

Religion

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them aloud, a few raised their arms, most simply bowed their heads. In the quiet moments one could hear the pinball machines in the next room.

One girl started singing a song of praise—her own tune, her own words. Another did the same, and eventually many voices were raised in a strangely beautiful blend of many songs and words. Several present, both men and women, cried softly.

Then, after embracing friends or clasping hands, they went home.

Thursday night there was again much prayer and singing, and this time they sang together, simple songs like "Amazing Grace" and "The Lord He Is Risen Indeed." They spoke in tongues and they prophesied, and finally they elected six elders.

Three of the group's founders—Joe Orduna, Tim Oglesby and Wesley Mabin—were among those named. They were blessed with "the laying on of hands" by the rest of the members, and then they took communion.

In Corinthians 12, the Bible lists the nine gifts God gave the early Christians, including the ability to speak in tongues, prophesy, work miracles and heal the sick. Most present-day churches believe these gifts were withdrawn after the Bible was completed. Members of Prayer and Praise do not.

These gifts, they feel, will remain until "that which is perfect is come"—the second coming of Christ. And that coming will be soon.

"It definitely is going to be within our lifetime," said Tim Oglesby. "The things that have been prophesied and have come true within the last year, within the last month, are amazing.

"There's an emphasis on young men and young women experiencing Jesus, and I believe part of this is the 'Jesus freak' movement. Some of it's fad, but the great majority is valid."

"Freak" doesn't necessarily mean long-haired-hippie-turning-from-drugs-to-God. If they use the term at all, it is more often in the same sense that someone is called an art freak or a music freak—it shows where their interest lies.

One member did said he'd been on drugs before he joined. He quit after the first meeting, then started having flashbacks—at home, in class, even during a Prayer and Praise meeting—even though he's been off

acid for a month.

He couldn't control them or tell when one would hit him, he said, until he asked Jesus to come into his life and help him. He hasn't had a flashback since.

Others, like Oglesby, had been brought up in a model Christian family... "people expected me to be a preacher someday. I had known the Lord as my personal savior, but I hadn't been baptized in the Holy Spirit or felt God's love completely filling me.

"Then I went to a Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship meeting here in Lincoln and really saw that God wasn't a stale God off in left field. He was there with those men, helping them every day in their lives, and I wanted that feeling."

Oglesby said people going to Prayer and Praise for the first time often feel the same way he did. "My heart was convinced, but my mind still had a few problems." Some call it a hoax or pure emotionalism. Others he said, are immediately "turned on by being in a meeting where Jesus is."

A similar campus group is the Campus Crusade for Christ. The similarity stops with their goals, however. At a Campus Crusade meeting, there is laughing, talking and joking before the meeting and the songs are the same ones they sing at church camp. About 60 students attend the meetings, mostly girls and mostly clean-cut.

The meeting starts with a "sharing period." One girl told how she and a few friends went to visit a church youth group in Henderson, and how enthusiastic the high school students seemed. One girl wanted to share the happiness this brought her because she is from nearby York, "and I think there is maybe one true Christian in York."

The lesson was given by Bob Querbach, one of the Crusade's six full-time staff members. Many of the members took notes.

Though there was no individual prayer, prophesying or speaking in tongues, the Crusaders believe in many of the same things members of Prayer and Praise do.

For example, they also feel the second coming of Christ is imminent. "I won't say it will be tomorrow, although it might, but I feel sure it will be during my lifetime," said Querbach.

"There are signs, 40 or 50 of them, foretold in the Bible and they're all starting to converge—earthquakes, wars, iniquity, heart attacks, drug abuse."

The best way to prepare for Christ's return to earth, he said, is to be evangelists, to help others

accept Jesus as their Savior.

Since the first Campus Crusade began at UCLA in 1951, over 400 campuses have formed their own groups. That their growth coincides with other similar movements, including the Jesus freaks, Crusade members do not consider accidental.

"After all," Querbach said, "when we started, we were considered freaks too. Some are good and some are bad, of course, but as long as we're going in the same direction, sure, we're with them."

Jim Engelkemier, part-time student and volunteer staffer for Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, agreed.

"I think it's great that Jesus can cross cultural and class barriers like this, he said. "Expressions differ, but inwardly the Jesus freaks have grabbed the same idea we have—that Jesus is the key to understanding the world and yourself."


Inter-Varsity (not to be confused with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes—there is no connection with sports) puts its emphasis on small prayer and Bible study groups which meet daily in dormitories, off-campus and in the Union. Two weeks ago they gave away nearly 13,000 copies of "Good News For Modern Man," a version of the New Testament, and sponsored a three-day conference in the Union.

"We're an evangelistic group," says George "Chip" Stulac, Inter-Varsity adviser. "We want to make Jesus Christ known to the whole campus community for what He is. Christianity isn't a bunch of do's and don'ts. And it isn't as if you never have any more fun when you ask Jesus into your life.

"I have more fun now than I ever did before because I'm happier; I can love instead of being self-centered. I don't have to worry about my future because if I accept Christ as my personal savior, He has already paid for my sins."


With Christ, happiness doesn't have to rely on external things, said Inter-Varsity president Bob Larson. "The joy is always there, inside."

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