

stroys the character of their neighborhood. The village, nestled between the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges, features cobblestone streets framed by two of the most famous bridges in the United States. The local community was united and relentless in its opposition. Residents sent city council members 1,500 signed postcards, 400 signed petitions, and thousands of e-mail messages.

The Watchtower's current plan calls for a complex consisting of four towers, the tallest of which will be 20 stories high. Another will rise 18 stories. The two other towers will be nine stories high. Originally, the Watchtower proposed all four towers to be 14 stories or higher. The new complex will be a residence for another 1,600 Jehovah's Witnesses who move to Brooklyn to work at the sect's international headquarters. According to one report, the organization currently has about 3,500 members living and working in DUMBO. The buildings will also contain a welcome center, a dining hall, a 1,100-car underground garage, and a three-story auditorium or Kingdom Hall.

According to the Watchtower's proposal, the city will benefit from the development. The sect says it will renovate two neighborhood parks adjacent to the new campus and will install security cameras at a nearby subway station. The zoning subcommittee voted 15-1 in favor of the Watchtower's plan. Charles Barron, the dissenting committee member, cited his opposition to all developments that disregard community concerns. Likewise, residents say the development will make traffic more dangerous and its new residents won't support or add to the local economy. The 51-member City Council's vote weighed in with three dissenting votes: Barron and two council members whose districts overlap the Watchtower's project.

Construction could begin as early as this year.

—MKG

## BAD, BAD CLINT BROWN

The pastor who inherited the Orlando Christian Center, the Florida-based church founded and built by faith healer Benny Hinn, has had his "lavish lifestyle" exposed by a local television news report. Citing financial records stemming from their divorce transcripts, WFTV Channel 9-TV revealed that the Rev. Clint Brown and his wife Angie utilized large amounts of church money to finance their extravagant lifestyle.

According to the news report, the \$1.4 million home in which Brown and his estranged wife lived carries a \$7,000 a month mortgage paid by the church. Utilities, lawn care, and pool maintenance are also underwritten by Faith World. The home is in Alaqua, the same gated community where Hinn lived. Angie is said to drive a \$95,000 Mercedes-Benz paid for with church funds. In addition, the couple reportedly spent hundreds of

thousands of dollars of church donations during exorbitant shopping sprees at Neiman Marcus and other exclusive stores.

Atop of all the "fringe benefits," Brown is reported to have received a salary of more than \$500,000 last year from the church.

And it's not just the Browns who profit from the generosity of Faith World members. According to the divorce records, Brown purchased more than \$70,000 of merchandise from women's clothing stores during a twelve-month period and it was paid for by the church. Brown's attorney told WFTV news that the money was spent by Brown on gifts for women ministers at various churches where he appears as a guest.

Brown moved to Central Florida in 1993, after being a music minister for Rod Parsley in Columbus, Ohio. He started and was pastor of Faith World, a church first located in a strip mall. In 1999, Hinn pulled up his Florida roots to move his ministry to Texas, following his personal move to California. Brown and his Faith World congregation merged with Hinn's church, then known as World Outreach Church. Brown and Faith World received Hinn's WOC facilities on 30 acres of property and assumed a near \$6 million debt. Some contend that Brown "bought" the congregation and property from Hinn, but both say they "loathe" the suggestion that Hinn "sold" his congregation to Brown.

—MKG

## ATHEIST FLEW ADMITS A CREATOR

Antony Flew, the British author of *Atheistic Humanism*, *Darwinian Evolution*, and *A Rational Animal*, and an avowed atheist for over 50 years, has acknowledged he has reconsidered his former philosophy and has moved toward a theistic belief. Flew is a former professor at Oxford, Aberdeen, Keele, and Reading universities in England. The 82-year-old professor now says that scientific evidence has led him to a belief in God.

For many years, Flew had ongoing public debates with Christian apologist Gary Habermas on topics such as the existence of God and the validity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their 1985 debate on the resurrection was published in book form, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?* Habermas is currently the chairman of the department of philosophy and theology at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

Habermas, who has remained friends with Flew throughout the years, told the Baptist Press that Flew told him he was "really rethinking theism" and considering arguments from the "intelligent design" movement. "He was going back and forth as to whether he should