

Spirituality and Exercise: A Balanced Diet for Godliness and Longevity

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the interrelationship between Christianity, sports, recreation, health education, and their collective impact on healthy living. It describes how spirituality and exercise serve as essential components for achieving both physical well-being and moral uprightness. While sports and Christianity have significant potential to promote health and social cohesion, the study critically examines their unintended consequences, such as excessive emotional attachment, commercialization, and sedentary lifestyles among spectators and congregants. The paper proposes a shift in focus from competitive sports and institutionalized religion to a more holistic approach centered on personal spirituality and physical exercise, emphasizing their role in fostering sustainable health. Drawing insights from existing literature, biblical references, and health education frameworks such as MRS NIGER D and NEWSTART, the study underscores the importance of balance, moderation, and conscious lifestyle choices in promoting longevity and well-being. The findings suggest that integrating spirituality and exercise into daily life can enhance physical, mental, and emotional health, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling existence.

INTRODUCTION

It is with great joy that I receive the honour to be with you on the Africa Congress on Christianity and Sports. This your second International Conference Programme with the theme: The Role of Christianity, Sports, Health Education and Recreation in the promotion of healthy Living has opened doors for those who are cocooned and ensconced in a worldview without expanding their horizon to see things from various and diverse prisms. You have four variables attached to only one constant factor. The four variables are expected to all contribute their various and diverse possibilities to develop healthy living. Healthy living is the only constant focus throughout all our conversations and discourses. We are here to discuss Christianity as well as the three other variables, however, it is only to the extent it can contribute to a healthy living. Also, we shall talk sports but only to what level it promotes healthy living.

In addition, Health Education shall be highlighted within the ambiance of its promotion of healthy living, and I have no inkling that it has any bother on another sphere of life. Furthermore, the relevance of Recreation in this discussion is admissibly limited to healthy living- permit me from the outset to crave your indulgence to rearrange the position of recreation to come before Health Education, this permission as I hope will be granted would aid a clearer and neater presentation of the idea in this study. The unbroken cord and strand that tied all the four variables and merge them to life in this discourse is a healthy living. To balance out all the four variables and the constant factor, a title: Spirituality and Exercise: Balanced Diet for Godliness and Longevity is made the nucleus of the ensuing discourse to lead us to healthy living. Most of these factors both the variables and the constant have been well explored by Olutoyin Raymond Ogunade's work "The Role of Spirituality on Health, Fitness and Sports" in *Health and Fitness Journal International*, Volume 1. No. 1. 2000. 43-61.

A PREVIEW OF THE POWER OF EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT TO SPORT

Mathew 5:44 says love your enemies, that seemed so difficult until two enemies were supporting a team in a goalless draw that was on extra time. They collective team scored a goal at the die second and they both hugged and celebrated together. On the flip side of the coin, *PM News Nigeria* listed enmity and death that have direct link to a football team winning or losing. My enumerations here are first limited to Nigeria and are few because the point I used the list to make is obvious that the same sports that

bring joy is capable of bringing sorrow and unhealthy living¹ six persons lost their lives in Ahoada Local Government of Rivers in 2009 when Barcelona won the UEFA Champions League. A bus driver who was a supporter of the losing Manchester United, rammed his vehicle into a group of Barcelona fans celebrating the 2-0 win, killing six; A Nigerian fan was killed after clashes ensued following the victory of English champions Chelsea over Spartak Moscow during a UEFA Champions League; the youths disagreed on the 2-0 outcome of the match in favour of Chelsea. Abbey said the two communities had in the past clashed over a piece of land and that the outcome of the UEFA Champions League match escalated the crisis. The Channels Television reported two separate incidences: A 23-year-old boy was stabbed to death at a makeshift pub, at Shasha in Lagos on Tuesday night during a fight between fans of Barcelona and Chelsea football clubs. According to police authorities, the boy was killed when supporters of the two clubs some of whom were reportedly drunk, engaged in a fight following the outcome of the football match which favoured Chelsea FC; and also, two football fans lost their lives in a ghastly motor accident while celebrating their club's victory.² The Punch of March 15, 2018³ reported A 24-year-old Chelsea fan has died after collapsing, following his club's 3-0 loss to Barcelona Football Club on Wednesday night. Although this incident happened in Ghana, it was an outflow of unbuttoned emotional attachment to sport.

