

AN INVESTIGATION OF SELECTED ORGANISMIC
VARIABLES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO USE OF
PRAYER BEFORE AN ATHLETIC CONTEST

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The purpose of this study was to find what effect socio-economic background, religious affiliation, religious beliefs and practices and playing ability of Morehead State University athletes had on their use of prayer before an athletic contest.

A questionnaire was set up by the researcher relating prayer to athletics. The questionnaire was considered more suited than was the personal interview because of the very personal nature of the study.

The questionnaire had four general areas which it covered: socio-economic background of athletes, athletes religious affiliation, his strength of religious beliefs and practices concerning use of prayer in athletics, and playing ability of the athlete. The questionnaire was distributed among athletes at Morehead State University. Each subject was given instructions on how to answer the questionnaire. The athletes were asked to respond to the questions in an hours time, with the researcher collecting them at the end of that time.

Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine whether significant relationships existed between selected variables. Hypothesis I, relating low socio-economic background to use of prayer

before an athletic contest was accepted. Hypothesis II, relating religious beliefs and practices to use of prayer before an athletic contest was also accepted.

Other findings relating church attendance of the subjects to praying earnestly was shown to be significant at the .05 level. Church attendance was also compared to daily prayer and significance was attained at the .01 level.

Praying individually before the contest was compared to praying earnestly and significance was found at the .01 level. Individual prayer was also related significantly to prayer with the team at .01 level. Significant results were attained when individual prayer and daily prayer were related.

Praying earnestly was related significantly to prayer with the team. Team prayer was correlated significantly to daily prayer.

These conclusions were also found from the study: a) Subjects from low socio-economic background prayed more before athletic contests than did middle or high socio-economic background subjects. b) Subjects with stronger religious beliefs and practices prayed more before athletic contests than those with weaker religious beliefs and practices. c) The subjects involved in contact sports prayed with the team more than those persons in non-contact sports. d) The subjects used prayer for inspiration before an athletic contest more than any other motivational factor.

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A Thesis
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Master of Arts

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Coaches and athletes have utilized prayer in athletics since the beginning of competition.¹ Ancient man dedicated his feats of power, strength, and skill to his gods in an effort to win their favor.² Athletes seek help through prayer in times of fear, anxiety, illness, happiness and joy even though they are not very religious.³ Yet the motivating factors behind the use of prayer in athletics are not quite understood.

There are many questions to be answered concerning prayer and athletics since investigations of this kind have been limited. How are athletes' motivations to pray affected by their socio-economic background? How many athletes use prayer before a game? When athletes do pray, are they praying to win, to help their team, or to better themselves? Does their amount of playing time affect their wanting to pray? Will belonging to a certain religious sect or being a member of a church affect his use of prayer before a contest? The answers to these questions and others could aid persons in athletics to gain a better understanding of the influence of prayer, religion, and their relationship to individual backgrounds, environment, etc., in intercollegiate athletics.

¹James C. Hefley, Play Ball, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), p. 62.

²Norman E. Gardiner, Athletics of the Ancient World, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 42.

³Based on personal correspondence between Mr. James Feffrey, Executive Director of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the writer.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

What effect does socio-economic background, religious affiliation, religious beliefs and practices, and playing ability of Morehead State University athletes have of their use of prayer before an athletic contest?

HYPOTHESES

H1 There is a significant positive correlation between low socio-economic background of athletes and their use of prayer before an athletic contest.

H2 There is a significant positive correlation between middle socio-economic background of athletes and their use of prayer before an athletic contest.

H3 There is a significant positive correlation between high socio-economic background of athletes and their use of prayer before an athletic contest.

H4 There is a significant positive correlation between religious affiliation of athletes and their use of prayer before an athletic contest.

H5 There is a significant positive correlation between the strength of religious beliefs and practices of athletes and their use of prayer before an athletic contest.

H6 There is a significant positive correlation between the playing ability of athletes and their use of prayer before an athletic contest.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What are athletes motivations to pray?
2. Does playing time of athletes affect their use of prayer?
3. Does religious affiliation of athletes affect their use of prayer?
4. Do religious beliefs and practices affect use of prayer by athletes before an athletic contest?

DELIMITATIONS

The following delimitations will be placed on the study:

1. The sample of subjects consisted of Morehead State University athletes only.
2. Their answers were written statements of their beliefs and practices concerning prayer in athletics.
3. There were no personal interviews.
4. Some of the terms such as prayer and God, (even though they were defined) could have different meanings to different people.
5. The questionnaire was limited by the number of questions and the amount of information derived from the subjects.
6. The age of the subjects was limited from 17 to 23 years of age.
7. The subjects were given one hour to complete the questionnaire.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Socio-economic background- The family environment and the financial status of the athlete, before coming to college and during his time here at school.
2. Prayer- To ask earnestly or request; to commune with God or another higher being one believes in.

3. FCA- Fellowship of Christian Athletes, is trying to channel the leadership abilities of athletes into becoming witnesses for Christ through their individual churches.
4. Earnest- Serious in intention, sincere.
5. Selected variables- What religious sect is the athlete affiliated with? Is he a member of a church? Did he pray daily? What is his classification in school? What sport did he participate in? What percentage of playing time did he have in the contests? Number of children in the family? Source of income? Low-high income bracket? Earnestness of prayer? Does he pray with the team? Motivation for prayer?
6. Athletic competition- An act of striving for a desired goal within the framework and rules of intensive game or sport. Against another individual, team, time, or distance.
7. Team prayer- Gathering of the whole team to pray together.
8. Belief- A conviction of the truth or reality of a thing.
9. Game, sport, match, meet, or contest- Synonyms referring to the setting in which athletic competition takes place.
10. God- The object referred to when men speak of one transcendent Supreme being, or Ultimate, as distinct from god referring to one of the deities recognized by men.
11. Playing ability- The amount of playing time of the individual in his particular sport.
12. Inspiration- Act or state of being intellectually or emotionally inspired.

