

Keith Miller's Refutation of False Accusations concerning Uganda

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Refuting False Accusations

I recently read the testimonies of saints from the Bugolobi district of Kampala--Sarah, Godwin, Edna, Rachael, and Mbabasi--concerning events in Uganda, on the Internet site "AFaithfulWord.org." My wife, Tina and I were sick inside and grieved in our spirit after we read these reports. We initially considered refuting item-by-item all the inaccuracies, misunderstandings, unforgiven offenses, downright lies and attacks against our character; We felt overwhelmed by the task. I wondered how anyone--let alone professing Christians--could write such horrible things against another person, especially their brother in Christ.

DCP's Dissemination of Unfounded Allegations

I told Tina that people reading these accounts who know us would certainly realize that those testimonies could never be true. We also felt that personally we would just endure the false accusations and lies that were written about us and the work here. We had no idea, however, that these reports would be published by the Defense & Confirmation Project (DCP) as a book, entitled Titus Chu's Divisive Work in Uganda and freely distributed to saints. DCP's editors--Evan Koch with Bill Buntain & Dan Sady, (none of whom have ever visited Uganda)--make their own serious allegations. They allege that in Kampala:

- "division [was] caused by the work under Titus Chu's leadership" (p. 13)
- "this new work...applied worldly means to attract increase and build up that work" (p. 13)
- "workers sent by Titus Chu tried to take over [the Kampala saints'] church life" (p. 13)
- "work was done..[by] natural effort and worldly mixture...measur[ing] success in sheer numbers" (p. 14)
- "Titus and most of those under him...[were] divisive and controlling" (p. 14)
- "deceit and manipulation...were perpetrated on the church in Kampala." (p. 14)
- Titus' "different work set itself in direct competition with...the church in Kampala" (p. 14)
- "Titus and those working under him...justify and build up their own 'kingdoms' under the cloak of the Lord's recovery." (p. 14)

These are serious allegations against us and other brothers from the Midwest who labored here in Uganda, including Titus Chu. Some brothers, (e.g. Nigel Tomes) have responded to these allegations in a general way. However, because Tina and I have lived in Uganda for nearly three years, and continue to labor here, we feel it is necessary to respond to specific accusations made against us personally.

Our concern is that this publication is no longer merely a personal attack against us, but rather an attack by Satan to try to destroy the Lord's work here in Uganda. Several brothers also assured us that unless there was a rebuttal, people reading that evil book (Titus Chu's Divisive Work in Uganda, by DCP) may take its contents as true. Our fear is that if we refute only some items, people may assume the other items we did not refute are true. **This certainly is not the case!** While there are fragments of truth interspersed throughout, overall, the testimonies in DCP's book contain so many inaccuracies and lies that any truth it contains has been obliterated by falsehood. Therefore, what we are doing in what follows (without going line by line and item by item,) is refuting all the testimonies. They are so inaccurate and manifestly false that we would advise all readers not to believe any of them.

Unethical Character Assassination

I previously recounted events leading to the Great Lakes brothers' labor in Uganda and subsequent developments in a piece entitled, "The History of the Lord's Move in Uganda," which is posted on the Internet http://www.concernedbrothers.com/CE/Uganda_History_by_Keith.pdf Since I was personally involved in the Uganda labor from the start and later moved here for the Lord's work, I believe I'm among those most qualified to accurately document events here. Rather than repeat the history of the Lord's work in Uganda, this piece refutes the false accusations, untrue allegations, outright lies and misleading statements contained in DCP's book.

By far the most malicious, hurtful, and slanderous testimonies against us and the work in Uganda were written by our sister, Sarah and her husband, Godwin Kihuguru. This was particularly disturbing and even traumatizing to Tina and me because Sarah is one who is particularly loved by us. In her negative report, she failed to recount how much love and care she received from my wife and me; how we introduced her to the church life and lived together as a family in Cincinnati, USA. When Tina and I traveled to Uganda initially in August 2001, it was because of our love for her and other Ugandan saints we had cared for in the US. We are grieved by what she wrote.

