



A PROPOSAL

for the establishment of an

Africa Centre for Apologetics Research

in Kampala, Uganda

April 2010

The 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 Centre for Apologetics Research (ACFAR) is to be a nondenominational, nonprofit, nongovernmental organisation of evangelical Christian conviction.

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 Centre'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 Centre'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 Centre 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 Centre may provide assistance to government agencies, the media, and other entities and individuals within its areas of expertise.

Doctrinal Standards

The Centre 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 (see attachment)

- 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 Centre will adhere to the guidelines set forth in the *Manual of Ethical and Doctrinal Standards* [www.emnr.org/manual.html] published by Evangelical Ministries to New Religions (EMNR).

Primary Areas of Research and Response

- Cult movements (such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Bahá'í faith, Branhamism, 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 the Bio Disc, *A Course in Miracles*, *The Da Vinci Code*)
- General apologetics

Services

The Centre will develop and/or distribute:

- A radio program to raise awareness and cultivate biblical discernment skills among its listening audience
- A quarterly research bulletin for pastors, featuring practical articles on discernment and the defense of the faith
- 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 Centre 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 Centre is to be based in the capital, Kampala.

Timeline and Duration

• **Phase 1/Implantation and Orientation (6 months):** The director will focus on firsthand research of new and controversial religions, along with extensive consultation with theologians and other academic specialists, as well as denominational and parachurch leaders. He will begin to build the ministry's reference collection, including primary source materials produced by groups active in East Africa. He will develop a contact database of churches, pastors, and parachurch agencies. He will also take first steps toward developing and testing apologetics training courses and material for broadcast. In addition, he will establish an office for research, administration, and other appropriate uses.

• **Phase 2/Teaching and Resource Development (6 months):** The director will broaden public activities, expanding the ministry's web site, producing a descriptive brochure, and producing original and translated works.

• **Phase 3/Full Ministry (ongoing):** The director will expand the work of teaching and training through conferences at appropriate venues. He will also begin publishing the aforementioned pastors' newsletter.

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

Administration and Oversight

Responsibility for the administration and oversight of the Centre will belong to the board of directors, in accordance with the statutes of the National Board for Nongovernmental Organisations.

Affiliation and Collaboration

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

Wherever appropriate and of mutual benefit, the Centre 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.

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.