



**FELLOWSHIP OF
CHRISTIAN
ATHLETES**

FCA Position Statements

August 2018

We recognize that we will be inquiries from coaches, athletes, parents, volunteers, schools, media, and a variety of constituent groups and organizations, some supportive and some challenging, to clarify our positions across a variety of controversial topics in Sports and Christianity. We want to be prepared with a unified, consistent voice at all levels across the ministry when presenting our views and also to know when appropriate to comment and when to seek support from your leaderships and the Support Center.

It is critical for all to understand that FCA is not a social or political commentary ministry. We do not find it in our best interest to release statements regarding social or political issues, events or news as there are many other organizations whose sole purpose is to weigh in on these issues. **In some cases, doing so could cause FCA to lose its non-profit, tax-exempt status** If, through careful thought and prayer, FCA leaders from a national level deem it necessary, then the statement will always be in a tone of respect that protects the ministry, yet not backing down on biblical beliefs.

To prepare and protect the ministry, FCA has developed a list of topics and positions on relevant issues to be reviewed by all to ensure our mutual understanding and consistency:

- Please note that these statements are intended to assist in responding to questions and NOT for a pro-active publicity campaign. We are not seeking to start a conversation about these topics but are simply preparing everyone within our ministry to be equipped to handle these situations if they arise.
- These positioning statements are valid to be used as a template for responding to questions from schools, coaches, parents, sponsors or any other entity affiliated with FCA as well as media interviews. (These are not to be used to support or endorse a political position or candidate.)
- Regarding local media, designate a spokesperson in your office to handle media inquiries. Make sure that all staff and volunteers know to refer media calls to the local spokesperson. The spokesperson must become familiar with the Positioning Statements and be prepared to follow the correct response.
- Always refer national media, media beyond your area of responsibility, or media with challenging issues to Hamilton Strategies at 610-584-1096 or dhamilton@hamiltonstrategies.com.
 - If you have questions, contact Nancy Hedrick at 816-892-1166.
 - **If it involves a crisis situation, please contact Ken Williams at 816-892-1146.**
 - When in doubt, call Ken or Nancy.

FCA Position Statements Topics

1. Ministry Access in Public Schools
2. Who Can Come to a Huddle and Who Can Lead
3. Immoral Acts by FCA Staff or Volunteers
4. FCA Chaplains on Campuses
5. Coaches' Actions On/Off the Field with Athletes
6. Cheating
7. Prayer in Sports
8. Coaches Praying at School and School-Sponsored Events
9. Christian Coaches Working With Non-Christian Coaches
10. Substance Abuse
11. Mixed Martial Arts
12. Violence in Sports
13. Violent Sports
14. Abortion
15. Suicide
16. Sexual Purity
17. Marriage
18. Homosexuality
19. Sexual Identity
20. Gender Identity
21. Social Issues Discussions
22. Reminder: No Political Statements as FCA Staff

Approaches to Writing

- Biblical
- Loving Attitude
- Positive toward FCA
- Document/Policy based
- Cover all issues in a concise manner

Ministry Access in Public Schools

FCA student clubs or Huddles are granted access to public schools and colleges by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the Equal Access Act (“the Act”). Passed by Congress in 1984, the Equal Access Act states that whenever a school or college recognizes a single non-curriculum related school club, it must also provide the same access, privileges and benefits to all school clubs. This Act protects religious clubs, like FCA, by giving them equal footing with all other student clubs. This “limited open forum” is available during non-instructional times, such as before or after school and lunchtime.

In order for FCA to be a qualified student club, it must be student-initiated and student-led. Many schools require faculty sponsors. As a result, coaches and staff may monitor, facilitate or supervise FCA meetings. Faculty cannot lead or be directly involved in the meetings.

Who Can Come to a Huddle and Who Can Lead

FCA invites anyone to participate in its Huddle meetings. Those who attend are typically current or former members of recognized school athletic teams, those who carry an interest in athletics and those wanting to pursue or deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ.

While FCA welcomes everyone to a Huddle, those desiring a leadership role in FCA ministries are required to fill out a Student Leader Application and agree to certain guidelines. The application outlines the ministry’s beliefs, vision, and expectations for a Huddle leader. These beliefs and conditions must be agreed upon and signed by all ministry leaders to ensure unity, personal integrity, and spiritual growth throughout all Huddle groups. The application includes FCA’s Statement of Faith, Sexual Purity Statement, Statement of Applicant’s Christian Faith and other responsibilities of a Christian outlined in the Bible.

