

Accounts and statements re: Racism, Bias & Abuse at Faith Christian Academy

Longer Statements from current students and alumni are at the end of this document.

"I believe Ramya Sinha. I experienced and witnessed racism during my 6 years at the school. FCA was then and continues to be a damaging patriarchal, misogynistic, racist, classist and homophobic environment that does harm to students." Beth Leyba FCA Alum

"The reports of racism at Faith Christian are consistent with my experience at the school."
Andrea Chavez FCA Alum K-12

"I believe Nancy Felix and Ramya Sinha." Kim Rayfield FCA Alum

<https://sites.google.com/view/truthatfca/home>

<https://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/295/207/568/>
(Reconciliation Document and Petition)

<https://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/492/246/186/>
(Initial Petition in support of Students of Color, Mr Tucker and Education in Race/Faith chapel)

From Petitions:

Simona K

As a black student Tucker has been one of the few to actually want to discuss the topic of racism. He actually cares to discuss the topic and is willing to see things from a different perspective. Tucker should not be fired for his desire to make others aware of racism. Tucker is an amazing teacher and an even more amazing person. I've been blessed to have him as a teacher.

Cecilia C

I encountered a group from FCA at YMCA of the Rockies when I was there with my class. Our experience with FCA and a chaperone was very racist in nature. How this chaperone made our students feel and how she made us as teachers feel was unacceptable. I wrote a letter to the principal of the middle school at the time but heard nothing back. I expressed how this chaperone represented the school and how her racist views made others feel marginalized and less than. My students saw through her immediately and called it what it was; racism.

name not displayed/anon

During our 10 years at Faith as a minority, racial discrimination was always an issue. I always felt it was more ignorance than discrimination. After Mr. Wall left we felt our family could no longer continue at Faith because we would not have an advocate in our corner when it came to support in the race area. We are one of the 9 students who left. It's ironic that the families who are trying to get rid of Tucker are many of the "white privileged" families who showed racism towards my children at Faith. Mr. Tucker is one of the few teachers who reached out to all students. If that makes him liberal in their eyes, I don't get it! Is this not a Christian school? Where is the love? Jesus walked the earth reaching out to all. Faith has become so segregated people thinking they are better than others, better basketball players, better cars, better homes, better grades, better singers, better colored skin! Where does this fit into the scripture? At least Mr. Tucker tried to address the HUGE issue Faith has. Getting rid of him or even demoting him for doing the right thing is a disgrace. If you let these families dictate what happens to Mr. Tucker do you really think they will stop at him? Who's next? They already have feel entitled.

Natalie G.

My daughter attended Faith as a freshman and experienced for the first time, first hand racism! She had never seen herself as a different ethnicity or race. She considered herself equal until going to Faith. It's so sad, I withdrew her immediately.

Selena P

Mr. Tucker has impacted my life in the past 3 years since I have been at Faith. He has taken me across the world 2 times to the Dominican Republic, as well as taught me how to be a leader in many aspects of my life. Him and his family have been nothing but a blessing to my life and have helped me to grow in my faith with Christ on a daily basis at FCA. From experiencing racism multiple times myself, I believe this topic was something that needed to be brought up. It saddens my heart to see him being punished for such a thing as this. He stood up for something he believed in, and by doing that he impacted my life.

Luis A.

I am a minority. I do not condone or accept racism. I believe every human being should be valued and respected regardless of the color of their skin. If you are slightly racist, you really need to evaluate your way of thinking and change it. I myself have experienced racism from a student at FCA and I don't EVEN ATTEND THE SCHOOL.

Daniel W.

I believe that leadership and some parents are willfully and consciously ignoring blatant racism in themselves and their constituents.

