



John & Anne Boyers around the Graham Taylor Statue

I am deeply grateful to Warren for his invitation to write a piece for this addition of ACTIVATE. Warren felt it appropriate given that I have just retired from chaplaincy at Manchester United after 26+ years.

HAVING SPENT OVER FORTY ONE YEARS FOCUSED ON SPORTS CHAPLANCY THESE ARE A FEW OF MY KEY OBSERVATIONS.

God initiates, guides and leads: My chaplaincy at Watford FC back in the autumn of 1977 began with God, not me! As Christians, my wife Anne and I sought to be disciples of Jesus Christ, following God's will our lives. Chaplaincy at WFC wasn't something I sought after, rather something with which God confronted me. Others confirmed this strange initiative seemed to be from God, so steps were taken. Some weeks later Graham Taylor agreed to an 'experimental year' - which started a lifetime focus on sports chaplaincy. Oak trees grow from acorns.

Learning about this sort of ministry: I was learning 'on the job' what it was to be a chaplain to a football club. It was so different from Church ministry: I was a guest in their home. I'd suggested how a chaplain could benefit many people - both players and non-playing staff - by being involved to offer appropriate confidential care and support as needed. Promising no 'Bible-bashing', I had freedom to talk about 'God-stuff' if questions were asked! Being pastorally proactive, spiritually

reactive were priorities for me. When other clubs showed interest in Watford's chaplaincy, this same pattern was commended. Sports chaplains should help people, as a confidential listening ear, a safety net for those in life's crises. It's not about a free pass to a game or a chance to meet sporting heroes!! Scripture tells Christians to do good works: that's sports chaplaincy's focus!

Local Church Support: Graham Taylor and WFC wanted me to continue my chaplaincy work, and St. James Road Baptist Church, Watford, gave me 25% of my working time to work outside the immediate needs of membership and congregation, as the football club chaplain. We need churches today with similar vision, encouraging experienced leaders to serve needs in the communities beyond 'their' church.

Opportunities and God's priority: The year 1987 was an interesting one for me. That summer, Graham Taylor became manager at Aston Villa, and asked if I'd go there with him. That autumn, Manchester United asked if I'd meet to explain chaplaincy: they were considering the possibility. They unexpectedly offered me a full-time job. Neither opportunity resonated with me. Unlike three years later, when the Baptist Union asked me to initiate an inter-denominational sports chaplaincy development ministry, which explains SCORE's origins. Looking back, had I taken either job with Villa or United in 1987, I could not have developed 'SCORE'. We need to know the difference between the good opportunity and God's opportunity, and follow the latter.

The story continues: 'SCORE' became 'Sports Chaplaincy UK', whose orbit has grown and developed. I'm thrilled to look back noting how the selfless, serving presence of trained chaplains supporting people in sport is being continued and extended today. I'd urge all chaplains to serve their clubs consistently, prayerfully, appropriately and humbly; clubs to understand and endorse the benefits of Sports Chaplaincy UK chaplains; and churches to release suitable leaders for this most worthwhile ministry.

Rev. John K Boyers Sports Chaplaincy UK founder and ambassador



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To pray for the expansion of the work of Sports Chaplaincy UK please register for our monthly prayer letter www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk/prayer

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You can become a volunteer of Sports Chaplaincy UK admin@sportschaplaincy.org.uk

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You can keep up to date with news of Sports Chaplaincy UK by Facebook: Sports Chaplaincy UK, Twitter: @sportchaplaincy www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk

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ACTIVATE

SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK
SERVING SPORT THROUGH EXCELLENCE IN CHAPLAINCY



Chaplaincy Reviews from across our Home Nations



Looking forward to developing our exciting partnership with 'Care for the Family'

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"The DREAM is to see an expression of God's love and compassion in every community called sport"

