

Christian Crusade, Prospering Under Hargis, Breaks Ground for a Superpatriotic College

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TULSA, Okla., Aug. 3—The ultra-conservative Christian Crusade, prospering under the energetic guidance of the evangelist Billy James Hargis, broke ground today for a superpatriotic school to be called American College.

The site is behind a gas station on a busy commercial thoroughfare on the outskirts of Tulsa, adjacent to the Crusade's three-year-old headquarters "cathedral."

The new school is the latest of several manifestations of the Hargis organization's financial health despite its loss three years ago of its Federal tax exemption.

East night Mr. Hargis, fundamentalist founder-director of the 22-year-old Christian Crusade, told followers of his continuing belief in baptism by immersion and said he had "never sprinkled or poured in my life."

This city of 350,000 population is already the home of Oral Roberts University, named for another Tulsa evangelist.

He said his college would teach "God, government and Christian action." He said it would provide a counterweight to what he portrayed as degenerate and liberal influences at other universities.

Convention Ends

Dedication of the new school came on the final day of the Crusade's four-day annual convention. It followed a warning



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Billy James Hargis

yesterday by one of the speakers, retired Brig. Gen. Clyde J. Watts of Oklahoma City, that there are "one or more Communist cells in every major educational institution in the United States."

Mr. Hargis, who celebrated his 44th birthday today, raised a reported total of \$70,000 for the new college last night from among 250 Crusaders here from 38 states.

After reading a "history-making announcement" that the first building would be a

dormitory for 200 students, he asked the audience to underwrite it.

He said the school had an initial \$50,000 pledge and started the on-the-spot plea for more at the \$25,000 level.

"Dear God," he prayed, at times with a catch and near sob in his voice, "young people can go to so few schools that champion conservative principles and Americanist ideas, may we see tonight the necessity of putting to work what we have while we're still alive."

"Oh, precious Jesus, our hearts are breaking over the paths so many of our youths are taking. Where are they going to learn to be militant, patriotic Americans?"

"I need \$350,000. I need some big gifts. Not only for the school, but for all the other things we're doing."

A \$25,000 Offer

A crusader stood and offered \$25,000.

"God bless you," the evangelist said from the stage of the oval, blue-carpeted auditorium in the one-story cathedral. "Is there a second who will make

a faith promise to invest in these young people for the America of tomorrow?"

There wasn't, even though the Crusade director pledged the college would have "strict moral standards" and would seek "accreditation" and teachers with "earned Ph. D's."

"All right, then, \$10,000," he said. "Can you think of anything you could do that would give you more lasting satisfaction than to raise up leadership to save your country?"

"Brethren, what are you waiting for? If you don't invest in this fight, your money is going to continue to devalue anyway and it will soon be worthless. If you've got the faith to promise \$10,000, don't you believe God will make it possible for you to do it?"

Down to \$5,000

Despite the urgent tone and evangelistic fervor of the plea, the audience held out until the founder-director, called "Dr." Hargis in Crusade tracts because of honorary degrees from Fundamentalist institutions, came down to \$5,000.

He thanked the hands that were raised at that level and at \$2,000. The jackpots, how-

ever, came at \$1,000, \$500 and \$100.

Mr. Hargis said in an interview that personal pleas were no longer so important a part of Crusade income as they were in the days when he traveled almost constantly across the country on one-night stands.

Now, he said, the Christian Crusade's annual budget exceeds \$2-million and the staff exceeds 100, including four traveling teams that help him alert "patriots" to the dangers of "liberalism" and approaching Communist "take-over."

The bulk of the organization's income, he said, stems from "direct mail" solicitations for contributions, sent regularly to a mailing list that has reached 200,000.

He said Crusade mailings, including the sale of books, booklets and tapes of speeches such as the one made to the convention Friday by former Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama, had become such a big business that in the last year a computer was leased to help with the operation and a cathedral annex was built across the street to house records and printing equipment.

"We aspire to rent mailing lists totaling a million names," he said.

Another major source of income, he said, are tours he and staff members conduct abroad.

"We make a profit off of everyone who goes on these seminars," he said during a conversation in his plush office at the cathedral.

He is making five trips this year. He calls them seminars because Crusaders who go receive as a bonus lectures on Communism, Christianity and patriotism for himself and staffers.

Mr. Hargis leaves next Sunday on a trip to Greece and Israel. The Crusade has advertised it as a "fabulous" tour

to the Holy Land at "unheard of low, low prices," or \$750 each. Next month he will take a jet economy plane load to the Orient for the "unbelievable" rate, available "only to Crusaders," of \$1,197.

That one is undersubscribed, but Mr. Hargis whetted the

interest of any would-be travelers at the convention by promising audiences during the tour with President Chung Hee Park of South Korea and Madame Chiang Kai-shek on Taiwan. He also told Crusaders that Governor Wallace might make the trip with them.

Tax Exemption Status

When the Internal Revenue Service revoked the Crusade's Federal income tax exemption in 1966 after finding that the organization's activities were political as well as religious, Mr. Hargis incorporated the nondenominational Church of the Christian Crusade separately.

Last December he received exemption for that and now tells contributors they may designate gifts for the church to qualify for exemptions. Yesterday he told them this could include gifts for the college.

The ground-breaking was for a dormitory for 200 students, to be ready next year. Classes will be held in the cathedral and in trailers for two years, during which the school will be a junior college with "associate of arts" degrees in six liberal arts categories.

These will include journalism. Mr. Hargis feels that existing schools have not instilled objectivity in students.

By 1972, Mr. Hargis said, the Crusade will have purchased a 100-acre campus near Tulsa and will move the school there, converting it to a four-year institution.

Other new projects of the organization include "the first annual convention of Christian conservative teachers" beginning Aug. 19 at the Crusade's Hotel in Manitou Springs, Colo.

The organization holds summer schools for youths there annually.

One continuing regret, sandwiched among four days of speeches here deploring, among other things, sex education and a "no-win policy" in Vietnam, was expressed by General Watts,

Only one Communist has been uprooted in the country in the last 25 years, he said, "and the time has come when our Government must capture

more." "They're here, folks," he said. "We've got to do something about them." He did not name the one the Government discovered.