Jaren T

As a minority who attended faith for all of my schooling this entire turn of events is in no way surprising to me. And it's incredibly sad that that is the case. Mr. Tucker has been an exemplary model of what a teacher and a Christian should be. That he's losing his job over trying to bring attention to a very real issue speaks volumes about how far this school has slid. The entire handling of this situation is embarrassing. I'm disgusted by the administration's spinelessness. Their response to tackling a difficult issue was to cave to pressure as soon as it was applied from parents. A tactic that I've personally witnessed working at Faith in the past. They care much more about keeping the status quo so as to keep the tuition checks rolling in than they do about practicing what they preach or standing by their Christian principles.

Kristy M

My black son attended FCA and had to deal with many racist comments and attitudes while there. I'd like to see that change.

name not displayed

My siblings and I attended Faith, and we definitely experienced both blatant and unconscious racism and racial stereotypes. While students typically weren't outright hatefully prejudiced, an overall lack of recognition of racial biases was all too common. My little sister was negatively affected by it the most, like when people called her "chink" while pulling up the corners of their eyes, even in front of teachers, and nothing happened (NOT OKAY). She would complain about it at home, but suffered in silence at school. There wasn't a teacher at Faith she felt comfortable talking about the issue with; none had ever shown any acknowledgement that this was a problem, so who would understand? Who could she go to? I am so proud that Mr. Tucker brought attention to this FINALLY, because it is real, whether you choose to see it or not. Trying to close your eyes to a problem doesn't make it go away, no matter how difficult it is to face head on in both yourself and those you love. And even more so, sheltering students from talking about racial issues will leave them entirely unprepared once they leave the small Faith bubble. It's not a political issue; it is an issue of humanity and of loving others, and thus it's an issue Christ followers have a duty to address. Thank you Mr. Tucker for everything you're doing! You are truly a light for Jesus (you know, the guy who was persecuted for daring to speak the unpopular truth).

Sarah B

I saw racial, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination from both faculty and students while attending Faith. This discrimination seriously impacted my desire to follow Christ when I entered college due to the pain my school had caused while they claimed to be Christian. As a past student, current advocate, past ministry chair, and member of the LGBTQ community, I ask that Faith review their diversity standards and create a space that shows the love, acceptance, and dignity which God instills in us to everyone.

name not displayed

I am appalled by the actions taken with Mr. Tucker. When I attended Faith, I experienced uncomfortable statements and jokes around my ethnicity. While they may not have been said in malice, I did not know how to respond and let people know it wasn't okay. I wish I had a figure of authority there that was brave and empathetic enough to bring this up as a topic like Mr. Tucker, but I felt alone.

Marianna C.

Mr. Tucker was one of my favorite and most respected teachers at Faith. While I have a complicated opinion of Faith's mission overall, I know the lack of diversity and acceptance of differences that the school embodies as a result of some individuals must be dealt with constructively in order to reestablish that mission of Christian education. If the school takes action to terminate Mr. Tucker, it is a sure sign to me and the community that FCA is not interested in having these conversations or celebrating diversity.

Jenny D.

It's time! After the first go-around nothing was done! It was swept under the rug. As a parent that's almost done with Faith I want to see a better future. There are others who actually signed the first petition for Mr. Tucker who feel their popularity has been at risk due to it. Judgement on popularity is nothing compared to radical discrimination. Kids have been damaged by Faith. It's time to protect the children. God commands us to look out for the children.

Evan F

Racism has always been a topic that has been shied away from at FCA, probably because the voices of the masses have, to this point, drowned out the voices of those who are hurting (accidental or otherwise). I know that in every story there is more than what we read in a few articles and hear secondhand, but based on the documentation I have and from the amazing character I saw in Mr Tucker as a genuine Christ follower, apologetics teacher, and true 'boundary pusher', I feel compelled to put my name on this. Diversity brings strength - especially diversity of thought - and especially(!) when those thoughts are still grounded in the love of Jesus.

Heather E.

