

Engage your community with the World Cup

Churches are exploring the possibilities of sports based outreach during the World Cup 2010. Many UK based sports ministries¹ are offering training and support for churches who particularly want to reach out to children and young people through holiday activities with sporting themes such as the soccer school holiday Bible clubs² or church based community games.³

Churches are planning to put on activities such as football tournaments, family fun days, schools programmes, sports quizzes, tract distribution plus showing World Cup football matches on big screens in their buildings to reach out to their communities. Some churches link the big screen opportunities to barbecues during which local sporty Christians share their testimonies. Some are turning their buildings into a mock up football stadium where local school children and families will be invited to join in various fun activities plus hear more about Christ.

In South Africa, churches and mission organisations are tapping into the outreach possibilities. Ambassadors in Sport⁴ aim to help restore vulnerable broken lives through the Gospel and football by leaving a legacy beyond the event. They have trained hundreds of Christian coaches to reach out to soccer mad and often desperately poor young people with the Gospel and to address issues such as HIV/AIDS and human trafficking.

Many South African churches, Christian organisations and individuals will seek to maximise the opportunities to share Christ both within their communities and with the visiting fans from around the world. Christian players will utilise their platform, overseas mission teams will use the bridge of sport, Christian radio stations will run special sporting programmes and local churches will put on fun events so as to share the Gospel.

Furthermore, Christians are expressing concerns for local subsistence businesses in South Africa who potentially could lose their trading spots and desperately needed income to multi nationals during the World Cup. Additionally, the threat of human trafficking to support the sex trade is a real fear in some of the cities and churches are seeking to address this issue.

In two years time, the world turns its attention to London and the UK for the 2012 Olympic/Para Olympic Games. Already much good preparation work has been done to help churches embrace the outreach possibilities of major sporting events especially under the banner of 'More than Gold'.⁵

My hope is that we make the most of this unprecedented opportunity offered by the 'Golden Decade of Sport'.

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(<http://www.eauk.org/forumforchange/sport.cfm>).

¹ <http://www.uksportsministries.org/uk-organisation>

² <http://www.ais-uk.org/soccerschools.html> <http://www.morethangold.org.uk/outreach/children/holiday-clubs/>

³ <http://www.globalcommunitygames.com/default.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.ais-uk.org/trec.html> <http://www.ais-uk.org/ambassadors.html>

⁵ <http://www.morethangold.org.uk/>