Welcome

CEO'S THOUGHTS

We believe God has given us this incredible dream, a dream to see an expression of his love and compassion in every community called sport. This community consists of over 25 million men, women and children - what a mission field, what an opportunity - be challenged and inspired to join us on this God ordained journey! As I reflect over the last few years and look forward to the future, I am humbled and blessed. I don't think that I, the Trustees or the leadership team would ever have imagined how far we would have travelled and the tremendous impact Sports Chaplaincy UK would be having in many towns and cities up and down our Home Nations and beyond. We are seeing

real people with real lives being touched by the love and compassion of God through his local church. I have the privilege of working with wonderful leaders and chaplains up and down our nation who quietly go in to this community impacting so many lives. Not only do I have the opportunity of working alongside and supporting so many wonderful and gifted leaders but I also have the privilege of hearing so many stories, testimonies and miracles of what God is doing in people's lives. Most of these stories we can't share but I hope as you read the rest of Activate you will see beyond the words on the page and see with eyes of compassion. I want to honour all those who have

supported, partnered and worked with us to help make a significant difference in the community of sport, a wonderful community, full of vibrant men, women and children who have seen and experienced a positive expression of the local church. We are so excited to see more and more chaplains, churches and denominations engaging with the community of sport from football to cricket, from rugby to horseracing, from gyms to ice hockey and everything else in between - this is not just about an activity but people.

Warren Evans
Chief Executive Officer



CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS

Whilst it is easy to recognise God's blessing in the development of sports chaplaincy, what often goes unseen is the background work that enables and supports it in areas such as admin and finance. We thank God for all who freely offer their time and skills to serve in these essential tasks. Another often faceless but no less essential group are the Trustees. Good governance is the core of an effective charity. Increasingly complex legislation makes keeping up to date quite a feat, as well as presenting a challenge as we seek to act with God honouring integrity. Thus we have sought to strengthen

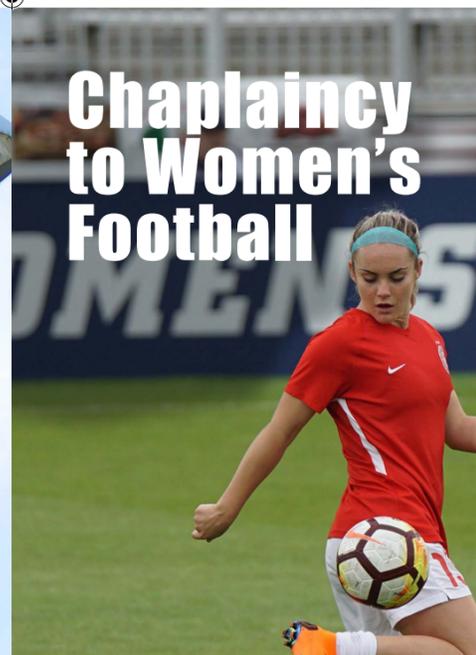
and broaden the makeup of our governance, adding three new Trustees, Anne Wafula-Strike, Phil Manchester and Dave Courteen. Also, following the retirement of Richard Knapp after 6 years of outstanding service, Tony Down has become Treasurer. Anne, a former GB & NI Paralympic wheelchair racer, has recently concentrated on charity work around disability, being awarded the MBE in 2014. Phil brings a wealth of experience in business, particularly in insurance, and in the charity sphere as a Trustee of Life Church UK. He is also very involved in Rugby Union at community level. Having founded a series of health

clubs Dave is now Managing Director of Mosaic Spa and Health Clubs. A former Trustee of Fit Lives, whose chaplaincy in health clubs has been incorporated into SCUK, he provides continuity with that area of our work. Tony Down is a qualified accountant who is also chaplain to Cardiff RFC. As you read the many accounts of God's love and compassion being shared in the community of sport through chaplaincy, please take a moment to thank Him for the unseen voluntary input of so many that makes it all possible!

David Chawner
Chair of Trustees



Chaplaincy to Women's Football



"It has been great to talk to someone who was willing to listen and understand" said a tearful parent of a young player struggling to make the team. Listening is a key component of sports chaplaincy and an activity women's football chaplains do frequently. We all have issues in our lives that need talking through and chaplains provide a non-judgemental, caring environment helping to alleviate anxiety and aid decision making. Women in particular value the opportunity to just 'chat' with someone they trust and who understands their environment. We hope this will help them to cope with the culture of elite sport where performance is everything.

So why is someone of the Christian faith needed to perform this role? As we share life's journey with all who belong to our

clubs, life's bigger questions will inevitably emerge. Discussions have ranged from how being in a single sex relationship might affect conversion to Christianity, whether the death penalty should be applied to rapists to whether schools should still have nativity plays. It's great to be asked to comment on religious or spiritual issues appearing in the media, always of course respecting others' points of view. Opportunity for dialogue at all levels is created by time with players, having lunch or travelling on the bus to away matches. We are often the one constant in a continuously changing setting. Would you be willing to brave the cold, rain and wind to be a Christian presence on the field of women's football?