The Beam: Journal of Arts & Science, Vol. 14, Issue 1 (Dec. 2021) ISSN: 1118-5953, Buike Oparaugo,⁴ expatiates the influence of televised European football matches on Nigerian youths and Nigerian football. Some of the findings and recommendations are very relevant in the ongoing discourse: This is evident as Nigerian fans now support clubs in Europe more than Nigerian clubs. The researcher also found out that European football matches have positively and negatively influenced Nigerian youths. Part of the recommendations is that students should desist from betting as failure to win could lead to depression or social vices.⁵ The need to be academic correct, I supposed made Oparaugo to quickly shift base from sport, which was primary in the study to betting. However, now that we have established that excessive emotional attachment to winning and losing in sports has been demonstrated with facts and data involved in the available reports at our disposal, it is therefore correct to argue that with or without betting the gross emotional attachment to winning and losing in sport must be stemmed to achieve a healthy living.

CHRISTIANITY

In like manner, the power of religion is so aggravating and most unmitigated when it is not checked. I need to say, here the work has been simplified because we are not to worry about what is religion as our searchlights are directly focused on Christianity. At the fore, there is a greater challenge, which involved among others- which religion is called Christianity? May be in addition one adds, who is a Christian. If we are not able to get this straight at this stage of the presentation, every other effort in this discourse must amount to antics and theatrics.

Aliyu Tilde asserted that that the basis on which Nigeria is rated as so religious is the number of days in a week attributed to worship, and also the number of public holidays attributed to religion.⁶ In fact, recent research at the University of Ilorin demonstrated that that the Public Holiday Act, which is the section two of the Nigerian Constitution has 9 religious holidays out of the total holidays which is 12. That in percentage is translated to 75% as exemplified below:

1. New Year's Day
2. Good Friday
3. Easter Monday
4. Workers' Day (1st May).

1 <https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2010/12/20/ismaila-lived-died-for-man-united/> Accessed: November 29, 2023.

2 <https://www.channelstv.com/2012/04/26/three-die-as-barca-and-chelsea-fans-clash-in-lagos/> Accessed: 29/11/2023

3 <https://punchng.com/chelsea-fan-collapses-dies-after-his-club-lost-3-0-to-barcelona/> Accessed: 29/11/2023

4 Buike Oparaugo. The Beam: Journal of Arts & Science, Vol. 14, Issue 1 (Dec. 2021) ISSN: 1118-5953. Accessed: 29/11/2023

5 Buike Oparaugo. The Beam: Journal of Arts & Science, Vol. 14, Issue 1 (Dec. 2021) ISSN: 1118-5953. Accessed: 29/11/2023

6 Aliyu Tilde. Monday Discourse with Dr. Aliyu Tilde: Religion and Nigerians, <http://www.gamji.com/tilde67.htm>. Accessed: November 30, 2023.

5. National Day (1st October).
6. Democracy Day
7. Christmas Day
8. Such day as the Minister may declare to be a public holiday in celebration of the Muslim festival of Id el Fitr.
9. Such day as the Minister may declare to be a public holiday in celebration of the Muslim festival of Id el Kabir.
10. Such day as the Minister may declare to be a public holiday in celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammed (Id el Maulud).

Saturday and Sunday are not included in the schedule, yet they are listed in the section of the Constitution.⁷ This confirmed Aliyu Tilde's assertion. Then the case of Christianity in this description becomes a paradox because, ironically none of the days ascribed to Christianity is mentioned in the Bible. We are now confronted with a question: Is Christian days of worship a departure from the Bible as its source? As a rule, Christianity is a Scriptural religion meaning that the basis of her practices should be the Bible, particularly the New Testament. How to align days of worship in the New Testament with the Christianity of today demand an urgent intervention of the department of Religions and Religious Studies departments or that of Christian Religious Studies. In the first place, there is an irreconcilable challenge when one discusses Christianity void of the Bible and the tenets thereof.

