

Why Dropping ‘Christ’ Is Not Sign of Retreat for Campus Crusade

“It’s not a Christian organization if Christ isn’t in the name.”

I hear that one a lot. In fact, I’ve heard it in relation to Campus Crusade for Christ changing their name recently. Some people are upset that they seem to have dropped the “Christ” part, when in fact it was the “Crusade” word that caused them trouble with certain international outreaches.

But everyone’s a critic, and they had to get upset about something. Campus Crusade announced its name change two weeks ago to “CRU.” For those outside the organization, “Cru” is an informal nickname that their campus staff have called themselves for years. It has enormous equity among what’s probably the largest outreach in the organization—not to mention their next generation of leaders—and among the five final name choices, they made that selection.

Like “CRU” or not, one of the biggest criticisms has been the tired line that “It’s not *Christian* if you take “Christ” out of the name.” Some have even called them “cowardly.” My take? That criticism, while probably made by well-meaning people, could not be more false. Using that argument, 90 percent of churches wouldn’t be Christian and the “Billy Graham Evangelistic Association” wouldn’t be Christian—along with about a million others—including Christian colleges and universities.

And *dropping* the word isn’t a sign of retreat, it’s a sign of advance. After all, what’s the point of having a word like “crusade” or even “Christ” in the name if leading with that actually *closes* the door to sharing that very message?

I saw a movie workshop at a Christian media conference recently actually called *"If 'Christ' isn't in the movie, you can't call it a Christian film."* That's equally preposterous.

I wish people—even well meaning ones—would find out the real information before criticizing name changes—particularly from organizations that have long track records of success and integrity. I wasn't personally involved in the name change, but I know they spent years agonizing over it, praying and doing their homework. They know that a name can either open a door or shut it.

There are legitimate reasons to debate names and name changes. Provocative challenges like calling people cowards for taking "Christ" out of the name isn't one of them.

I'd love to hear your thoughts on the name change and the issue in general.

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Editor's Note: *The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of Phil Cooke and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Charisma editorial staff. To read a differing opinion by Michael Youssef, [click here](#).*