Immoral Acts by FCA Staff or Volunteers

FCA believes that those in staff and volunteer positions should have a clear calling from God to lead in this ministry. The Bible plainly outlines certain criteria and traits for spiritual leaders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Following the Bible’s example, FCA requires all staff and volunteers to complete a Ministry Leader Application and agree to certain biblical guidelines. These beliefs and conditions must be agreed upon and signed by all staff and volunteers to ensure unity, personal integrity, and spiritual growth throughout FCA. The application includes FCA’s Statement of Faith, Statement of Applicant’s Christian Faith, Sexual Purity Statement, Youth Protection Policy and other responsibilities of a Christian outlined in the Bible.

When a FCA staff person or volunteer chooses to not adhere to these criteria and participates in an immoral act, that person may be required to discontinue serving with FCA. Specific cases are outlined in the FCA Staff Manual.

FCA believes two of the fundamental values of the Christian life are forgiveness and restoration; therefore, FCA extends these principles to all people, including staff and volunteers.

FCA Chaplains on Campuses

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is a Christian ministry whose mission is "to present to athletes and coaches and all whom they influence the challenge and adventure of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, serving Him in their relationships and in the fellowship of the church." Employees of FCA must agree with this mission and be able to consent and sign FCA's Statement of Faith and Statement of Applicant's Christian Faith upon hire.

Some FCA staff and volunteers also function on a volunteer basis as chaplains for sports teams. The FCA Chaplain's role is designed to help athletes and coaches at all athletic levels. At the invitation of the coaching staff, FCA chaplains serve as spiritual counselors as a voluntary service to the team. These chaplains are often asked to give guidance on various spiritual and character issues as needed.

All chaplains are asked to complete chaplaincy training so that they understand their role. Since FCA chaplains volunteer solely by the request of the coaching staff, questions of exclusivity should be directed to the sports team.

Coaches' Actions On/Off the Field with Athletes

FCA believes that coaches are often the most important adult role models in young people's lives. Because of coaches' great influence on athletes, FCA encourages biblical leadership, character, and service in coaches' lives. FCA believes that all coaches' interactions with athletes should be with honorable intentions, for the purpose of training and mentoring, on and off the field. Integrity and uprightness in a coach's life is vital for maintaining credibility and authority, as Psalm 25:21 affirms. Verbal or any other form of abuse cannot be condoned.

Any coach that is in a volunteer or staff position with FCA must also agree to and sign FCA's Statement of Faith, Sexual Purity Statement, Youth Protection Policy and other responsibilities of a Christian outlined in the Bible.

Cheating

Honesty is a highly valued attribute in the life of a Christian. The Bible states that God tests the heart and is pleased with integrity (1 Chronicles 29:17). The Bible also relates that honesty and integrity can protect a person from false accusations and wrongdoing and give a person respect and peace within a community (Psalm 25:21, Proverbs 10:9).

FCA believes that Christians should have integrity in everything they do, including academics and sports. FCA does not condone cheating in any form.

Prayer in Sports

FCA is a ministry based on prayer. The Bible is clear that God wants Christians to pray at all times about everything in their lives, big or small (1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18). No prayer is trivial to God. The Bible also states that Christians should continually give praise and thanks to God for all circumstances in their lives (Hebrews 13:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Prayer in sports is just an extension of the Christian athlete's heart that is focused on God. A mature Christian also recognizes that prayer does not guarantee victory, but rather the sovereign will of God.

Prayer is considered private religious speech, and students are allowed to pray at school and school-sponsored events as long as it is student-initiated and student-led. Student prayer is protected by the Constitution as long as it does not appear that the school endorsed it. Student-led prayer is permitted at events such as FCA Huddle meetings and praying as a team before a game or at practice.

Off campus and away from school-sanctioned events at either public or private venues, FCA staff may offer prayer or freely express their faith privately or in public, a right protected by the First Amendment. The same right applies in those situations to team coaches, parents, athletes and other individuals. If an individual has not been invited by a group specifically to pray in a public or private setting, it is still wise to ask the group's leaders if that individual may have permission to pray so as not to bring offense to anyone or overlook the facility's or group's policies.

