

Aims:

- To create an understanding of what a Sports Chaplain is and does:
 - What kinds of challenges do they face?
 - What kind of environment do they work in?
 - What kinds of sportspeople will they meet?
 - What kinds of crises will they encounter?
 - How can they meet the needs of the athlete?

- To present a model for holistic development of a Sports Chaplain, which can also be used in serving Christian sportspeople.

What is a Sports Chaplain?

- An appointed minister with the purpose of providing spiritual guidance to people involved in sport.
- Serves the sports person holistically – spiritually, personally, and athletically.
- Helps the sports person to integrate the Bible's perspective in sport and life.
- Sports experiences are used by the Chaplain in order to develop the whole sports person in Christ.

The Sports Chaplain's Strategy

- On-going life interaction with the hope of leading sportspeople to a relationship with Christ.
- Walk together with the sportsperson in all aspects of life.
- The ultimate aim is life transformation in Christ through the integration of sport and faith in their everyday lives.

The Sports Chaplain's Goal

- Seeks to achieve an integration of a biblical perspective into sport and all of life.
- Seeks to help the athlete/team grow holistically- spiritually, personally, athletically
- Intentionally values the sports experience to develop the whole sportsperson in Christ – mind, body, spirit.

Criteria of a Sports Chaplain

- Sports competence
 - Value sport as an integral part of a sportsperson life, not just a platform for ministry.

- Knowledgeable about sport and the needs of the athletes they're working with
- Commitment
 - Committed to God and the needs of the sports person
- Loving
 - Demonstrating God's unconditional love to the sports world.
- Serving
 - Service to the sportsperson is not for self-gain or the reputation of your church, or ministry.
- People orientated
 - Build relationships to model Godly character and love.
 - Willing and able to work together with those surrounding the sports person, including coaches, family members and spiritual advisors.
- Servant hearted
 - A serving heart.
 - Serve to build up the sports person, **enhance** to build up their performance in sport and their identity in Christ.
 - Serve behind the scenes (stay out of the limelight).
- Humility
 - Be humble, understand your role serving the athlete and community.
- Nurturing
 - Be skilled in understanding needs and providing spiritual guidance to meet the needs and pressures experienced by the sports person. Be encouraging.
- Faithful
 - Be faithful to the call of God.
- Integrity
 - Keep your word.
 - Maintain confidentiality.

- Trustworthy
 - Respect the athlete's need for privacy.
 - Do not give any news away to the media or others.

- Credible
 - Live what you preach. Be consistent in the sports person's eyes.
 - Serve with authenticity - be transparent about your own failures.
 - Be punctual for appointments.
 - Be discrete and confidential.
 - Follow up.
 - Make time.
 - Be consistent – follow through on your commitments.
 - Be ethical.
 - Serve with equality.

- Discipline
 - Not imposing.
 - A good listener.
 - Prayerful.
 - Understanding.
 - Encouraging.
 - Identifying needs.
 - An invited guest/volunteer.
 - Speak the truth in love.

- Bible based
 - Trained in biblical matters and able to communicate spiritual insights.
 - Spiritually mature.
 - Ability to communicate Gospel.

- Heart for God, for the Gospel and for People
 - A Humble Heart- Isaiah 57:15, 65:5 and Matthew 5:3.
 - A Bold Heart - 2 Timothy 1:6 and Acts 1:8
 - A Wise Heart - Proverbs 1-7 and Matthew 10:16

Helpful	Harmful
Be prayerful	Asking for photos of or with sportspeople
Wait for doors of opportunity to open to you	Expecting rewards or favours
Keep the sportsperson's schedule in mind	Promise or prophecy of victory
Be attentive to the need for deeper discussion	Approaching them on the day of their event
Prepare yourself prayerfully for ministry – Proverbs 19:2	Give away their personal information or contact details
Be relational	Don't brag about your relationship with sportspeople
Being prayerful	Being self-reliant
Have a comforting, warm, inviting attitude	Being rude and self-important
Don't do it alone (2 Timothy 2:2)	Having a mindset of 'I own the ministry'
Being catalysts for growth	Maintaining the status quo
Acting with respect toward the sports field/track/club	Being unaware of boundaries

Different kinds of Sports Chaplains

- Team Chaplain
- Club Chaplain
- Individual Chaplain
- Major Event Chaplain

Team Chaplain (National Team Chaplain) – serving a sports team on a regular basis to help both the players and the team grow holistically:

- **How does a Sports Chaplain receive an appointment?**
 - o Via:
 - Club leadership
 - Players committee
 - Trial presentation
 - Trial period
 - Team approval
 - Referral or recommendation

- **When does a Sports Chaplain do ministry?**
 - Often times on a weekly basis

- Before or after team practices
 - Non-game days (unless requested)
 - When the coach or team allows
- **Where does a Sports Chaplain do ministry?**
- In the locker / change room
 - On the team bus (road trips)
 - A place designated by the team
- **Whom does a Sports Chaplain serve?**
- The whole team, including coaches, managers, volunteers
 - The individual and their families
 - The players, church or unchurched
 - Those who attend optional events, such as chapel services
- **How does a Sports Chaplain present the Message?**
- A short (approx. 15 minute) presentation
 - Sport or life based (themes)
 - Clear Biblical reference/analogy
 - Sports illustrations
 - Time for discussion
- **Characteristics of the message:**
- Be Bible based
 - Be easily understood
 - Produce spiritual fruit
 - Include sports related themes and illustrations
- **What to expect:**
- Questions about your experiences as an athlete (if you are a former-sportsperson, especially if you are mentoring athletes from the same sport)
 - Questions about relationships
 - Questions about your family
 - Questions about life
 - Questions about death

- **How to build trust:**
 - o By visiting trainings and/or practices
 - o By offering assistance
 - o By being available

Club Chaplain – Serves as a resource to a sports club through providing various pastoral services to different categories of people within the club.

- Services may include:
 - o Preparing devotionals and/or Bible studies
 - o Performing weddings
 - o Conducting funerals
 - o Leading a prayer at a team banquet
 - o Ministering to youth
 - o Supporting them through crisis
- Characteristics
 - o Broader and more flexible than the team chaplain
 - o May work with one specific team on a regular basis, but is also available for all the teams, members, coaches, and staff in a club.

Individual Chaplain - A mentor who supports the sports person in his or her personal, spiritual, and athletic development in a decided period of time.

- Invited by a specific sportsperson
- Supports sportsperson with daily devotions and bible study, based on the sportsperson's individual needs

Major Event Chaplain - A selected and accredited member of an international chaplaincy team.

- Provides services to a wide range of sports people participating at a major sporting event.
- Provides religious services – church services, bible studies, prayer - for athletes, teams, and clubs, in various major sporting contexts.
- Chaplaincy is often conducted in a multi-faith context, although the majority served are from the Christian Faith as a result of consistent sports ministry.

AMARANT'S MODEL FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

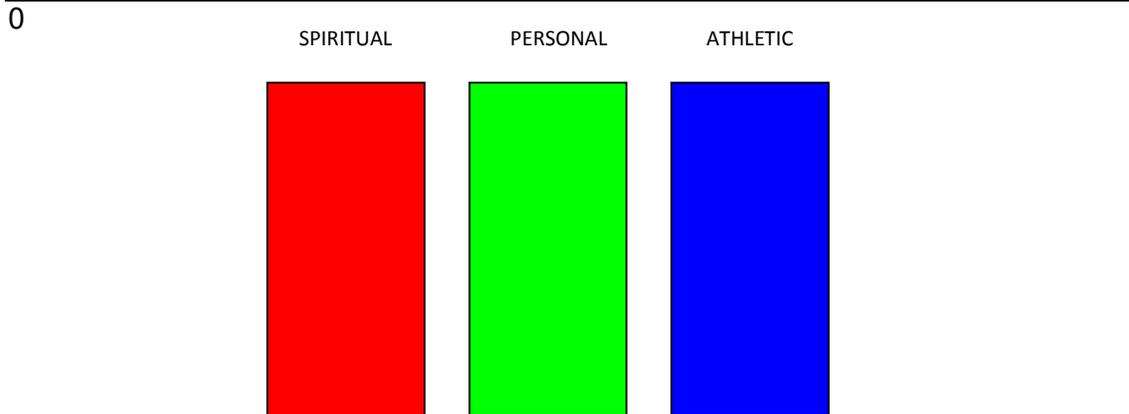


Image 1. The three life domains.

The spiritual, personal and athletic life domains

The colored areas represent three life domains into which we as sports chaplains or as sports people can divide our everyday life:

1. A *spiritual domain* which includes our devotional life and our relationship with God.
2. A *personal domain* which includes our private life and our roles in the family and among friends.
3. An *athletic domain* which includes our sporting career and our roles in the sports world.

