

The shallowness of this historical analysis and characterization of religion is profound [sic].* In the west, spirituality divorced from religion ---think and do what you want, in private--- is the hand-maid of the bureaucratic / totalitarian state, which tolerates neither competition nor limits in its claims to legitimate authority.

The decadence of our own culture (as in Rome near the end of the empire) is marked not by the ubiquity of sport but by the ubiquity of spectating, and by the callowness of our political class.

Philip Bess

*Just one example: allusions to Grand Inquisitors and the reference to Malleus Maleficarum. [Legal historians know better...](#)

On Feb 4, 2014, at 3:56 PM, Erin R Silva <erinrsilva@COMCAST.NET> wrote:

To be sure it was an article of interest, Julio. But I fear a misdirection. Sports, in my opinion is too easy an excuse.

I just covered ancient Greek, Roman, Early Christian and Medieval architecture in one of my classes this semester, and my students were horrified at the prospect of burning Christians to provide light for the Circus Maximus. I told them to read the history and they might understand why. Two birds with one stone, get rid of irritating Christians and provide light for the chariots. In my opinion, it is religion itself that is the problem. Religion isn't losing ground to sports because of the inherent value or distraction of sports. It has lost ground because that is its historical trajectory and because of its obvious overreach and dysfunction. The silliest thing to be seen in Rome is a crucifix inside the Pantheon.

It has always been in the nature of organized religion in the West to do itself in. Without his wife, Justinian would have done himself in much earlier than he actually did. Western religion has historically surrounded itself with monuments *to itself* -- granted, beautiful monuments indeed, borrowed from its Roman oppressors. I confess I love and am impressed by all of it, from those first churches in Ravenna, to towering Medieval Gothic structures, all the way to La Sagrada Familia. Don't get me wrong. It brought tears to me yet again during our trip to Barcelona last spring. And reminded me that religion's most dangerous competition is its historical built environment. I cried not because of Jesus or God, but because of Gaudi. In Western culture, the buildings, the sculpture (Bernini for God's sake!), Giotto's frescos, Suger's triumph with stained glass and those golden ribbed vaults, and the Beauvais choir and apse, inside which there is room for God and all the saints, promised more than religion could ever deliver. Go stand inside

Chartres in the afternoon, and Beauvais at almost any time. I'll take that over any actual experience with God I've ever had.

It is clear to me from history, that from its first Savonarola neighborhood barbeque, the Western Church was doomed to fail. And that is not to mention the damage done by such things as The Malleus Maleficarum, along with present day naughty misbehavior by its clergy. The buildings stand grander than ever, for which I am glad, and yet are mostly dark inside at night. No sport could ever damage religion or compete with it like all the aforementioned.

The Greeks understood the human condition better than we could ever imagine. They simply created gods who gave us the games by which we prove ourselves, and buildings like the Parthenon to inflate our pride, and they pretty much stayed out of it all. Think about it, they were much wiser than we've ever given them credit for being. Let humans spend their time proving themselves to each other, not to us. And we'll sit back, drink our wine, make love, and watch the fun. I'm sure all of them were watching the Super Bowl on some cosmic widescreen, eating chicken wings and drinking... ehem... wine, not beer, and thankful that the Titans didn't make it that far.

E

Architect Erin R Silva
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Dept. of Architecture
Dept. of City & Metropolitan Planning
College of Architecture + Planning
LEAP Faculty, College of Undergraduate Studies
University of Utah
silvaer@arch.utah.edu

Architect Erin R Silva & Associates
115 South 1100 East, #505
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
801-557-3400
erinrsilva@comcast.net

From: ACS is a new scholarly forum on architecture and spiritualit [mailto:AM-[CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU](mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU)] **On Behalf Of** Norman Crowe

Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 9:34 AM

To: AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU

Subject: Re: Is Religion Losing Ground to Sport (Article in the Washington Post)

'interesting that "the spirituality impulse" can be so easily re-directed -- i.e., sports. In times of war it is applied to sacredness of country or creed set against the enemy who is all evil and therefore easy to kill. Maybe spectator sports, for those who are so inclined, provides at least a less dangerous re-direction of the impulse than war, as Travis suggests. Perhaps we need to somehow re-position humanism with a new urgency and intensity? We are a curious specie!

Norman Crowe

Architect
Professor Emeritus, University of Notre Dame
Adjunct Professor, University of New Mexico

On Feb 4, 2014, at 9:16 AM, Travis Price wrote:

Lest, we forget. The Coliseum, the relished love of War and the God of War was a very organized Greco-Roman act of worship well before humanism of Christ, Buddha and others came into the "game". These combat driven spiritual states are still highly prevalent in most remote cultures of the world today. Not pretty, but as real as the super bowl and far more vicious. T

Travis L Price III, FAIA
Travis Price Architects
1028 33rd St NW - 320
Washington, DC 20007
202 . 965 . 7000

www.TravisPriceArchitects.com
www.SpiritofPlace-Design.com
www.ArchaeologyofTomorrow.com

-----Original Message-----

From: ACS is a new scholarly forum on architecture and spiritualit [<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>] On Behalf Of Eric ROSS
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 4:27 AM
To: AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU
Subject: Re: Is Religion Losing Ground to Sport (Article in the Washington Post)

Dear freinds

I also think that organized sport replaced [organized] religion as the opiate of the people some time ago.

Eric Ross, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Humanities and Social Sciences Al Akhawayn University
E.Ross@au.ma<http://ericrossacademic.wordpress.com/>
P.O.Box 1889, Ifrane, 53000
Morocco
tel.: +212 (0) 535 86 24 81
fax: +212 (0) 535 86 29 77

-----ACS is a new scholarly forum on architecture and spiritualit <AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU> wrote: -----To: AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU
From: Julio Bermudez
Sent by: ACS is a new scholarly forum on architecture and spiritualit
Date: 02/02/2014 10:37PM
Subject: Re: Is Religion Losing Ground to Sport (Article in the Washington Post)

Dear ACS friends

I read a provocative but intelligent article this morning in the Washington Post. I think it's worth your time reading it. Its title says it all: "Is Religion Losing Ground to Sports?"; The authors, one history professor and the other a religious studies academic provide a nuanced argumentation. This is particularly timely given the SUPERBOWL tonight.

For those not familiar with American Culture (and there are plenty of you in ACS that fit this description), the SUPERBOWL is arguably the most watched (and awaited) event in American Television ... It is the championship game of American Football (sorry for this explanation for those familiar with it)

Anyway, here is the article. Enjoy (or disagree with it; either way, good to check it out)

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/is-religion-losing-ground-to-sports/2014/01/31/6faa4d64-82bd-11e3-9dd4-e7278db80d86_story.html

Julio

Julio Bermudez, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

The Catholic University of America
School of Architecture and Planning
Crough Center of Architectural Studies
620 Michigan Ave NE
Washington, DC 20064

(202) 319-5755 (phone)

bermudez@cua.edu (email)

<http://faculty.cua.edu/bermudez> (web)

"leap and the net will appear"