Coaches Praying at School and School-Sponsored Events

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes believes that coaches are often the most important adult role models in young people's lives. Because of coaches' great influence on athletes, FCA encourages biblical leadership, character and service in coaches' lives. Prayer should be a vital discipline in a Christian's life (Acts 2:42; Romans 12:12), but since coaches are employees of the school, they may not lead prayer at school or school-sponsored events, such as athletic practices or games. There is concern that what they say may be considered speech endorsed by the school.

Prayer is considered private religious speech, and it is permissible for coaches to pray at school and school-sponsored events on the condition that it is private prayer. Team or group prayer should always be student-initiated and student-led in the school environment. As long as a coach does not lead prayer himself and stands aside and silently bows his or her head while students lead prayer, a coach is protected under the First Amendment.

Christian Coaches Working with Non-Christian Coaches

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes believes that coaches are often the most important adult role models in young people's lives. Because of coaches' great influence on athletes, FCA encourages biblical leadership, character and service in coaches' lives. However, not all coaches follow this type of leadership. Therefore, Christian coaches who work with non-Christian coaches have the opportunity to impact these coaches for Christ.

By following examples in Scripture, Christian coaches at all levels of leadership have a responsibility to share Christ whether through actions or in words. The Bible clearly states in 1 Peter 2:12-15 that Christians should submit to every human institution and conduct themselves honorably among authority. According to this Scripture, Christian assistant coaches should respect authority and display integrity so that non-Christian coaches can see Christ in their lives. FCA encourages Christian coaches in leadership positions to be a godly influence in the lives of their coaching staff, as Matthew 5:16 states. FCA's role is to minister to these coaches by encouraging and equipping them to know and serve Christ.

Substance Abuse

At FCA, our mission is "to see the world impacted for Jesus Christ through the influence of athletes and coaches." We believe that Christian athletes and coaches have the ability to change the hearts and lives of others through their actions and words. Because of this, there is a need to adhere closely to biblical standards and resist temptations.

The Bible makes it clear that drunkenness and abuse against a person's own body is not pleasing to God (Proverbs 23:19-21, Ephesians 5:18). Not only should a Christian worship and honor God with their words, but also with their bodies (Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Because of the Bible's clear stance on this subject, FCA does not condone any type of substance abuse, including alcohol, drugs or any other banned or illegal performance enhancing drugs/supplements.

Mixed Martial Arts

Mixed Martial Arts is a sport that is quickly gaining popularity in the United States. Since its introduction in the United States in 1993 and sanctioning in 2001, Mixed Martial Arts has improved its regulations to improve safety and fair competition and include referees and physicians at each event.

As with any sporting competition, participants in Mixed Martial Arts have the choice to display integrity, service, teamwork and respect among those they compete with. The Bible is clear that Christians should exercise self-control in everything (1 Cor. 9:25) and conduct themselves in a manner acceptable to Christ's standards (Colossians 1:9-11). The Bible also states that the motive of a person's heart is important to God (1 Samuel 16:7, 1 Corinthians 4:5).

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes seeks to impact the motives of the heart and encourages athletes and coaches of all athletic levels to use the powerful medium of athletics to make a difference for Jesus Christ. The rising popularity of Mixed Martial Arts presents a significant opportunity for FCA to reach an emerging sports culture with the truth of Jesus Christ.

Violence in Sports

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is a ministry that encourages athletes, coaches and all whom they influence to use the powerful medium of sports to make a difference for Jesus Christ. FCA believes the sports environment has the potential to foster values such as integrity, service, teamwork and excellence. Athletes and coaches, as well as parents and fans, have the opportunity to show respect for each other and for those within the competition.

The Bible is clear that Christians should exercise self-control in everything (1 Corinthians 9:25) and conduct themselves in a manner acceptable to Christ's standards (Colossians 1:9-11). The Bible also explains the importance of submitting to authority and obeying the rules in an agreeable way (Titus 3:1-2). Excessive aggression or violence with intent to harm is not acceptable in any form, and FCA does not condone these behaviors in sports or anywhere else.

Violent Sports

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is a ministry that encourages athletes and coaches of all athletic levels to use the powerful medium of sports to make a difference for Jesus Christ. FCA sees sports as an agent to foster values such as integrity, service, teamwork and excellence within competition. These values are cultivated through the intention of the heart, not the action of the game. The Bible states that the motive of a person's heart is important to God (1 Samuel 16:7, 1 Corinthians 4:5).

