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Being a Christian is not always easy on a college campus. Everyday college life sometimes puts a very real strain on faith and beliefs. With this in mind, a variety of campus religious organizations offer different programs where Christians can come together to

By SHANNON BURROUGHS

and CATHY ROBINSON

Staff Writers

share and strengthen their faith. If you are looking for close interpersonal relationships and tend to shy away from large groups, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship is for you, according to staff member, Jimmy Long.

"People get lonely on campus and since I-V meets in such groups, it lets people get to know each other well," Long said. "It provides a set of friends that are established over four years. In other large groups, this close contact is not possible for everyone."

1-V is organized into 60 small groups which meet weekly on campus and in apartments. "These small groups are active at the hospital, Campus Y and other places, and the members engage in fellowship and Rible study," Long said.

Long also said he thinks I-V can be distinguished from other campus groups by its student leadership. "I'm the only staff member," he said. "The students learn leadership skills and become ministers to each other."

In addition, to the small group meetings, there are large chapter meetings every two weeks in which members hear speakers and have fellowship.

"We use the 60 action groups toward our goal of discipleship. With the Bible as a foundation, students can share and grow toward a mature faith. Our second urpose is evangelism. Or evangelism chairmen and small group leaders are important to our witnessing. We also emphasize being sensitive to non-Christians. Thirdly, we think that missions are important. Our mission chairman organizes our efforts in this regard. We have had students go to the Philippines and to an Urban and Rural Ministry project in Jackson, Mississippi."

Inter-Varsity began at Carolina in 1951, when a transfer student from N.C. State organized a chapter. The nondenominational group's Carolina chapter now has a membership of over

600, according to Long.

Despite the large membership, I-V's small sub-groups make closeness possible. "The thing I like best about I-V is the ability to have one-to-one relationships," Palmer said. "It's great getting to know these people."

FOCUS is a Christian organization for the needs of graduate students. "We are related to Inter-Varsity," said Jay Farrel, chairman of the group. "We act as a graduate segment of I-V. Our purpose is to express the Christian viewpoint to the academic community."

To further this goal, FOCUS sponsors speakers on campus, small group Bible study and monthly dinners for large groups.

Farrel noted the tremendous opportunities to meet students from all over the world who are doing graduate work at UNC. "We can learn so much from other people," he said. "They have different religious backgrounds, are from different denominations and different countries. I enjoy learning

what other people have to teach me." "I think the fellowship with other Christians is important," said FOCUS member Kathy Brooks. "We support each other and help each other with the problems and situations that grad students face. In this case, the needs of undergrad and grad students are different."

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is for Christians with an interest in sports, but FCA officer Charley Quaile said membership does not consist entirely of athletes. "You don't have to be an athlete to come to the meetings," said Quaile. "But it helps if you understand and can relate to athletics in general because a lot of our speakers are athletes, coaches, athletic directors or people who are involved with sports in some way. We use athletics as an example for Christians."

The FCA is a fairly large group with an average of about 100 people attending meetings every Thursday at 9 p.m. in the Tin Can.

"We don't become extremely close to everyone there, but we try to do things to help people to get to know one another," Quaile said. "We try to do a lot of things outside of FCA because we realize that so a large a group doesn't lend itself to close personal involvement." Quaile said FCA members go on beach trips together, get bloc tickets to football games and go to the Haw River for get-togethers on Friday nights. *

At meetings, after singing, prayers and discussion people break up into smaller groups to get acquainted.

Religious groups

Campus Christians mix large memberships, small group activity

"New people are coming all the time," said Quaile. "The group is large enough so there are always people I haven't met yet. I'm always meeting new people and I'm able to share the Christian contact with them on campus. I come across more Christians I know on campus simply because FCA is a large group."

Quaile said he thinks FCA's size leads to a diversity of Christians in the group. "It's an opportunity to grow and give because everyone is at different levels in their walk with God. There's always somebody different to give to and to receive from."

Campus Christian Fellowship is a local group which began in the fall of 1976. "It's not as large as some of the others," said Lisa Styons, a junior involved with the group. "We have a lot of unity-everyone participates."

'We can learn so much from other people. They have different religious backgrounds, are from different denominations and different countries.

—Jay Farrel

"Our purpose is to try to draw Christians together for worship, Bible study or fellowship," said Phil Laughlin, the campus minister.

The activities of Campus Christian Fellowship include weekly worship services, fellowship meals, Bible study, socials, concerts and speakers.

"It's non-denominational," - Styons noted, "and I like that. It's like a church, but not quite as traditional."

Laughlin also said the CCF is more like a traditional congregation than positive reactions from other students, other campus organizations. "We have a regular service and communion every Sunday," he said. "If I'm away, a student does the message. When they leave school and go to another church, they won't just sit in the congregation. They learn to participate. While a student is here in school, it's hard for him to stay active in his own church. If

"The campus house and its facilities are available to all, and we have four students living there," said Laughlin.

"Also, we are building a library there. "We're open to all students,"

a good group. They're mostly from North Carolina. They've been an active group, and they're very close to each

Campus Crusade for Christ and Inter-Varsity are two of the largest

Christian organizations on campus. "There are many similiarities between the two," said Tom Lowder, staff worker for Campus Crusade. "Both groups are non-denominational and involved in evangelism, discipleship and missions."

"Basically, I think that Campus Crusade emphasizes the presentation of the claims of Jesus Christ a little stronger than Inter-Varsity," said Lowder. "But that's something that's hard to measure."

"We make a lot of presentations to athletic teams, fraternities, sororities and other living groups," Lowder explained.

He characterized the group as a mixture of classes, independents and Greeks, but mostly North Carolinians.

"This is a 28-year-old organization," Lowder said. "It began at UCLA in 1951. Our goal is to serve the person who's making a commitment to Christ by placing him in an environment where he can grow in faith."

Lowder says the group carries out this goal by conducting team meetings, holding weekly leadership training classes, promoting small group interaction, sponsoring conferences with other campuses and sponsoring monthly meetings of College Life.

"College Life is almost unanimously popular nationwide because of the mood, content and atmosphere of the meetings," Lowder said. "It is present on most major campuses when a Campus Crusade organization is active. The meetings often include out-of-town speakers, singing and fellowship.

"We've received almost universally Lowder said. "Our objective is not to alienate people."

"The group has helped me to grow," said Robert Willis, a first year medical student. "I can understand more clearly the basics of the Christian life.

"I've matured, and I can handle life better in the University environment. I think I'll be better prepared when I leave because of it. And more than that, I'm able to teach and help others."

For more information about these and other campus religious organizations, contact Student Affairs Laughlin emphasized. "I think we have or the UNC Chaplains' Association.

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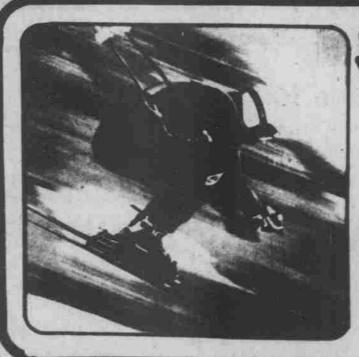
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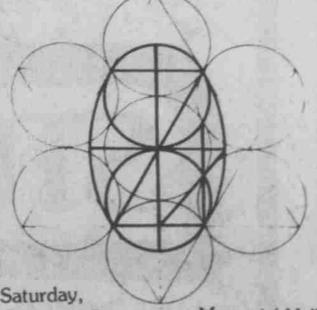
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