The nerve to discuss Christianity is under a serious attack in pure academic sense because of the presence of diverse denominational teachings and precepts. There cannot be straight answer to some questions like do Christian male wear cap to worship in the Church? Must we wear footwears in the Church, or no? Do Christian wear sultana, cassock, suit or Jallamiah in Church? Do Christian use jewelry or not? For Christians, are there clean food and unclean food? Is vegetarian diet the Christian standard of meals or not? Is celibacy Christian or non-Christian? Are Christians to keep the Sabbath or Sunday? Can a Christian marry more than one wife? Is hell currently burning or will commence at the coming of Jesus? Where are the Christians who are dead, in heaven or sleeping in the dust of the earth till resurrection morning? These are so few questions; however, they form the basis for bifurcation and polarization that contributed how to describe Christianity and who is a Christian. For this presentation, denominations are so many to the point that they are even arranged in blocs: Orthodox, Catholic, Protestants, Episcopal, Pentecostal, Gospels, Indigenous, Spiritual. When one takes only one of these blocs, there could be 1500 further distribution each. Not even Christian Association of Nigeria and Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria could serve as an umbrella body for Christianity in Nigeria, nor the World Council of Churches do same for the whole world.

The confession is that the conception of the idea of Christianity is elusive especially when one notices that more of what passes today as Christianity are features of some past empires like Rome and British. If it is not too early to propose that those who desire to follow the examples of Jesus Christ and his teachings and want to be call Christians should go back to study the New Testament Religion. As it were, any sincere presenter can only speak of a denomination or some denominations that share some similar features. Note, there is no gainsaying that everyone call Lord, Lord, but not everyone does the will of the father- Mathew 7:21-23. The meaning of Jesus question: Who do you say I am- Mathew 16:15, is more relevant now than before. This is because there are churches who believe and proclaim the only true God and his Christ as eternal life, while others compel a confession of Trinity: Co existence, Co eternal, and Co equal of three persons in one. The fear of confusing myself before I get you confuse or the fear of confusing you before I succeed in confusing myself led me to announce that I shall find a greater capacity in addressing the issue of healthy living sited better within the ambiance of spirituality. The dynamics involved in attempt know what is Christianity and who is a Christian could be avoided in this presentation to avoid antics and theatrics, when energy is redirected to spirituality to achieve a healthy living.

⁷ Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre PHA, amended in 2019. <https://placng.org/uploads/2019/12/An-Ac...PDF> Accessed: 27/03/2023.

SPORT

Sport is an umbrella name or generic for several human activities like football, rugby, table tennis, lawn tennis, badminton. Basketball, handball, hockey, but mention a very few. Each one however, has rules and regulations which must be strictly adhere to, and failure to adhere means that the particular sport is ill represented. Sport in itself is a subdivision of another umbrella word according to Johan Huizinga in his 1933 work titled *Homo Ludens*. He elucidated on the origin of sport thus: human in search of pleasure develop the idea of play which is devoid of rules, unserious, voluntary, unattached to material or pecuniary gains and reward beyond the derived pleasure, yet it is absorbing and player are utterly intense with full dedication and zeal.⁸

In his opinion, it is a section of play, the act of pleasure seeking in human that metamorphosed to sport. Play gave birth to Game and Sport due to introduction of rewards for a winner which brought competition and modified the fun-loving orientation, to cravings for conquering and an attainment of some material gains and profits. Game is a period of play that is competitive and organized, involve physical exertion of energy and mental and intellectual skills in which attainment of championship and laurels are not the primary focus. Sport is a play that involves competition, organization, and physical exertion, with an absolute focus on attainment of championship, laurels and rewards.

While sometimes games may attract in addition to declaring a winner some rewards, it must be cleared that that fun is at the centre of games rather than structure means of championship and reward. Ceremonial matches to celebrate an occasion are expected to be games, while such matches in a league are described as sport. Sport is a championship structured into tournaments where players must continue to defeat opponents to move on and eventually become a champion. Those who win tournaments can earn prestigious titles, fame, and oftentimes large amounts of prize money.⁹

RECREATION

In a sense, recreation is preferable in the order of flow of thought as against the way the arrangement was ordered. I hereby crave your indulgence to allow my rearrangement in this order: The Role of Christianity, Sports, Recreation and Health Education in the promotion of healthy. This rearrangement promotes an unbroken flow of thought because there is a sense in which recreation is connected to play, game and sport. In the spirit of permission, I need to add exercise to the discourse to contribute to the expansion of clarity. The most common definition of Recreation is any activity done for enjoyment when one is not working. Mandatorily, recreation must be limited to refreshing the body and the soul and must not include desire to win or receive reward. The understanding of recreation apparently takes us back to Huizinga analysis of play. It is at this juncture that is most relevant to introduce exercise, a related concept which inadvertently seem to this presenter to be obviously missing. Exercise as describe in their contributions to the book: *Cambridge Handbook of Psychology, Health and Medicine*, Neville Owen, Kym Spathonis, and Eva Leslie concluded that: activity requiring physical effort, carried out to sustain or improve health and fitness. They further posited that “exercise improves your heart and lung power”.¹⁰ While play targets pleasure, game entertainment, sport wins and rewards, recreation fun and refreshments, exercise focuses on health and fitness as its primary concern. Therefore, this presentation may not have a safe landing without healthy living. So, it is compelling to dwell on exercise.

