

Campus Ministry Drops 'Christ' From Name

By Todd Starnes

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One of the nation's most prominent Christian ministries has decided to take Christ out of its name – a move that has generated cries of political correctness from within the evangelical community.

Campus Crusade for Christ International [announced](#) this week that it will change the name of its U.S. Operations to “Cru” in early 2012.

“We felt like our name was getting in the way of accomplishing our mission,” said Steve Sellers, the vice president for Campus Crusade, noting that the ministry will still be committed to “proclaiming Christ around the world.”

Sellers said researchers found that 9 percent of Christians and 20 percent of non-Christians were alienated by the name Campus Crusade for Christ.

The organization was founded in 1951 by Bill and Vonette Bright and today has 25,000 staff members serving in 191 countries. Bright died in 2003, but his widow offered support for the name change in a [video](#) posted online.

“When Bill Bright started the organization, he told his wife that someday they would have to change the name,” Sellers said. “As early as the late '70s and '80s he was looking at making the name change.”

Sellers said several factors were [involved](#) in the name change – including overseas sensitivities.

“Our name was becoming more and more of a hindrance,” he told Fox News Radio. He specifically mentioned the word crusade.

“It's reverted back to some of its meaning related to the Middle Ages – forcing [Christianity](#) on different parts of the world,” he said.

As for removing Christ from their name, the Campus Crusade for Christ website states:

“We were not trying to eliminate the word Christ from our name. We were looking for a name that would most effectively serve our mission and help us take the gospel to the world. Our mission has not changed. Cru enables us to have discussions about Christ with people who might initially be turned off by a more overtly Christian name. We believe that our interaction and our communication with the world will be what ultimately honors and glorifies Christ.”

But that decision has created controversy within the evangelical Christian community – some taking to [social networking sites](#) and the organization's website to voice their displeasure.

“Take Christ out, and you become just another crusade,” one critic wrote on the Campus Crusade website. “How repulsive can you get?” Another person wrote, “We are both appalled that you think you have to remove the name Christ from your name.”

“It is sad that an organization like Campus Crusade at least appears to have allowed themselves to be taken by the politically correct environment instead of acting counter culturally as Christ’s followers are called to do,” said Richard Hornsby, of Kansas City. “For an institution like Crusade to appear to cave to the same cultural pressure that leads school principals to harass or try to ban Christian groups from meeting on campus is incredibly sad. We expect the ACLU to intimidate small towns and schools by threatening to sue them. We don’t expect long-standing pillars of the Christian community to fold like this.”

Hornsby was actively involved with Campus Crusade at The Ohio State University when he was a college student. He said he was surprised by the name change.

“I immediately thought of Paul’s letter to the Romans, ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,’” he said. “It may be that CCCI has good intentions behind the change, but on its face, this decision to drop ‘Christ’ seems like an attempt to hide or mask the core identity of the group.”

But Sellers defended the removal of Christ’s name from the title – and denied that political correctness was involved.

“It has nothing to do with political correctness,” he said. “It has everything to do with how we can be effective at what God has called us to do.”

“Most churches don’t have Christ in their name,” he said. “Hardly any other Christian organization has Christ in their name. People are making an issue out of something that isn’t the intent at all.”

Sellers said it is “more important that the organization is effective at proclaiming Jesus than it is important to have the name of Jesus in the name of the organization.”

And he stressed that the mission of the organization has not changed.

“We are an evangelistic organization that is committed and has been committed and will be committed to proclaiming Christ around the world,” he said.

The new name, Cru, has long been used as a nickname for the organization on university campuses. Other than that, Sellers said Cru does not have a definition.

“Much like lots of brand names they don’t necessarily have meaning in and of themselves,” he said. “It is a name we intend to give meaning so that when people hear it they know that it’s a caring group of Christians who are passionate about lifting up the name of Jesus.”

Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2011/07/21/campus-ministry-drops-christ-from-name/#ixzz1SmNliuHj>