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Abstract

The appointment of sport chaplains in public colleges or universities can be controversial and contested as in a recent case at Iowa State University. Some scholarly attention has been paid to the relationship between sport and religion, but studies on sport chaplains are just recently emerging. Through textual analysis of media coverage and promotional materials, this study examines how collegiate sport chaplains, their ministry organizations, and public universities navigate the competing interests of evangelical chaplains and state-funded institutions. The study explores the roles and responsibilities of collegiate sport chaplains at two public universities (University of Tennessee and Auburn University). It also provides a brief review of the historical context of muscular Christianity for the discussion of collegiate sport chaplaincy.

Keywords

case study, chaplains, collegiate sport, First Amendment, muscular Christianity

Combining sport participation and public proclamations of religious beliefs appears to be particularly common in the United States (Coakley, 2009). Collegiate sport chaplains are part of this phenomenon. Thus far little research has been done in this area (Dzikus, Waller, & Hardin, 2011; Waller, Dzikus, & Hardin, 2008, 2010) although sport chaplains minister in a number of athletic departments across the United States. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA, 2009) estimates that hundreds of chaplains serve in intercollegiate sports in a variety of ministries. It lists full-time sport chaplains at 24 public and four private colleges and universities. Of the latter only one was religiously affiliated at the time. A study by Dzikus et al. (2011) created a list of 149

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part-time and full-time collegiate sport chaplains. Of those, 64.4% served in public and 35.6% in private institutions. In addition, a survey of athletic departments at Catholic colleges and universities found more than 200 chaplains ministering to athletes and coaches (Hastings, DelleMonache, Kelly, & Nazar, 2006). This study focuses on the role of sport chaplains in state-funded institutions in the United States, where a potential violation of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, inclusion/exclusion, and preference to Christianity are among the contested issues (Lupu & Tuttle, 2008; "Petition," 2007).

Waller et al. (2008) raised critical questions regarding the qualifications and roles of collegiate sport chaplains including the provision of counseling services and the separation of church and state. Whereas the constitutionality of sport chaplains at private schools is not in doubt, it is a potentially problematic issue when sport chaplains serve in athletic departments of public institutions. FCA is a Christian, nonprofit sport ministry and major provider of sport chaplains and character coaches for public colleges and universities. Supported by a legal opinion provided by the Alliance Defense Fund, FCA (2009) maintains that its chaplains do not violate the law, as long as they do not receive any funding from those institutions and as long as the institutions, chaplains, and coaches follow specific guidelines. These guidelines will be discussed later in this article.

The purpose of this study is to examine how collegiate sport chaplains, their ministry organizations, and public universities navigate the competing interests of evangelical chaplains and state-funded institutions, through examining how they publically present themselves in published media.¹ The study explores the role and responsibilities of collegiate sport chaplains at two public universities, the University of Tennessee and Auburn University. It also provides a brief historical context for the discussion of collegiate sport chaplaincy and muscular Christianity.

The following discussion of two case studies of collegiate sport chaplains is based on a textual analysis of a variety of sources including newspapers, web sites, promotional videos, media guides, and chaplain training manuals. While these sources may not reveal the actual roles and responsibilities of these sport chaplains, they do provide an opportunity to interpret the individuals' self-description in terms of their roles and responsibilities and the way these are mediated to the public through FCA, the athletic departments where sport chaplains work, and the chaplains themselves.

This study aims to encourage universities, colleges, and athletic departments to consider the roles and responsibilities of sport chaplains in their organizations. Although Coakley (2009) has raised the question whether sports and religion are a promising combination and considerable scholarly attention has been paid to the relationship between sport and religion (Baker, 2007; Hall, 1994; Higgs & Braswell, 2004; Hoffman, 2010, 1992; Magdalinski & Chandler, 2002; Putney, 2001), the subject of sport chaplaincy has received little attention within these broader works (Ladd & Mathisen, 1999). Given the growing popularity of sport ministries and the potential legal and ethical issues related to the work of sport chaplains within public athletic

departments (Waller et al., 2008), collegiate sport chaplaincy is an important area of scholarly inquiry.

This study underscores what Waller et al. (2008) described as promises and problems of collegiate sport chaplaincy. On one hand, chaplains promise holistic care for student-athletes by adding psychospiritual support. On the other hand, potential issues arise with religious coercion and, in public institutions, separation between church and state. In published media (e.g., web sites, media guides), chaplains are depicted as members of the teams' support staff, but they also play a role as recruitment and marketing tools. Athletic departments and sport ministries appear to count on a mutually beneficial image transfer.

Method

Since this study is an interpretive act, it is necessary to recognize that the sources or texts mentioned are open to various readings and interpretations. However, some readings may be more likely than others, and some interpretations may be closer to the preferred reading of the original authors. This dynamic is widely acknowledged in hermeneutic or textual analysis approaches in sport sociology. As early as 1990, Duncan noted, "Although texts may strongly suggest a particular reading . . . there are always oppositional readings" (p. 27). Likewise, some possible interpretations may clearly be outside of "what makes sense." In the following textual analysis, an attempt is made to "make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made" of the respective texts (McKee, 2003, p. 1). It is important to acknowledge that the representations of a particular sport chaplain, for example, on the pages of a media guide, may not reflect the chaplain's own understanding of his role and responsibilities. Furthermore, when basing interpretation on a chaplain being quoted in a newspaper or on a web site, it is assumed that this actually reflects what that person said. This certainly is a major assumption and limitation of this study (Hill, 2006).

Whether the authors are the FCA, athletic department staff, or the chaplains themselves, their texts have a mediating function in creating particular understandings of the role of chaplains. Similarly, referencing the press coverage of the 2001 foot-and-mouth epidemic in England, Hill (2006) points out that "press reporters were not consciously inventing, but they were operating according to a very definite 'way of telling'" (p. 117). How journalists report about sport chaplains may in turn be framed by the way athletic departments choose to represent them in their publications. For example, media guides

are the primary means by which colleges and universities market their athletic teams to the press, advertisers, and corporate sponsors as well as alumni, donors, and other campus and community members who read them. Unlike many game programs, the media guides tend to be thicker, slicker portrayals of the images

the institution wishes to present about itself and its athletes. (Buysse & Embser-Herbert, 2004, p. 67)

The athletic department and FCA web sites examined in this study arguably serve a similar function.

Based on these sources, this study discusses two full-time FCA sport chaplains with assignments in “big-time” college football programs. The analysis begins with James Mitchell at the University of Tennessee, whose tenure as sport chaplain in the athletic department from 2003 through 2008 seemed largely uncontested. Next, Chette Williams at Auburn University will be discussed, whose campus has become a major training ground for FCA collegiate chaplains. Williams is closely involved in the training of future chaplains and has also been at the center of some controversy caused by critical questions about his status at Auburn raised by the *New York Times* (Roberts, 2005). A background on the history of FCA and its chaplain ministry will be offered before exploring the case studies in more depth.