Angy King
Pastoral Support Director for Women's Football for England and Wales, Chaplain to Reading Women and Wales Women



Disability Sports Chaplaincy

CHAPLAINCY AT THE WORLD WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018 IN HAMBURG, GERMANY

From 15th to the 26th August a small international team of Christian sports chaplains served at the World Wheelchair Basketball Championships that took place in Hamburg, Germany.

There were in total 28 of the world's leading basketball nations competing in this major global sports event, 16 men's teams from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Germany, GB, Iran, Italy, Japan, Canada, Netherlands, Morocco, Spain, USA, Poland, South Korea and Turkey; and 12 women's teams from Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, France, GB, Canada, Netherlands, Spain and USA. Over the course of the 11 days 96 matches were played, culminating in victory for the GB Men's team and the Netherlands Women's team.

In terms of the chaplaincy team of 8 members, there were 5 men and 3 women, from a number of countries (GB, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Japan). All of the GB contingent from the chaplaincy team were SCUK chaplains who self-funded their participation: Heather and Martin Lewis, Pat Cooke-Rogers and Steve Jones.

The chaplaincy team's presence had been brokered beforehand by the German sports chaplaincy agency SRS, a Christian non-profit organization founded in 1971 and based in Altenkirchen/Westerwald that has been pioneering on the continent the support of athletes within the world of all ability sport. Each chaplain had been fully accredited by the organisers of the tournament, the International World Basketball Federation.

At these world championships the chaplaincy team had a large chaplaincy tent as a base, to which competitors, coaches and spectators at the event could come for conversation, prayer and to pick up Christian sports-related resources. But the largest part of the chaplains' time was by far spent out and about in the competition and training venues, surrounding refreshment areas and team hotel, interacting with players, coaches and family members. Some spiritually significant conversations were had by some chaplains with individuals which are being followed up back in their respective countries, as are constructive conversations with sport managers and administrators within national wheelchair basketball governing bodies. Some chaplains had opportunities to read scripture and pray with a few players and coaches and to give out some sports Bibles.

The final competition day of the championships was a Sunday, with the

men's final taking place in the afternoon. The organising committee agreed to an open-air morning Christian service taking place outside the main competition venue. The three chaplains who were on shift that day were involved in the worship service in partnership with the local Lutheran church.

Steve Jones
Pastoral Support Director for Disability Sport





WALES



In the last 12 months we have seen some incredible progress across Wales with God's favour on us at many levels:

- We signed an agreement with the FAW WPL who have endorsed sports chaplaincy to all their top tier clubs and we have already had a number of club enquires, placing 4 new chaplains with a couple more lined up, and still needing more volunteers to meet roles."
- A Christian trust provided a grant so we could take someone on part time to help develop the work across N Wales and Elliot Mayor was appointed in Jan 2018. He has already met with about 30 church leaders from 25 churches and has been actively engaging with about 16 keen potential chaplains and has already placed 6 chaplains. Elliot is doing an amazing job so please keep praying for him.
- We have seen good growth in chaplaincy numbers where we now have 52 chaplains and 30 in waiting! And we still need more volunteers to be chaplains - please?! We have also been busy replacing a number of chaplains retiring or moving on and pray God's blessing on them for their time faithfully serving their clubs, not

least Pete Orphan who was the initial pioneer of SCUK in Wales and who has after 15 seasons with Swansea RFC hung up his boots and bible there but wonderfully paved the way for a great replacement in Matt Hopkins!

• As well as growth in our numbers we also continue to reach new sports areas like Wales netball, gym chaplaincy including faith R'xd, a referees society and all ability rugby. Helen Lewis has made a fantastic impact with the national netball team whose CEO Sarah Jones says "Our chaplain has been invaluable to us as an organisation. She has been a fixed point of support for our senior players and workforce for almost 18 months. We are excited about her expanding the support to our age group squads over the coming months and look forward to her joining us for many more seasons to come" Helen also serves at the Celtic Dragons.

• A few of our chaplains have served at major games events and have incredible stories to tell. Heather Lewis and Steve Jones served at the Commonwealth Games where they also very much became part of Team Wales. Steve and Heather also served at the World Wheelchair Basketball Championship. (See *Disability Sports Chaplaincy* article).