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes seeks to impact the motives of the heart within all sports, including sports with more potentially violent competition, such as football, boxing and even sanctioned and controlled ultimate fighting. By competing fairly within the rules of the game, participants in more violent sports still have the opportunity to show respect for each other and impact the hearts of those with whom they compete.

Abortion

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is a ministry built on biblical principles and truths. The Bible clearly states that all people are made in God's image and are of great worth and value to Him. The Bible also says that God knows each individual person and has a plan for his or her life even before birth. Psalm 139:13-16, Galatians 1:15 and Ephesians 1:3-4 are just a few Scriptures that address these topics.

The Bible also states that the sanctity of human life is of utmost importance to God. Passages such as Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 30:19 reflect God's desire for humans to choose life. Because of the Bible's clear stance on this subject, FCA cannot condone abortion.

The Bible states in Romans 3:23 that all people have sinned and are in need of Christ's forgiveness and restoration. For those who may have already experienced an abortion, 1 John 1:9 promises that God is faithful to forgive and heal those who seek it. In following Christ's example, FCA strongly believes that every person should be treated with love, dignity and respect. As a result, FCA desires to serve and support those who desire God's healing in their lives.

Suicide

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes acknowledges the concern over the growing rates of suicide, especially among adolescents, and recognizes losing a loved one to suicide is a difficult, painful and often confusing experience.

The Bible states that the sanctity of human life is of utmost importance to God. Passages such as Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 30:19 reflect God's desire for humans to preserve life. Because of the Bible's clear stance on this subject, FCA cannot condone suicide as acceptable for a Christian.

The Bible is also clear that for those believe in Jesus Christ and accept his gift of Salvation, they will experience eternal life, as stated in John 5:24 and 1 Corinthians 1:8. While suicide is a sin for a Christian, this one act of disobedience does not counteract a believer's commitment to Jesus Christ and assurance of eternal life.

FCA recognizes an individual contemplating or committing the act of suicide is not acting in a normal state of mind due various medical and emotional reasons. FCA desires to serve and support those who desire God's healing in their lives as they deal with the effects of losing someone to suicide, as well as intervene when an individual is contemplating suicide by directing them to any professional help they may need, as well as pointing them to the truth of God's Word.

Sexual Purity

FCA is a ministry built upon biblical principles and truths. God desires His children to lead pure and holy lives. The Bible teaches that the appropriate place for sexual expression is in the context of a marital relationship. The biblical description of marriage is one man and one woman in a lifelong commitment.

While upholding God's standard of holiness, FCA strongly affirms God's love and redemptive power in the individual who chooses to follow Him. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin and seek His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). FCA's desire is to encourage individuals to trust in Jesus and turn away from any impure lifestyle.

Those who desire to be employees or volunteer leaders in any form of FCA's ministry are required to agree upon and sign FCA's Statement of Faith, Sexual Purity Statement, Youth Protection Policy and other responsibilities of a Christian outlined in the Bible.

When a FCA staff person or volunteer chooses to not adhere to these criteria, that person may be required to discontinue serving with FCA. Specific cases are outlined in the FCA Staff Manual.

FCA believes two of the fundamental values of the Christian life are forgiveness and restitution; therefore, FCA extends these principles to all people, including staff and volunteers.

Marriage

FCA is a ministry built upon biblical principles and truths. God has ordained marriage and defined it as a covenant between one man and one woman. (Genesis 2:18-25) (Matthew 19:4-5). FCA believes that marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as stated in Scripture.

Those who desire to be employees or volunteer leaders in any form of FCA's ministry are required to agree upon and sign FCA's Statement of Faith, Sexual Purity Statement, Youth Protection Policy and other responsibilities of a Christian outlined in the Bible.

When a FCA staff person or volunteer chooses to not adhere to these criteria, that person may be required to discontinue serving with FCA. Specific cases are outlined in the FCA Staff Manual.

FCA believes two of the fundamental values of the Christian life are forgiveness and restitution; therefore, FCA extends these principles to all people, including staff and volunteers.

Homosexuality

FCA is a ministry built upon biblical principles and truths. God desires His children to lead pure and holy lives. The Bible teaches that the appropriate place for sexual expression is in the context of a marital relationship. The biblical description of marriage is one man and one woman in a lifelong commitment.

The Bible clearly states in several passages that participating in homosexual activities and other sexual sins is outside of God's will for a Christian. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18-20). Because of the Bible's clear stance on this subject, FCA does not condone any sexually immoral act outlined in the Bible, including homosexuality.

