

A letter to Pastor Keith Underhill from Tonny Karwa

Dear Pastor Keith,
It saddens my heart and that of my entire household as we battle with the reality of your departure. I can't hold my emotions back and I admit that I am usually weak when people leave me. I have written this letter to you as a son entrusted to you by our Father in Heaven, the Father of our Lord Christ Jesus.

How we miraculously met

Do you remember smiling at me when we first met at The Aga Khan University Hospital? Do you remember the first scripture you opened and shared with me on the first day of our short hospital devotion? I remember it so well. It was Psalm 23. "Who could this be that opens a simple and common scripture like Psalm 23 and powerfully shares from it for ten minutes and moves my heart?" I kept on wondering. You indeed showed me a lot of love as Christ enabled you. My wife and I were in deep pain after sustaining major bone dislocation and fractures on our legs when suspected Al-Shabaab terrorists bombed our bus on Sunday, May 4, 2014 on our way home from church at 5 pm. Do you remember how afraid I was to what could happen to my 5 months pregnant wife? Could the baby survive?

Unusual events before, during, and after our meeting

After you were discharged from the hospital that week and later on at home, I kept on reflecting on these issues:

- ♣ *On the day of the accident, my wife and I were really lamenting about the doctrine taught by the church where we were members. I can recall that it*

was the last discussion we had a few seconds before the accident that led to our meeting in the same hospital and with our beds adjacent to one another.

- ♣ *Why was I allocated an adjacent bed to yours? Initially, I was allocated bed 31 but apparently the occupant had not signed out officially so, I was allocated bed 25.*
- ♣ *Why did the Red Cross team that removed us from the vehicle wreckage change their minds to bring us to The Aga Khan University Hospital where you were apparently admitted? Initially, they were contemplating of taking us to Guru Nanak Hospital or Kenyatta National Hospital.*
- ♣ *Why did you have to share with me about the gospel of grace yet you, just like me, were in deep pain and recovering from an operation? After you left the hospital, you even ensured that Peter came daily to share with me from the Holy Scriptures.*
- ♣ *Why did you have to go out of your way to come and see us at home after we were discharged? You needed finances badly, yet you still did share with us the little you had. You needed enough time and rest to recover, yet you still created time to frequently come and share with us from the Scriptures. On days that you were held up, you sent Peter to be a blessing to us, still he is.*
- ♣ *Why did you have to bring to us doctrinal reading materials at home? You also did send Peter on several occasions to ensure we have enough to read at home.*
- ♣ *Why did you have to check on us constantly via phone? Do you still remember calling me on your way to the United Kingdom while still at the airport?*

God's purpose for our meeting

I asked the Lord, and still I do, to open my eyes that I may know the meaning of this whole parable. He moved my heart to understand that the day of my redemption had come, together with my household. He had to create a conduit through which he could speak unto me, unto my family, to show us his mercy and grace unto salvation. Your hospitalization was my salvation together with my household. One may ask and of course they do, but who is this Pastor Keith? He is not popular. He does not hit the media like the renowned televangelists. He is too ordinary and simple. Does he have a fleet of cars like our renowned pastors?

Life after our meeting

My wife, Sally Olivia, has devoted herself to daily study of the scriptures, especially in the morning before she sets out for work. She has greatly benefited from the books and materials you freely gave us. She carries with her one book everyday to read in the bus on her way to work and during her lunch breaks. Her doctrinal point of view has been profoundly transformed by listening to the audio sermons that you gave us and dedicated study of the materials. This has also spilt over to her life as a wife and mother. Peter has also been bringing with him some of the audio sermons and we listen to them together as a family.

We have diligent and fruitful family devotions. Our devotions are more Christ-centred compared to the previous ones. Currently, we are studying the book of John and we hope to begin studying the book of Luke volume 1 and 2 by J.C. Ryle that you brought us the last time you visited us this year.

My perspective of the Doctrine has tremendously changed. I no longer view God the way I used to. I see his grace daily. I see his redemptive work in my life. I see his Sovereignty in my life more vividly. You have taught me how to manage my

time well so that I can get enough time to read my bible and listen to the audio sermons you gave me. Nowadays television does not take much of my time. You have taught me to use my computer for a noble purpose. Most of the time, I download sermons from YouTube into my computer so that together with my wife we can listen to them. You have taught me to see an opportunity of sharing the grace of the Lord via the social interactive media platforms like Facebook. My role as a husband and father has improved, basing all that I do on the word of God. I hope the Lord will continue to help me more. I also hope to train my son, Matz Junior Tonny in the ways of the Lord.

My Solemn Plea

I daily pray so that the Lord may graciously enable me to serve him faithfully the way you have done here in Kenya. Peter keeps on sharing with me how you have been toiling to take the message of salvation to the remote parts of my cradle land Kenya. Your sacrifice speaks volumes in Kenya, specifically in my family. Your love for us challenges us daily towards living like you. May the Lord bless you abundantly. Continue remembering us in prayer and in doctrinal issues. We hope to see you soon. You are the father that the Lord blessed me with, to help me see light in the Gospel of Grace. You are truly a Reformed Pastor and mentor. I hope to join the Pastoral Training programme that you initiated here in Kenya at Trinity Baptist Church, Donholm where you have served for 40 years when the Lord finally enables me.

Doxology

Our hearts continue to Glorify the Lord for bringing you into our lives that me may show us his Sovereign grace of salvation.

To him be the glory and honour and praise forever and ever. Amen