I grew up going to Faith and it was not a diverse place. This is important so that everyone who goes to Faith feels welcome and loved. Racism was not part of any discussion at Faith. This for me isn't just about how Faith does or doesn't handle race, it's how they handle everything. In middle school any kid that was different was bullied, and the excuse for that was "boys will be boys." They never discussed the issue of bullying, race, special needs. Those in charge at Faith really need to check themselves and make sure they actually following through with the messages they teach at the school or the church. I don't want to see this school go down in flames but they need to change how they talk about modern day issues

name not displayed

What Mr. Tucker has done for the school and his endless amount of love and how much he cared for the students, and this is what he gets for creating a discussion about racism that's actually been a problem in Faith? I'm not talking bad about Faith. I've was there from third grade and graduated. I'm thankful for the way the school has helped me grow, especially the teachers. I, who was a minority at Faith, experienced racism from fellow students. Many made racial remarks for jokes and giggles because they thought was acceptable. This is why the school needs discussion. It's not because we're too sensitive and can't take jokes. It's what we deal with every day. What we learned from Christ to accept and love one another has diminished into ignorance.

Danyle D

I grew up at FCA, graduated, and then left to go to college in Portland. How FCA taught about racism, I believed racism was dead until I hit life in Portland. It is an important topic and should be brought up more. Tucker did the right thing and depressing that he is getting punished for trying to create an environment to discuss this topic.

name not displayed

This is not about guilt tripping anyone. This is about listening to someone who thinks differently than you. Racism and sexism have run rampant at FCA far too long.

Beth L.

I graduated from FCA in 1997 and during my time there faced racism, classism, sexism, and very serious episodes of sexual harassment from other students that went unpunished. I have come to view the school as a very dangerous environment that harms the students who don't fit in the categories of white, rich, and "Christian", and it is also damaging to female students due to the patriarchal and misogynistic environment.

Maria U.

I am from Colombia and my son and daughter graduated from Faith. I have endless difficult stories that my children faced at Faith Christian Academy. I support Mr. in his journey because it is about time that they stopped hiding the tremendous and horrifying treatment that students of color face daily at Faith. I was not surprised when I read Mr. Hasz's letter to parents because that is exactly what he did with me when I expressed my concern. He cordially dismisses you with the excuse that nothing of the issues that you bring up are a matter of racism. Maybe he does not see them as important because he belongs to the white privilege and it is difficult to talk about something that you have not experienced. Sadly, people who learned how Jesus taught us to tolerate and treat each other well show this kind of behavior. I will be happy to support Mr. Tucker on whatever he needs. Maria Uribe, Ph.D University Colorado, Denver

Janea N.

Gregg Tucker is an incredible man of integrity and should be supported for doing the right thing. Faith Christian academy suffers from many problems one of them being racism which should be handled with love and understanding not silence. I am proud to know this man and believe he should be honored for his actions.

Ben C.

Gregg stepped up to address an issue that has plagued the school for years. I stand with him. The school should be ashamed of themselves.

Shawna V.

I have had to kids at Faith Christian High School. My oldest has the most respect for Mr. Tucker and would often mention Mr. Tucker and what a great teacher he is. Mr. Tucker demonstrates the honesty and the real that FCHS needs. My son had an absolute awful experience at Faith and our eyes were quickly opened to the lack of honesty and integrity at Faith. Also a friend of mine enrolled her daughter at Faith, I have never been so embarrassed to even suggest putting her daughter in Faith. After just one semester she pulled her daughter out because of racist issues against her. Unfortunately Faith must have an amazing set of rose-colored glasses if they can't see that this is happening. They don't extend the same grace that they frequently ask for.