SPORT AND CHRISTIANITY

It is undeniable that Sport and Christianity have sufficient power to contribute good and cohesion among human in the society, however, there are underlying semblance in the two that compel a discussion on their contribution to healthy living. Some of these are: Aversion of War; Codes of conduct or rules; types, bearing compound name but so different, for examples denominations in Christianity and games in Sport, winning and reward, desperation, Commercialization, household of faith and fandom, rivalry and competition.

8 Johan Huizinga. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element of Culture*. English Translation, Windsor: Roy Publishers, 1955. 12.

9 Richard W. Kaeuper. *Medieval Chivalry: Tournament- The privileged practice of violence*. New York: University of Rochester, 2016. 208-232.

10 Neville Owen, Kym Spathonis, Eva Leslie. *Cambridge Handbook of Psychology, Health and Medicine: Physical activity and health*. Susan Ayers and Co. (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 155-161.

AVERSION OF WAR

Sport and Christianity have helped in averting war and battle which were primordial to human beings in expressing their illusory ego of superiority connected to victory over others often demonstrated in the celebration of conquering opponents or obstacles.¹¹ 1Co 9:24-27:

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

With sport, such tendencies could be managed under tournaments and championships. Such expressions of energy and skill for rivalry and desire for overcoming in war and battle find legitimate medium of expression in sport.¹² War mongers are tamed and accommodated through sport of their liking, so also energetic youths are inadvertently steered away from crime.¹³ Injuries, casualties and violence are still reflecting in sport, however, they occurred under a better rule of engagement than in a full-blown war. Christianity employs symbolism of war to carry on simulations of war which distract warrior to feel at home fighting a rather spiritual war. The concern of Christianity includes among others, winning, victory, glory and reward as well. This is one nexus between Sport and Christianity. Sport appears less injurious because it carried out under the ambiance of love, order and entertainments, however, the bitterness and the unfulfillment of losing is depressing.

Christianity has been weaned of the years of crusade when it was engaging physical war, and now it is engaging in spiritual war. At inception, Christianity has a developed idea of war because Jesus has always been painted as a winner and a conqueror, and his followers are expected to be also. Fans in sport do worship their role models with almost the same fervor as the exemplar in Christianity.¹⁴ If an identified Satanist comes into the gathering of Christians there would be some change in their reaction because without causing any harm and irrespective of any good, he may be found doing he is a perceived enemy. Jesus conquers the devil; Christians are more a conqueror through the blood of Jesus. The longing to always win and overcome in human is served by both sport and Christianity. By this, psychologically, both sport and Christianity have contributed to healthy living.

CODES OF CONDUCT

The development of system of doctrine in Christianity, sporting ethics in sports,¹⁵ setting of elaborate and clear code of conduct, rules and regulations, have been impacted human society with civility, order and organization promoted by sport and Christianity. This, no doubt has contributed to taking the present world out of her primordial state and promote modernity. On the flip side of the coin, there are limitations to the contributions of sport and Christianity to foster to healthy living because of some inherent features found in them. Some of these features are presented in subsequent discussions thus:

DIVERSITY AND DIVERGENCE

All games in this world with different goal, rules, ethics and organizations are only merge under the name sport so long as they are made to be competitive, serious and targeting a winner who will be given reward at the expense of losers. With all this peculiarities and differences, there various players must always pathways so also their various fans. When different games are up for view in a home where there is only one Television, the preferences of one have to be consider at the expense of the other, who may not understand the mode of operations in the other person's preferred game. When we look at Christianity a similar feature is observed with Orthodox, Pentecostal, Epis-

11 J. S. Olaniyan. The Interplay of Human Spirituality in Religion and Sport in Nigeria. Ilorin: Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, A Ph.D. Thesis, 2018. 5.

