

MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSIONARIES FLATHEAD-AREA HUDDLES MAY HAVE ULTERIOR MOTIVES

The press has reported that the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) has local chapters in the Flathead area. These chapters have been described as helping middle school and high school students grow spiritually. The chapters, or "huddles," meet weekly at the home of a coach or student where they discuss religious issues and provide fellowship for Christian students. The press reports that the Flathead-area groups function as social support groups for students.

If FCA simply acted as a religious support group for Christian athletes, there would be no cause for concern. Unfortunately, its agenda goes beyond this. It appears that FCA tries to do an end run around barriers separating church and state by using students as, in essence, missionaries in public schools.

Rob Boston of Americans United for Separation of Church and State says, "They [FCA] are definitely in-

terested in evangelizing on school grounds, and they use students as their primary vehicle."

FCA is large, ambitious and growing. It claims to have 500,000 students currently involved, and it plans to have a chapter on every school campus in America.

FCA's message is fundamentalist. The group's statement of faith says the Bible is the "infallible" word of God, and all sinful people need to be saved. FCA's website is filled with fundamentalist zeal. In a section titled "Dating Standards/Marriage," students write in with questions concerning who it is acceptable to date. They receive answers warning them to be wary of "non-believers." This is because "only one person is spiritually alive," and the chances are "overwhelming" the relationship will fail. Another student is told that dating non-Christians is "the most dangerous thing she could do."

The "Locker Room" section also encourages students to recruit their peers, but in a subtle manner. One answer encourages students to use their peers' times of "pain or concern" as an opportunity to give "divine aid." Another says students need to "always be looking for a receptive time to share [their] faith" with others.

So far, the Flathead huddles are apparently not meeting in schools. American United's Boston says the FCA frequently uses the federal Equal Access Act to get clubs started in school. These groups generally meet during lunch or other times designated for club meetings. Boston said the law was designed to give students the opportunity to form religious clubs. However, he says most FCA groups aren't led by students. "FCA finds a student to do the front work and then runs the club from behind the scenes," Boston says. □

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Montana. He has not paid taxes since 1987 and has been trying to get his social security number rescinded. He commonly refers to America as the "united [sic] States of America." All of these are traditional freemen practices. He has also praised the work of John Trochmann and the Militia of Montana.

The Militia of Montana has increasingly shown an interest in land-use issues. It has been a supporter of the Jarbidge Rebellion and an opponent of the roadless initiative. In fact, it promoted MFMU's conferences. As for KGEZ, John Stokes, KGEZ's owner, has been referring to anyone who disagrees with him as a "Green Nazi" [see related article on page 1]. □

CLARIFICATION

The February 2001 *Network News* contained a story about Rep. Bob Davies (R-Bozeman) sponsoring House Bill 253. The bill would have required the state's attorney general to sue the federal government for ownership of all the land in Montana's borders. One person who gave testimony in favor of the bill, Clinton Cain, contacted MHRN. He believed a passage in the article made it sound like the information he gave to the committee was false. This was not MHRN's intent. Cain said he is very thorough in his research and stands by the veracity of the statements he made in support of HB 253.