

EDITORIAL

Rebirth or death for York christians?

It will be interesting to see whether the Church of Christ's club status will be renewed by York University at the end of this month.

The church's York chapter, Students for Christ, has been a recognized campus organization since fall 1986. Concerns about the group began from the start, and the first formal complaint was lodged in February 1987.

Since then, Student Affairs has heard a substantial number of allegations that the fundamentalist group is harassing students in order to recruit members, and dissenters describe feelings of guilt and distress from having been pressured not to leave the church. Student Affairs recorded enough complaints that the Office ran an advertisement in the July 14 *Excalibur* asking members of the community to "register their concerns."

The Inter-Faith Council (IFC) also heard allegations and, after a review, last March voted to dismiss Students for Christ from the IFC. At the end of this month, the Church will have to undergo a review process in order to have its status renewed.

Clubs seeking renewal file an application with Student Affairs. The application is reviewed by the Office and if the group is religious in nature, the IFC makes a recommendation. The IFC's advice carries great weight, but the decision to renew club status ultimately rests with Provost Tom Meininger.

The University will be in an awkward position. Presidential regulations encourage students to "think, speak, write, create, study, learn, (and) pursue social, cultural and other interests" freely, as long as they respect other students' rights to pursue the same privileges.

Yet the Church of Christ is not founded on these principles. Critical thought is discouraged because of the group's strict adherence to the Bible. Rob Tucker, Director of COMA (Council on Mind Abuse), says the Church of Christ labels scepticism as the devil's influence.

As a club recognized by York, Students for Christ has access to University space and facilities and may apply for funding from student government.

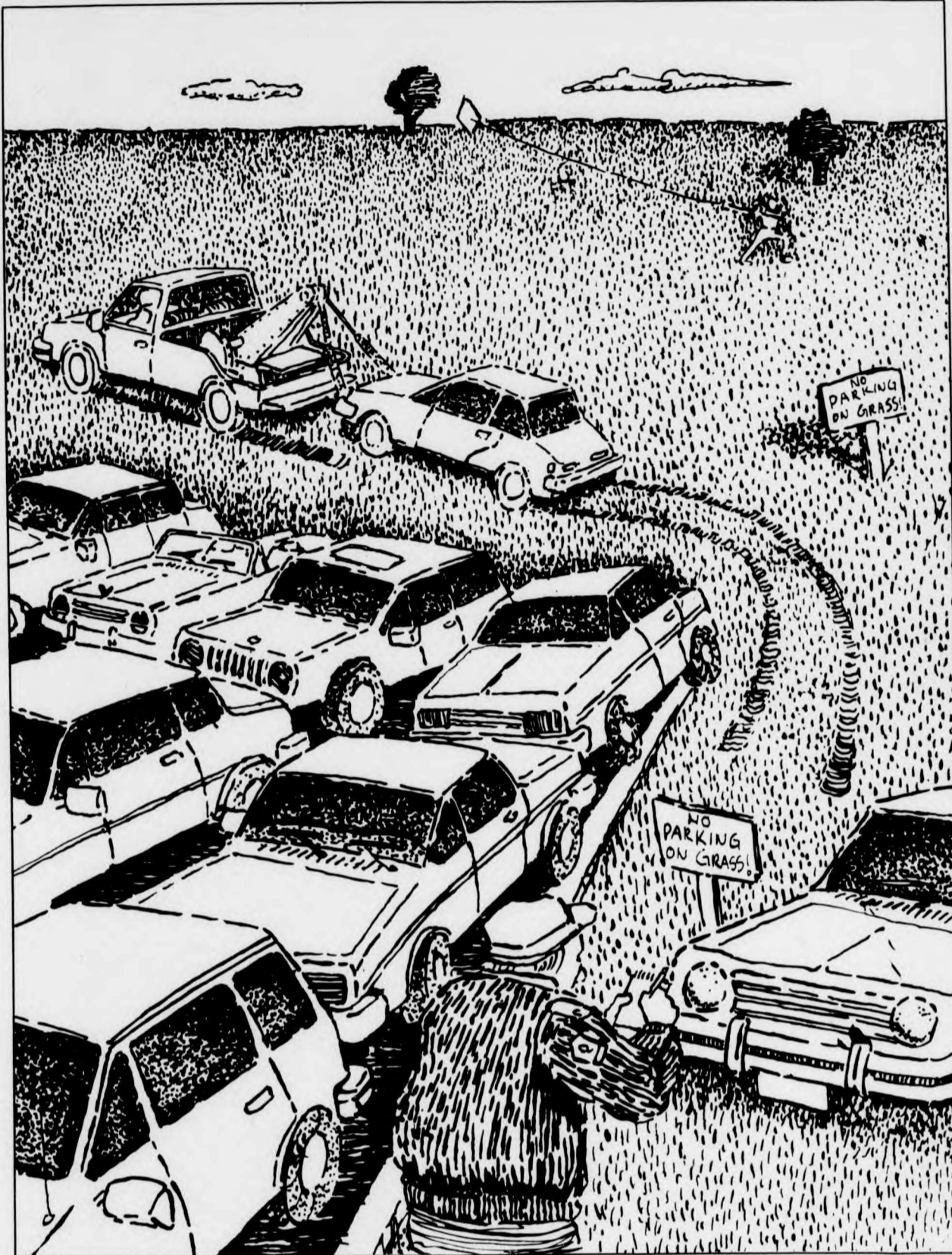
Among other rules, clubs must refrain from harassment as it is defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

