
Hoffman’s book is an odd collection of essays grouped under 4 headings:
Sport as Religion;  
Sport as Religious Experience;  
Religion in Sport;  
Sport, Religion and Ethics.

Hoffman is a leading writer on sport and Christianity and the book includes three chapters by himself:
Nimrod, Nephilim, and the Athletae Dei,  
Recovering a Sense of the Sacred in Sport,  
Evangelicalism and the Revitalization of Religious Ritual in Sport

Other leading writer who contribute include Jim Mathisen (From Civil Religion to Folk Religion: The Case of American Sport), Michael Novak (The Natural Religion), Charles Prebias (“Heavenly Father, Divine Goalie”: Sport and Religion), Robert J. Higgs (Muscular Christianity, Holy Play, and Spiritual Exercises: Confusion About Christ in Sports and Religion), Brian W W Aitken (Sport, Religion and Human Well-Being), Howard Slusher (Sport: Morality and Ethics), Allen Gutman (From Ritual to Record) and Arthur F Holmes (Towards a Christian Play Ethic).

The book also includes such bizarre articles as an attack on sportsmen with long hair!

Articles which I found particularly thoughtful were Carol Flake’s ‘The Spirit of Winning: Sports and the Total Man’ and James Baker’s ‘Are You Blocking for Me, Jesus?’ Both of these chapters challenge some of the excesses of evangelical interpretation of sport. Flake quotes Fritz Pietersen, "If Jesus Christ was sliding into second base, he would knock the second baseman into left field to break up the double play. Christ might not throw a spitball but he would play hard within the rules." Baker writes of the development of an "incipient form of a football theology".

There is also a thoughtful article by Carmen and Dorothy Leone on the death of a boxer.

The book is a useful introduction to the subject of sport and Christianity. Having read a chapter by a selection of writers, the reader can then decide whose work to read more of.

Shirl Hoffman is an important writer on sport and Christianity. His other articles by include:


The Sancification of Sport Shirl J Hoffman, Christianity Today 30(6), (April 4, 1986): 17-21;  
The decline of civility and the rise of religion in American sport, Shirl Hoffmann, Quest 51, 1999, 69-84