Often we tend to view these life domains as separate islands which compete for our time and energy. As a result:

1. Our everyday life becomes a constant battle to achieve the right balance between the different domains.
2. Our minds and our identity become shattered and confused, since we play different roles in the different domains.

The solution is to turn the perspective around. We need to realize that the three life domains are different parts of one and the same whole, and that they are based on one another. The most fundamental domain is the spiritual, which is supposed to influence and permeate the personal and the athletic domains as shown in Image 2.

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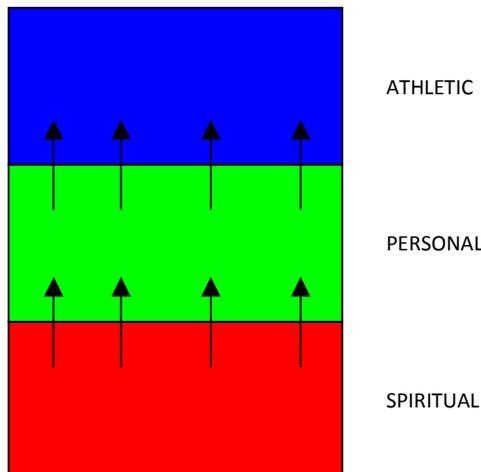


Image 2. Our life domains as parts of a dynamic and functioning whole.

As we start to view the different life domains as parts of a dynamic and functioning whole, rather than as separate, competing islands, we discover that (a) we are the same persons and (b) we have the same mission, regardless of the roles and the contexts. As a result:

1. We become more whole and harmonious individuals
2. We give God the opportunity to use our whole life, instead of just one domain, as a platform for His Kingdom

Being or doing?

Today’s sports world is performance- and result-oriented. In the Bible, however, we see a different order: the identity precedes the mission.

We can draw a line that divides the life domains into two categories: *being* and *doing*. “Being” has to do with *identity* and “doing” has to do with *calling*. According to the Bible, our deepest identity is that we are created in *God’s image* and redeemed by Christ to be *God’s children*. Our deepest calling as Christians is the Great Commission in Mt 28:19: “Go and make disciples of all people” (see Image 3).

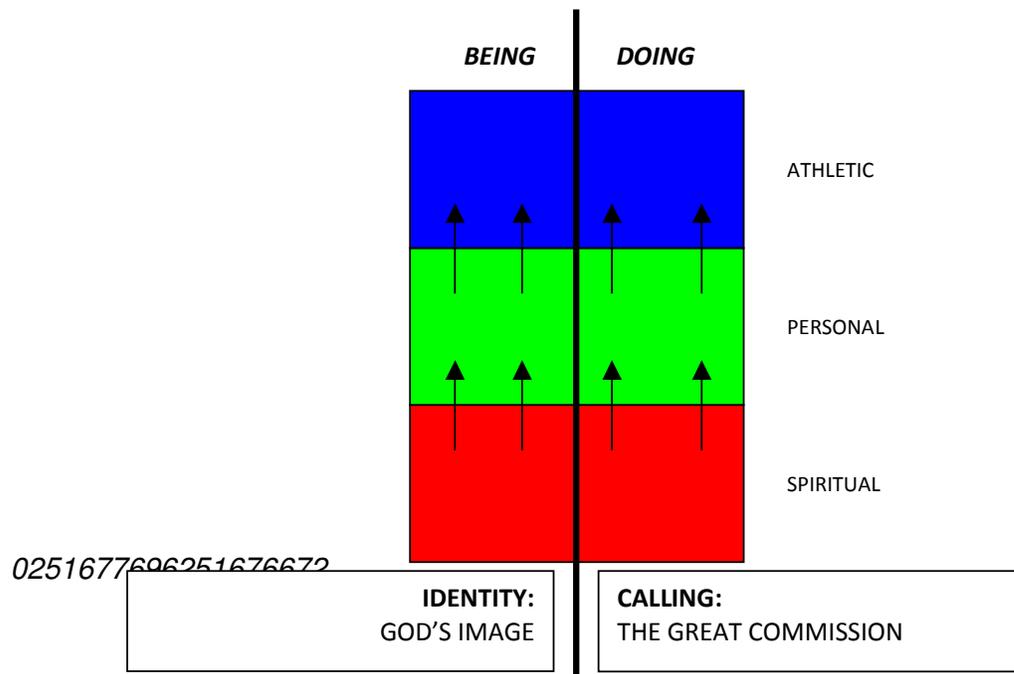


Image 3. Our life domains divided into the categories “being” and “doing”, and our life as a whole founded on God’s creational purpose for our “being” and our “doing”.