Prayer, earnest, inspiration and belief were taken from a dictionary for the writer's use. The remainder of the terms were defined by the researcher through his knowledge of the subject.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ancient Man

The ancient Greeks incorporated athletics and religion into many of their festivals. The Panhellenic festivals were carried on before battles and wars to insure the safe return of their soldiers. Those were religious ceremonies that were carried out in conjunction with athletic contests and competitions of the soldiers.⁴

Upon the introduction of Christianity the church took over the old pagan fairs; the pagan rites were abolished, each day of the festival began with a religious service and was followed by the athletic events and competition, all giving thanks to their god.⁵

The Olympic festival was a salute to the gods and was always started by a sacrifice to Zeus. The typical Greek festival consisted of sacrifice, sports, and feast.⁶

The Roman festivals were very similar to the Greeks in that they were paying tribute to their gods through athletic contests.⁷

Confucius stated that for an overall spirit and body relationship that charioteering and archery were important to the soul of his followers.⁸

Ancient man dedicated feats of his power, strength, and skill to gods in an effort to win their favor.

⁴Norman E. Gardiner, Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1970), p. 27.

⁵Ibid., p. 28.

⁶Ibid., p. 197.

⁷Ibid., p. 163.

⁸Ibid., p. 144.

Unpublished Studies

Morbeto, found that 55% of all coaches and athletes polled from universities and colleges in California, utilized some type of prayer in connection with the conduct of the athletic contest. Their reasons varied from praying to win - to praying because everyone else did.⁹

Wilton M. Wilton, exhaustively analyzed the beliefs of the great early philosophers and of seventeen modern leaders in physical education with concern on moral and spiritual values in physical education and athletics. Wilton felt that the individual could attain as many values from athletics in a spiritual way as from every day life.¹⁰

J. T. Ryan supports Wilson's belief in the potential moral and spiritual values of athletics by contending that, "Sports provide opportunities to exercise the precepts which should be established in the home, school and church."¹¹

Fellowship of Christian Athletes

A general belief of most of the members of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes was stated in an issue of The Christian Athlete, which read:

The athletic contest isn't the time to pray for success. Prayer does not create miracles, but the peace and poise which prayer produces creates the miracles. Prayer then is dropping

⁹Joseph A. Morbeto, "The Incidence of Prayer in Athletics as Indicated by Selected California Collegiate Athletes and Coaches," (unpublished Masters Thesis, University of California, 1967), p. 22.

¹⁰Wilton M. Wilton, "Comparative Analysis of Theories Related to Moral and Spiritual Values in Physical Education," (unpublished dissertation, University of California, 1958), p. 33.

¹¹William L. Lackie, "The Influence of Religion on Games and Sports in the United States," (unpublished dissertation, University of Utah, 1965), p. 41.

all fear and anxiety for the outcome, trusting all to God. The athletic contest is a time for a man to acknowledge his union with his maker and lean back upon the power that such union can give him. It is certainly a time when a man can throw off, if he can, all the unnecessary debris and impediments of fears, angers, prejudices, envies, and discords that he can and make of himself as clear as possible for passing on the power and the glory of God. The athlete, then can best turn into the inter rhythm of the spirit by dropping all fears and anxiety about results, love his teammates, throw himself into the joy of the game and trust all to God. In this way he finds the peace within himself which will allow him to give the wholeself to the contest.¹²

Paul Dietzel, the 1958 "Football Coach of the Year" has stated that before every game his team prays, "Lord protect us and our opponents from injury. Help us to play clean, follow the rules and honor you."¹³

Buddy Dial, former All-Pro wide receiver, gives his beliefs on prayer in athletics. "I've prayed silently and felt a surge of energy push through me as though a new dynamo had been cut in. The presence of Christ is as real on the playing field as it is in church."¹⁴

Rafaer Johnson, former Olympic decathlon champion, has written, "He is always present and ready to help. I can do all things in him who strengthens me."¹⁵

Carl Erskine, former Brooklyn Dodger pitching great, when talking about prayer and athletics says:

¹²"World's Worst Shutout," The Christian Athlete, Vol. 12, (December, 1964), p. 41.

¹³James C. Hefley, Play Ball, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), p. 14.

¹⁴Ted Simonson, The Goal and the Glory, (Westwood, New Jersey: F. H. Favell and Co., 1962), p. 72.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 50.