Steve continues to do a great work helping nations from across the world understand how to support, develop

and be chaplains to those with disabilities, a great pioneering work from Wales.

• Our partnering with the Gideons has meant that in Wales we have provided over 2500 badged testaments to 10 teams and many are already asking for more! We have also developed closer links with many churches and church bodies across Wales and more and more are responding to our vision and wanting to serve their sporting communities.

There is so much more that could be said... but it remains my huge privilege, with God's help and guidance, to lead a fantastic team across Wales and see God do great things.

To God be the glory.



(Warren Evans, Martin & Heather Lewis, Elliot Mayor)

Martin Lewis
Chaplain Support Director for Wales and Chaplain to Cardiff Blues



SCOTLAND

to enquire about having a chaplain. We are seeking funding to enable Ben to pioneer chaplaincy within the sport in much the same way as I have done with football. Added to his rugby chaplaincy role, Ben was also appointed as chaplain to the Scottish Women's National Cricket team – the Wildcats.

upshot is that we are hopefully going to place our first chaplain at a shinty club this year. This will be a pilot, with the plan being to appoint a chaplain at all of the shinty clubs in the top two tiers of the Marine Harvest League the following year. Again, we are seeking funding to make this a reality.

We have experienced exciting new developments in Scotland over the last year. Football chaplaincy has continued to grow.

We will have upwards of 23 female chaplains within Scottish Women's Football this coming season. We will also have over 70 chaplains at men's clubs throughout the SPFL, Highland League and Lowland League. We have also been asked by the East of Scotland League (the tier underneath the Lowland League) if we will develop chaplaincy for their clubs and we already have 8 chaplains in place with more to follow. Football clubs in other leagues also have chaplains, taking our overall total at present to 110.

The fact that Ben is a former rugby player and cricketer has certainly helped him gain acceptance and favour in both situations!

Another exciting development was the first appointment by Sports Chaplaincy Scotland of a gym chaplain. Elma Beaton was placed in Bannatyne's Gym in Inverness. Already a member there, Elma was well known, and since becoming the official chaplain she has received a steady stream of requests for pastoral support from fellow gym members. We believe that this pilot is going to lead to many gyms throughout Scotland requesting chaplains.



We have also started to move into other sports. Ben Thorpe became Sports Chaplaincy Scotland's first appointment in Scottish Rugby when he was placed at Stirling County RFC and his reputation is growing to such an extent that other rugby clubs are already approaching us



Yet another very recent development has been Sports Chaplaincy Scotland's engagement with the Camanachd Society (Scottish Shinty). Several meetings have been held and the



So there are many new opportunities being presented to us, largely due to the reputation of our football chaplains doing such good work. As is often the case, the major obstacle to these wonderful opportunities being taken is a lack of infrastructure and limited finance. To help address this we have appointed an Advisory Board in Scotland, one of whom (Rob Wilson) has contributed to the SCUK board of trustees to represent Scotland's interests and to give input into the development of the charity on a UK level.



We have also appointed a new administrator, Catriona Lamont, who is also our chaplain at Hibernian Women FC. Catriona is doing a great job in both areas.



(Scottish Chaplains)

Mark Fleming
Director to Scottish Football & Chaplain to the SFA





NORTHERN IRELAND



The need within sports clubs up and down the country for chaplains driven by clubs themselves is both hugely encouraging and hugely challenging. So too has the "perceived value" of the existing chaplains within clubs risen, with a greater acknowledgement within many clubs of the wide and diverse range of skills that a chaplain has to offer. And we give thanks to God for the people serving faithfully at our clubs over many years and those who have added to this number in 2018.

Andrew Thompson has, over 20 years as Ulster Rugby Chaplain, been an inspiration to all our local chaplains to say nothing of serving faithfully at the Kingspan where the essence of sports chaplaincy has been defined in a fruitful ministry that has sprung from the seedbed of building trusting relationships. Andrew steps down from his role in June and we look forward to what God has planned for him in the years ahead.