But the definition is vague. Is an invitation to a Bible talk harassment? One student told *Excalibur* that a Church member called him a "wimp" when he declined one such invitation. Is this harassment?

Perhaps the most difficult consideration in the judgment to renew club standing is the subjective nature of religion. The spiritual element of the Church of Christ is deeper than in, say, the Cheerleading Squad.

Since Students for Christ has been expelled from the IFC, it seems unlikely that its York recognition will be renewed. But club status does not appear to be important to the group — Students for Christ has never approached CYSF for funding. Nor is University space an urgent need of the club — its Bible talks, socials, and Sunday service are held off-campus.

Meininger will have a tough decision.



We will publish, space permitting, letters under 250 words. They must be typed, triple-spaced, accompanied by writer's name and phone number. We may edit for length. Libellous material will be rejected. Deliver to 111 Central Square during business hours.

LETTERS

All churches created equal

Dear *Excalibur*,
The author of "Students speaks out on sects" (Daryl Wiggers, Sept. 15) voices his alarm at how these dissenting religious groups operate. My purpose for writing is to state that I see little difference between the Church of Christ and most religious denominations. The difference lies not in that there are rituals performed, practices followed, or unproven "truths" believed, but in the degree to which these modes of operation appear to be obviously at fault.

While Wiggers sees these lies in the Church of Christ, some of us see them in religions so commonly accepted that few blink an eye. Wiggers states that "it is only those who are ignorant of scripture who are seduced by this deviant organization."

Is it not possible that those who are knowledgeable of scripture are not seduced by this organization because they have already been seduced by another? Perhaps this is a fundamental similarity inherent in most religious organizations, a common denominator of sorts.

How practical! It provides a point of reference from which to judge others. And how convenient too, in that it encourages one to cast one's critical eye only beyond the boundaries of one's own religious beliefs.
— C. Connolly

Poor parkers pay please

Editor,

Let's hear some violins for the miscrant car-owners who tell their sad tale in the letter "Parking tickets unfair to students" (Sept 8). Reading their letter was a highly informative experience, as I discovered that by parking illegally on University property, and leaving one's car there for more than four days, you can actually expect to get a ticket! What's more, you can't expect to have it torn up and thrown away when you go crying to the Parking Services people that you don't have any money.

Grow up people! Parking permits exist for a reason, and I didn't pay my fees to watch "poor students that we are" parking for nothing and expect the University Administration to smile paternally and look the other way.

You name the University policy as being inhuman; your reasoning being that they dare to fine students who flaunt their rules, and consider themselves above the regulations by virtue of their limited means. The University maintains order in the same way as our governments do, which is by a system of equality; a Bay Street lawyer in his Jaguar pays the same parking ticket (or speeding ticket for that matter) as the welfare case in the second-hand Chevy. Why I ask, should you who say you are "quite broke" expect to be treated any differently?

Finally, I have to wonder why you declined to sign your names to this letter, in which you incite the University community to boycott all parking fines? Is it possible that you fear ridicule from your friends for buying a car, trying to dodge the parking regulations, and then racking up more fines in one week than you could pay for? Step in to the real world kids. Whining that you're "only a poor student" may work with your mother, but for a car owner in Toronto, it's a bleak self-deception to think that tactic will work.

—Ed Daugavietis

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