

NEWS

CHURCH WORLDWIDE

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship Sanctioned at Two Dozen College Campuses

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship is being denied recognition at almost two dozen California college campuses because it requires leaders to adhere to Christian beliefs, effectively closing its leadership ranks to non-Christians and gays.

California State University, which has 23 campuses, is “de-recognizing” local chapters of the evangelical Christian group. The university system says InterVarsity’s leadership policy conflicts with its state-mandated non-discrimination policy requiring membership and leadership in all official student groups be open to all.

“For an organization to be recognized, they must sign a general nondiscrimination policy,” said Mike Uhlenkamp, director of public affairs for the California State University system. “We have engaged with (InterVarsity) for the better part of a year and informed them they would have to sign a general nondiscrimination statement. They have not.”

InterVarsity, active in the United States since 1947, has been challenged on more than 40 college campuses, but CSU, with 447,000 students, is the largest to ban it so far. Other schools that have challenged InterVarsity include Vanderbilt University, Rollins College, and Tufts University.

InterVarsity policy states membership is open to all, but leaders must affirm its “doctrinal basis,” which declares belief in “the entire trustworthiness” of the Bible. Many Christians who read the Bible literally also argue it prohibits homosexuality.

In a video statement posted to the InterVarsity website, spokesman Greg Jao said the CSU decision means local chapters will lose access to on-campus meeting rooms, student fairs, and other official school functions. He estimates the annual cost of covering those losses will be about \$20,000 per chapter.

But Uhlenkamp said, in effect, the impact will be much less. “We are not disbanding them, they have not been removed from any of our campuses,” he said. “They are just not an officially recognized student organization. They will still have access to meeting rooms, they just will not receive as steep a discount.”

—*Religion News Service*

Washington Church Takes Ice Bucket Challenge

With buckets of icy water and warm hearts, members of Tacoma Christian Reformed Community Church honored long-time member Gert De Kruyf. The “Ice Bucket Challenge”—an Internet sensation raising awareness of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)—was the kickoff event for the annual church picnic on August 24 in honor of De Kruyf, who has ALS.

It started when pastor Clay Warren poured icy water on his own head and then challenged the worship team, who in turn challenged council members.

De Kruyf was diagnosed in June 2013 with a rare form of ALS called Brait-Fahn-Schwartz disease that also includes sporadic Parkinson’s disease. Lori De Kruyf, Gert’s daughter, said, “She is on Facebook. Several extended family members had been doing the bucket challenge. It lights her up from the inside to see it.”

Council member Ken Gritter said, “As a council member, it was an honor to

take the challenge in Gert’s honor. During her battle with ALS, she and Tony have never wavered in their faith and have always put their trust in the fact that God is good and has a plan for all our lives.”

“For too long the general public has not known about the challenges people living with ALS face,” said Becky Moore, executive director of the ALS Association chapter that serves Tacoma. She said funds raised by ice bucket challenges help them to provide more free services to people living with the disease.

The De Kruyf family has not only been blessed by the bucket challenge but by the care shown to Gert. Church members have brought meals and asked how they can help with day-to-day care. “It’s been pretty amazing,” said Lori. “They have been blessed by the church family. They have been a blessing to the church family.”

—*Amy Toornstra*



The Council of Tacoma Christian Reformed Community Church takes part in the bucket challenge in honor of Gert De Kruyf. Pictured left to right are: Deacons Eric Vander Pol and Mike Ridderhoff; Elders Howard Wouters, Art Tel, and Council President Ken Gritter.

CARLA RIDDERHOFF