A Brief History of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes

In 1954, Don McClanen, a 29-year-old basketball coach and athletic director of Eastern Oklahoma A&M, founded FCA as a nonprofit, interdenominational ministry. McClanen received considerable support by Branch Rickey, then general manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates (Dunn, 1980). The goal was “a ministry of coaches and athletes, the harnessing of heroes to reach those who idolized them for a life for the Lord” (Dunn, 1980, p. 14).

Today, FCA is one of the largest sport ministries and providers of collegiate sport chaplains in the United States. Its current 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” (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2011a, para. 3). Among its other ministry efforts in 2010, the organization reached more than 313,000 participants on 6,272 junior high, high school, and college campuses through local clubs (“Huddles”), Bible studies, and special events (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2011b).

FCA in the Context of Neo-Muscular Christianity

Putney (2001) refers to FCA as a “neo-muscular Christian” group (p. 10). He describes muscular Christianity as “a Christian commitment to health and manliness” (p. 11). Neo-muscular Christianity is a product of the reengagement of American evangelicalism with sport in the 1950s (Ladd & Mathisen, 1999).

According to Ladd and Mathisen (1999), the relationship between evangelical muscular Christians and sport in the United States has been marked by an ebb and flow between engagement, disengagement, and reengagement. Proponents originally developed the movement in response to religious teachings and practices they perceived to be too ascetic, otherworldly, esoteric, and—most importantly—effeminate.

Although connections between physical strength, manliness, and morality had been made before, muscular Christianity was initially practiced most distinctly in England during the 1850s. In 1857, the *Saturday Review* first mentioned the phrase “muscular Christianity” in a review of Charles Kinglsey’s *Two Years Ago* (Hall, 1994). Thomas Hughes also expressed the idea in his influential *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* (1857) and made explicit reference to it in *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1860). Hughes’s work both reflected and reinforced the role competitive sports played in the Protestant public schools that educated White, upper-middle class men (Allen, 1994).

Toward the end of the 19th century, muscular Christianity was particularly influential in the United States. Between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century, the movement won over most middle-class skeptics in the United States and developed in a distinctly American brand of muscular Christianity. Ladd and Mathisen (1999) argue, “This American evangelical form was more utilitarian and extrinsic in its attitude toward sport, more practice-oriented and less idealistic in its strategies, and more closely linked to American Protestant revivalism” (p. 20). This era of evangelical engagement, however, would undergo a transformation after the turn of the century.

As sport approached its “golden age” in the 1920s, the “age of play” increasingly displaced earlier notions about the virtues of sport. Instead of character development, consumption, spectacle, and amusement took center stage. According to Dyreson (1989), “[American] society began to abandon much of the Protestant ethos that had served it for so long and assumed the ethics of affluence” (p. 272).

In the early 20th century, many evangelical Christians began to disengage from the world of sports. Evangelical Protestantism in general had lost steam after World War I, in part due to fragmentation from within and broader cultural changes from without. In elite sports, concerns about ethical problems in professional and collegiate sports caused many evangelicals to become disenchanted (Ladd & Mathisen, 1999). Changes in the YMCA, once the very embodiment of muscular Christianity, illustrate this process. By 1907, “Y” members were no longer required to be associated with evangelical churches, the leadership placed less importance on Bible studies, and by 1911, the “Y” retreated from elite, competitive sports (Putney, 2001; Rader, 2009). According to Ladd and Mathisen (1999), “As sport shifted into second gear and gained momentum in American society, evangelical Christians shifted into neutral and were no longer a part of the dynamic that drove the institutionalization of sport” (p. 88).

The current phenomenon of collegiate sport chaplains is a product of the reengagement between American evangelicals and sport after World War II (Ladd & Mathisen, 1999). This reengagement was facilitated by a resurgence of evangelicalism (Ladd & Mathisen, 1999) and an exploding popularity and geographical expansion of professional sports (Rader, 2009).

Ladd and Mathisen (1999) credit fundamentalist Protestant preacher Billy Graham and mile-runner Gil Dodds for harnessing athletic star power for revivalist meetings in the 1940s, and Orient Crusaders’ Sport Ambassadors program for delivering the organizational blueprint for modern sport evangelism. Together, they were part of the

pragmatic wing of fundamentalist Christians who were willing to accommodate popular culture to revive religious fervor, especially among American boys and men. By the 1950s this change in evangelical attitudes toward sports facilitated the emergence of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) as “the granddaddy of evangelistic sports ministries” (Hoffman, 2010, p. 136). FCA would become “the largest and most influential of all the religious athletes’ organizations” (Baker, 2007, p. 199).

FCA and similar organizations approached the marriage of sport and religion distinctly different from their predecessors. Whereas 19th-century proponents of muscular Christianity primarily sought to use the combination of sport and religion to promote the development of character (albeit a distinctly White, male, middle-class notion of it), Evangelicals in the second half of the 20th century mostly used sport as a promotional tool (Hoffman, 2010; Ladd & Mathisen, 1999). According to the *New York Times*, former FCA director of communications John Dodderidge encapsulated this approach by noting, “If athletes can sell razor blades and soft drinks, why can’t they sell the Gospel?” (Smith, 1997, p. SM26). Dodderidge merely echoed what FCA president John Erickson reportedly had told *Sports Illustrated*’s Frank Deford in 1976:

If athletes can endorse products, why can’t they endorse a way of life? Athletes and coaches, be it right or wrong, have a platform in this country. Athletes have power, a voice. So, simply, how can we best use this for something constructive in the faith life? (p. 69)

In addition to such neo-muscular Christian ideas, FCA (2009) expresses more classical notions of the movement, when it points to the history of chaplains in the military to legitimize their own sport chaplains:

Individuals who are serving teams in the capacity of Character Coach or Chaplain have been around for 100-plus years. Our military learned, as far back as the Revolutionary War, that during times of war Chaplains were critical to counsel and motivate fighting men. As you prepare your athletes for the battle of competition, a Chaplain that comes alongside you to serve you, your coaching staff and your players is a time-tested game plan of success. (p. 2)

Comparing athletes to “fighting men” who prepare for battle is muscular Christianity’s way of prescribing preferred forms of masculinity as an antidote to effeminacy. Dunn (1980), author of a book on the first 25 years of the organization, also depicted FCA’s influence on one college coach in classic muscular-Christian terms. Describing the impact of FCA’s Weekend of Champions in Dallas in 1969 on University of Michigan baseball coach Moby Benedict, Dunn writes,

Previously, [Benedict] had been embarrassed to say that he was a Christian because he thought others would think it unmanly of him. After his participation

in the Weekend of Champions . . . , however, he remarked that he'd like to have a team of Christian "sissies," that he'd be willing to take on anybody in the country in athletic competition, and that he knew he would come out on top. (pp. 122-123)

Such a reaction, according to Dunn "was typical of many who saw the force of the Fellowship for the first time" (p. 122).