12 J. S. Olaniyan, cited Joel Lasie, the former African Light Heavy Weight Boxing Champion as an example that fits this description.

13 Peter Lupson. Thank God for Football. London: Azure, 2006. 1-14.

14 Matt Beardmore. Is it safe to Worship Athletes? Psychology Today, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/time-out/201310/is-it-safe-worship-athletes> Accessed: 30/11/2023.

15 Johan Huizinga. 9

copal, Gospel, Spiritual, Indigenous, Protestants, Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventist, Sabbatarian, to mention a few. Couples who have different preference for a Christianity might end up pathing ways on a Sunday or one worships on a Sabbath while the other worship on a Sunday. The Christian message for couples to marry within their denominations has not helped. Even the claim to the superiority of the preference of the husband has failed. As sport has fandom, so also, Christianity has the household of faith or denominations. Both sport and Christianity may unarguably be unifying factors but they are also divisive factors. They push for group identity by expressing the otherness concept. Galatia 6:10 says: As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. The danger is the addition of household of faith and especially. If this statement had stop at do good to all men, this matter will hold no ground.

DESPERATION TO OVERCOME OPPONENT OR ENEMY

The natural outlook of sport and Christianity is to win and overcome, this drive is akin to strive to thrive. The desire to outshine or conquer the other group manifests when, at the start of many tournaments team players gathered to pray for victory.¹⁶ Christian prayer has some portion dedicated to victory as well.¹⁷ Neither sport nor Christianity ever wish victory for his opponent or enemy. This desperation for win knows very little bound as both sport and Christianity could attach the use of some magical powers to achieve their desired victories. Many Christians spend hours on the mountains, valleys and river sides, in night vigils and long hours in daily prayers to overcome enemies. Here, it is valid to report the length Jesus went to correct this anomaly in Mathew 5:43-44 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. In sport, it is mandatory to celebrate wins, celebration of wins depresses the losers, and fuel animosity. The word opponent in itself communicates opposing forces and rivalry. However, it is the nature of sport as the use of enemy is known nomenclature in Christianity.

SACRED TIME AND GAME TIME DICHOTOMY

Sport has game time and Christianity has Sacred time. Saturday is more often acceptable as game time, this day in Israel and many Arab nations is considered sacred time for Bible religions including Christianity. With this background Sunday would be a preferable game time in these regions of the world and among the Christians who accepted Sabbath- Saturday as sacred time, in Nigeria, the Sabbatarians and the Seventh-Day Adventist belong to this classification of Christians. From the foregoing, it is emerging that preference for sport time and sacred time is capable of promoting division between sport and Christianity. In addition, whenever sport time coincide with sacred time there comes to the fore split allegiance between the match and God of Christianity. Here is a game of where one allegiance would tilt for sport or for Christianity- Sport idolatry!¹⁸ A pastor rushed a worship section and rushed home to settle down to watching European League. When the members confronted him on the matter, he responded that God ordered him to create a balance between him and sport.

COMMERCIALIZATION

Sport and Christianity are sources of generating money and source of livelihood. They create job opportunities for many people. This is a promotion of healthy living because a well-fed man is not an angry man. However, profiteering and extortion go with the commercialization in sport and Christianity. In sport, investors in tournament pay heavily to organize tournaments and maintain their players. They targeted recouping and making profits over spectators who buy tickets to watch the tournament or subscription from the various channels. Whenever any team loses, the amount of money lost is dangerous to be imagined because it is both humongous and colossal. This propels attitude of win or die at all cost, which may lead to player not showing restraints at causing injury on opponents to achieve a win or prevent a loss. Christianity teaches freely ye have received; freely give- Mathew 10:8 could not hinder tithe and offering, sowing seeds and donations. In the immediate past, the sale of both indulgences and penance, which now manifested in the sale of anointing oil and handkerchief. This is not to mention various spe-

16 Andrew Guest. Where has all the Magic Gone? Juju, Africa, and Superstition in the Game. Accessed: 30/11/2023.

17 Gordon Preece and Rob Hess. Sport and Spirituality: An Exercise in Everyday Theology. Adelaide: ATF, 2012. 21.

18 Sancto, Modern Sport and Idolatry, July 23, 2014.

cial programs conducted in Christianity aimed at fund raising. Since we are in December, we shall soon witness the huge money that would be generated through Santa Clause. The prosperity gospel has produced some super rich General Overseers with jets like owners of football clubs and other thriving sports investors.¹⁹ Many betting games are linked to sports as well. Eventually, parishioners and audiences are contributing money for the Church owners as well as sports owners.