My prayers before a game now are not for victory, but that I be in tune with God's ways. If my mind gets a sense of rhythm and coordination my body does too. Confusion and pressure then bother me less. If I neglect this meditation--call it an "inside pitch"--my mental conditioning is not complete.¹⁶

Former Michigan State football coach, C. L. "Biggie" Munn, gives his views on the value of prayer in athletics:

In prayer I could face those problems with God. I urged my teams to consider prayer as a practice as important as the actual playing of the game. At M.S.U. the football teams pray before each game. At recognition that the strength to play originates with God--not to win. Upon a victorious players suggestion we pray after each game as well. Prayer is not a technique for victory. It develops men who recognize a supreme power . . . therefore when real men are created hard-fought games and victories seem to follow as inevitable by-products. Prayer produces unity.¹⁷

The Reverend Richard Armstrong, a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and one of the few authors today who encourages young athletes to utilize prayer at game time, has made these suggestions for praying:

A. Be sincere--"prayer is the soul's sincere desire unuttered or expressed." B. Be natural; C. Be dilligent--"be constant in prayer." (Romans 12:12); D. Be courteous--"out of my distress I called on the Lord." (Psalms 118:5); E. Be inclusive--"in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Phil. 4:6); F. Be confident--"if you ask anything of the Father he will give it to you in my name." (John 16:23); G. Be submissive--"not my will but Thine be done." (Luke 22:42).¹⁸

¹⁶Norman V. Peale, Faith Made Them Champions, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., Inc., 1954), p. 79.

¹⁷Ted Simonson, The Goal and the Glory, (Westwood, New Jersey: F. H. Favell and Co., 1962), p. 53.

¹⁸Rev. Richard Armstrong, "The Huddle," The Christian Athlete, (November, 1965), p. 12-13.

A young boy at the AAU track meet once asked Parry O'Brien, Olympic Shotput Champion:

What do you do when you put the shot? Do you ever pray and ask God to help you? Parry looked at the young man and replied, "You can train your body to a peak of physical perfection; you can have it as strong as it is able to be. You can concentrate on shot-putting to the point where you know every minute things that you are going to do. But when you get into the ring you need something just a little extra, something down deep within you that can give you that extra boost you need for world's record breaking performances. I always pray to God, because I've found in him that power that helps me do just that little extra."¹⁹

"Doak Walker, a three time All-American at Texas Christian University, said that there was never a time he didn't pray before going on the field."²⁰

Bob Richards, famous Olympic pole vault champion has much to say about prayer and athletics through his travels and talks with many people:

The quality that people have that makes them winners is that they have something to inspire them and keep them going after a defeat. You've got to have that something outside of you, a power greater than your own, that somehow comes into a tired body and aching muscles and just inspires you to do your best. When these individuals have given everything they have to an event, they will call on God through prayer and find a power greater than their own to help them.²¹

Mr. Richards relates about the Millrose Games in 1948 in Madison Square Garden in New York City, where he saw a young man running the mile in record time:

¹⁹Bob Richards, The Heart of a Champion, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 72.

²⁰Ibid., p. 41.

²¹Bob Richards, The Heart of a Champion, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 69.

The crowd started to cheer the boy on, but this boy, Gil Dodds, was in trouble because his legs were starting to weaken and they began to wobble. As Gil Dodds started around the last curve he lifted his eyes to the sky and prayed. His legs started to straighten up and the pain on his face changed to a confident smile and he began to sprint. He hit the tape in 4:05.3, for a new world's Indoor Record. When the race was over Gil walked up to the microphone and simply said: "I want to praise the Lord for helping me run tonight." On the train going back to his home town Bob Richards asked Gil Dodds, "Gil, what did you pray for at the three-quarter mark?" He said, 'I simply said to the Lord, "Lord, I've come this far on my own strength. With your help and your power I know I can go the rest of the way.' I felt the surge of that divine power within me and it helped me to the tape."²²

Mr. Richards talked to Gunder Hagg in Sweden a few years ago about his running and records:

Hagg once held more world's records than any runner alive and was voted the outstanding runner of the past century in the world. Hagg told Bob Richards that he had never broken a record, or run any race without before and during the race, praying and finding a spiritual strength that helped him do his best.²³

"Dutch Warmerdam, the boy who held the world's record in the pole vault, said, 'I've never cleared a height over fifteen feet without God to help me and I know he has.'²⁴

"Bobby Morrow, the great American sprinter, says, 'I've never run a race in my life without praying that God will help me do my best.'²⁵

²²Ibid., p. 79.

²³Bob Richards, The Heart of a Champion, (New York: prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 77.

²⁴Ibid., p. 80.

²⁵Ibid., p. 67.

The story is told about Milt Campbell on his way to a new world's record in the Melbourne Olympics in the decathlon.

He has seven great scores in the first seven events and on the eighth event, the pole vault, he misses by two feet. He is so dejected that he walks off the field and into the locker room with tears running down his face. He gets down on his knees and prays, 'Oh God, if you will help me come back, I'll give you all the praise and all the glory.' He went back on to the field and threw the javelin about 10 feet farther than he had ever thrown it before. He then ran the fastest 1500 meters in Olympic decathlon history breaking Bob Mathias' Olympic record.²⁶

In 1954 the World Championship in the 1500 meters is a duel between John Landy and Brian Hewson:

With his legs pumping like pistons the boy from Ireland, John Landy, drives through the tape to become the new world champion. And while one hundred thousand people continue to roar John Landy kneels down in the middle of the track, with his head in his hands, and thanks God for the victory.²⁷

"Otto Graham, former Washington Redskin Coach, said that he never does anything without asking for God's help. When men reach out for God, they do their best. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these other things will be added unto you.'" (Matthew 6:33)²⁸

Fran Tarkenton relates how God's power entered his life on the football field through prayer.

Soon after he accepted Christ into his life at a FCA conference, his team was playing in the last seconds of a game against Auburn that would decide the Southeastern Conference Championship. Auburn was leading 13-7. Georgia had moved the ball to the Auburn 13 yard line and as the quarterback Tarkenton had to come up with a play, he called

²⁶Ibid., p. 67.

²⁷ Bob Richards, The Heart of a Champion, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 68.