In summary, changing attitudes toward sports among evangelical Christians facilitated the emergence of FCA as "the granddaddy of evangelistic sports ministries" in the 1950s and 1960s (Hoffman, 2010, p. 136). Despite a longer history of professional chaplaincy and muscular Christianity, the sport chaplains currently serving in public universities are a relatively recent phenomenon that developed out of the reengagement of evangelicalism with sport in the United States after World War II.

FCA at the University of Alabama

A brief outline of the history of FCA at the University of Alabama exemplifies the development that led to the involvement of full-time sport chaplains at public institutions. The path includes the establishment of local campus ministries with a focus on student-athletes, the appointment of local clergy as team chaplains, and finally FCA employees working as full-time chaplains to the football team.

The FCA "Huddle" at the University of Alabama is the longest running FCA campus organization (Atcheson, 2000). The local chapter started in September in 1964, just 10 years after FCA's founding. Since its inception, the Alabama FCA has offered weekly meetings during the school year, mostly under leadership from the football team. Allan Watson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, started the group after he had read about FCA and realized the potential for evangelism: "I saw some committed Christian athletes who had much to give other athletes who needed their influence" (Atcheson, 2000, p. 269). Among the 9 participants at the first meeting were Steve Sloan, the school's quarterback and later athletic director (1987-1989) and Wayne Atcheson, at the time a graduate assistant in the athletic department, who would later serve as the school's sports information director as well as associate director of the donor program for football and basketball. Atcheson is also the author of *Impact for Christ: How FCA Influenced the Sports World* (1994) and *Faith of the Crimson Tide* (2000).

Over the years, FCA and the University of Alabama developed a particularly close relationship, as Atcheson (2000) notes, "The FCA is considered part of the rich tradition of football and the athletic department at Alabama itself" (p. 60). By the mid 1960s, Alabama FCA athletes regularly gave invocations at football home games (Atcheson, 2000). By the 1970s, football head coach "Bear" Bryant routinely presented the local FCA chapter a check for Christmas that would cover the group's annual budget (Atcheson, 2000).

During the 1980s, Alabama's football program further strengthened its Christian ties. In 1987, new football head coach Bill Curry recruited local reverend Sylvester Croom, Sr. as team chaplain for the Crimson Tide (Atcheson, 2000). Croom, Sr. also spoke at FCA meetings on campus. During the early 1970s, Croom, Sr. was given credit for helping Black recruits to overcome their concerns about playing for "Bear" Bryant. Two of Croom's sons Sylvester and Kelvin played football for Alabama. Croom, Jr. became a standout player for the Crimson Tide (1972-1974) and the first Black football head coach in the Southeastern Conference (Bain-Selbo, 2009). Also in 1987, Alabama players initiated the now familiar postgame prayers at the 50-yard line. The practice originated with FCA athletes when the Crimson Tide played Penn State (Atcheson, 2000). The following year, the University of Alabama officially recognized the 25th anniversary of the Alabama FCA Huddle in a pregame ceremony. At the time, Steve Sloan, founding member of the FCA Huddle at Alabama, was the school's athletic director (Atcheson, 2000).

The 1990s brought continued growth to FCA's efforts at Alabama. By the end of the decade, attendance at the weekly FCA meetings averaged 240, up from about 25 during the organization's early stages (Atcheson, 2000). In 1997, under new head coach Mike DuBose and at the suggestion of athletic trainer Bill McDonald, Alabama instituted a chapel service on Friday nights or Saturday mornings before games. Players and coaches affiliated with FCA were among the most active participants (Atcheson, 2000). According to Atcheson (2000), "Chapel services are voluntary but are well attended, and add to the spiritual preparation before the team boards the buses for the stadium on Saturday" (p. 287). In 1998, new assistant coach Ronnie Cottrell suggested that the team should have a team chaplain and coach DuBose selected Bruce Chesser, pastor of the local Calvary Baptist Church, who also took over the lead at the chapel services. Chesser was the last local clergy member to serve as team chaplain before the arrival of one of FCA's sport chaplains.

In 2002, former Crimson Tide player Jeremiah Castille became the first full-time FCA director at the University of Alabama. Atcheson (2002) described Castille's responsibilities as follows:

Daily duties for Jeremiah will include counseling the Alabama football and basketball players primarily at the start. His time will be spent one-on-one with athletes as a mentor with their social, academic, spiritual, team and individual concerns. He will conduct team chapel services. He will also assist in the weekly FCA meetings . . . (para. 11)

At the time, other universities in the southeast already had similar positions established. Wes Yeary was in his 6th year in a full-time position with FCA at University of Mississippi; Chette Williams (Auburn) was in his 4th year; Ken Smith was in his 2nd year at Mississippi State, after having served as team chaplain at Florida State and South Carolina; and Kevin Hynes, "brother-in-law to Georgia head coach Mark Richt," was serving at the University of Georgia (Atcheson, 2002, para. 12). In 2004, Castille left his position with FCA reportedly seeking a financially more stable

situation for his family. While focusing his efforts on his own foundation and ministry, Castille stayed on as Alabama's team chaplain (Clark, 2004; Gold & Roberts, 2007). First Alan Ward, then Gary Cramer took over the position of FCA campus director at Alabama, where Cramer has "the privilege of serving as an 'inspirational coach' to Bama's student-athletes, coaches, and athletic staff," according to Alabama's official athletic web site (CBS Interactive, 2011, para. 1).

This brief historical outline illustrates the rise of the modern full-time sport chaplain at a public university. It demonstrates how closely the interests of FCA and the University of Alabama are interwoven and the role of key "players" with personal and professional interests in both FCA and the athletic department. This close relationship between FCA and public universities has received some critical reception by scholars (Griffin, 1998; Waller et al., 2008) and, in once case, by faculty members.

Resistance to FCA Chaplains at Public Universities

The first, and thus far only, known case of organized resistance to an appointment of a full-time FCA chaplain at a public institution occurred at Iowa State University (ISU) in 2007, when 96 faculty members signed a petition that expressed strong opposition "to any effort to introduce chaplains or any other form of religious counseling, whether publicly or privately funded, into any part of our athletic programs" ("Petition," 2007, p. 1). This example illustrates a number of potential legal, ethical, and social issues that arise when athletic departments at public universities provide privileged access for selected ministers to student-athletes (Waller et al., 2008).

At ISU, the concerns of the faculty included a potential violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and "negative consequences for non-Christian students, and even for Christian students who may not believe in the particular religious form of Christianity that such a chaplain might endorse" ("Petition," 2007, p. 1). Despite the criticism, ISU's Athletic Director supported the appointment: "Much like we have offered our student-athletes access to drug and alcohol counselors, sports psychologists, nutritionists, hypnotists, physical therapists, learning specialists, chiropractors, physicians, etc., we are now going to also provide access to a spiritual advisor" (Powers, 2007, para. 10).