Other statements provided to FCA Coalition for Racial Reconciliation & Justice

Rec'd June 8, 2018

"I attended Faith Christian academy from 7th grade to my senior year of high school, eventually graduating from there. However, throughout what was supposed to be considered the 'best years of my life' I found myself struggling to go to school everyday and enjoy my time spent in school. The amount of hatred that runs throughout the student body and even the faculty is beyond me and I was astonished to find that the supposed Christian community that was within faith was anything but that. From teachers being forced from their positions because of their political views, to my closest friends having a real fear of being harmed at school by fellow classmates simply because of their skin color, I found it harder and harder to remain happy and compelled to represent the school as a whole. Within the issue of racism, I was told I could never be too upset about it because I was half white, therefore I was expected to watch my friends and myself be ridiculed and essentially shunned to the highest form by other students and faculty. Yet, the school failed continuously to recognize any fault within their actions or their lack to defend the students whose parents put hard earned money towards the school's annual funds through tuition as they were promised a Christian community that offered academic excellence. However, they were left with their children traumatized by the constant hate speech and bullying that riddled the halls of the school. Teachers were forced out because they decided to stand up for students and were dubbed 'liberals' that corrupted Christian values that the school supposedly represented. It was disgusting, as politics are not a reflection of Christianity. Faith's idea of what Christianity should be is so twisted that they fail to see any wrong in their actions but are quick to condemn anyone with differing opinions. There is an ongoing theme of sexism with how the girls are treated within the school especially within sports. There are even continuous comments from certain faculty members, all men, that felt the need to Insult several of the girls at the school, claiming 'they were only built for the kitchen'. Kids with lgbt friends or they themselves are lgbt were either removed from the school or ridiculed altogether. Our job as Christians is to love others no matter if we consider the other person worthy or not. The constant battle to fight for what is morally right is seen as a sin in the eyes of faculty and students, resulting in any positive action being dubbed as an attack from Satan. I can not say enough to express how disappointed I am with my school and I am practically ashamed to have said I come from there. I am hoping that these statements enact change as within this day and age where children are scared to go to school because of recent events with schools being physically attacked. However, I feel that at some points children are scared to attend Faith because of the ridicule and bullying that is essentially supported by the board of administrators. That idea in general is devastating. These are supposed to be the best years of our lives but Faith took that away from me and I pray that never happens to any other student that steps foot in that school." ML, FCA Alumna

4-23-2018

To the Faith Christian community (specifically Doug Newcomb, Andrew Hasz, and Michael Cook)

The first incident of racism I ever encountered was at Faith. I was in 2nd or 3rd grade, playing at recess and a girl who was upset with the fact that I was playing with a different group of friends came up and told me she didn't care about me anyway because I was "just a stupid, BLACK, kid" (and yes, there was a strong emphasis on black because even at a young age we all have a firm understanding on how to hurt one another). I told my mom later that night, who was justifiably upset and told my teacher. The teacher said that she was "so sorry someone would say that to me" but the entire incident was of relatively little consequence otherwise. The girl didn't get in trouble, there was no conversation had with me and her, or the rest of the class(es) about why it was wrong. There was the simple apology from the teacher and it was brushed aside.

Speaking in fact, the vast majority of instances of racism I've experienced were from the Faith community. Admittedly, some of what I dealt with can be chalked up to kids being kids (albeit racist and/or insensitive ones), and would likely have been encountered anywhere (not that this makes it right). However, I believe it is undeniable that the Faith Christian community is worse than most schools in this regard and to say otherwise is to be willfully ignorant. Since graduating I've spent the majority of my time outside of the "Faith bubble" meaning I was in communities that were non-Christian, or at the very least, not expressly religious. In that time I've experienced racism or racial insensitivity far less than I did at Faith. Even while I was a part of the Faith I never encountered the kind of insensitivity or ignorance outside the community as I did inside it. It's deplorable that a community that claims to model themselves after the life and love of Christ is worse in this regard than those with no connection to Christ whatsoever.

From my experience and observation, the main reason why this issue is worse at Faith than other places is due to the homogenous makeup of the school and faculty, which in turn begets a community where education on real world problem such as race are seen as irrelevant and therefore invaluable. Because of this and you can afford to turn a blind eye to the racial insensitivity going on within your own school because the portion of student body being effected by this is negligible to you. So when an issue like this presents itself it can be "safely" (from the faculty's point of view) ignored or swept under the rug. This indifference creates a breeding ground for intolerant behavior which once it gains a foothold gets stronger over time.

