

# Sports Chaplaincy Conference 2017

## A game of two halves

### Success, transition & significance (Robbie Hunter-Paul):

#### Nurturing success:

- Sportsmen are single-minded.
- It is all about them & their success.
- However, people come from different worlds & play in a team together. But it is a long process. It took 10 years for the Bradford Bulls to create a legacy by 2006.
- He Aha Te Mea Nui O te Ao, He Tangata He Tangata He Tangata (When asked what are the important things in life I reply: "It is people, it is people, it is people.") New Zealand proverb.
- What attributes do successful athletes have?
  - *1: Attitude:*
    - a. They're not frightened to lose.
    - b. It is at a deep level, the content of their character.
    - c. They are good, positive, selfless people.
    - d. If you're not a good person you won't be a good leader.
    - e. One of the All Blacks (83% win rate) pillars is: "No dickheads."
  - *2: Responsibility:*
    - a. They don't shift blame for what is going on around them.
    - b. "I may not have dropped the ball, but I gave the pass that led to it."
    - c. They don't shirk the work.
    - d. We need to sing from the same hymn-sheet.
  - *3: Sacrifice:*
    - a. You have to make sacrifices if you want to achieve things.
  - *4: Evolve:*
    - a. We can fall foul of standing still.
    - b. We have to move forward.

- c. Be willing to grow.

### **Transition:**

- Many professional athletes fall on hard times when they finish their careers.
- *1: Identify a direction:*
  - a. Use the assets of your sporting career in your next step.
  - b. This gives you a new area to focus on, a new layer, a new chapter.
  - c. We will be confronted with people thinking: "Who am I?" They know who they are when they're in sport because they're told who they are, where to go, what to eat, etc..
- *2: Apply "your" ARSE (personal attributes):*
  - a. They got where they are by applying their attributes. Many of them don't what they are, they just do them.
  - b. They need them to be identified for the next step.
  - c. What is their passion?
- *3: Compete (be obsessed):*
  - a. Will I be the best? "No."
  - b. Will I be the best I can be? "Yes."
  - c. Don't be afraid to make mistakes.
  - d. You will sometimes get it wrong.
  - e. The danger can be that we don't live in the moment if we're always planning ahead. We need to stop, slow down and enjoy the moment. Appreciate where you are right now.

### **Prevent (Nigel Lund):**

- Many terrorists have doubts & second thoughts.
- They have reminders on pin boards at home and emails from their radicalisers reminding them why they're doing it if they have any doubts.
- Attacks are becoming more simple and more numerous.
- Some are drawn and radicalised because of revenge. It's happened to them so they do it in return.
- So much goes on under the surface to bring an attack.



- 850 have travelled to Syria, Iraq, etc. To fight. Most will come back and they come back effected by it.
- More attacks have been foiled than happened in the UK.
- Government Counter Terrorism Strategy: Contest (4 P's)"
  - a. Protect.
  - b. Prepare
  - c. Pursue.
  - d. Prevent.
- Prevent differs from the other 3 because it operates in a non-criminal place. It tries to keep people out of this, rather than arresting them.
- Prevent in 3 ways:
  - a. Challenge ideologies.
  - b. Protect vulnerable individuals.
  - c. Support institutions that try and stop radicalisation.
- Prevent is all about safeguarding.
- Lone wolves are rare. People are put in a social process where they will listen.
- Terrorists want to change society (destroy evil) and they aren't "one size fits all".
- What puts people in a place where they'll listen?



- The key is “a sense of injustice”. Use that as a hook the hang the others on. This injustice is often related to bullying and hate crimes.
- Religion is used: Mistranslated by the speaker and not understood by the listener (especially if they’re a new convert).
- How might we know that someone may need support?
  - a. Changing behaviours, life situations and attitudes.
- How can we support people?
  - a. Channel (an online resource).
- Radicalisation is a grooming process and is no different to sexual exploitation. They are using someone to get to somewhere they want to go.

## **Kingdom or kingship, mission or ministry (Graham Daniels)?**

### **The vision of Jesus (Matthew 9:36-10:15):**

- Jesus gives the great commission at the end of the gospel but pre-empts it in chapter 4 when he calls the disciples to be fishers of people.
- How do we make apprentices, learners of Jesus in the world of sport?
- Right in the middle of Matthew’s account of “go and fish” and “go and make disciples” is Matthew 9 and 10.

### **1: The motive for mission (v.36):**

- Compassion.

- We need to change our glasses because when Jesus sees the crowd he has compassion ((this Greek word is only used of Jesus in the NT).
- He has compassion because the crowd were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
- When Jesus looks at my football club and my life he is filled with compassion.
- It's Jesus' compassion in us. If it was down to my compassion even my family would be stuffed.