After some deliberation, ISU's President Gregory Geoffroy decided to approve the position with some caveats. First of all, the position was titled *Volunteer Life Skills Assistant* instead of team chaplain and was "not be funded with any State, University, Athletic, or ISU Foundation funds" (Geoffroy, 2007, p. 1). Further provisions stated,

The person holding this position is explicitly prohibited from acting as an agent to promote a particular religion or religious viewpoint, pressuring in any way student-athletes to choose religion over non-religion, or coercing, directly or indirectly, student-athletes to participate in any type of religious activity . . .

The person selected for this position must be prepared for and committed to assisting with the full range of diverse belief systems that he or she may reasonably encounter among student-athletes. (p. 1)

ISU subsequently selected Kevin Lykins for the position (Witosky, 2007b) and FCA hired Lykins as the "Iowa State University Area Representative" (Iowa Fellowship of Christian Athletes, n.d.). The ISU case illustrates the potential legal and ethical ramifications of sport chaplains serving at public institutions and the contested nature of this position. Aware of such potential challenges, FCA maintains that it is not violating the law when it provides chaplain services to student-athletes.

FCA on Rights and Responsibilities of Its Chaplains

FCA bases its statement on the rights and responsibilities of its chaplains serving public institutions on a legal opinion provided by the Alliance Defense Fund (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2009). The opinion points out that FCA chaplains work with teams at the invitation of their coach. Thus, in regard to the law, the chaplains enjoy similar rights and responsibilities as invited guest speakers and volunteers. These chaplains "have no formal relationship with the university, are not paid by the university, and they do not speak on behalf of the university" (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2009, p. 2). Since it might be perceived to be an obvious breach of the establishment clause of the First Amendment if a public university were to pay a sport chaplain of a particular religion, the matter of funding for these positions deserves more attention.

According to FCA, its chaplains "are responsible for developing their own funding base . . . with the help of a Local Leadership Board" and they do not receive direct funding from the public universities where they minister (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2009, p. 1). To fund their position, FCA encourages its chaplains to target the school's alumni with the help of head coaches and school administrators, who "can open the door for you to get connected with key alumni who would support you . . . If a Head Coach knows your needs, he can help greatly in getting you in front of alumni" (Yeary, 2007, p. 21). FCA at the University of South Carolina (USC) illustrates how the organization raises funds for its chaplains.

FCA's chaplain ministry at USC began in 2002, when Adrian Despres started to work with the Gamecocks football team under head coach Lou Holtz. At the time, Despres was already a member of the ministry staff of Kingdom Building Ministries (KBM; Kingdom Building Ministries, n.d.). FCA and KBM currently cosponsor an annual USC Spring Game Rally with player testimonies and devotional messages from team chaplain Despres. The event is held in the football stadium directly preceding the Garnet and Black Spring Game (South Carolina Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2011a). In 2005, Jack Easterby joined the staff as FCA's campus director at USC and chaplain to the men's basketball team. Since 2007, Frank Hester also works with the football team (South Carolina Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2011e).

To garner support for this staff, the South Carolina FCA publishes a number of testimonials on its web site. For example, current head coach Steve Spurrier provides the following endorsement:

The FCA Chaplain staff are a vital part of our football program. Our goals, for all our players, are to do their best in school, on the field and in everyday life.

We want our players to represent our University in a first class manner every day. The spiritual life of each player on our team is extremely important as we strive to accomplish our Carolina football team goals. (South Carolina Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2011d, para. 1-2)

The coach thus encourages potential donors to believe that supporting FCA's chaplains directly benefits USC's football team.

To finance its chaplain ministry at USC, FCA is working on a "vision budget" that projects for an annual budget of US\$200,000 that would fund two "full-time campus-wide Chaplains (male & female)", three "part-time football Chaplains," and "an administrative assistant;" another US\$50,000 is projected for ministry resources, outreach, and travel (South Carolina Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2011b, para. 3). The funding plan calls for the recruitment of more than 300 FCA "Teammates" from South Carolina, of whom two thirds are expected to contribute US\$100 per month over 5 years. In addition, the plan is to increase "FCA Staff personal Home Team support," also consisting of monthly and annual donors (South Carolina Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2011b, para. 4). Finally, a 3-year major gifts effort is set out to raise US\$500,000 from donors for the statewide FCA organization in South Carolina (South Carolina Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2011c). In addition to stressing that public universities do not provide funding for its chaplains, FCA further explains the rights and responsibilities of its chaplains.

According to the Alliance Defense Fund, FCA's chaplains "generally do not have a constitutional right to counsel student-athletes on public university campuses" (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2009, p. 2). As invited guest speakers, however, sport chaplains do enjoy some protection from the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment and students have associational rights allowing them to meet with chaplains on or off campus (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2009). In regard to the use of university facilities, FCA maintains that its staff "may use the same rooms made generally available to all guest speakers and/or volunteers," on invitation of a coach or professor (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2009, p. 2).

To avoid legal challenges, FCA advises its chaplains/character coaches that although they "may be able to provide religious counseling . . . it must never be forced upon a student. Typically any religious discussions with students should be initiated by [the students]" (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2009, p. 2). The chaplains "cannot treat students differently based upon their religious beliefs and/or views" (p. 2).

Furthermore, they “must not give the impression to students that the university coach or the university is sponsoring or endorsing the FCA [character] coach’s speech or activities” (p. 2). The previous examples of the relationships between FCA and the Universities of South Carolina and Alabama already make it clear that the point of whether or not public schools create the impression of endorsing FCA will be important for the discussion of the following case studies.

James Mitchell at the University of Tennessee

The case of James Mitchell at the University of Tennessee (UT) illustrates how the athletic department used the position of the team chaplain to promote a positive image for its football program. In 2002, the retirement of John Stucky, Assistant Athletics Director for Physical Development, left a deep void in the football program at UT. Stucky was not only in charge of strength and conditioning but also fulfilled a less formal role. On Stucky’s later passing, then football Head Coach Phillip Fulmer remembered Stucky as “a great man” who

meant so much to so many people whose lives he touched. He was a man of great Christian faith and he shared that faith with all who would listen. He was a coach who motivated and inspired young men to reach their potential on and off the playing field. (“Ex-Strength Coach,” 2007, para. 5).

The football program decided to fill Stucky’s informal role as a confidant and spiritual leader with a sport chaplain. In an interview republished on an FCA web site (Moore, 2007), Fulmer explains,

Several of us coaches believe very strongly in the spiritual aspect of bringing up young people. We don’t cram anything down anybody’s throat but we try to give them spiritual guidance—as well as academic, social and obviously athletic guidance. We had a void in the spiritual aspect. (para. 15)

The replacement came in the person of James Mitchell funded by FCA. Mitchell subsequently served as the team chaplain at UT until December of 2008, when head coach Fulmer resigned. Mitchell followed former UT offense coordinator David Cutcliffe, who had taken the post as football head coach at Duke University in 2007 (Duke Sports Information, 2009). The following discussion of Mitchell’s role as the sport chaplain at UT does not imply any wrongdoing or unethical behavior on the part of Mitchell or the university. It is meant as an illustration of the complicated and at times unclear relationship between sport chaplains and athletic departments at public colleges and universities.