UNPROPORTIONABLE HEALTH BENEFIT

Sport and Christianity have partial health benefits with the benefit going to the smallest number compared to participants. Taking Football as an example, only twenty players, one referee and two lines men are actively engaged in movements, while thousands of spectators are sedentary. The spectators spent their money, the spectators are promoting health hazards caused by sedentary life for one hour and a half at forty minutes a piece. It is those who enjoy the benefits of movement also that would also be remunerated. The health benefit of sport is unproportionable. Christianity allows for participatory praise worship, however, during sermon, the people who are active are reduced to Pastor and few officiating ministers, while the congregants or parishioners who also number several thousand usually sit, and maintain sedentary position for an hour or more. These members bring tithe, offerings and sow seeds, they also experience sedentary postures which is inimical to healthy living while the Pastor and his active aids are remunerated. Just as the players enjoy health benefits and the spectators lose health benefit, so also, the Pastor and aids enjoy health benefits and the congregants lose health benefit. This sedentary life is extended to those audience of congregants who watch through television, satellite, telephones, podcast and every other media of transmission.

No matter how comprehensive this presentation strives to be, it becomes glaring it is dealing with an inexhaustive topic. Wisdom compels that one draws inferences on sport and Christianity without a tone of finality. From the foregoing, the exposition on the features of sport and Christianity revealed that they would make an unholy alliance and a bed of two strange fellows. The good from their combination is minimal compare to the promotion of harm they contribute to healthy living. Most of the good from them are ejaculatory and ephemeral and materialistic. In their place, Exercise and spirituality are presented for a review and considerations.

EXERCISE AND SPIRITUALITY

To save words, the best way to describe exercise is to say that exercise is sport without attachment of winning and pecuniary gains. The celebrations of winning and the bitterness of losing are detached. Exercise is a physical exertion of the muscle's bones and the entire body with the aim to sustain health, maintain health, improve health, promote health and fitness, and to encourage agility, reinvigoration, revitalization, reinvention and rejuvenation.²⁰ Whenever the aims are to any other thing outside the aforementioned or their auxiliaries it is no longer exercise. Under any condition, exercise improves the hearts and lungs power. Aversion of War: exercise is not designed as diversionary for war, even it does, it is not the primary intention because it does not celebrate the winner and has no intention to give any form of reward to participants. Codes of Conduct: there are no strict codes and conducts for exercise different from any rules set for whatever games or play it is taking its form, save that it is purely target at health. Diversity and Divergence: exercise is fluid in nature, it is every human activity aimed at healthy living. Desperation to Overcome Opponent or Enemy: the idea of competition is not inclusive in exercise, thereby does not have nomenclatures like opponents, enemy or rivals. In addition, overcoming anybody is not relevant to exercise, and there is nothing to be desperate about exercise. Sacred Time and Game Time Dichotomy: Crowd target for a time is not an element of exercise because it neither have audience, spectators or group orientation. In fact, exercise can be decided upon by an individual, and when it is more than one person everyone must be participants. Comfortable, affordable, convenient and appropriate time are determined by a participant or participants due to its flexibility and lack of rigidity, without collusion on other spheres of life- religious or sacred time inclusive. Commercialization: there is no need to buy a ticket before engaging in an exercise, neither is anyone investing or targeting

¹⁹ Robert J. Higgs and Michael C. Braswell. *An Holy Alliance: The Sacred and the Modern Sport*. Maco: Mercer, 2004. 5.

²⁰ S. A. Bingham, G. R. Goldberg, W. A. Coward, A. M. Prentice, J. H. Cummings. "The effect of exercise and improved physical fitness on basal metabolic rate." *British Journal of Nutrition* / Volume 61 / Issue 2 / March 1989. Cambridge University Press, 2007. 155-173.

any profit beyond health, exercise is free. Unproportionable Health Benefit: Everyone who participate in an exercise benefit prorate, even when there is a coach or a trainer as the case may turn out to be, as the trainer is leading so the other are participating. In cases where trainers are paid, both trainers and trainees benefit from the exercise due to mutual participation as against active versus sedentary approach.

