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Examining Campus Crusade for Christ in context

Matt Hunter

Issue date: 9/27/07 **Section:** [Soap Box](#)

In his recent op-ed, Eryk Salvaggio addressed some reasonable concerns regarding the name of Campus Crusade for Christ. I agree that "crusade" is not the optimal word to use - at the very least - given his point that the term could be associated with the bloody Crusades of the Middle Ages. However, I also understand why the founders of Campus Crusade chose to use it and I believe that their motives were both Biblically and reasonably sound.

Campus Crusade for Christ was founded in 1951 on the UCLA campus. In the context of this time, the term "crusade" did not immediately bring to mind images of priestly knights wading through blood in the Holy Land. Throughout American history, the term "crusade" has been used to describe movements ranging from women's suffrage and organized labor to abolition and the fight for civil rights. At the time Campus Crusade was founded it was more likely that people would associate it with these types of movements.

Only recently have people in the US primarily associated the word "crusade" with the invasion of the Holy Land in 1099. If the organization were formed today - given our current political sensitivities - it would make little sense to use a word that connects the ministry to this unfortunate chapter of Christian history. However, given the context of American society at the time, that was not a primary consideration.

Christianity at its core seeks to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:18-20). Fundamental to its existence is a heart for the lost and a desire to reach people with the message of God's love and forgiveness. Jesus said that he had come to "seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10) and before ascending into heaven gave that command to each of his followers.

The rest of the New Testament - in addition to delving into theological matters - chronicles the struggle of the early church against the oppression of the Roman government and the endeavors of early missionaries who sought to reach other people and nations with the message of Christianity - you might say it was a "crusade."

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Matt Sargent

posted 10/04/07 @ 6:27 PM EST

Nice rebuttal, Matt!

Keep up the good work. :)

Huckabee for prez!

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New Orleans Reader

posted 10/06/07 @ 10:10 AM EST

Matt, Thanks for your reply. I found Eryk Salvaggio's opinion article pretty disappointing. It had a angry tone and lacked a level-headed perspective shown in yours. ([Continued...](#))

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