

## Devotional Blog - Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021

A few weeks ago, the football world was rocked by the news that 12 of Europe's elite clubs wanted to form a "European Super League". 6 of these clubs were from the English Premier League who, were invited to take part in a league that did not take into account all the other teams involved in domestic leagues. Nor did this proposal have any consideration for supporters of these "elite 6".

There was outrage in the rest of the football community. The supporters of the 6 English clubs were so angry that they soon galvanised themselves into action. Protests against the clubs' boards and officials were quickly organised and within 2 or 3 days the dream of a "European Super League" was shattered.

This proposal, which was so bad for game, had aroused such passion among the fans that their actions and protests forced the clubs to back down. When was the last time you or I, or the Christian Church as a whole, took such passionate action against something that we considered was wrong or bad for the community? Football supporters often get a bad press, but on this occasion, I think they showed the church what real passion is all about!!

This Sunday is the 4<sup>th</sup> annual "National Sports Sunday", which is being promoted by Sports Chaplaincy UK. The idea is to encourage local churches to get involved with their local sporting communities.

Did you know that there are over 30 million people involved in sport in one way or another? This is a huge proportion of the men, women and children in this country. Sports Chaplaincy UK currently has around 600 chaplains serving this community, that's approximately 1 for every 50,000, that's some mission field!!

The role of a Sports Chaplain is to offer pastoral and spiritual support to those of all faiths and of none and to be a listening ear, especially when things are not going too well, whether that related to sport or issues with other areas of life.

For many of the 30 million involved in sport it is the only thing in life that matters, and the grounds and stadiums are places of pilgrimage and worship, especially for fans and supporters, who as I mentioned earlier are people of great passion.

Although club chaplains are not evangelists, as such, they are Christ's representatives in the club which they serve and to encourage folks that there is more to life than their sports club.

As you have seen from the figures, I mentioned earlier the "field" of sport is vast and the potential for a harvest for God's Kingdom is great, but as with so many mission fields the labourers are few. Even with a small club like Hampton

& Richmond Borough I could do with another pair of hands, especially to help with the ladies and youth teams.

Many folks have only heard the name of Christ as a swear word and they need someone to point them in the right direction. They need to hear the Gospel, because as Romans 10:13 states – Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Paul goes on in verses 14 & 15 – How, then can they call on one that they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news”.

Chaplains seek to be “beautiful feet” bringing the good news of God’s love and compassion into a sometimes-murky world of sport. Sports Chaplaincy UK are desperately seeking to train and place new chaplains, especially in gyms. Unfortunately, like many charities’ funds are low and are badly in need of a boost to be able to carry on this work.

If you would like to find out more about the work or make a donation visit-  
[www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk](http://www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk)

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Hampton Mission Partnership