

DWELL COMMUNITY CHURCH IS A CULT (OBVIOUSLY)

Harambee Christian School and the Cost of Dissent

Harambee Christian School – built in 2007 with donated money intended to help South Linden's children – could lose its building in June 2027 unless it pays $1.1 million to the church that kept the deed when the school became independent in 2024 over "an apparent difference in vision." Dwell Community Church, formerly Xenos Christian Fellowship, is infamous in the Columbus area for concerns over its high-control fundamentalist practices, so it may come with little surprise that the church is at it again, this time at the expense of an underprivileged community. Here we explore the cost of dissent in a cult that prioritizes a pipeline to membership over the true heart of service. And in this case the cost is literal with a price tag of over a million dollars dressed up as a gift when it is in fact exactly the opposite. This summary is drawn from public tax returns, recorded deeds, and other public documents; it is not a publication of Harambee Christian School, and all opinions are the authors own.

Once again, we see that Dwell Community Church is a Cult (Obviously).

2026 | O c t o b e r

Katie M. Reinaker

e: katie@dwellchurchcolumbusisacult.com

What is happening

Harambee Christian School (Harambee) must raise $1.1 million by June 2027 to buy its own building from Urban Concern, a charitable arm of Dwell Community Church (Dwell), or Dwell will not renew its lease.

The school: Harambee Christian School serves 148 students in pre-K through 8th grade at 1000 Bonham Avenue in South Linden; 84% come from low-opportunity neighborhoods. The school has operated in its present building since it was constructed in 2007.

The owner: The building is titled to Urban Concern, Inc., a nonprofit governed by Dwell Community Church (formerly Xenos Christian Fellowship). When Harambee became independent in July 2024, Dwell kept Urban Concern and the deed to the property.

The terms: Harambee leases the building for $1 a year and pays all costs. The lease ends June 2027. Dwell will sell for $1.1 million; if Harambee cannot buy, Dwell has said it will not renew the lease.

The clock: Harambee says it must know by January 2027 whether it will have the funds to secure the building.

The gap: Harambee has raised $565,000, but about $500,000 of this is needed to replace a failing HVAC system. The full $1.1 million is still to be raised despite an ongoing capital campaign since the group became independent in 2024.

Conrad Hilario – one of the present co-pastors of Dwell Community Church alongside Ryan Lowery, the son-in-law of co-founding pastor and cult personality Dennis McCallum – sent the following update to the church's leadership team, the Servant Team, on October 13, 2026, laying out the decision to ask Harambee to pay $1.1 million for the property.

From: Conrad Hilario <hilarioc@dwellcc.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2026 10:58 PM
To: Servant Team Line <servteam@dwellcc.org>
Subject: [servteam] Harambee Update

Dwell Servant Team,

We want to give you an update on our conversations with Harambee Christian School (HCS) regarding the lease and possible sale of the 1000 Bonham Ave building.

When Harambee leadership expressed their desire to be independent of Dwell and Urban Concern in 2024, the Elders leased our building to HCS for $1 per year for three years. The goal was to give Harambee time to build financial stability and launch a capital campaign to purchase the building. At the end of that term, we planned to either sell the building to HCS or move to a market-rate lease.

The current lease ends on June 30, 2027. We reached out to the HCS board a year early so that both sides would have plenty of time to negotiate a good path forward. In August, the HCS board proposed two options:
1. Dwell gifts the building to HCS.
2. Dwell extends the $1 per year lease long-term

After much prayer and discussion, we believe that offering HCS the opportunity to purchase the building, rather than maintaining a long-term lease, is the best way to steward what God has entrusted to Dwell through Urban Concern. In September, our Elders sent a proposal to HCS offering to sell the building at a significant discount: $1.1 million, a third of what we paid to build the facility. If HCS decides not to purchase the building, we do not plan to renew the lease when it ends next June. We are awaiting their response.

Donors already paid for this building

Urban Concern's own tax returns show the school was built with gifts, not debt carried by Urban Concern.

Year	What the Form 990 shows
2006	Donor-restricted funds jump from $112,326 to $656,687, released as "construction funds"
2007	Contributions of $3,513,950: $1,289,039 from individuals and $2,174,273 through other organizations (likely construction loan co-signed by Urban Concern and Xenos)
2007	The building goes on the books at about $3.6 million, with no mortgage owed by Urban Concern
2009–2014	The school building is pledged as collateral for up to $4.8 million of Xenos's own bank loans, then released in December 2014

From 2008 to 2024 Dwell gave the school roughly $200,000 to $800,000 per year. But the building itself was a community gift, raised for one purpose — a Christian school in South Linden.