²⁸Ibid., p. 16.

for a time out and bowed his head and prayed for God's guidance. A play came into his mind and he explained it to the team as best he could. They lined up and ran the play and scored a touchdown. Georgia kicked the extra point and won the game. Tarkenton says that: I've found great comfort in prayer in pre-football. Last season I was really down after losing three straight games. Many of my passes weren't hitting the target. I wasn't playing as well as I thought I could. I began praying more every night and morning, asking God to lift the mental pressure. He lifted the burden and gave me renewed strength and presence of mind. When asked what he prayed for before a game, Fran stated: 'I never pray to win a game, but as a quarterback, I pray for strength to lead my team well, to do my best, to enjoy presence of mind. Prayer isn't a rabbit's foot. A Christian isn't necessarily lucky just because he prays. You can't bargain with God through prayer to win the game or to help you play better.²⁹

Bob Richards sums it up best as to how athletics and prayer are interwoven:

I have always prayed in competition, not to win, but that God would help me do my best. I have found that when you pray, instead of being all tight and tense you relax. Instead of thinking negatively, you think positively. Instead of being all dissociated, you are integrated-- every muscle and bone is working for you. I don't quite know what it is, but when that divine dimension touches your life, the greatest within you comes out.³⁰

²⁹James Hefley, Play Ball, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), p. 38.

³⁰Bob Richards, The Heart of a Champion, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 98.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Personal interviews are usually considered to be the best way of ascertaining the general beliefs, attitudes, and practices of individuals.³¹ Because of the very personal nature of this study, a questionnaire was considered more suited as a way of obtaining the desired information. The questionnaire was an original one because of the lack of an instrument relating to prayer to athletics. The questionnaire was validated using a panel of expert judges. Each question on the questionnaire was set up on a scale type basis. The respondent only needed to check the most desired answer. The questions that pertain directly to prayer and athletics were set up on a Likert-type scale. This method indicated both the direction and the intensity of the respondent's position regarding the question or statement.³²

Essentially there were four general areas sought in the questionnaire: 1. Knowledge of the respondents socio-economic background; his parents occupation, his parents annual income, and number of children in his family. 2. The strength of his religious affiliation. 3. His religious beliefs and practices concerning the use of prayer in athletics. 4. Individual information about his playing ability in a particular sport.

³¹C. U. Good, and others, The Methodology of Educational Research, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1935), p. 378.

³²Ibid., p. 362.

Each questionnaire had specific instructions, enabling each athlete to answer the questions in the same manner.

The questionnaire was distributed to every athlete in the athletic dorm at Morehead State University. (total 80). It was given out at an evening hour when most of the individuals were in their rooms. Each was given instructions on how to answer the questionnaire. The athletes were asked to respond to the questions in the next hour, with the researcher collecting them at the end of that time. This helped keep the individual from discussing the questions with others, which could cause biasness to his answers.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

Percentages were taken for every response for each question in the questionnaire. Intercorrelations were run between socio-economic background, playing time of athletes, church attendance, individual prayer before athletic contest, praying earnestly, praying with team, and daily prayer. Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated for each of these variables and each was tested for significance using an "F" test.

All tabulations were done using a Friedon calculator.

Table I

PERCENTAGE FOR EVERY RESPONSE FOR EACH QUESTION

Question I - Primary Family Occupation

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Professional	11	13.75
Business	24	30.00
Skilled Labor	26	32.50
Laborer	18	22.50
Housewife	1	1.25

Question II - Annual Income

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
\$ 2,500- 5,000	5	6.25
\$ 5,000- 7,500	17	21.25
\$ 7,500-10,000	21	26.25
\$10,000-15,000	17	21.25
\$15,000-20,000	17	21.25
\$20,000-above	3	3.75

Question III - Children in Family

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1 or less	6	7.50
2-3	31	38.75
4-5	29	36.25
6-7	10	12.50
8-9	1	1.25
10 or more	3	3.75

Question IV - Classification of Subject

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Freshman	24	30.00
Sophomore	22	27.50
Junior	23	28.75
Senior	11	13.75

Question V - Varsity Sport Participated in

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Football	53	66.25
Basketball	5	6.25
Baseball	4	5.00
Golf	5	6.25
Track	7	8.75
Wrestling	1	1.25
Tennis	5	6.25

Question VI - Playing Time

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
0%	14	17.50
20%	10	12.50
40%	14	17.50
60%	9	11.25
80%	13	16.25
100%	20	26.20

 $\bar{X} = 56\%$
 $SD = 37.1$

Question VII - Religious Sect

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Catholic	23	28.75
Protestant	53	66.25
Jewish	0	00.00
None	2	02.50
Other	2	02.50

Question VIII - Member of a Church

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	67	83.75
No	13	16.25

Question IX - Denomination of Church

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Methodist	13	16.25
Roman Catholic	18	22.50
United Church of God	5	6.25
Baptist	22	27.50
St. Lukes Catholic	1	1.25
United Church of Christ	4	5.00
St. Rita Catholic	1	1.25
St. Pauls Catholic	1	1.25
St. Michaels Catholic	1	1.25
Christian Church	4	5.00
Luthern	2	2.50
St. Francis Catholic	1	1.25
Episcopal	1	1.25
Presbyterian	1	1.25

Question X - Church Attendance

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Once a week	27	33.75
Twice a week	8	10.00
Once a month	11	13.75
Twice a month	6	7.50
Less than once a month	28	35.00