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

If you make a brief life analysis, where is your main focus – on “being” or on “doing”? Do you devote more time and energy to *becoming the person God has created you to be* or to *doing what God has created you to do*?

The Bible unites “being” and “doing” in a whole. Both seem to be equally important, and they seem to depend on one another. If we study people in the Bible who were given a mission by God, we find that the mission was always preceded by a time of preparation. Moses was 80 years old when God called him to lead the children of Israel out the slavery in Egypt. Jesus underwent 30 years of preparation for a mission that would last three and a half years.

It is by *becoming the people we are created to be* that we are able to *fulfill the mission God has called us to do*. Thus, “being” precedes “doing” without one of them being more important than the other. By finding a sound balance between being and doing, we are able to grow dynamically while at the same time contributing to the expansion of God’s Kingdom in people’s lives.

Where are you rooted?

A tree stands more firmly, the deeper and the stronger its roots are. Imagine that you are a tree planted in a garden, where the three life domains represent three layers of soil that exist at different depth beneath the surface, as shown in Image 4.

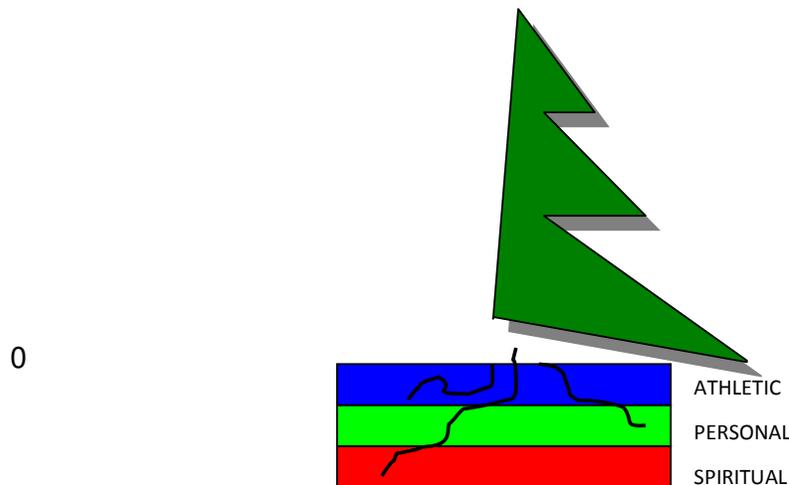


Image 4. The tree of life with roots at different depths.

The question is: *Where do you have your roots?* Here are four control questions you can ask yourself in order to find out where you are rooted. In which of the three layers of soil...

- ...do you get your nutrition?
- ...do you find strength and motivation?
- ...do you seek to fill your needs for approval and praise?
- ...are your self-image and your self-worth shaped?

Many sports people – especially many professional players, coaches, and referees – have their roots in the most superficial, athletic domain. Their identity and their approval are based on their role and their status within the sports world. They are what they perform; it is their degree of success that determines their value. But what happens the day when they are severely injured and are forced to quit their career? Free fall. Some people remain a “former

professional soccer player” or a “former highest-division referee” for the rest of their lives, because it is better to be a “former something” than to be nothing at all.

Other sports people have their roots in their family and friends, the middle layer of soil. It is a little safer; the roots are a little deeper and stronger. But the people we love can be taken from us: sometimes couples split up, friends move, loved ones die. Then what happens? Who are we, if we are left alone? Free fall.

There is only *one thing* that can never be taken away from us. Colossians 2:7 tells us to be “rooted and built up in [Christ] and established in the faith.” As Christian sports chaplains and sportspeople we have the tremendous opportunity of being anchored in the deepest, truest, and most fundamental life domain. With our roots in Christ, we stand firm and are able to resist any storm in life. Sport becomes an act of worship. We are able to serve our fellow-creatures unselfishly, without having to show off, because we are doing it for God and to His glory. We are also able to face challenges, setbacks, and role changes with peace and calm, knowing who is our identity, our worth, and our strength – Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. Where are you rooted?
2. What can you do to grow your roots deeper?

Credits: Paul Kobylarz’ documents on Chaplaincy from Vancouver and Turin Olympics – Sport for Life; Traders Point Christian Church

Credits: Andreas Andersson – Sport for Life - Amarant