A Servant Team member of Dwell wrote the following, indicating that the church is well aware of the optics and concern around the present issue:

> My concern is people donated toward this building with the understanding that they were helping build a school in the inner city. Now we, as a church, are asking that school to buy the building. They may have to go back to some of the same people and businesses that gave money 20 years ago and say, "Hey, we need money to buy our building." Imagine a secular person or business responding, "Didn't we give you X thousand dollars to build that building in 2006?" I worry this could undermine donors' trust in how the church uses money given for a specific purpose. Donors may also be less willing to contribute toward acquiring an existing building today than they were toward expanding services or helping students, as they did during the original campaign.
>
> I understand that donors were supporting a church operated ministry. My concern is whether they understood their gifts primarily as supporting the school and its students, regardless of which organization held the title.

Harambee splits from Urban Concern in 2024

Harambee announced the separation from Urban Concern in 2024 and now operates the school independently though Urban Concern still holds title to the property.

The disagreement. In 2023 Harambee's leaders went to Dwell's elders about "an apparent difference in vision." By Harambee's account, Dwell hoped more Harambee students would join its student ministries.

The metric. Urban Concern's tax returns from 2016 to 2021 reported, as a measure of the school's success, the share of K–5 students attending Renegade, a Xenos/Dwell student Bible study (51%). A Servant Team member recently stated on the church's email chain regarding the sale of the property to Harambee:

> While we haven't directly seen the fruit of harambee translate into Dwell members and leaders, the school has been super fruitful in reaching students for Christ, correct? I think it makes sense that harambee and Dwell split after difference in vision but I think ensuring that this school doesn't dissolve would be a priority too for the sake of those students and families.

Harambee's goal. Harambee said it wanted to partner with a wider group of churches and reach families not connected to any church.

The separation. Both sides agreed in late 2023 to independent governance, effective July 1, 2024. Urban Concern kept title to the building.

The fundraising limit. Harambee reports that Dwell "asked us to limit our solicitation of its members and did not encourage them to give." The families and church members who know the school best were largely closed off as donors.

Harambee has stayed publicly gracious, thanking Xenos and Dwell for more than two decades of support and asking for prayer *"for a resolution that honors both ministries."* However, this may also be read as an attempt to appease the entity that holds the key to its future mission in the community. Moreover, reports indicate that senior members of Dwell, including co-pastor Conrad Hilario, asked Harambee to remove public comments on its social media posts that were critical of Dwell.

> That social media post is still problematic at best. It presents the issue in several ways that implicitly shift the responsibility on Dwell for Harambee's current situation.

What the law says about a charitable building

Under Ohio law the building is a charitable asset, and the money from any sale must stay with Urban Concern's charitable purpose — it is not Dwell's to spend freely.

It is held in trust for the public. Ohio treats property a nonprofit holds for charitable purposes as a charitable trust, overseen by the Attorney General's Charitable Law Section (ORC 109.23–109.25).

Selling it is regulated. Urban Concern may sell, but selling most of its assets to anyone other than a like-minded charity requires either court approval with notice to the Attorney General or member approval with advance notice; Urban Concern reports no members. The Attorney General can demand an independent appraisal (ORC 1702.39).

The money stays charitable. Sale proceeds must serve Urban Concern's own purposes — for 16 years of tax returns that purpose was empowering families "to be agents of positive change in South Linden." Whether gifts for the building were legally restricted to the school is the key open question.

However, members of Dwell's Servant Team apparently seem to misunderstand this restriction:

> I think the 1.1 million dollar offer is very generous but still allows for UC to reallocate money to other ministries. I trust full heartedly that the elders have considered and discussed this in much prayer. We who are outside of the situation may think we "know the answer" but think we should be humble and recognize that years of thought and prayer have gone into this.

Harambee is the natural buyer. It is the only 501(c)(3) already running the program the building was built for.

Negotiating positions and alternatives

Both parties face real constraints. The records support the view that a sale to Harambee is Urban Concern's simplest and most attractive monetary exit from this initiative. Urban Concern may have other options to monetize the building though each would be slower, costlier, or more closely scrutinized by regulatory authorities.