Spirituality finds expressions in every human activity that portrays the most desirable of, and from all man irrespective of creed and faith. Impeccable character is the hallmark of spirituality.²¹ The persuasion that these virtues are so good and must have been endowed to human by some supernatural is what led to the expression known as spirituality. A very good example is Galatian 5:22-23: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. In addition, one can say against all the aforementioned there no religion. If you add, Linguistics, Discernment, Prophecy, Miracle, Healing, Faith, Knowledge, Wisdom, 1Co 12:7 & 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. This description is for every man: Religious or irreligious, Christian Muslim, Yoruba Religion, Asian Religion, Judaism, Wicca, Zoroaster and a host of others. Spirituality is a universal concept beyond the bounds of all world religion, it is a phenomenon undeniable.

Let us now come to think of: Aversion of War, All the manifestations of spirituality are capable of rehabilitating and reforming the war mongering nature in human beings who possess such traits. Spiritualist is not designed to avert war and battles through diversionary antics, yet it is acceptable that with spirituality, even the imagination of war pale. Codes of Conducts; spirituality runs on the template of how God will, no manipulations could induce or prohibit its impacts. It is beyond human and so, no codes of conducts are set as its guidelines. Diversity and Divergence; yet the same spirit is in control of the varieties and all are for one purpose. Desperation to Overcome Opponents and Enemies; spirituality is set to break boundaries and barriers in human relationship and convert enmity to friendship. Sacred Time or Game Time Dichotomy; Spirituality is not time bound; it is nondiscriminatory of any events or games. Commercialization; Spirituality is beyond commercialization- simony, buying or selling of something spiritual or closely connected with the spiritual. More widely, it is any contract of this kind forbidden by divine or ecclesiastical law. The name is taken from Simon Magus (Acts 8:18), who endeavoured to buy from the Apostles the power of conferring the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Unproportionable Health Benefit; spirituality takes health benefits all round humanity, not even minding race and sovereignty. There is no active versus redundancy, movement versus sedentary in spirituality because its effect goes round and comes round everybody in human society.

The inference at this juncture includes that the marriage of Exercise and Spirituality promotes a healthy living totally without any feature that is inimical to healthy living.²² Both are aimed at sustainable development for healthy living without any side effects. As such, the last variable to come under the searchlight of this study is health education, which in itself is self-explanatory through the nomenclature.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Health education is a profession of educating people about health. Areas within this profession encompass environmental health, physical health, social health, emotional health, intellectual health, and spiritual health, as well as sexual and reproductive health education.²³ The sole aim of Health and Physical Education is to provides the knowledge, understanding and skills required to successfully acquire a healthy living and physical fitness.²⁴ Therefore, there is no arguments for or against if health education promotes a healthy living because it is designed by hu-

21 Ballard, Susan. "Place and date of completion: Gold Coast, Queensland. June 20, 2020." Diss. School of Human Services and Social Work Griffith University Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Medical Research Department: School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University, 2020.

22 Monika Pelechova, Gilly Wiscarson, Derek K. Tracy. "Spirituality and the mental health professions" in *The Psychiatrist* / Volume 36 / Issue 7 / July 2012. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 249-254.

23 Judith Miller, Susan Wilson-Gahan, Robyne Garrett, John Haynes. *Health and Physical Education: Preparing Educators for the Future* 4th edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 28-32.

24 Judith Miller, Susan Wilson-Gahan, Robyne Garrett, John Haynes. *Health and Physical Education: Preparing Educators for the Future* 4th edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 28-32.

manity with thoroughly updated, and features covering ethics, morals the and duty of teachers, with emphasis on the development of movement competence and health literacy. Many researches, theories, curricula and pedagogies have been assessed and annexed to form an engaging introduction and methodologies made available to teachers to achieve a promotion of healthy living through health education. Several studies have been framed by various propositions Curriculum which all from different angles contribute to Health and Physical Education. Two of such propositions would engage us for the rest of this presentation thus:

CHARACTERISTICS OF LIVING THINGS

The connect of characteristics of living things to characteristics of human beings to health education is linked to the need to understand every aspect of human life in order to maximally cater to its maximal productivity and efficiency. This proposal was first made by Jesus Christ in John 10:10b, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "More abundantly" means to have a superabundance of a thing. "Abundant life" refers to life in its abounding fullness of joy and strength for spirit, soul and body ...In this proposition, I am building on the foundation Jesus laid, the construction started by earlier contributors to further develop the acronym for the characteristics of living things or life MR NIGER D to the characteristics of healthy living in human beings **MRS NIGER D**.

