

YOUTH EVANGELISM THROUGH SPORTS: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES  
TO THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

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## ABSTRACT

The focus of this thesis is to examine the Challenges and Prospects of Youth Evangelism through Sports to the Contemporary Church. It is discovered that most of the youth are more committed to sports than to God. The purpose of the study was to find out the causes of the youth passionate involvement in sports, the need to reach them with the Gospel of Jesus through sports and the challenges of the prospects of youth evangelism through sports. The study design was a descriptive one with a questionnaire as the instrument used for data collection shared among some churches in Surulere Local Government, Lagos. It was strongly established from the data collected that the major causes of youth involvement in sports are their energetic nature, unemployment, love to interact with other friends and the opportunity it affords them to express their feelings of joy or emotions. Lastly, some recommendations were made to the church, the youth, parents and the Surulere Local Government, Lagos. Among the recommendation are: All Churches in Surulere Local Government should regularly organize sporting competitions, the youth of the church should encourage the church by participating in the sporting events, parents should encourage their children who are naturally gifted in sports, the Surulere Local Government, Lagos should make the stadia in her jurisdiction available for the church use for free or at an affordable cost and the church should not compromise her worship hour and day for any match because God is greater than all things.

## 5.2 Conclusion

This study investigates into Youth evangelism through sports and provides the challenges and prospect to the contemporary church. It shows that the youth are very passionate about sports, as a result of the fact that they are full of strength and vitality. They are jobless and desire to be gainfully engaged and sports serve as a source of livelihood. It was also discovered that sports also help to open channel of interactions with other people, and it creates an avenue for them to express their feelings and emotions of joy and sadness.

The researcher also reveals some of the various challenges that any church that ventures into youth evangelism through sports will likely encounter. They are: the fact that sports is very expensive to run and maintain the experience of agony and defeat which cannot be avoided and the creating of enmity between or among opponents. Others also include, the use of performance enhancing drugs by some youth, some become arrogant and proud because of sudden wealth and fame and the most devastating of all the sudden death of participants and spectators.

The study also helps to uncover several prospects that the church will get by being involved in youth evangelism through sports. And they are as follows: it helps to enhance the mental function of the body, it assists in getting rid of killer diseases like obesity, hypertension diabetes etc. It is also a vital method of evangelizing the youth since they have a strong passion for sports and financially it helps to provide major source of income for the youth either as a player, coach, referee or agents. The fact that sudden wealth can make one to be a millionaire overnight cannot be ruled out. For example, the entire Super Eagles' players that won the last Nations Cup were greatly rewarded in cash and in kind by the government, corporate bodies and some individuals. Another prospect is that it keeps the community aglow for celebration of



winning trophies and also helps to unite warring factions. It also provides employment for the youth and reduces the high rate of youth involvement in crime.

The implication of this study is that the church should adopt the strategy of sports evangelism in order to reach and win the teeming youth who are helpless and wasting away in the hands of the devil. In other word, the contemporary church should make use of these vast opportunities that abound in sports.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. All the churches in Surulere Local Government should regularly organize sporting competitions ranging from Table Tennis, Football, Volleyball etc, in their community with the intention of reaching and winning the youth.
2. The youth of the church should encourage their churches by actively participating in the sporting competitions either as players, spectators, and referee or as agents who promote sporting events.
3. The Surulere Local Government, Lagos should encourage the churches in her jurisdiction by making the stadia available for their use for free and if money will be charged, it should be at an affordable cost.
4. The health committees should be carried along in any of the sporting activities in order to examine the participants to know whether they are fit enough to participate, and in order to provide first aid attention to either any of the participant or the spectators that need attention.
5. The church should organise seminars and workshops on sports and its challenges and prospects in order to educate and promote the involvement of the people especially the youth in sports

6. Parents should encourage their children who are naturally gifted in sports to participate actively and passionately.
7. Every church should have a recreation centre where members and non-members can come to relax and participate in the sports of their choice. Some important matches should be televised in order to discourage the youth from going to the beer parlour to watch football matches.
8. The Church should not compromise her worship hours or day for any match no matter what because God is greater than all things and His glory and honour must not be share with any gods or events.