## *2: The theology of mission (v.37, 38):*

- It's God's Harvest Field. It's not mine! It isn't reliant on me! He is the Lord of the harvest.
- If we forget this we're in all kinds of trouble in our ministry of the gospel.
- We can be proud about the answer we've found in God. "If only you were a bit like me..."
- Is there an in-built vanity?
- Pride's manifestations (arrogance and despair):
  - a. Look at what I'm doing!
  - b. I hope they never find out about the problems I face and the mess I'm in.
    - i. We vacillate between the 2.
- If you act like the Lord of the harvest you're a fool!
- God is our leader.

## *3: The strategy for mission (10:1-15):*

- Jesus shows them how to do and then watches them do it.
- This is a training run: Don't go to the Gentiles or Samaritans. 1<sup>st</sup> go to the lost sheep of Israel. You're not ready to go too far afield yet (that will come after Jesus' ascension).

### *3.1: Go and speak (v.7):*

- Proclaim: "The kingdom of heaven has come near."
- The most dangerous thing in church history is that we think we know the gospel.
- Never assume the gospel, don't treat God's word lightly.
- Don't be ashamed of the gospel or hide your light under a bushel.
- We loved you so much that we shared not only the gospel of God but our very lives as well (Paul to the Church in Thessaloniki). Do it in that order.

- The gospel is most important. It is better than my human decency. It may not come chronologically first but it is of most importance.
- Don't bank on your own brain power or charm!
- Because people have no knowledge of the Bible now and no hardness of heart. They are amazed by the stories. Print the stories and share them with them. Ask *them* what *they* think about these stories.

### 3.2: *Be vulnerable (v.8-10):*

- What you have you have received freely from God so freely give.
- How do you give? Vulnerably.
- We serve a vulnerable crucified Saviour who never manipulated or groomed people.
- As you go you should be brilliant at being normal and loving.
- Unapologetic about the gospel and respectful of people's views.
- We need to be better at being normal. If you're not normal, if you're a nutter, you're dead!

### 3.3: *Nurture faith (v.11-15):*

- We're not manipulators or full of our own ability.
- God does something and then we're in a place to nurture faith. We don't create faith.
- Be thoroughly humble and servant-hearted.
- We can be de-railed by so many knocks so easily. Keep going! It started with 12 workers and keeps going.
- Keep us keeping on.

## **Evening celebration (Warren Evans):**

- If we, the church, look at our communities the same others do the church is no different.
- Who are in our sports clubs? The widows, orphans and the broken.
- The sports clubs are the margins Jesus goes to.
- Little things done consistently brings about massive change.
- "Do what you do so well that they will want to see it again and bring their friends." Walt Disney

- When you see someone's life transformed by Jesus you don't need to tell others because the transformed person will.
- The Enemy doesn't kick a dead dog.

## **Evening celebration (Hugh Osgood):**

### **Matthew 5:14-16:**

#### *1: A positive world-view:*

- It says that we can bring out the God-colours.
- Too often the Church has a negative world-view.
- People know what the Church is against rather than what it is for.
- When the Church is known as a light it is often thought of in terms of a search light looking for that which is wrong.

#### *2: A positive view of people:*

- God loves the people he's created passionately.
- This love is for each other in the Church and must also be released to others in the world.
- Have I got that ability to see what God can do in people who don't yet know him?

#### *3: A realistic view about ourselves:*

- God puts us on a lamp stand and puts a city on a hill.
- God believes in us enough to say that he is going public with this message and he is doing it through us.
- Jesus isn't like a politician. He doesn't just have photo opportunities with his "success stories". He stands with each of us, like the 7 lamp stands in the book of Revelation where 5 are barely flickering.
- Jesus holds cracked clay pots and God's glory is seen in a way that it won't if we wear concrete personas.
- If we, the Church, are holding hands and looking outwards we won't agree on everything because we're not just looking at each other. But where we're looking will put these differing views into perspective.

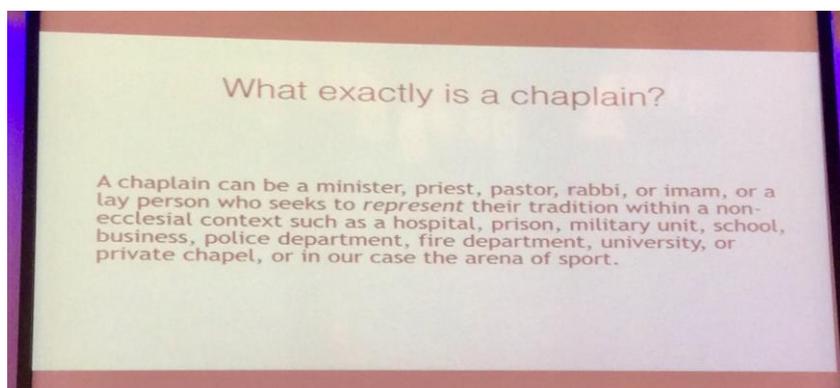
## **Team talk (Mark Fleming):**

Exodus 14:5-14:

- Moses has no idea how this will end when he stands at the edge of the Red Sea!
- The people were terrified (v.10).
- The Israelites choice: Drowning ahead of them, destruction behind them. What do they do? Blame their leader.
- Moses response? Drawing from his past experience of what God has done. So he says: "Stand still."
- God tells Moses to tell the people to "move on".
- If I'm Moses I might say: "Are you geographically challenged God?"
- God will sometimes call us to do the impossible and impracticable.
- Wisdom is proved right by your actions.
- Stop looking for the blueprint and look at my footprint. Stop looking for the grand plan and look at the next thing God is calling you to do.

### **Pastor & prophet (John Swinton):**

- Where is God in Sports Chaplaincy and what does it look like?
- One job for a theologian is to take simple, everyday things and make them more complicated!
- Complexification!
- Your words create worlds. What worlds did you create today?
- The names that we give to things are important, because they become those things when we name them.



- Ultimately we represent God.

- We also seek to re-present the Gospel in ways that make sense in sport.
- Prophetic ministry means to see the present differently.
- **Developing a faithful sporting imagination:**
  - a. Our imagination is given to us by God.
  - b. But our imagination is bounded by our culture which says you can only value things you can see, taste, hear, feel and smell. But this is a belief structure itself that cannot be proved!
  - c. We need to renew our minds/imaginings (Romans 12:2). We do this by allowing the biblical narrative to shape our imagination and worldview.
- **Sport has to do with the movement of bodies. But what exactly is a body?**
  - a. *Material* bodies and *Lived* bodies.
  - b. Material body is the physical thing.
  - c. Lived body is your experience of being in the world, the way you encounter and feel the world.
- **What is a biblical understand of the body?**
  - a. The soulfulness of the body.
  - b. Genesis 2:7: God picks up dust and blows his spirit into it, making it a human being.
  - c. St. Augustine described human beings as “animated earth”.
  - d. Every breath we have is given by God. The very essence of who we are is a gift from God.
  - e. Therefore, all bodies are holy and beautiful.
  - f. Every encounter with another human being is a holy moment.
- Therefore, sport is a spiritual discipline.
- **Sport as worship:**
  - a. You could even say sport, in it’s purist form, is worship, a celebration of the body which holds the holiness of God.
  - b. Worship is so much wider than Sunday services. We should meet together but it doesn’t need to be Sunday mornings.
  - c. We have also constructed holiness incorrectly. Two of the most holy moments in history are the birth of Jesus (mess, dung, animals, shepherds

and new parents) and the cross (abuse, nudity, pain, torture, crying, blood, fear and death).

- **Sport as formation:**

- a. The human body remembers things.
- b. Your body takes the form and shape of your spiritual practices.
- c. In sport we form our physical body into the shape of the sport we play. These physical disciplines transform our minds.
- d. We should redirect the desire of people's formation
- e. 2 Corinthians 3:-4: We are letters from Christ showing Paul's ministry amongst us.
- f. As we engage in spiritual disciplines we become a letter for Jesus.
- g. When we engage in physical disciplines we become a letter other people can read.
- h. We should make the familiar strange, change the culture.

- **Sport as trust:**

- a. We should trust each other.

- **Sport as community:**

- a. Sport should take the shape of trust.
- b. We form a *team* but, at another level, we form a *community*.
- c. We are about community formation.
- d. Sport is becoming increasingly de-souled and just competitive.

- **Sport as witness/lament:**

- a. Why do we only thank God when we score, not when we miss? Where are the prayers of lament in sport?
- b. We "go again" after a defeat. We always move on! Where is the space for lament?
- c. Calvin: Do we have a theology of glory or a theology of the cross?
- d. A theology of glory means everything should go well, whereas a theology of the cross means we can lament.
- e. Lament allows space for reflection.

- f. Doing isn't always speaking. Sometimes quiet reflection is doing something. Sometimes sitting in a space in stillness is enough.
  - g. Doing nothing is a radical, counter-cultural habit. Find "sabbath moments".
  - h. Most Psalms of lament end with a "but", a sign of hope (except Psalm 88 – "darkness is my only friend").
- **Sport as competition?**
    - a. The gospel isn't about winning at all costs and never submitting. The gospel is about submission.
    - b. We need to be in it to win it! We can't witness to what we have if we're not in it.
- **How do we enable people to compete faithfully?**
    - a. This is the task of Sports Chaplains.
- **Chaplaincy re-members (bringing back together things that have been fragmented) the soul of sport:**
    - a. Putting the body in it's right place, bringing trust, creating community, encouraging witness, encouraging lament, winning faithfully.