- **M-** stands for movement, in the case of human beings all non-sedentary aspect of human life contributes to healthy living e.g., jogging, dancing, walking etc.
- **R-** stands for respiration, in human it involves inhaling oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide, one may deliberately engage in inhaling and exhaling to promote healthy living.
- **N-** nutrition- stands for diet, in human efforts must be taken to see that all nutrients in the right quantity and quality be taken at the right time and timing. Having temperance to avoid obesity and overweight.
- **irritability-** stands for response to external stimuli, in human response to physical or sensory pain from external effects. It is worthy of note that for humans, response to pain can also come from inward, this is seen as soul matters pertaining to emotional and psychological challenges. This is only noticed in human affairs as different from other living things. Therefore, we make a proposal to add to this acronym-soul and spirit, indicating responses to internal stimulus and psychosociospiritual variables, instead of MR NIGER D we propose MRS NIGER D.
- **G-** stands for growth, in human it covers increase, physically, mentally and emotional in commensuration with one's age. In this case intellectual growth is an added value.
- **E-** stands for excretion, in human it covers hygienic environmental spaces for performing and managing excretion and excretes.
- **R-** stands for reproduction, in human it goes beyond ejaculatory accidental discharges leading to accidents of births. It involves major planning like birth control and spacing of birth, and family planning of finances, education and what type of life one wants to reproduce.
- **D-** stands for death, in human deaths is more than the natural termination of life, it involves being conscious of its possibility and making concerted efforts to adequately prepare for it. This preparation may include preparation of testaments, confessions of some hidden facts and deliberately drawing a funeral plan.

NEWSTART

C. S. Connerston of the National Institute of Health²⁵ contributed to the popularity of another health education proposition NEWSTART which is a physician monitored, scientifically researched lifestyle-change program based on eight fundamental principles proven to help you achieve optimum health:

- **Nutrition-** Balance diet with much focus on plant-based food
- **Exercise-** At least thirty minutes of exercise three times a week
- **Water,** drinking at least three liters of water depending on the region of the world one lives. Total abstinence from alcohol, soda, and harmful beverages including caffeinated drinks.
- **Sunlight** Adequate exposure to Sunlight, especially in the morning for acquisition of vitamin D.
- **Temperance** Moderacy in all good things and total avoidance of every habit inimical to health like smoking, drug abuse and violence.
- **Air** deliberate exposure to adequate good quality air through occasional inhaling and exhaling. Also, a

25 C. S. Connerston National Institutes of Health <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7529032/>

conscious avoidance of inhaling polluted air like fumes and smokes or other emission of gaseous industrial wastes.

- **Rest** A well control adequate daily rest which involve eight hours of sleep per day and at least one day rest per week.
- **Trust** in God involves identifying the limitation of human to achieve all of his insatiable desire and ability to confront hat lies in the unknown future for everyman. Therefore, to add to healthy living human needs to trust in whatever form or interpretations of God of his/her full persuasion.

CONCLUSION

This exploration does not lay claim to have exhausted what is available in terms of data and resources on the title of the theme of this international conference but it has from the prism of its explorations conducted expositions relevant for contribution to the extant body of knowledge on the title of the theme of this international conference. Christianity and sport have positive impact to contribute to health, yet the features in them that are inimical to healthy living must not be ignored at every level. So also, recreation and the fun it gives to life must also be kept under control to deliberately keep in focus the recreation whose fun may have adverse effects on health. Healthy living must not be sacrifice for fun from recreation. In addition, good dose of spirituality and exercise have proven to be excellent for healthy living. These expositions must not be taken for granted also. The two propositions from the well research health programs or counsels we shared in this study, are not in any way new but should also not be neglected in our collective pursuit of healthy living. Health education remain a very green area for more investments to promote healthy living in human societies. In all these, the word balance must not be relegated. Repeated use of temperance and moderacy in all these studies is a pointer to the importance of balance. It is therefore safe to be categorical that a balance of all the variables you presented in the title of theme of this international conference must contribute their positive impact to healthy living, while we posit that spirituality and exercise constitute a balance diet for godliness and longevity in life. Thank you.