	Urban Concern / Dwell	Harambee Christian School
Leverage	Holds record title. The $1-a-year lease ends June 2027 and Urban Concern has said it will not renew if the purchase fails (Harambee, Oct 21, 2026).	Occupies the building and runs the program it was built for. As a 501(c)(3) continuing that purpose, it is the most obviously qualifying buyer under ORC 1702.39(B)(1)(c). Community and donor sympathy.
Financial position	The building is about 99.7% of Urban Concern's assets. Since the July 2024 split it has no program	FY2025: cash and savings $691,135, net assets $649,627, no debt, revenue $2.13 million

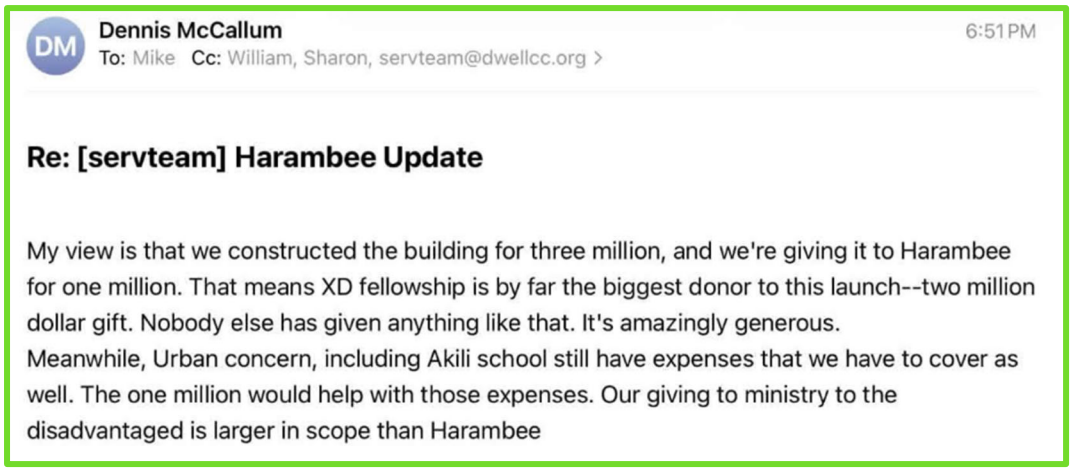
	Urban Concern / Dwell	Harambee Christian School
	and no operating revenue; its FY2025 loss equals one year's depreciation. Any carrying costs would have to be funded by Dwell.	(EdChoice $822,286). $565,000 raised as of Oct 21, 2026, but after campaign and capital costs $488,000 of it is reserved for the roughly $500,000 HVAC replacement, so the full $1.1 million purchase price is still to be raised.
Constraints	Sale proceeds remain Urban Concern's charitable assets and must be used for the purposes in its articles; they cannot simply be moved into Dwell's general ministry if those purposes or the 2006–07 gift terms are narrower. Reputational exposure because the building was donor-funded.	Deadline of June 2027, with a decision needed by January. Lost the $115,000 annual Dwell contribution. Harambee states that Dwell "asked us to limit our solicitation of its members and did not encourage them to give."

How to read the $1.1 million price

It sits slightly below Urban Concern's own book value (building $1,317,188; all land, buildings and equipment $1,424,248 at June 30, 2025), and well below the $3.6 million construction cost in 2007.

Whether it is a "discount" therefore depends on the yardstick: Against the replacement value it is about $2.5 million off; against a realistic sale price for a special-purpose school building in South Linden it may be close to or significantly above market. Harambee describes $1.1 million as "a significant reduction from the earlier price and well under the appraised value," which indicates both an earlier, higher asking price and an existing appraisal; neither figure is public, unless Harambee is referring to the tax appraisal. Why Urban Concern chose $1.1 million is not stated anywhere in the records, and no independent commercial appraisal has been produced by Harambee, Urban Concern, or Dwell.

Internally, Dwell leaders are representing the "discounted" price as equivalent to a $2 million gift to Harambee: Dwell's founding pastor – Dennis McCallum – stated precisely this position in justification of the organization's stance towards Harambee.



This is, of course, wild speculation on value with absolutely no justification. Of course, that is not surprising coming from a man who started a cult (obviously), though his view accounts for quite a lot among the members of Dwell Community Church. Indeed, this same view has been repeated in public comments on social media posts as a justification for the church's stance.

Another Servant Team member at Dwell stated the following – further indicating that no independent fair market value of the property has been established and that $3 million is an assumption pushed by the church's leadership.

> - "... Leaving nothing toward the purchase." Assuming the building's fair market value appraises at $3.3M & the purchase price is $1.1M, the term in commercial real estate is "gifted equity". The IRS views this as Urban Concern gifting $2.2M to Harambee. Underwriters would consider this gift of $2.2M as a down payment as far as the mortgage LTV goes. This is literally Dwell giving Harambee a $2.2M downpayment on a $3.3M building. If Harambee is unable to clear the underwriting process with a 66% downpayment ($7000 - $8000 monthly mortgage) there is a high risk they would lose the building even if we gifted it.