Mitchell had coached 13 years in college football before he became the Campus Director for FCA at UT in 2003. He has also served as the National Director for Pro Athlete Outreach and had been ordained as a nondenominational minister (“2007

University of Tennessee Football Guide,” 2007; Moore, 2007). He worked out of an FCA office located in UT’s Neyland-Thompson Sports Center, which also hosts the football program’s indoor practice field as well as strength and conditioning, dressing, health care, meeting, and coaching facilities. Since the public university could not compensate Mitchell, a web site asked visitors to “prayerfully consider a donation that will allow Mitch to continue to minister to players, coaches and wives of the University of Tennessee Athletic department” (“James,” 2005a, para. 3).

Given the separation between church and state, Mitchell’s position in UT’s athletic department may be controversial. Thus it is not surprising that he was not listed in the Athletic Department’s staff directory (“Athletic Department,” 2008). However, in a variety of print and online publications by the university, Mitchell was variably described as “team chaplain” or “FCA Director.” For example, he was pictured on the football program’s web site under “Tennessee Men’s Support Coaching Staff” with the title “Team Chaplain.” His position could be found along side other full-time positions such as the Assistant Athletic Director (Football Operations), the Equipment Manager, and the Assistant Director (Student-Athlete Welfare; “Tennessee Men’s Support,” 2008). In the *2007 Volunteers Bowl Guide* Mitchell was again listed under “football staff” this time with the title “FCA Director” (“Volunteer Bowl Guide,” 2007, p. 5). In the same publication he appeared in a group photo of the “2007 Tennessee Volunteers Coaching Staff” (p. 9).

The university featured Mitchell most prominently on two pages of the *2007 University of Tennessee Football Guide* where he was introduced as “team chaplain for the Volunteers.” The article provided the following insight into Mitchell’s role with the team: “Whether it is a hug on the neck, a kick-start or just listening, ‘Mitch’ has made a difference in the players’ lives while helping to mold them into well-rounded players, and more importantly, good men” (pp. 20-21). The *Football Guide*’s function as a public relations and recruitment tool was evident considering a number of testimonials concerning Mitchell’s work with the team. Jesse Mahelona, a former UT and NFL player, says about Mitchell,

I believe he is a father figure, a dad away from home. It’s a blessing to have a man of God we can turn to for guidance and love. But, ultimately, he’s an inspiration for the entire University of Tennessee. (p. 20).

Oklahoma native Robert Meachem, a 2007 NFL first-round draft pick was quoted, “I came to Tennessee because on my visit, I could tell how close, like a family, everyone was. I saw that I could grow to become a great person and receiver here” (p. 20). Finally, Archie Manning, former NFL quarterback and father of UT graduate and NFL standout Payton Manning, told readers, “The thing I can tell you is at Tennessee, they will treat your son with class” (p. 20). It is clear that the authors wanted readers to understand that the presence of the team chaplain is believed to be a cornerstone in creating an atmosphere of care, support, and character development.

As such, Mitchell's role appeared to be similar to that of Judy Jackson, Associate Director of Student Welfare, who the *Football Guide* featured directly following the story on Mitchell. Jackson was described as a "full-time football staffer" and "a mother away from home." The article further explained,

Judy coordinates all the Volunteer's community service outings. But more than that, she provides a voice and a face that the players feel comfortable going to and taking advice from. Judy is quick to give a kind word or, if needed, a gentle lecture in order to make sure the players make the right decision. (pp. 22-23)

Undoubtedly, while their specific tasks were different, Jackson and Mitchell served similar functions in the social system of UT's football team. Together they stood as mother and father figures providing a surrogate family; and arguably a Christian family. Accordingly, Mitchell's story was entitled "Family Matters in Big Orange Country" (pp. 20-21). This emphasis on "family values" undoubtedly reflects the ideology of the Christian-conservative FCA.

Mitchell responded to the needs of the program by facilitating a host of activities that included weekly chapels for members of the football and basketball teams; teaching at weekly, campuswide meetings of FCA and Athletes in Action (AIA); weekly Bible studies for the women's basketball coaching staff; summer bible study for the football team; special Bible studies for married athletes; weekly devotionals for football secretaries and football and basketball coaches; one-on-one counseling with and hospital visits to athletes; and being "on campus each day impacting lives of every athlete and being a positive, Christian role model" ("James Ministry Highlights," 2005a). Whereas these services are well received by many players, the chaplain's institutionalized relationship with the team—along with such practices as "team prayers" following the coach's pregame speech—has the potential to alienate other team members and put coercive pressure on those who do not follow the particular beliefs of the chaplain (Coakley, 2009; Witosky, 2007a).

FCA provides further testimony regarding the role of the sport chaplain. Former UT and current NFL quarterback Erik Ainge said about Mitchell,

Pastor Mitch really knows what we go through every day, what we battle and what's hard for us. He understands what can help us. He's always asking, 'What did you read today? Are you going to church this weekend? FCA tonight?' Plus, he's a good outlet anytime you want to talk. ("Air It Out," n.d., para. 23)

For FCA, Ainge may be prime example for the reason for investing in UT football, as Mitchell reports about the success of his work:

Erik and I meet one-on-one, and he goes to church with me. He's consistent. He and his girlfriend come to Bible study on Monday nights. Being the quarterback, he's naturally in a leadership role, anyway. But the thing that's been so fun about

him is that he's matured in his walk with Christ from the time he got here as a freshman until where he is now. His maturity level has really grown. ("Air it out," n.d., para. 24)

Mitchell describes himself as a "relationship builder." His concept is "to be available. Not everybody's ready for Bible Study, so sometimes you just listen" (Moore, 2007, para. 8). If the athlete is open to it, Mitchell appears to be more than happy to act as "relationship builder" between the athlete and Mitchell's God. Fulmer describes Mitchell as a "godsend," who provides services to athletes beyond the expertise of coaches: "We're very proud of his influence on the kids. Being kids, they have issues that sometimes are a lot deeper than we can deal with as coaches—personal, spiritual, family tragedies or whatever" (Moore, 2007, para. 19).

Next to preaching Christianity and teaching bible lessons to those willing to come to meetings, providing advice on personal matters apparently is part of a sport chaplain's job description in the athletic department. "Mitchell is such a good listener that athletes often call him at home to discuss spiritual and personal issues. . . . Mitchell does most of his counseling from an office in the Neyland-Thompson Sports Complex," describes an article that appears on the FCA web site (Moore, 2007, para. 9). Mitchell's case illustrates that sport chaplains may serve as spiritual leaders, counselors, mentors or any combination of the three.