False Accusation of “looting...the Knoppe’s home and wiping out...their possessions”

Sister Sarah alleges that, after their departure, there was “*the looting of the Knoppe’s home and wiping out of all of their possessions*” (p. 41) This accusation is aimed particularly at my wife and me, since she goes on to say, “*The Millers later used the excuse that the property was all for the work...*” (p. 42) There is also the added accusation that, “*They went through the Knoppe’s property and private things with no regard for their privacy.*” (p. 42)

This slanderous accusation of “*looting... the Knoppe’s home and wiping out of all of their possessions*” is absolutely false! It is a libelous accusation not only against my wife and I, but also against Steve & Barb Lietzau, who were also involved with handling the Knoppe’s things after they left Uganda and returned to the US. By publishing these accusations DCP is party to this slander.

Please be assured that my wife and I never stole any item from anyone, neither did we “*loot the Knoppe’s home or wipe out all of their possessions*” as alleged in Sarah’s testimony. Prior to returning to the States to attend his son’s wedding, Tim Knoppe told Tina and me that he might not return to Uganda. Tim personally walked us through his furnished apartment, showing us which personal items belonged to him and what belonged to the apartment’s owner, in the event that Tim did not return. Tina has emails confirming that she and Donna [Tim’s wife] discussed exactly what items were to be returned. My wife and I then worked together with Steve and Barb Lietzau to assure that everything of the Knoppe’s was returned to them or kept for them. The following is the text of an email sent by Donna Knoppe in the US to my wife, Tina, dated December, 29, 2005

Dear Tina

Just want to write a note to let you know I got my things. Thank you so much. As usual you sent some things I didn't ask for but really needed. You are a dear sister. I wanted my housecoat but forgot to ask. You "still" know me. I also want to remind you of our relationship.. you are still in my heart and I do pray for you. I think the Lord will cover all things.

I hope you are having some time to enjoy your family.
Greet the kids for us.

Hope to see you sometime in the future.
love in Christ
Donna

I ask the reader to consider whether this resembles the response of someone whose home has (allegedly) been “looted” and all their possessions have been “wiped out”? This is an outright lie! If there was any item not returned to the Knoppe’s that should have been returned, we are not aware of it, neither has it ever been brought to our attention. These irrefutable facts counter the false accusations of “looting” and that “*there was no consideration to first check with the Knoppes about taking these other things.*” (p. 42)

My wife, Tina and Barb Lietzau also worked for long hours going through every item in the Knoppe’s furnished apartment to assure that everything was either returned to the apartment’s owner or packed up for the Knoppes. The apartment’s owner even had a detailed checklist of

every item belonging to him. This checklist was reviewed by the owner with Steve and Barb Lietzau before the apartment was handed over to him. Nothing was found to be missing. To say that there was "*looting of the Knoppe's apartment*", that items were taken from the apartment's owner and from saints, and with no regard for privacy is a flagrant lie. How a sister could make these malicious accusations is beyond our imagination! That DCP would disseminate such unfounded allegations on its website and in print is unbelievable!

False Allegation—using money to coerce a brother to be in the meetings

Sister Edna alleges that I asked her to lend money to a brother to establish a small business, on condition that he attend all the church meetings. (p. 56) She accuses me personally, saying, "*Keith Miller asked me to lend this brother some money...*" (p. 56) This sister also says, "*...it was shameful that Keith had used money to coerce this brother to be in the meetings*" (p. 56) This is a misrepresentation. Please, be assured that I never asked Sister Edna to give or lend, a brother any money. Nor did I ever tell a brother he was required to attend meetings in exchange for money that he received.