The work of sports chaplaincy in this past year in Northern Ireland has seen even greater recognition from both the Irish Football Association and the Northern Ireland Football League, a support for which we are very grateful, including use of their stellar facilities and the close friendships we enjoy. New gym chaplains continue to be on the rise in a culture where many people's

source of physical activity is the local gym and as gym coaches target their physical strength and well being, so too has the gym become a hub where chaplains can play a role in taking care of their mental health and spiritual well being.

New chaplaincy appointments this season at all of the top 4 tiers in football are evidenced by Institute, Loughgall, Dollingstown and Bangor whilst in female sports we have seen new appointments at Priorians Hockey Club and Crusaders Strikers Football Club.

The reach into Football academies has taken a greater leap as Club Chaplains have been welcomed in embracing the younger age groups.

Wilson Beare at Portadown has led the charge and we have been able to provide close to 5,000 club crested Bibles across 20 clubs and organisations, thanks to our friends at Gideons, with many of these going into the hands of academy players, all through the chaplains.

Truth is though, that we are not even scratching the surface - within many sports we do not have enough trained chaplains to take up positions and within many sports, we are not yet active. And we have not yet built on the good work of many other Christian groups in the Republic of Ireland. We are enormously encouraged by God as we reflect on the doors he has opened, continues to keep open and the people he has placed to serve within clubs. But we are nowhere near it. God has told us what to do and we are failing. The question is not - "Do we have the Presence, Protection and Promises of God?" - we have them all Absolutely Assured. The question is rather "Do we have the Strength, Courage and Desire to fulfil the purposes of God and what he has laid before us to do?" And we all will be held accountable.



(Philip Mitchell with Stuart Elliott, Sports Chaplaincy UK ambassador)

Philip Mitchell
Pastoral Support Director for Northern Irish Sport



ENGLAND

It has been yet another busy and exciting year for the development of sports chaplaincy in England.

With increased media exposure to the Christian world we have seen an influx of people contacting us to express an interest in becoming a chaplain. This has meant more induction training events all over the country including bespoke training in gym chaplaincy and horseracing chaplaincy.

Conference 2018 saw a change in both timing and venue with the switch to the second week in June from the traditional October date and being hosted by Life Church, Bradford. This was a fantastic time of training in areas as diverse as Media, Bereavement and Safeguarding. We were also delighted to have Roger Lipe from the Fellowship of Christian Athletes as our keynote speaker sharing from his wealth of experience in chaplaincy in the US from the last 25 years.



(Roger Lipe, Fellowship of Christian Athletes)



(Carolyn Skinner, gym chaplain)

In terms of specific sports we continue to be grateful for the ongoing support in football from the Premier League, English Football League and the Professional Footballers' Association. Shaun Harvey, CEO of the EFL, is a strong supporter of chaplaincy because of the positive experience he had of Rev Martin Short former chaplain at Bradford City in the years following the Bradford fire disaster in 1985. With Shaun now in such an influential position in the EFL this has meant in 2018 we have been able to appoint Chris Nelson and Cameron Collington as chaplains to the EFL staff at their offices in Preston & London. This should encourage all of us in chaplaincy, as we faithfully serve at our local clubs and sports the long term positive effects for God's kingdom and chaplaincy can be far reaching.



(Chris Nelson and Cameron Collington)

There is also cause for celebration in Rugby League as for the first time we now have chaplains at all 12 of the Super League clubs. With one of those clubs being Catalans Dragons who play in Perpignan, France this means that we also have a chaplain there with Philip

Alcock being appointed in April 2018! Antonio Hall, Pastoral Director in Rugby League does a sterling job supporting & developing chaplaincy and as well as achieving 100% in the Super League has seen Tony Ford's switch from Oldham to Barrow Raiders Rugby League. Antonio also continues to offer pastoral & spiritual support to Rugby League officials.



(Philip Alcock & Steve McNamara, coach to Catalans Dragons)

Looking to the future there are 2 main areas of development. Firstly, with so many applying to become chaplains the challenge is how to place them across different sports and we hope we can do this by greater and closer engagement with the local church. Secondly, towards the end of 2018 we had a very positive meeting with Baroness Sue Campbell, Head of Women's Football at the FA. There are currently 6 teams in the women's game in England with chaplains but we hope with Sue's support and with the great work Angy King continues to do as chaplain at Reading FC Women and in overseeing English Women's football for SCUUK there is tremendous opportunity and potential for the future.



(Induction training)

Matt Baker
Pastoral Support Director in English Football