\bar{X} = 3.41 SD = 1.48

Question XI - Individual Prayer before an Athletic Contest

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Always	42	52.50
Frequently	16	20.00
Sometimes	12	15.00
Rarely	6	7.50
Never	4	5.00

\bar{X} = 2.00 SD = 1.19

Question XII - Praying Earnestly

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Always	25	31.25
Frequently	23	28.75
Sometimes	19	23.75
Rarely	9	11.25
Never	4	5.00

\bar{X} = 2.42 SD = 1.18

Question XIII - Motivation for Prayer

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Fear		
Inspiration	28	35.00
To Win	6	7.50
To Help Yourself	15	18.75
To Avoid Injury	4	5.00
Help the Team	15	18.75
Avoid Mistakes	5	6.25
Guidance from God	3	3.75
To Give Everything	1	1.25
Do My Best	2	2.50
Because Coach Says So	1	1.25

Question XIV - Prayer With The Team

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	67	83.75
No	13	16.25
Always	62	77.50
Frequently	3	3.75
Sometimes	1	1.25
Rarely	1	1.25
Never		

\bar{X} = 1.96 SD = 1.92

Question XV - Daily Prayer

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Always	23	28.75
Frequently	16	20.00
Sometimes	25	31.25
Rarely	10	12.50
Never	6	7.50

\bar{X} = 2.62 SD = 1.22

Discussion of Table I

An investigation of the socio-economic background of the subjects revealed that 62.5 percent of their parents were either skilled laborers or business people making on the average of \$7,500 to \$10,000. The subjects' families averaged between 2 to 5 children which constituted 75 percent of the total response.

It was found that only eleven seniors were included in the study while the other classifications were fairly equal in number.

Football players dominated the sample, making up 66.25 percent of the total while 26.2 percent of the subjects played 100 percent of the time. The mean for the subjects' playing time was 56 percent.

An investigation of the subjects' religious affiliation indicated that 66.25 percent were Protestants and 28.75 percent were

Catholic. Eighty-three and three-quarters percent of the subjects were found to be members of a church. Baptist (27.50%), Roman Catholic (22.50%), and Methodist (16.25%) were the most prevalent demoninations. On the average, the subjects attended church once a month. It was noted that 33.75 percent of the subjects attended church once a week.

Fifty-two and one-half percent of the subjects always prayed individually before an athletic contest while 31.25 percent always prayed earnestly and 28.75 percent frequently prayed earnestly. Inspiration was the most prevalent answer concerning the reason for prayer.

It was found that most subjects (83.75%) prayed with the team. Sixty percent of the subjects either sometimes or always prayed daily.

Each question or variable was separately analyzed as to its relationship to other questions or variables.

Introduction - Table II

The first three questions on the questionnaire were used to determine socio-economic background of the subjects. There were set up on a numerical rank type scale for each response. For example:

Question I. In your family the principle source of income is derived from what occupation?

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| (5) professional | (3) skilled labor | (1) housewife |
| (4) business | (2) laborer | |

Question II. Approximately what income do your parents earn yearly?

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (1) \$2,500-5,000 | (3) \$7,500-10,000 | (5) \$15,000-20,000 |
| (2) \$5,000-7,500 | (4) \$10,000-15,000 | (6) \$20,000-above |

Question III. How many children are in your family?

(6) 1 or less (4) 4-5 (2) 8-9 (5) 2-3 (3) 6-7 (1) 10-more

The investigator used each response for these three questions and totatled their ranks. An example would be: (5) Professional, (5) \$15,000 - 20,000, (6) 1 or less children = (16). To determine the socio-economic background this scale was devised:

	<u>Rank</u>	<u>% of Subjects</u>
High Socio-economic background	(15-17)	7.50
High Middle Class	(12-14)	37.50
Middle Class	(9-11)	31.25
Low Middle Class	(6- 8)	22.50
Low Class	(3- 5)	1.25

The mean for socio-economic background was 10.91 or middle class. The standard deviation was 2.65.

Question 10, which referred to church attendance, was also set up on a rank scale: (2) once a week (4) once a month (5) less than once a month (1) twice a week (3) twice a month. The mean for this question was 3.41, which was between once and twice a month in church attendance. The standard deviation was 1.48.

Question 11, 12, 14, 15 were set up on a Likert type scale, which also gives a rank to responses in the following manners:

(1) always (2) frequently (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) never

These questions all dealt with prayer and its use.

The mean of individual prayer was 2.00 or frequently was the average answer. The standard deviation was 1.19.

Earnest prayer had a mean of 2.42, which was frequently or sometimes of the subjects answers. The standard deviation was 1.18.

Team prayer had the lowest mean, 1.96 which put these answers slightly above frequently. The standard deviation was 1.92 which was

also the highest standard deviation.

The mean for daily prayer was 2.62, the highest mean, which put these answers also between frequently and sometimes. The SD was 1.22.

Pearson product-moment correlations were computed between all possible combinations of questions, (1,2,3,) (6,10,11,12,14,15) used to determine whether significant relationships existed.