The fact that some collegiate sport chaplains are described as counselors is potentially problematic. Waller et al. (2008) caution that the majority of the states in the United States require professional certification and licensure for those practicing as counselors. Without a sanctioned training program or credentialing organization for collegiate sport chaplains in the United States, there is concern that some sport chaplains may not be properly trained to fill all of these roles. University presidents and athletic directors place a lot of trust in the individuals they provide to the athletes for spiritual guidance. Young athletes also place tremendous trust in their chaplains. As one report about Mitchell puts it, "athletes find him readily approachable and totally trustworthy" (Moore, 2007, para. 12). They do so in part because the university endorses the position of the team chaplain. In 2005, Selena Roberts of the *New York Times* raised a key question concerning this critical appointment: Who directs the chaplains trusted to direct young athletes in the official service of the athletic department?

Chette Williams at Auburn University

According to a *New York Times* article in 2005, Chette Williams had baptized 20 Auburn football players since becoming the team's sport chaplain and FCA campus director in 1999 (Roberts, 2005). Williams' case is significant because Auburn has become a major training ground for FCA chaplains and the role of coaches in integrating chaplains into the program. Former head football coach Tommy Tuberville was instrumental in bringing Williams, an Auburn' 3-year letterman, back to his alma

mater. Tuberville, Auburn's head football coach from 1999 to 2008, had worked with another FCA chaplain, Wes Yeary, during his tenures at the University of Miami and the University of Mississippi. Tuberville reportedly helped FCA raise the necessary funds for Williams' position (Auburn University, 2007; Stroud, 2003). Tuberville defines his responsibility as a coach as "helping 120 young men grow into conscientious adults—the whole person, not just the athlete" (Williams, 2007, p. vii). The coach called on Williams because he "knew my assistant coaches and I would need help, and what better person to have than a man of the Lord who played football at Auburn and knows what these players go through?" (Williams, 2007, p. vii). Tuberville saw the chaplain as an important partner in reaching his goals beyond the win-loss record. "I'm here to make sure these young men get a degree and become better people," said the coach. "Football is secondary, and I tell them that. If we can build their character and attitude and give them a strong background in academics we've done our job" (Stroud, 2003, p. 17).

Before taking this position, Williams had graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, became a licensed (1987) and ordained (1988) minister and worked as the president of IMPACT Ministries in South Carolina, as well as the pastor and associate pastor of two Baptist churches (Auburn University, 2007). The 2007 Auburn football media guide identified Williams and Yeary as members of the support staff (Auburn University, 2007). It listed Williams as Team Chaplain and Yeary as the Director of FCA Chaplain Training following such positions as Director of NFL Relations and Director of Football Operations and alongside the graduate assistant coaches. They "joined [the] UA staff in" Fall 1999 and August 2005, respectively (p. 89). Yeary's responsibilities were described as "oversees the training and development of FCA college team chaplains across the country. Coordinates the chaplain internship program hosted at Auburn. Assists as chaplain with Auburn athletes" (p. 89). Yeary was a former Baylor football player and also has experience coaching high school and college (Auburn University, 2007). He became a licensed (1992) and ordained (1994) minister and had served with FCA at the University of Miami while Tuberville was the linebackers coach for the Hurricanes.

The web site for Chette Williams Ministries Inc. (CWM), a nonprofit 501C3 charity, provides important insights into the role of the FCA and the sport chaplains at Auburn. Williams' responsibilities include ministering to coaches, players, and athletic department staff on a daily basis as well as facilitating Bible studies and counseling sessions with players and coaches, for whom he offers guidance, encouragement, and spiritual direction. The site further reveals the ultimate goal of Williams' work at Auburn: "His impact on both players and coaches has been profound and God-inspired, resulting in many souls saved and many wayward Christians brought back to a growing and productive life in Christ." ("Chette Williams," 2007, para. 2)

According to the headline of a press release advertising Williams' 2007 book *Hard Fighting Soldier: Finding God in Trials, Tragedies, and Triumphs*, "God and College Football [are] . . . a Match Made in Heaven . . . and the SEC" (Lee, 2007, p. 1). The press release explains the relationship between the "spiritual coordinator" and the head coach as follows:

In the Southeastern Conference, where some claim football to be a religion of its own, God is expected to be a season MVP for at least one team. When the Auburn Tigers kick off their season this fall, Head Coach Tommy Tuberville and Spiritual Coordinator Chette Williams will lead the team onto the field with two playbooks—one for a winning season and the other, the Bible, for a victorious life. (Lee, 2007, p. 1)

The press release presents Williams as a role model by advertising his “miraculous comeback story . . . which chronicles [Williams’] life as a tough young Auburn football player who went from being feared and rejected . . . to becoming one of the most influential mentors in college football today” (p. 1). Williams’ redemptive journey to becoming the team chaplain included being dismissed from the team toward the end of his sophomore season for his negative attitude and his return to the team after being led to Christ by a teammate (Williams, 2007).

Similar to UT’s promotion of James Mitchell, Williams also relies on testimonials to support the chaplain’s expertise, explaining his role at Auburn as follows: “‘Boys become men—that’s the biggest thing Chette facilitates at Auburn,’ said Heath Evans, former Auburn Tiger who now plays for the New England Patriots. ‘We were boys when we arrived. We were men when we left’” (Lee, 2007, p. 1). This use of endorsements by former college players turned professional may suggest to readers that a faithful relationship to Williams’ God leads to athletic and economic success. It further echoes ideas central to muscular Christianity with its emphasis on vigorous masculinity where the price to be won on the playing field is proper manhood and physical strength is related to one’s Christian character (Coakley, 2009; Hall, 1994; Putney, 2001). Understanding muscular Christianity helps to explain why it is less likely to find equivalent testimonies stating that collegiate athletics and the sport chaplain turn girls into proper women. Given the fact that some sport chaplains also work with women’s teams, the absence of similar testimonials by women athletes is remarkable.

Coakley (2009) lists establishing team solidarity and unity as one of the ways athletes and coaches use religion in sports. This function is acknowledged in FCA’s Chaplain Training Manual (2007):

Some coaches also are interested in doing things that will help build team unity. Things like team building activities and get-togethers where athletes can be transparent and open with each other help address some issues that can bring healing, strength and unity among them all. (p. 13)

A report in *Birmingham Christian Family* (Stroud, 2005) confirms that one of the functions of the sport chaplain is to build team unity. According to Coach Tuberville, Williams was instrumental in Auburn’s unbeaten 2004 season by building

a love between coaches and players that has been a real blessing. . . . It has not been about individual performance or individual success. It has been about a team, a love for each player, each coach and faith in God. (Stroud, 2005, p. 18)

An instrument in forging this sense of unity was the collective singing of *Hard Fighting Soldier*, a song that encouraged players to put “on the armor of Christ” (Stroud, 2005, p. 19): “I am a hard fighting soldier, on the battlefield. I keep bringing souls to Jesus. By the service that I give” (Williams, 2007, p. 145). The song was first adopted in FCA meetings and team prayer sessions and later found its way into Auburn’s locker room that “instantly . . . became the prayer room as players hooked up arm” (Williams, 2007, p. 147). According to Williams (2007, p. 145), he had told the players “about the Roman soldiers hooking together going into battle. ‘That’s what you’ve got to do,’ [he] said. ‘You have to hook up with your teammate and protect him while you fight side by side.’”

