

FOOTBALL VS. CHURCH



By Tim Czapiewski

Football! You either love it or hate it. It's a game that brings either sadness or joy. So what is it about

this sport that brings so many together and creates such a wide spectrum of human emotions?

I remember attending church after taking my stand for God. The church was right next to a football stadium. It was a rather hot day and the windows were wide open. At the same time we were holding our service, a football game was in progress. I remember looking through the church and noticed how few were in attendance. I remember listening to the speaker and how boredom was reflected upon everyone's face.

Suddenly, we heard the roar of the crowd at the stadium! It drowned out the voice of our speaker. A few minutes later, the football game interrupted us again. Finally the church assistants had to go around to shut the windows so we could proceed with our meeting. One of my friends whispered to me, "Wouldn't it be great if church was as exciting as a football game." To this day, I have never forgotten that comment.

Football is a straight forward sport. The goal? Simply take a football and carry it to the other side of the field. What creates the challenge is the struggle you meet from the opposing team who would like to take the ball away from you. Additional excitement is created from the crowds that gather together to watch the spectacle.

So how can we compare this world to the game of football? First of all, the game we are playing is being observed by the entire universe. **"We are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses..." (Hebrews 12:1).** The Bible also says that Satan is the great opponent of the church. **"The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:12).**

As the Devil increases his efforts to win in this great game, what is the church doing to counter his efforts? The answer to this question is very troubling. Currently the state of the game sounds like this; The two minute

warning has sounded. Satan's team has taken the ball to the red zone and is ready to score. God's team is getting beat up badly and taking losses due to injuries and exhaustion. Heaven watches in amazement as the church is penalized for not having enough men on the field! Where are God's faithful replacements to counter Satan's advance?

TIMEOUT...!! How highly would you regard a football player who meets in the locker room for a rousing pep talk, stands around for five or ten minutes to congratulate the coach on his great speech, and drives home without even intending to play in the game! It may sound silly but this is the mind-set of many church members today.

Many define "Church" as the routine people go through once a week to validate that they are right with God. But it's actual purpose is to focus its members on the great task given to us by Jesus. Not only to talk about it, but initiate plans that accomplish it! Jesus said, **"And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then, finally, the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).**

Jesus predicted that before the end comes, fifty percent of the church would be considered foolish and unprepared to meet Him, while the other fifty percent would be counted as wise. (Read Matthew 25) The Bible defines who these wise church members are. **"Those who are wise...lead many to righteousness" (Daniel 12:3).**



God's objective for His church is to soak up the great truths of salvation like a giant sponge. But if a sponge does not get wrung out, it begins to rot. Its repulsive odor spreads throughout the house until the owner seeks out the sponge and tosses it into the garbage. So it is with a church that neglects to wring out the

truths of salvation upon the lost souls in the world around them. Their religion degrades into a warped culture. Apathy, legalism, and worldliness substitute true religion. To those God says, **"I know your deeds...So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:13-14).**

Unconverted church members confuse those who hunger for an example of true godliness. They misrepresent the great truths of perpetual salvation that have been covered by shrouds of unbelief for centuries. False theories of redemption have nearly gained world wide acceptance. The Devil is ready to score a great victory in these final moments of earth's history. But wait! The news of God's everlasting kingdom must be carried to everyone on earth!

With so many to reach in these last days and so few devoted to reach them, it seems impossible to think this work could ever be accomplished! Yet the Bible prophecies indicate that it will occur. **"I saw another angel flying in mid-air, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth--to every nation, tribe, language and people" (Revelation 14:6).**

The prophecies describe God's Holy people as they finally advance the everlasting gospel throughout the entire earth, **"At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows. Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it" (Joel 2:6-11)?**

Dear Church member: The determination to bring the entire world to a decision between life and death is more intense, more exciting than any football game that will ever be played! Will you join the ranks of your teammates who are sacrificing themselves in order to advance the Everlasting Gospel or will you be a mere spectator? Will you continue to protect your daily routine or alter it to accommodate those who are reaching out for everlasting peace?

Begin this moment to be accountable for your service to the lost. Align yourself with those who actively devise ways to reach those who have not made their commitment to serve the living God. Replace the hours you invest in activities that bear no heavenly value and lay plans that bring eternal rewards. **"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27).**

Nothing brings greater health to the soul than to enter into the service of God! Working for the salvation of others improves every facet of the human experience. Let us speed the arrival of our God by offering everlasting life to every living man, woman and child. **"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).**

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