Table II

INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN VARIABLES

Comparison	r	F-ratio	P
1-2	.1796	2.60	NS*
1-3	.1545	1.90	NS*
1-4	.2009	3.28	NS*
1-5	.2802	6.65	S (.05)
1-6	.1608	2.07	NS*
1-7	.4068	15.61	S (.01)
2-3	.1522	1.86	NS*
2-4	.3239	9.20	S (.01)
2-5	.1041	1.46	NS*
2-6	.3159	8.67	S (.01)
2-7	.2150	3.79	NS*
3-4	.0629	.31	NS*
3-5	.0619	.30	NS*
3-6	.2172	3.86	NS*
3-7	.1222	1.18	NS*
4-5	.4025	15.14	S (.01)
4-6	.4969	25.72	S (.01)
4-7	.5983	43.65	S (.01)
5-6	.2228	4.10	S (.05)
5-7	.3627	11.85	S (.01)
6-7	.2513	5.26	S (.05)

F (.05) = 3.96

F (.01) = 6.967

DF = 1 and 78

Key to Comparisons

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1) Socio-economic background | 4) Individual prayer |
| 2) Playing time | 5) Earnest prayer |
| 3) Church attendance | 6) Team prayer |
| | 7) Daily prayer |

* NS = Not Significant

Discussion: Table II

A significant correlation was found between low socio-economic background and praying before an athletic contest (hypothesis I). Significance was attained at the .01 level as indicated by the F-ratios computed (praying individually before an athletic contest, 9.20, and praying with the team, 8.66). An F-ratio of 6.96 or more was needed for a significant correlation. Therefore hypothesis number one was accepted.

The hypotheses (II and III) relating to middle and high socio-economic background prayer before an athletic contest were rejected since hypothesis number one was accepted.

There was no significant correlation between religious affiliation and praying before an athletic contest. Church attendance did not correlate significantly with either individual prayer (F-ratio = 3.29) or team prayer (F-ratio= 2.07). Hypothesis number four was rejected. It was felt that religious affiliation would be significantly related to praying before an athletic contest. Many subjects could have answered how they attended church while at school but not at home. This could have caused these findings.

There were a number of variables related to hypothesis V. The first related individual prayer to praying earnestly and significance was found at the .01 level. An F-ratio of 15.14 was attained while a table value for an F of 6.96 was needed.

Team prayer was then correlated with both praying earnestly (F-ratio= 5.25). These results indicated that a relationship between these variables was significant since the F-table value needed was 3.96 at the .05 level. Based on these results hypothesis V was accepted.

Playing time did not correlate significantly with either individual prayer (F-ratio= .3070) or team prayer (F-ratio= 3.86). It was also felt that playing time of athletes would be significant to prayer before an athletic contest because the more an athlete played it was felt that he would need to call on God's help more through prayer.

Church attendance, earnest prayer and daily prayer were inter-correlated significantly. All F-ratios exceeded the 3.96 table value.

Praying earnestly, team prayer, and daily prayer were also significantly intercorrelated. F-ratios of 4.10 or higher were computed while a value of 3.96 was necessary for significance. With these variables being significant it helped to strengthen the study in that those questions pertaining to prayer should be significant.

Individual prayer and team prayer were related significantly (F-ratio= 25.71) but comparisons between church attendance and socioeconomic background (F-ratio= 2.59) and church attendance and playing ability (F-ratio= 1.90) were found to be insignificant. The lack of significance here could be do to the fact that many athletes did not count their church attendance at home but only at school.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the study was to find what effect socio-economic background, religious affiliation, religious beliefs and practices and playing ability of Morehead State University athletes had on their use of prayer before an athletic contest.

A questionnaire was set up by the investigator relating prayer to athletics. Because of the very personal nature of the study a questionnaire was more suited as a way of obtaining information than was the personal interview.

There were four general areas covered in the questionnaire: socio-economic background of the athlete, athlete's religious affiliation, his strength of religious beliefs and practices concerning use of prayer in athletics, and playing ability of the athlete.

The questionnaire was distributed among the athletes in the athletic dorm at Morehead State University. Eighty questionnaires were returned to the researcher.

Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine whether significant relationships existed between selected variables. Hypothesis I, relating low socio-economic background to use of prayer before an athletic contest was accepted. Hypothesis V relating religious beliefs and practices to use of prayer before an athletic contest also was accepted.

Other findings relating church attendance of the subjects to praying earnestly was shown to be significant as the .05 level. Church attendance was also compared to daily prayer and significance was attained at the .01 level.

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Praying individually before the contest was compared to praying earnestly and significance was found at the .01 level. Individual prayer was also related significantly to prayer with the team at .01 level. Significant results were attained when individual prayer and daily prayer were related.

Praying earnestly was related significantly to prayer with the team. Team prayer was correlated significantly to daily prayer.

Conclusions

Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Subjects from low socio-economic background prayed more before athletic contests than those from middle or high socio-economic backgrounds.
2. Subjects with stronger religious beliefs and practices prayed more before athletic contests than those with weaker religious beliefs and practices.
3. The subjects involved in contact sports prayed with the team more than those persons in non-contact sports.
4. The subjects used prayer for inspiration before an athletic contest more than any other motivational factor.

Recommendations

1. A larger survey should be taken with the use of more subjects.
2. A follow-up study should be done to explore other aspects of prayer and athletics.
3. A random sampling of athletes from several different universities across the country could be used in doing a similar study.

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Based on personal correspondence between Mr. James Jeffrey, Executive Director of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the writer.