Auburn’s players embodied muscular Christianity when they walked, instead of ran, with their arms interlocked onto the field before a decisive win over Tennessee. Williams (2007) described the scene:

They walked with confidence—not the cocky stride of players who know how good they are, but quite confidence knowing that God was ordering their steps. Several players told me later that they weren’t even thinking about winning or losing at that point. They were just walking with God. (Williams, 2007, p. 146)

This was undoubtedly not only a powerful experience for those who participated but also a potentially intimidating scene for anyone whose beliefs did not line up with those who consider themselves warriors on a mission to save souls. In the words of the chaplain, “God had transformed us into witnesses, His message in the flesh for all the world to see” as images from the locker room were shown on Coach Tuberville’s television show (Williams, 2007, p. 147). At this point it is clear that the function of the team chaplain was not only to attend to the spiritual needs of the students and to build team unity but also to use the students to transport the religious message through the media including promotional materials of the university and FCA.

Next to Auburn’s football guide, the cross-promotion between the Auburn football program and FCA is especially evident in a 2007 FCA video in which Coach Tuberville played a central role. The 3.5-min clip called “Grow” is part of a promotional video distributed through DVDs and streaming on FCA’s web site and Youtube (FCA, 2007). It begins with images of Auburn’s logo and Tuberville speaking to players, while a male voice-over declares,

Bringing home championships, overcoming rivals. This is the stuff Auburn legends are made off. And Tommy Tuberville is at the helm of this football machine. In seven seasons at Auburn, Tuberville has built an amazing football legacy. But despite his drive for victory this coach has a much more important priority. (FCA, 2007)

The introduction then leads to Tuberville giving credit to his God for giving him the opportunity to become a successful coach.

The next sequence features images of Tuberville entering the field with his players at the Sugar Bowl, Auburn coaches, staff, and players kneeling in prayer in locker room, and scenes from an Auburn game. At the same time the audience is told about Tuberville's mission: "Over the years, the Auburn football team has been doing more than just winning games, they have become a strong voice for Christ reaching out to young people on the Auburn University campus" (FCA, 2007). It thus appears that for FCA, Tuberville, and by association Auburn University, the role of the chaplain is not just about spiritual guidance, but about converting young people to their particular brand of Christianity. Interestingly, throughout the clip there is no mentioning of FCA itself, neither in the audio nor in visuals. Viewers uninformed about the source may quite possibly think the video was commissioned by Auburn University.

Other parts of the clip suggest that the relationship between Tuberville and FCA serves as a recruitment tool for Auburn's football program, as the coach states,

We tell our parents when we recruit them [the players] that we are going to be their second parent. And we are going to do everything we possibly can, while they are here, to help them grow and mature in their four, five years that they are on Auburn's campus. (FCA, 2007)

The voice-over explains that "Tuberville brought in two full-time chaplains" to pursue this goal, and with the addition of Williams and Yeary, "the coach was building his team" (FCA, 2007). It is certainly a desirable and commendable goal for coaches to develop the students not just as athletes but as whole persons. Undoubtedly, many viewers will find it refreshing to see coaches who think college sport should be more than striving for physical excellence and winning. However, a critical question is whether this mission applies to the same extent to all of their charges including, for example, atheists, Muslim, and Jewish students without efforts to convert them. If so, does the athletic department also provide atheist or Muslim counselors, for example? Do these coaches and chaplains have the development of any mature adult in mind, or do they have a particular goal: a mature (Evangelical) Christian?

These questions linger when the clip continues with a testimony by Ben Obomanu, a former Auburn player and now Seattle Seahawk, regarding his recruitment experience:

When I came to Auburn, I met Coach Tuberville. I met my position coach and the offense coordinator and former players. One of the greatest things that probably happened was me meeting the team chaplain and talking about that for a second. Taking a break from all the hoopla and things that college may bring. Just actually letting me know that they have more than football going on here. They actually try [to] built our lives and build young people's lives—. . . a life pleasing to God, that He would be proud of.² (FCA, 2007)

This passage suggests that Auburn's team chaplain provides a service that reflects primarily the religious convictions of the FCA and the head coach, which raises a number of questions. Do potential Auburn students, who are recruited by Auburn's Athletic Department and who happen not to share Christian beliefs, have the same opportunity to meet other religious and nonreligious counselors, who are equally promoted and endorsed by the authority figures in the athletic department? Obumanu mentions that the meeting with the chaplain during his recruitment visit gave him a sense that the university, athletic department, and coaches "have more than football going on here. They actually try [to] built our lives and built young people's lives" (FCA, 2007). Should not all students coming to the athletic department have that sense—not just those whose religious background line up with that of the head coach and not just in those sports with the greatest publicity?

In 2005, the *New York Times* raised additional questions regarding the role of the sport chaplain at Auburn by linking Williams to powerful Robert E. "Bobby" Lowder, a long-term trustee of the university as well as CEO and Chairman of Colonial BancGroup until just before it was closed by regulators and subsequently sold in 2009. Lowder has been portrayed as one of the 10 most—if not the most—powerful boosters in college sports by ESPN (Fish, 2006a, 2006b) and "the man behind 2009's biggest bank bust" by CNN (O'Keefe, 2009). The *New York Times* reported that Lowder was one of the primary benefactors of CWM, William's ministry. In 2003, US\$30,000 of the US\$73,335 of public support William's nonprofit organization reportedly came from the Robert and Charlotte Lowder Foundation. According to the article's analysis of tax filings, Williams "drew \$55,824 in compensation as president [of CWM] for 20 hours of work per week" (Roberts, 2005, p. D3).

The *New York Times* also pointed out several ties between William's ministry, Auburn staff, and Lowder. For example, Terry Windel, Auburn's Associate Athletic Director, volunteered to keep the books for CWM. Windel also had sold a house to Williams, reportedly worth US\$346,050, located three blocks from Coach Tuberville's home (Roberts, 2005). At the time of the report, the vice president of CWM was Ben Thomas, a former Auburn player (Roberts, 2005). Thomas was Auburn's Resident Manager of Auburn's athletic dormitory (1997-2005), Director of Athletic Events (2005-2008), and currently "assists with day-to-day operations of football program with emphasis on player relations and player development" as the Director of Player Development (Auburn University, 2009, p. 78). Furthermore, CWM's chairman Mike McCartney (Auburn trustee from 1979 to 1992) and treasurer Wayne Hall (former Auburn defensive coordinator) were portrayed to be close to Lowder (Roberts, 2005).