This is both a misunderstanding and a lie. The brother in question was a new campus contact of mine. He inquired of me how he could start a business in Uganda. I felt unqualified to give any advice being myself a newcomer in a foreign country. I asked him to talk with Sister Edna and inquire from her. I asked this sister if she would work with him because she is well-known in Uganda and experienced in the banking industry. I felt she might be able to give him advice on obtaining a bank loan or get him connected to people who could assist him. Apparently, when this brother went to Sister Edna, he asked her for money. After meeting with him and discussing his business plan, Sister Edna told me she thought his plan had a reasonable chance of success. She then told me that she had decided to give him the money he needed to start the business. I was surprised by this and asked Edna, "Are you sure you want to do that? You may not get it back." She assured me it was OK and asked me to give him the money in an unmarked envelope, telling him it was an anonymous donation from someone in the church. She also said, if he made the profit he anticipated, he could return the money, but, if not it was OK.

I did as our sister requested and the brother happily received the money. It was clear to both Edna and me that this brother would be working outside Kampala and his purpose in taking the money was to raise money for his university education. I stayed in touch with the brother for several weeks, periodically checking how his business was going. Eventually, he told me the business failed.

Not until months later did I discover that Sister Edna thought that when I asked her to help him, I wanted her to give him money. She was offended by this. However, this was never my intention. It was a misunderstanding. When I discovered this, Tina and I went to Edna in the office of the church meeting hall and apologized to her for the misunderstanding that I caused. I can testify that in my conscience before God I never asked Edna to loan this brother money. But, I still felt very bad, especially because this brother never returned the money. I even offered to reimburse her myself. However, she assured me things were OK and that she had forgiven me. Apparently, this was not the case.

These are just two of the numerous items misreported in the newly-published DCP book. I bring these specific items up because they are false accusations against the character of my wife and me. Our fear is that these kinds of accusations (if not directly refuted) may plant seeds of questions in saints and cause them to doubt the genuine work of the Lord here in Uganda. Simply beginning a false report by saying, "*Oh Lord Jesus, cover this speaking*" (p. 17) does not make it right! Nor does it make the report true!

The mockery of my labor contained in these saints' "testimonies," along with the bitter personal accusations against me— of being impure, selfish, worldly, shallow, ambitious, etc. are matters they will have to deal with before the Lord. Only the Lord sees our real heart condition. I dare not judge another person's labor or motives. Each of us has to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and account for our own deeds whether good or bad. The Lord Himself will be the ultimate Judge in that day; He will try everything by fire. I simply pray we all will be able to stand.

The False Accusation of Doing a “Private Campus Work”

I am accused of doing a “private work” on the campus of Makerere University. One saint says, “*Keith had his own agenda for the campus,*” (p. 22). Another alleges we had a “*hidden agenda*” (p. 55). I am also accused of “*running [my] own meetings and protecting [the students] like [my] own personal dynasty*” (p. 28) Along the same lines, DCP’s writers allege that Titus’ co-workers “*build up their own ‘kingdoms’ under the cloak of the Lord’s recovery.*” (p. 14)

The work in Uganda, as detailed in my previous piece, was initiated by my wife and I through fellowship with Brother Titus Chu and the Great Lakes co-workers. Tim Knoppe and Steve Lietzau were later brought into this fellowship after prayer and much consideration. They were sent to Uganda in 2003 under this fellowship. Several Great Lakes brothers coordinated the work in Uganda and traveled here regularly to set the direction, minister life to the saints, and shepherd the saints. These brothers included Paul Neider, Mike Li, John Myer, and later, Vern Yoder. There was extensive, detailed fellowship. The allegation that my functioning in Uganda was doing a “private work” and “build[ing] up my own kingdom” is absurd and totally unfounded.