APPENDIX

Table III

Complete Breakdown of Questions 11, 12, 14 and 15

Freshman

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
11	Always	9	37.50
	Frequently	8	33.30
	Sometimes	5	20.83
	Rarely	2	8.33
	Never	1	4.16
12	Always	8	33.33
	Frequently	7	29.16
	Sometimes	5	20.83
	Rarely	5	20.83
	Never	0	
14	Always	19	79.16
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	1	4.16
	Never	0	
15	Always	8	33.33
	Frequently	5	20.83
	Sometimes	6	25.00
	Rarely	5	20.83
	Never	2	4.16

Sophomore

11	Always	10	45.45
	Frequently	6	27.27
	Sometimes	5	22.72
	Rarely	1	4.54
	Never	0	
12	Always	6	27.27
	Frequently	5	22.72
	Sometimes	7	31.81
	Rarely	2	9.09
	Never	2	9.09
14	Always	17	77.27
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	1	4.54
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	

Question	Response	Percentage	
15	Always	5	22.72
	Frequently	3	13.63
	Sometimes	7	31.81
	Rarely	5	22.72
	Never	2	9.09
<u>Junior</u>			
11	Always	11	47.82
	Frequently	5	21.73
	Sometimes	3	13.04
	Rarely	2	8.69
	Never	2	8.69
12	Always	5	21.73
	Frequently	7	30.43
	Sometimes	6	26.08
	Rarely	5	21.73
	Never	0	
14	Always	18	78.26
	Frequently	1	4.34
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
15	Always	4	17.39
	Frequently	8	34.78
	Sometimes	7	30.43
	Rarely	2	8.69
	Never	2	8.69
<u>Senior</u>			
11	Always	9	81.81
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	1	9.09
	Rarely	0	
	Never	1	9.09
12	Always	5	45.45
	Frequently	2	18.18
	Sometimes	1	9.09
	Rarely	2	18.18
	Never	1	9.09
14	Always	10	100.00
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
15 Always	4	36.36
Frequently	1	9.09
Sometimes	5	45.45
Rarely	0	
Never	1	9.09

Football

11 Always	30	71.02
Frequently	13	24.52
Sometimes	5	9.43
Rarely	3	5.66
Never	2	0.37
12 Always	17	32.07
Frequently	14	26.41
Sometimes	12	22.64
Rarely	10	18.86
Never	1	1.88
14 Always	51	96.22
Frequently	0	
Sometimes	0	
Rarely	1	1.88
Never	0	
15 Always	13	24.52
Frequently	13	24.52
Sometimes	18	33.96
Rarely	8	15.09
Never	2	3.77

Basketball

11 Always	2	40.00
Frequently	1	20.00
Sometimes	1	20.00
Rarely	1	20.00
Never	0	
12 Always	2	50.00
Frequently	0	
Sometimes	1	25.00
Rarely	1	25.00
Never	0	
14 Always	3	75.00
Frequently	0	
Sometimes	0	
Rarely	0	
Never	0	

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
15	Always	25.00
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	50.00
	Rarely	0
	Never	25.00
<u>Golf</u>		
11	Always	0
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	60.00
	Rarely	20.00
	Never	20.00
12	Always	0
	Frequently	60.00
	Sometimes	20.00
	Rarely	0
	Never	20.00
14	Always	0
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
15	Always	0
	Frequently	20.00
	Sometimes	20.00
	Rarely	60.00
	Never	0
<u>Track</u>		
11	Always	0
	Frequently	28.57
	Sometimes	57.14
	Rarely	14.28
	Never	0
12	Always	14.28
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	71.42
	Rarely	14.28
	Never	0
14	Always	14.28
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	14.28
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
15	Always	14.28
	Frequently	14.28
	Sometimes	42.85
	Rarely	14.28
	Never	14.28

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Tennis</u>		
11	Always	3 60.00
	Frequently	1 20.00
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	1 20.00
	Never	0
12	Always	2 40.00
	Frequently	1 20.00
	Sometimes	1 20.00
	Rarely	1 20.00
	Never	0
14	Always	4 80.00
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
15	Always	3 60.00
	Frequently	1 20.00
	Sometimes	1 20.00
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
<u>Wrestling</u>		
11	Always	1 100.00
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
12	Always	0
	Frequently	1 100.00
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
14	Always	1 100.00
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
15	Always	0
	Frequently	1 100.00
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
<u>Catholic</u>			
11	Always	9	39.13
	Frequently	8	34.78
	Sometimes	4	17.39
	Rarely	1	4.34
	Never	1	4.34
12	Always	6	26.08
	Frequently	5	21.73
	Sometimes	7	30.43
	Rarely	2	8.69
	Never	3	13.04
14	Always	11	69.56
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	2	8.69
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
15	Always	7	30.43
	Frequently	6	26.08
	Sometimes	5	21.73
	Rarely	3	13.04
	Never	2	8.69
<u>Protestant</u>			
11	Always	28	52.83
	Frequently	9	16.98
	Sometimes	9	16.98
	Rarely	5	9.43
	Never	2	3.77
12	Always	17	32.07
	Frequently	14	26.41
	Sometimes	12	22.64
	Rarely	10	22.64
	Never	0	
14	Always	44	84.90
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
15	Always	13	24.52
	Frequently	11	20.75
	Sometimes	19	33.96
	Rarely	10	18.86
	Never	2	3.77

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
<u>Are you a member of a church (Yes)</u>			
11	Always	34	50.74
	Frequently	15	22.38
	Sometimes	12	16.41
	Rarely	5	7.46
	Never	2	2.98
12	Always	19	28.35
	Frequently	16	23.88
	Sometimes	19	28.35
	Rarely	12	17.91
	Never	2	2.98
14	Always	54	80.59
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	2	2.98
	Rarely	24	31.34
	Never	0	
15	Always	19	28.35
	Frequently	13	19.40
	Sometimes	21	2.98
	Rarely	11	16.41
	Never	3	4.47
<u>Are you a member of a church (No)</u>			
11	Always	3	27.27
	Frequently	2	18.18
	Sometimes	3	27.27
	Rarely	1	9.09
	Never	2	18.18
12	Always	3	36.36
	Frequently	2	18.18
	Sometimes	2	18.18
	Rarely	2	18.18
	Never	1	9.09
14	Always	5	45.45
	Frequently	1	9.09
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	1	9.09
	Never	1	9.09
15	Always	0	
	Frequently	3	27.27
	Sometimes	3	27.27
	Rarely	2	18.18
	Never	3	27.27

