



A PROPOSAL

for the development of an

**African Center for Apologetics Research**

developed by

**The Centers for Apologetics Research (CFAR)**

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## **Need**

Today, cultic spiritual movements are flourishing across Uganda and virtually all of sub-Saharan Africa. The response of the Christian churches is not yet equal to the scale and severity of the harm caused by these groups and by unsound theological trends. Pastors, Christian workers, and lay believers need a robust and reliable source of factually sound, biblically informed information and analysis so they can identify, answer, and evangelize the wide range of false and defective religious groups that pose a constant challenge to the proclamation of the Gospel and the building of the church.

## **Nature**

The Africa Center for Apologetics Research (ACFAR) is to be a non-denominational, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization of evangelical Christian conviction, developed and maintained as a long-term partnership by the Centers for Apologetics Research (CFAR) and the Kampala Evangelical School of Theology (KEST).

## **Mission**

In light of the Scripture's commands to defend the faith once for all delivered to the saints (e.g., Jude 3–4), the Center's fundamental purposes will be to:

- Monitor and continuously compile accurate data on new and controversial religious groups active in Uganda and East Africa
- Analyze the beliefs and practices of such groups in the light of Scripture, and develop practical apologetic responses
- Warn and inoculate the greatest possible number of lay believers against both indigenous and imported cults and aberrant Christian movements
- Equip pastors, seminary and Bible college students, Christian workers, and lay believers with tools and training to enable them to recognize and respond effectively to such groups (both apologetically and evangelistically)
- Raise up African apologists who will model balanced, biblical reasoning and responses to the challenges posed by heretical movements

## **Scope**

The geographic scope of the Center's activities will be, in order of priority:

- East Africa (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi)
- the rest of English-speaking Africa
- the rest of sub-Saharan Africa

## Constituency

The Center will primarily protect and equip the church, with a special emphasis on:

- Pastors and missionaries
- Seminary and Bible-college students
- Christian workers (e.g., in campus ministries)
- Groups with special vulnerabilities (e.g., women, young adults)

In addition, when appropriate (and as circumstances allow), the Center may provide assistance to government agencies, the media, and other entities and individuals within its areas of expertise.

## Doctrinal Standards

The Center will promote Christian unity around the essentials of the historic Christian faith, and not reflect the specific traditions or emphases of any given Protestant denomination. It will affirm the following statements of faith:

### *Ancient*

- Apostles' Creed
- Nicene Creed
- Athanasian Creed
- Definition of Chalcedon

### *Contemporary*

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration (1999)
- The Lausanne Covenant (1974)
- The Manila Manifesto (1989)
- The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978)

## Ethical Standards

In its research and outreach, the Center will adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Manual of Ethical and Doctrinal Standards [[www.emnr.org/manual.html](http://www.emnr.org/manual.html)] published by Evangelical Ministries to New Religions (EMNR).

## Primary Areas of Research and Response

- Cult movements (such as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahá'í faith, Association for the Healing Place of God of All Armies)
- Aberrant Christian movements (such as the Word-Faith movement)
- World religions (such as Islam, Hinduism)
- Popular occultism (such as astrology)
- Anti-Christian fads and phenomena (such as *A Course in Miracles*, *The Da Vinci Code*)

- General apologetics

## Services

The Center will develop and/or distribute:

- A quarterly research bulletin for pastors, featuring practical articles on discernment and the defense of the faith, sent via post
- A web site devoted to news, research, and analysis of new and controversial religious groups in East Africa
- Training seminars and conferences for pastors, seminary and Bible students, Christian workers, and lay believers
- Resources for mass distribution in English and local languages, including:
  - tracts, pamphlets, and books
  - data CDs
  - audio and video material

In addition, the Center will develop and maintain a specialized reference collection, consisting of a research library and files in its primary subject areas, for its own use and for consultation by qualified researchers.

## Location

The proposed Center is to be located on the premises of the Kampala Evangelical School of Theology (KEST).

## Timeline and Duration

The work of the Center in Uganda will commence with the arrival of John Divito, M.Div. to serve as its director, once sufficient personal and ministry support has been raised. (Time frames are approximate)

- Phase 1/Acculturation and Orientation (6 months): The director will familiarize himself with the culture and customs of contemporary Uganda, with a special emphasis on firsthand research of new and controversial religions and extensive consultation with Christian ministers, theologians, parachurch leaders, and missionaries. He will begin to build the ministry's reference collection, including primary source materials produced by groups active in East Africa.
- Phase 2/Teaching and Resource Development (6 months): The director will initiate public activities, to include establishing an office and web site, producing a descriptive brochure, and teaching a class in an apologetics-related field at KEST.
- Phase 3/Full Ministry (ongoing): If he has not already done so, the director will work with KEST to develop an advisory board, distribution plans and lists (e.g., pastors, Bible colleges), and training series appropriate to various audiences (e.g., seminaries, churches). In addition, he will begin publishing the aforementioned pastors'

newsletter and translating tracts and other key resources in Luganda and other local languages.

Lord willing, the Center will continue to serve the church in Africa until His return.

### **Administration and Oversight**

Responsibility for the administration and oversight of the Center will be shared between its two sponsoring organizations, KEST and CFAR, according to details specified in a separate agreement. In addition, the Center will have a local advisory board composed of Christian leaders nominated by KEST and CFAR.

### **Affiliation and Collaboration**

The Center will share a ministry identity with the international network of Centers for Apologetics Research, which currently has affiliate organizations in Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Brazil, and the United States. (These other ministries will freely contribute their expertise and research resources to the Center.)

The Center will also be recognized as an arm of KEST in its wider mission of offering biblical and holistic training geared to the specific needs of the 21st-century African church.

Wherever appropriate and of mutual benefit, the Center will seek to develop collaborative relationships with evangelical denominations and parachurch agencies in Uganda and other African nations to fulfill its purposes. In addition, CFAR will assist in developing partnerships with likeminded apologetics and countercult ministries outside of Uganda (including well-regarded North American agencies such as the Institute for Religious Research and Stand to Reason).

### **Funding**

Principal funding—including the salary of its director its general operating costs, as well as special projects—will be raised and provided by CFAR in the first years of its operation.

### **Dissolution**

If, at any time, the board of directors of either KEST or ACFAR should decide to discontinue their organization's sponsorship or financial and material support, the partnership will be dissolved and the Center's work will either cease or continue under the auspices of the remaining sponsor organization.

### **Conclusion**

We realize that, apart from the power and provision of the Lord, none of this will ever come to fruition. We deeply appreciate your partnership and prayer as He leads us in response to the needs before us. May He be glorified as we consider this opportunity to serve His kingdom together.