While upholding God's standard of holiness, FCA strongly affirms God's love and redemptive power in the individual who chooses to follow Him. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin and seek His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (**Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11**). FCA's desire is to encourage individuals to trust in Jesus and turn away from any impure lifestyle.

The Bible is very clear that all people are of great worth and value to God. In following Christ's example, FCA strongly believes that every person should be treated with love, dignity and respect. FCA believes the good news of Jesus Christ is for all people, as Luke 2:10 states, and anyone is welcome to attend FCA ministry Huddles and activities.

Those who desire to be employees or volunteer leaders in any form of FCA's ministry are required to agree upon and sign FCA's Statement of Faith, Sexual Purity Statement, Youth Protection Policy and other responsibilities of a Christian outlined in the Bible.

Sexual Identity

FCA is a ministry built upon biblical principles and truths. Scripture is clear in that Christians are to find their identity in Christ. We find complete and appropriate expression of who we are, including sexuality, when our actions align with God's design for sexual expression in the context of a biblical marriage relationship. God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (Romans 1:26-27) (1 Corinthians 7: 1-16)

The Bible is very clear that all people are of great worth and value to God. The Bible also states in Romans 3:23 that all people have sinned and are in need of Christ's forgiveness and restoration. In following Christ's example, FCA strongly believes that every person should be treated with love, dignity and respect. FCA believes the good news of Jesus Christ is for all people, as Luke 2:10 states, and anyone is welcome to attend FCA ministry Huddles and activities.

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Gender Identity

FCA is a ministry built upon biblical principles and truths. All persons are created in God's image and are made to glorify Him (Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 43:7). God designed and created two distinct and complementary sexes: male and **female (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6)**. God has given unique identities to men and women for His glory, and each person's gender is determined by biological sex instead of one's self-perception.

The Bible is very clear that all people are of great worth and value to God. The Bible also states in Romans 3:23 that all people have sinned and are in need of Christ's forgiveness and restoration. In following Christ's example, FCA strongly believes that every person should be treated with love, dignity and respect. FCA believes the good news of Jesus Christ is for all people, as Luke 2:10 states, and anyone is welcome to attend FCA ministry Huddles and activities.

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Social Issues Discussions

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If you find yourself in a social issues discussion, the responses below are designed to assist in a respectful and loving dialog.

Please contact the NSC on issues that are national in scope, or if you are uncertain on that, so leaders may strategize with local leaders to respond if necessary through careful thought and prayer.

Questions related to: “Is FCA politically or socially active?”

FCA is a ministry organization with one vision: “to see the world impacted for Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.” Our focus for over 60 years has been to minister to coaches and athletes, and, in a world where many headlines compete for our attention, FCA welcomes the opportunity to share what we do as a ministry and the impact we have with others in various arenas of society.

Questions specifically related to bigotry or racism, tensions and violence, and addressing reconciliation:

As a ministry that believes all men and women are created in God’s image, FCA mourns the fact that racial tension still exists in America today. God has clearly commanded us to reject hatred, and our hope is that the athletic field remains a place where individuals of every race and background come together with respect for each other, our country and enjoyment for the game. We will continue to minister to coaches and athletes to present them with the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Questions specifically related to an FCA-related school or program being accused of forcing students to accept faith:

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes holds steadfast to the ideal that every player, coach and leader has the right and the freedom to choose to participate in voluntary activities according to their individual religious beliefs. We count it a privilege to help coaches and athletes fulfill God’s purpose for their lives and commit to the adventure of following Jesus Christ for a lifetime.

Political Statements Reminder

Please remember that because of FCA's 501(c)3 status, **staff must not make political statements directly or indirectly endorsing or promoting a particular political candidate, the "type of candidate" that should be supported, or political issue.** Doing so could cause FCA to lose its non-profit, tax-exempt status. This includes any form of communications whether in person, at FCA gatherings or events, or any digital channels such as social media, web, blog or email, etc. This includes links as well.

This restriction is not intended to restrict free expression on political matters when an individual is speaking for themselves and not for FCA or in their role at FCA:

- If you indicate you are employed by FCA on a personal social media account or digital channel, you must include a disclaimer in your profile that your views are your own and do not represent the views of FCA.
- If you make a statement or posting on an issue, cause or current event related to FCA, you must include the disclaimer as well.

Let's help each other. Please remind staff of this if you see communications with political statements. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. If you have any questions, contact Ken Williams. kwilliams@fca.org