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
<u>Methodist</u>			
11	Always	6	46.15
	Frequently	3	30.76
	Sometimes	3	23.07
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
12	Always	3	23.07
	Frequently	5	38.46
	Sometimes	3	23.07
	Rarely	2	15.38
	Never	0	
14	Always	11	84.61
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
15	Always	1	7.69
	Frequently	2	15.38
	Sometimes	8	61.53
	Rarely	1	7.69
	Never	1	7.69
<u>Roman Catholic</u>			
11	Always	9	50.00
	Frequently	8	44.44
	Sometimes	4	22.22
	Rarely	1	5.55
	Never	1	5.55
12	Always	6	33.33
	Frequently	5	27.77
	Sometimes	7	38.88
	Rarely	2	11.11
	Never	3	16.66
14	Always	15	88.88
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	2	11.11
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
15	Always	7	38.88
	Frequently	6	33.33
	Sometimes	5	27.77
	Rarely	3	16.66
	Never	2	11.11

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
<u>Church of God</u>			
11	Always	0	
	Frequently	2	40.00
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	2	40.00
	Never	1	20.00
12	Always	0	
	Frequently	2	40.00
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	3	60.00
	Never	0	
14	Always	0	
	Frequently	4	80.00
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
15	Always	0	
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	2	40.00
	Rarely	2	40.00
	Never	1	20.00
<u>Baptist Church</u>			
11	Always	13	59.09
	Frequently	4	18.18
	Sometimes	2	9.09
	Rarely	2	9.09
	Never	1	4.54
12	Always	9	40.90
	Frequently	3	13.63
	Sometimes	6	27.27
	Rarely	4	18.18
	Never	0	
14	Always	18	81.81
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
15	Always	8	36.36
	Frequently	7	31.81
	Sometimes	2	9.09
	Rarely	4	18.18
	Never	1	4.54

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Church of Christ</u>		
11	Always	4
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
12	Always	2
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	2
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
14	Always	4
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
15	Always	1
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	3
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
<u>Christian Church</u>		
11	Always	1
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	1
	Rarely	1
	Never	1
12	Always	0
	Frequently	3
	Sometimes	1
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
14	Always	2
	Frequently	
	Sometimes	
	Rarely	
	Never	
15	Always	1
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	1
	Rarely	2
	Never	0

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Luthern Church</u>		
11	Always	2
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
12	Always	1
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	1
	Never	0
14	Always	2
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
15	Always	1
	Frequently	1
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
<u>Episcopal Church</u>		
11	Always	1
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
12	Always	0
	Frequently	1
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
14	Always	1
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	0
	Never	0
15	Always	0
	Frequently	0
	Sometimes	0
	Rarely	1
	Never	0

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
<u>Presbyterian Church</u>			
11	Always	0	
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	1	100.00
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
12	Always	0	
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	1	100.00
	Never	0	
14	Always	1	100.00
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	0	
	Never	0	
15	Always	0	
	Frequently	0	
	Sometimes	0	
	Rarely	0	
	Never	1	100.00

QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: Please answer each question honestly and with the best knowledge available to you. Do not sign your name.

1. In your family the principle source of income is derived from what occupation?

Professional Skilled labor Housewife
 Business Laborer Other _____

2. Approximately, what income do your parents earn, yearly?

\$2,500-5,000 \$7,500-10,000 \$15,000-20,000
 \$5,000-7,000 \$10,000-15,000 \$20,000-above

3. How many children are in your family?

1-less 4-5 8-9
 2-3 6-7 10-more

4. What is your classification at Morehead State University?

Freshman Junior
 Sophomore Senior

5. In what varsity sport do you participate?

Football Golf Wrestling
 Basketball Swimming Soccer
 Baseball Track Other _____

6. In what percentage of the game are you usually involved?

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

(60%, 80%, 100% would be considered a regular or starter depending on your sport.)

7. With what religious sect are you affiliated?

Catholic None Jewish
 Protestant Other
(Please specify)

8. Are you a member of a church?

_____ Yes

_____ No

9. What church do you belong to? _____

10. How often do you attend church?

_____ Twice a week

_____ Once a month

_____ Less than

_____ Once a week

_____ Twice a month

_____ once a month

11. Do you as an individual pray before an athletic contest?

This means on your own, not with the team.

_____ Always

_____ Sometimes

_____ Never

_____ Frequently

_____ Rarely

12. Do you pray earnestly or does your mind wander and think of other things during prayer?

_____ Always

_____ Sometimes

_____ Never

_____ Frequently

_____ Rarely

13. If you do pray before a contest, what is your motivation to do so? Why do you feel the need to pray? Mark best answer.

_____ Fear

_____ To avoid injury

_____ Inspiration

_____ To help the team

_____ To win

_____ To avoid making mistakes

_____ To help yourself

_____ Other _____

14. Do you pray with the team preceding the contest?

_____ Yes

_____ No

15. Do you pray daily on your own?

_____ Always

_____ Sometimes

_____ Never

_____ Frequently

_____ Rarely

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