Without directly accusing Williams, the *New York Times* article suggested that a booster like Lowder might support a chaplain to gain access to the inner circle of the football team (Roberts, 2005). Auburn and Williams denied such allegations after a review of CWM's financial records found potential minor, but no major NCAA violations (Associated Press, 2005).

Discussion

The use of spiritual care professionals in the military, prisons, and hospitals indicates that public institutions that merely provide its members access to chaplains do not violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment. In the case of military chaplaincy, the U.S. government even hires and discharges the chaplains, establishes their professional standards, and builds and maintains houses of worship (Lupu & Tuttle, 2007). According to Lupu and Tuttle (2008), this is a case of “affirmative accommodation,” where the government’s support for religion is lawful because it is “responsive to a government-imposed burden” (p. 970). Prisoners and hospital patients are similarly “deprived of ordinary access to religious experience at a time when patients [and prisoners] may be especially in need of religious counseling or comfort” (pp. 970-971).

If public universities wanted to pay for the services of sport chaplains, they would have to demonstrate that their athletes and staff are experiencing unique stresses and demands, as well as lack of regular access to religious services, that affirmative accommodation is required. Lupu and Tuttle (2008) conclude that it could be argued that a college campus is “a self-sufficient community” separating students enough from surrounding communities that public “colleges can justify maintenance of a designated chapel” or paying for a religious coordinator position on campus (p. 972). Such a chapel, however, could not permanently display a Christian cross or symbols specific to other faiths as it would violate “religious equality” and constitute “government selection of religious content” (p. 973).

Among the implications of this discussion for sport chaplains at public universities are the following questions: (a) Do student-athletes experience additional burdens compared to their fellow students that would justify additional affirmative accommodations? and (b) Do public universities create the equivalent of a permanent display of a Christian cross, when they feature evangelical-Christian ministers in their promotional materials in the guise of staff members and when these ministers are given permanent offices in the athletic department?

Although these questions require further research, it seems clear that these institutions tread a fine line when they provide privileged access for FCA chaplains. For example, chaplains praying with players before or after games can put coercive pressure on players to participate (Coakley, 2009; Witosky, 2007a). According to Batista (2002), “the Supreme Court and other federal courts have reaffirmed that the First Amendment authorizes and protects students’ freedom to engage in religious activities in the public schools” if the school does not sponsor, endorse, or promote those activities (p. 87). For example, student-led prayers at games are considered free expression and lawful. This is not the case, however, if coaches or other school authorities initiate those prayers. Discussing local FCA chapters (“Huddles”) at public schools, Batista finds that they violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment if they are “sponsored by a coach who actively participates” (p. 112). On the other hand, “if the

coach merely attends and is not in a leadership or sponsoring position, it is probably free exercise and association. The determining factor will likely be whether each athlete participates voluntarily and without actual or perceived coercion" (p. 112).

This pressure may be present when religion becomes a major tool for building or expressing team unity. The FCA's Chaplain Training Manual (2007) specifically discusses building team unity as one of the possible responsibilities of its chaplains. It appears possible that some coaches invite chaplains to promote their own religious beliefs without having to lead religious activities directly, which would more obviously violate the First Amendment. In this case, chaplains become the "less controversial" extended (religious) arm of the coach.

Furthermore, the previous description of Auburn's chaplain helping to turn the locker room into a "prayer room" (Williams, 2007, p. 147) serves as a powerful testimony of the potential promises and problems involved in using chaplains to build team unity. Constitutional concerns also arise when the line between government and religion becomes blurred (Witosky, 2007a). This may be the case when religious groups and publicly funded institutions promote each other. The two cases discussed in this study show the cross promotion between FCA and athletic departments in materials like videos and media guides.

The discussion surrounding the appointment of a sport chaplain (later called volunteer Life Skills Assistant) at Iowa State not only demonstrates the potential for controversy and resistance, but also how public athletic departments may attempt to deal with the situation (Witosky, 2007b). Iowa State elected to appoint strict guidelines against the use of public funding for the position, as well as against coercion and proselytizing (Geoffroy, 2007). But based on the cases discussed in this study, ISU's resolve to keep the Life Skill Assistant from promoting "a particular religion or religious viewpoint" (Geoffroy, 2007, p. 1) seems to be a contradiction of FCA's expressed mission "to present to athletes and coaches, and all whom they influence, the challenge and adventure of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord" (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2001a, para. 3). ISU nevertheless appointed an FCA chaplain for the position of Life Skills Assistant, who also reportedly passed the university's first annual review of his performance (Logue, 2008). As the case studies of chaplains at UT and Auburn show, ISU's limitations on and review procedures for a team chaplain or Life Skill Assistant are the exception rather than the norm. But even with these measures in place, concerns remained among some faculty members at ISU (Powers, 2007). This study found no similar resistance at Auburn and UT.

Conclusion

Sport chaplaincy is a growing field for practitioners ranging from part-time volunteers to full-time professionals. Thus far, little systematic research has been conducted in this area (Dzikus et al., 2011; Waller et al., 2008, 2010). Sport chaplaincy promises holistic care and spiritual guidance for athletes and coaches who often struggle with the pressures and uncertainties of athletic competition and public scrutiny

(Coakley, 2009). Potential legal and ethical issues arise particularly when sport chaplains work in public colleges and universities. The two case studies discussed here highlight the work of two full-time chaplains who primarily work with college football players and coaches in two public universities. They are not funded by those institutions, but rely on donations and fund-raising. Both work for and with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, a major provider of collegiate sport chaplains in the United States. The cases presented here illustrate that some collegiate sport chaplains appear to work in an official capacity in the athletic departments and that there exists a considerable amount of cross-promotion between the chaplains, their Christian organizations, and athletic departments.

This study supports Coakley's (2009) assertion that Christian organizations use sport (a) to encourage spiritual growth, (b) recruit new members, and (c) promote fundamentalist Christian beliefs, evangelical perspectives, and muscular Christianity. The study further confirms that athletes, coaches, and teams use religion to cope with the stress and uncertainties of competition, to establish team solidarity and unity, and to achieve competitive success (Coakley, 2009). Future research should further examine issues of gender and power related to sport chaplaincy, especially in the context of neo-muscular Christianity. It should also consider perspectives and experiences of collegiate sport chaplains, athletes, coaches, and administrators from their point of view and further explore the legal and ethical ramifications of collegiate sport chaplaincy.

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1. We would like to thank the reviewers for their help to clarify this purpose statement and the organization of the manuscript.
2. In transcribing this quotation from the video, a decision had to be made as to how to spell the words "God" and "He." Given the context, it was decided to capitalize the two words consistent with the practice on the FCA web site and other Evangelical-Christian texts.

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