Additionally, at least one Servant Team member questioned the narrative surrounding the $3 million value:

> Do we know this is a substantial discount compared to what we could actually sell the building for? It may have cost $3 million to build, but that doesn't mean it had a $3 million resale value the day it opened. Adding inflation or comparing it to expensive houses doesn't establish its value today, especially given the location and the HVAC replacement it needs. I understand there's an appraisal, but I have doubts we could actually sell it for anything near $3 million (ChatGPT, personal communication, 2026).

Given the special purpose for which the building was constructed, the location of the asset, and the various restrictions on a sale by Urban Concern and the use of those sale proceeds, it is highly unrealistic that the property could fetch anything close to $3 million in an open market transaction. Moreover, the purchase price appears to be inadequately justified by the leadership of Dwell with a chorus of leaders speculating on the value of the property and what is or is not generous to a dissenting organization that has left the fold.

> In my opinion, 1/3 of what was our cost, after 3 years of virtually free leasing, is very generous and enables them to have the independence they desire.

No support has been provided for the asking price for the property, and no clear explanation has been given as to how Urban Concern intends to legally deploy the sale proceeds in connection with their original charitable purpose – to serve the community of South Linden – if Harambee manages to obtain the necessary funds.

A test Harambee is being set up to fail

Dwell is using Harambee's dissent and its love for its mission against it: asking the school to buy back a building donors already paid for, while limiting who it can ask for help.

The terms make failure likely. $1.1 million by June 2027 with a go/no-go decision by January (about three months away), a failing HVAC system, and a request not to solicit the church members closest to the school.

A failed campaign becomes a verdict. In a church culture where leaders' decisions are often framed as God's direction, a school that cannot raise the money can be held up as proof it was wrong to leave the umbrella of Dwell. We fear that is the entire point.

This exact issue was raised on Dwell's Servant Team email chain, where the writer appears to believe that a failure by Harambee to raise funds to meet an arbitrary sale price set by the church without even so much as an independent appraisal is evidence that God does not support Harambee or its decision to separate from Dwell.

> 1) Does this not seem odd to anyone else? If this was something God really wanted for harambee he would find a way for them to meet the generous sale price. 15 years in banking 10 in commercial, I'm sure this kind of deal will not surface again with out God's provision.

On the contrary, Dwell's excellent funding pipeline appears to be evidence of God's approval of the organization, despite the fact that the church is largely made up of middle and upper class white suburban members with the means to provide such funding. This stands in contrast to Harambee's charitable mission in an underprivileged community.

The price is not the issue alone. Harambee itself calls $1.1 million "a significant reduction" from an earlier price and "well under the appraised value." The question is why a church would charge a ministry it launched anything at all for a building the community funded without an independent appraisal or any financial transparency related to the building's true value. However, Servant Team members at Dwell have made it very clear that only Dwell-affiliated ministries should receive the full benefits of Dwell funds.

> First, it sets a dangerous precedent that ministries within our church that decide to separate independently are entitled to assets they utilize for their ministry that legally belong to the church (regardless of the intent of the donors).
>
> I would hope donors donating to a ministry of Dwell understand that such donations are under the purview/ownership of Dwell because it is ultimately a ministry of Dwell.
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> Additionally, I understand the concern for Harambee, but I'm confused why the elders or Dwell CC bear the present responsibility for this ministry's future considering Harambee requested on their own to be separate from Dwell. It gives the impression that Harambee wants the benefits of separation without the costs that inevitably are associated with pursuing organizational separation.

A gracious path is open. Dwell could transfer the building to Harambee for a nominal sum, extend the lease, give more time, or let its members give freely. Any of these would keep the building doing what donors gave it for. Indeed, many within Dwell are calling for this exact response, though the elders appear to maintain that their position is both justified and even charitable. Indeed, not all members of Dwell agree with the position that the elders have taken with respect to Harambee.

> My concern is the cost of purchasing the building places such a financial burden on Harambee that it potentially ends the ministry. I too hope we will continue to consider a new phased transition, gifting the building or financial support to spread these costs over time. This could allow Harambee to build a sustainable future without jeopardizing its mission.

What you can do

The most useful help is money before year-end and informed questions to the people who control the building. However, some donors have expressed concern given that the money will ultimately find its way back to Dwell Community Church (which is a cult, obviously). Depending on your personal convictions, you might consider:

1. Give or pledge before December 31 through Harambee's own giving page: harambeechristian.org/give. Pledges count toward the January decision.
2. Ask Dwell and Urban Concern to show the donor restrictions on the 2006–07 building gifts, the appraisal behind the price, and how sale proceeds would be used.
3. Ask for better terms: a nominal-price transfer, a longer lease, or more time.
4. Contact the Ohio Attorney General's Charitable Law Section if you gave to the building campaign and want your gift's purpose honored: charitable.ohioago.gov, 800-282-0515.
5. Share this summary with people who gave to Harambee or Urban Concern.