I came to Uganda with a burden to preach the gospel in order to save sinners and bring them into the local church where they could grow in life and be perfected in function. Kampala is home to the leading university in Uganda--Makerere University. It is altogether proper that some saints and workers focus on the campus. The workers who came to Uganda prior to me (Tim Knoppe & Steve Lietzau) were already laboring on the communities of Bugolobi and Naguru Go-down. Therefore, it was decided, in fellowship with the Great Lakes co-workers, I should labor on the university campus. This was neither “my own agenda” nor “my private work.” Some Bugolobi saints were content “*sitting for hours and hours listening to Brother Tim Knoppe share,*” (p. 54) attending “*up to four five-hour sessions a week, without a break*” (p. 20.) I do not condemn these saints for seeking their own spiritual growth. However, personally, I was burdened for the increase of the church, especially from the campus. It is unfortunate that the Bugolobi saints are not enlarged enough to allow others to faithfully follow their own burden. Instead they belittle the campus labor as “*not producing lasting fruit,*” (p. 23) alleging “*their preaching is not out of a pure heart*” (p. 35) and attracting “*crowds of people who came to one or two meetings (satisfying [my] drive to depict large numbers)*” (p. 46) It is even alleged that, “*American cookies were being used to lure the students to meetings.*” (p. 22) (This statement is an insult to students at Makerere University!) Our gospel labor is even condemned because, “*at the campus meetings guitar music and short, simple gospel messages were emphasized.*” (p. 22) Yet, what is wrong with “guitar music”? What is erroneous about “short, simple gospel messages”? Must our gospel messages be long and complex? Such negative, critical speaking brings no honor to Christ. The Apostle Paul rejoiced even when Christ was announced for the wrong motives! Why can’t these saints rejoice?

The meeting they criticize was a weekly gospel gathering designed for new people. Some locally-made store-bought donuts or cookies were served after the meeting to foster a warm atmosphere for fellowship. Is this a sin? (Have the critics perhaps forgotten the elegant, home-made goodies the American sisters prepared for the Bugolobi saints to enjoy during their weekly district meetings?)

In addition to the weekly gospel meetings, small group meetings were conducted in several campus locations. These gatherings focused on enjoying the Lord and teaching basic lessons in the Christian life and biblical truth. For more committed saints there was a three-month “discipleship program.” After this we conducted a ten-month full-time training. Classes during this training included: Vision of the church, Practicality of the church, Growth in life, Practical Issues of Christian Workers, Shepherding workshop, Crucial Truths and a Revelation Bible Study. Along with these courses, the trainees had daily Bible reading assignments, Bible memorization, and frequent gospel preaching experiences. The trainees also conducted their own small group Bible studies and one-on-one Bible studies with people they personally led to the Lord. Many of the saints whom I met when I first arrived in Uganda during 2005 are now serving in the church today on a full-time basis. While preaching the gospel, we have not neglected deeper truths and experiences.

The False Allegation of “Not producing any lasting fruit”

It is alleged that our labor was “*not producing any lasting fruit*” (p. 23) The facts refute this claim. I am happy to report there has been “lasting fruit” from the campus labor. Our labor in Uganda, both on the campus and in the communities, has, by the Lord’s mercy, produced lasting fruit on many levels—young people have committed their lives to Christ, some have changed their careers for Christ’s sake; others (though pressured by their relatives to work,) have taken a year off to be trained; some “pastors” have committed themselves to the oneness of the Lord’s Body, and others (though enticed with money to leave the church life,) have stood steadfastly for the church. Twice there have been ten-month trainings here in Kampala. We have also conducted a “discipleship program.” In all about 50 saints were involved in these long-term trainings. Many of these were brought to the Lord and shepherded by me during my early campus labor. There are 7 saints currently serving the church on a full-time basis. Others are serving as deacons in the church and regularly attend the church gatherings. In addition, I am working with more than 200 pastors from over 60 communities on a weekly basis, sharing the vision of the Church. On the one hand, I am accused of “*producing no lasting fruit*” (p. 23) On the other hand, I am also accused of “*empty boasting about the number of people that [I]...brought into the church.*” (p. 45) I do not give the report above as a boast, but to refute the false accusation of “no lasting fruit.” Like the Apostle Paul, I am compelled to be “foolish,” by these unfounded accusations. Moreover, I do not regard these believers as my “personal dynasty,” nor as my “kingdom.” From the beginning, my wife and I realized our stay in Uganda would be of limited duration. During our time here we have sought to raise up saints and genuine local churches, “answering to the Lord.” Once we return to the US, the results of our labor will be left in the Lord’s hands.

