

IHOP and Lou Engle Falsely Accused of ‘Demonizing’ Homosexuals in Uganda

A little-known documentary that was released a year and a half ago is casting aspersions on IHOP-KC, the international 24-7 prayer ministry in Kansas City; on Lou Engle, founder of TheCall; and on other Bible-believing Christians.

God Loves Uganda aired on PBS stations across America on Monday night. A *Christianity Today* review about the movie by John G. Stackhouse Jr. suggests:

“God Loves Uganda correctly shows that the antihomosexual agenda there has been driven, in part, by some American evangelicals, notably Scott Lively, a very minor figure at home in the United States, and Lou Engle, one of the founders of the International House of Prayer (IHOP) and known to many more as the director of ‘TheCall’ prayer rallies.”

The IHOP-KC leadership team has responded, categorically denying the accusations and insinuations about the ministry in the film and affirming that the ministry’s leadership love all people, including those who struggle with same-sex attraction.

“We stand by the supremacy of God’s Word, even when it is unpopular in our culture,” the statement from IHOP-KC reads. “To be clear, our leadership team upholds the New Testament view of the sanctity of sex in the context of marriage between one man and one woman. At the same time, we strongly oppose victimization, violence, and hate against any sector of society that disagrees with this biblical view. We honor the dignity and rights of all who differ from us.

“We unequivocally stand with Lou Engle, whom we have known for many years. We have seen him consistently love, value, and

honor people of all backgrounds. Moreover, we are proud of the manner in which he has shown tremendous compassion towards all while maintaining biblical integrity.”

The IHOP-KC leadership team has put together a statement of answers to questions that some are asking about its stance on the *God Loves Uganda* documentary, which follows:

What is *God Loves Uganda* (GLU)?

In spring 2013, a documentary was released at the Sundance Film Festival, entitled *God Loves Uganda*. The documentary explores the rationale behind a controversial piece of legislation proposed in Uganda that called for draconian, punitive measures against acts of homosexuality. The main rationale that the documentary explores is the influence of evangelicalism in North America, and in particular it follows a group of students from the International House of Prayer. The inference of the film is that such “foot soldiers” are fomenting anti-gay rhetoric and fervor, which has led to persecution of those in Uganda who identify themselves as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender).

Does the International House of Prayer support the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda?

No, we do not. We never have, and stated as such in the interviews for the documentary (which never made it to the final cut of the film). We have very little to do with Uganda as an organization; we do not have missionaries in Uganda and do not send a dollar of our budget to Uganda. Our primary mandate as an organization is prayer and humanitarian action; it is not political. We are not involved in U.S. politics, let alone politics in another nation. Upon further investigation of the bill (due to the making of this documentary), we would state that many of the provisions of the bill make it untenable in its current form, and we would oppose its passing.

Does IHOP-KC send missionaries to Uganda?

The International House of Prayer has developed a missions school over the past few years. We have sent missions teams and individual missionaries to many nations. The only missions team that has ever gone to Uganda was the team that the *God Loves Uganda* film crew followed. We have not sent any other missionaries to Uganda, and while we have friends in Uganda (as we have in many nations), we have no organizational presence in the nation and neither do we support any individuals financially.

Does IHOP-KC support missionaries financially?

IHOP-KC is committed to giving to the poor and to efforts that forward the Great Commission of Jesus throughout the earth. We do this primarily in our own city (Kansas City) through efforts that feed the poor, support widows and orphans, and help local schools and evangelism projects. We do support missionaries in other nations; however, we do not support any missionaries in Uganda financially and have never supported any of the individuals shown in the *God Loves Uganda* documentary.

Does IHOP-KC support violence against any sector of society?

We categorically repudiate any claims that we support violence. We strongly oppose victimization or violence against any sector of society. We honor the dignity and rights of all whose opinion differs from ours.

The director of *God Loves Uganda* claims that evangelical missionary activity (including that of IHOP-KC) is a numbers game, a fight for souls, and that IHOP-KC does not care about social justice or humanitarian issues. Is this true?

Evangelicalism has become a byword among many, and perhaps, at times, for good reason. However, the history of evangelicalism sees a people convinced by the claims of Christ as shown in

the Bible, which, as a result of a spiritual transformation in their own lives, has led to great social reforms in human history: the abolition of the slave trade, the feeding of the poor, the establishment of labor laws, education as a right for all. We identify and seek to emulate this evangelical tradition, seeking justice for the whole person. We, along with the body of Christ, seek to serve both the spiritual and physical needs of people: spiritual needs through prayer, Bible translation, teaching and evangelism, and physical needs through feeding programs, training programs, clothing those in need, combating the orphan crisis and seeking to end sex-trafficking. The students that the *God Loves Uganda* film crew followed were involved in prayer, evangelism and humanitarian activities. At no point were they preaching sexual morality or fomenting anti-gay rhetoric in Uganda.

What is IHOP-KC's stance on homosexuality?

We uphold the New Testament view of the sanctity of sex in the context of marriage between one man and one woman. We uphold the teachings of Jesus and the apostles as outlined in the Bible as our primary authority and moral guide. While we recognize that many in today's society do not accept the sexual ethics as laid out in Scripture, we wish to pursue this ethic as closely as possible in our congregation. Therefore, we seek to lead lives of sexual purity, which includes calling actions of sexual union outside of the marriage covenant sin; such sinful actions include premarital and extramarital sex, be it heterosexual or homosexual in nature. We honor the dignity and rights of all whose opinion differs from ours, and work with many who may hold such differing views.

Why did you give this film team such open access in the filming process?

We were given to understand that this film would not pursue a polarizing view of evangelicals and missionary work. We believe that it is important for the good of society to have

civil dialogue over the issues of the day. We believe that those in the faith community should not shy away from such discussions. IHOP-KC is completely open to civil dialogue and mutual respect in such discussion. It would appear from the inferences, innuendoes and untruths alluded to in the documentary that the filmmakers were not open to such civil dialogue and have instead pursued a deceptive means to achieve a hateful, polarizing result.