Faith has maintained a "money over morals" type of attitude for as long as I can remember, and has always shown that they've been plenty willing to bend, or entirely disregard their "Christian" values in lieu of losing money (be it fear of a lawsuit, losing affluent members of the community, or what have you). This hypocrisy is the real reason Gregg Tucker was fired if we're being honest with one another. But I digress, as that is a slightly different issue, though obviously at play here.

As I was getting at before, the singularity of the "Faith" demographic has created a bubble amongst a group of people already prone to creating an echo chamber for themselves. There's no education, no understanding, and no attempt to understand.

The lack of diversity in the student body is unsurprising. A private, religious school in Arvada may not attract much in terms of diversity on the surface. And given the environment they encounter once there the minority students who do attend are unlikely to speak highly of the school to their family and friends who may otherwise help bring in more diversity. When I was in middle school a group of kids called my name in gym. When I went over to them they asked me why black people were scared of chainsaws. I gave a weary "why" succumbing to the fact that I wouldn't be able to avoid the punchline and was simply told "Runnnnn, nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger" as the joke teller mimicked the sound of a chainsaw starting up. I didn't tell anyone about this instance. I knew from experience it wouldn't do any good; if anything it'd make it worse. Beyond that, I wasn't upset so much as I was just sick of these sorts of jokes. By that point I had become desensitized to it. By that time in my FCA tenure I, at 13 years old, had already become desensitized to the racial insensitivity that abounded here. Racism isn't something anyone should ever just have to learn to cope with or become desensitized to. In the outside world that seems very apparent, but Faith hasn't seemed to have received the message.

Beyond this, and more disappointingly, there is a serious lack of diversity in the faculty as well. I attended Faith for pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school and can think of only one non-white teacher or staff member in those 16 years. And even that one teacher was only there briefly. This lack of diversity has culminated in a lack of understanding of anyone coming from a different background. Lack of understanding makes it impossible to be empathetic and without empathy you'll always be unable and unwilling to address the issues that may be (and in Faith's community, certainly are) plaguing your homogenous community.

In fact, faculty was often as bad as student in some of their insensitivity towards me and other minorities. During high school I was also the recipient of racist comments from members of the faculty. While these were mostly people I'd developed a rapport with there were micro-aggressions (subtle racial prejudices) as well which honestly were much more concerning (exactly the type of thing Mr. Tucker was trying to bring light to with his chapel in case you care). In high school I had a teacher who was pushing me towards doing something I wasn't initially very comfortable doing. It was related to doing something that was "black" and after prodding me towards it for a while they admitted that the reason they wanted me to do it was because "it wasn't very often they got a black person with a lot of talent, so when they did they really liked to use it to their advantage."

Since it seems like you tend to need things spelled out for you in terms of systemic racial issues the problem with that statement is that it turns me into an object to be used instead of a person or a means to an end instead of an end in and of myself. While this was the most blatant example this was indicative of the overarching attitude of the Faith community. Whether it was this, being asked by staff why I wasn't better at sports, or being told my blackness was the reason for my ability to sing, or not being able to be left alone in the building lest I steal something, there were very obviously a lot of internalized racial prejudices that, whether advertent or inadvertent, are harmful to minorities and the thought processes of your students and staff.

If you take even 5 minutes to consider me, the other minorities at this school, our stories, your handling of the recent situation and can lie to yourself enough to say "We're doing everything we can to emulate Jesus" then you're beyond talking to and beyond helping.

The entire handling of this issue of race at this school has been abysmal and the firing of Gregg Tucker was disgusting (for more reasons than just what was listed here). You have a problem, Faith. The first step is admitting it.

Wearily,

Jaren Thomas

P.S. If (read "since") your P&L is your biggest concern here, please consider this. While you may be satiating the vocal, blood thirsty group that wanted Tucker gone due to their own ignorance, his firing was myopic on your end. In today's culture the amount of people who will be appalled by your actions here will far outweigh those who praise them and while you may have prevented a handful of families from leaving Faith today, you're driving away scores who now won't even consider supporting you or sending their kids to your school tomorrow. This reputation doesn't bode well for your legacy. Food for thought.