Starting a Campus Meeting Viewed as Divisive

The Bugolobi saints report that my request “*to allow the students to meet separately on the campus...was turned down in fellowship on the ground that there had to be one expression of the church in the city...*” (p. 24) Apparently these saints developed a legalistic view of the local church which only allows one meeting for all the saints in the entire city. Yet in North America it is common practice for the church to have a campus meeting for students. Why then is this condemned in Kampala?

Falsely Alleging the formation of District Meetings divides the Church

The Bugolobi saints’ testimonies falsely allege that the formation of district meetings divides the Church. They charge me with dividing the church, saying “*Keith was more and more empowered to take action to divide the church and build up a work under their control.*” (p. 26) This is linked with my wish for a Lord’s day meeting on campus. (p. 26) They also allege that via a “*plan to divide the church into three or more districts...the brothers from the US had come to divide the church.*” (p. 44.) The Bugolobi saints claim that under this arrangement there is “*no proper expression of the local church*” (p. 29) They argue that the “*three groups [should] meet together as the Church in Kampala...so that one local expression could be maintained.*” (p. 29) They condemn the Midwest brothers for “*promoting the case for districts within the city, wrongly considering Makerere, Bugolobi, Naguru, [etc.] as separate districts. For clarity, all these areas are part of the city of Kampala.*” (p. 30)

It seems these brothers believe that ‘the ground of locality’ forbids multiple district meetings within a city’s boundaries! According to their concept, *to “divide the church into three or more districts” is to “divide the church”!* Yet, the introduction of district meetings is normal as the church grows and spreads, especially in larger cities when transportation is difficult or expensive. Jakarta (Indonesia), Seoul (Korea) and Taipei (Taiwan) are a few of the cities where local churches have multiple districts and meeting halls throughout the city. This does not invalidate the practice of the local church—one church, one city. However, it seems these few saints from Bugolobi wish to establish an ordinance requiring all the saints to come together under their terms and in one place in order to be recognized as the Church in Kampala. They condemn multiple districts as divisive! They say, “*two polar positions took root: one for the one local expression and the other for ‘district congregations’.*” (p. 30) Multiple congregations (districts), however, do not mean there’s no longer “one local expression.” If this were true, many local churches around the globe are in violation of this ordinance! It is a shame that this legalistic concept has been propagated among these Bugolobi saints, causing unrest and confusion.

Many Districts, but one church

I can report that in the case of Kampala, since we began meeting in districts and reaching out to other congregations, hundreds of genuine believers in Christ are slowly coming to realize that they are part of the local church. This is exhibited as leaders and “pastors” from around the city of Kampala come together to attend weekly trainings regarding the Christian life and Biblical truths. They take what they have learned from these trainings and minister it to those whom they are serving. In this way, saints from all over the city enjoy a practical church life within their own communities. Every other month these district leaders come, bringing the saints they are serving, to the corporate church gathering in Kampala. Hundreds of saints from all over the city look forward to these bi-monthly gatherings. They are coming to the realization that they are one with all believers in the city and part of the one church in Kampala. Doesn't this match our stand, that as the “local church”—“*we recognize all the blood-redeemed and Spirit-regenerated believers in Christ as members of the one church in each city*”? [*Beliefs & Practices of the local churches*, p. 4]

What's the basis of our 'oneness'?

The view we had when coming to Uganda was that this Biblical truth—the believers' oneness--could and should be seen today among all the Lord's believers and not merely a special select few. From what I have seen and experienced in Uganda, I believe this is not just a Biblical truth, but also a practical reality. I am personally witnessing hundreds of genuine believers slowly coming into the reality that they are part of Christ's one body and part of the one church in Kampala.

The feeling any Christian should have when they see this happening is love, joy and peace- not bitterness, hatred, envy, and malice. “How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity.” (Psalm 133) We all should take notice- if the fruit of “standing for the oneness” causes saints to speak against their own brothers, make false accusations, and even lie, then something is terribly wrong with that “tree.” Praise God for all the good work He has accomplished so far in Uganda! Praise Him that we are allowed to participate in it today!

Your brother in Christ,

Keith Miller,

Kampala, Uganda, Africa

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