
News Updates

TBN FRAUD REPORTED

Reports of substantial financial malfeasance — said to be in the tens of millions of dollars — have been disclosed by a former high-ranking official of the Trinity Broadcasting Network. Even more disastrous for the organization, which is said to be the world's largest Christian television network, is that the whistle-blower is the granddaughter of its co-founders, Paul and Jan Crouch.

In September 2011, Brittany Koper was fired by TBN following her discovery of "illegal financial schemes," according to the *Los Angeles Times*. A legal battle has followed. According to the *Times'* report, the "lawsuit alleges that Brittany Koper was promoted to the position of TBN's financial director in July [2011] because the network directors needed someone 'within the family' to keep its financial 'skeletons' hidden."

In the lawsuit, it is claimed that "Trinity Broadcasting's directors, Paul, Matthew and Janice Crouch, bought luxury items for personal use through sham loans to alter-ego corporations. The complaint cites a long list, including a \$50 million 'Global Express' luxury jet aircraft, luxury cars, 'a \$100,000 motor home purchased by Trinity Broadcasting as a mobile residence for director Janice Crouch's dogs,' and mansions and cabins in California, Florida, Tennessee and Texas," according to an online report by the *Courthouse News Service*. It was also alleged that up to \$500,000 is used annually for meal expenses, personal chauffeurs, fictitious rent expenses, and redecorating expenses for the Crouches.

In the network's response, TBN's lawyers claimed that Koper and her husband, Michael, "used forged documents to embezzle funds to buy trucks, jewelry, a fishing boat, a motorcycle, a Lexus and life insurance," the *Times* said. It was also reported that the Kopers gave to Michael's uncle, Joseph McVeigh, "thousands of dollars without authorization."

According to the British online publication, *The Guardian*, "The network's lawyer has denied the allegations calling the McVeigh lawsuit a 'tabloid filing' accusing McVeigh and the Kopers of working together to steal from the ministry."

A TBN lawsuit against the Kopers and McVeigh, based upon the aforementioned allegations, was dismissed in both state and federal court last year. McVeigh says that the funds were a \$65,000 loan he acquired with an agreement to make monthly payments of which he claims he is current. The 13-year promissory note was obtained in 2010 and was approved by the Kopers.

Attorney Tymothy MacLeod, who filed the lawsuit on behalf of McVeigh, also said that Koper plans to file a wrongful-termination suit against the network. In the lawsuit already filed, the Crouches are not named as defendants.

—MKG

CAMPING ADMITS FAILURE

Approximately 10 months after his predicted date for the return of Christ and the end of the world failed to materialize, Harold Camping of Family Radio finally admitted his error.

In March, the ministry posted "An Important Letter from Mr. Camping" on its Web site. Originally the letter was to be mailed out to Family Radio's listeners, but the document was reportedly leaked onto the Internet without authorization, so the ministry's board made an immediate decision to post it.

The confession sends mixed signals and critics see little, if any, true repentance on Camping's part. "Yes, we humbly acknowledge we were wrong about the timing; yet though we were wrong God is still using the May 21 warning in a very mighty way," Camping wrote. The 90-year-old radio evangelist also maintained, "The May 21 campaign was an astounding event if you think about its impact upon this world."

Camping further wrote: "We must openly acknowledge that we have no new evidence pointing to another date for the end of the world. Though many dates are circulating, Family Radio has no interest in even considering another date. God has humbled us through the events of May 21, to continue to even more fervently search the Scriptures (the Bible), not to find dates, but to be more faithful in our understanding."

Nearly two decades ago, Camping first prophesied the end of the world for 1994. Following that failed prediction, and for the past several years, he predicted the end of the world for May 21, 2011. When his predicted date for May 2011 passed without the foretold result, he decided he must have misinterpreted the biblical data by five months. At that time the end, he said, would occur in October of last year.

Days after the failed May date, Camping suffered a mild stroke.

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cit., pg. 166.
 7. Ibid., pg. 247.
 8. Ibid., pg. 248.
 9. Ibid., pg. 250.
 10. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1959, pg. 193. This statement is also cited in "H. Richard Niebuhr" on Wikipedia. Document accessed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._Richard_Niebuhr.
 11. George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991, pg. 29.
 12. Ibid., pg. 34.
 13. Renald E. Showers, *What on Earth Is God Doing?* Bellmawr, N.J.: Friends of Israel, 2003, pp. 79, 80.
 14. Machen cited in George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, pg. 137.
 15. Ibid., pg. 194.
 16. Ibid., pg. 50.

17. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, op. cit., pg. 73.
 18. David F. Wells, "The Word in the World." Document accessed at: www.the-highway.com/wordworld_Wells.html. This online article originally appeared in John H. Armstrong, General Editor, *The Compromised Church: The Present Evangelical Crisis*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1998. The quotation is on page 27 of the book.



EDITORIALS

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- There, too, may be within the seeker a deep dissatisfaction with life in general or in one's own life that creates great feelings of vulnerability.
- There also may be a desire for spiritual meaning and direction.
- Many have a desire for a cause to live for.
- Added to that, there may be a total ignorance of group manipulation.
- There often is also a desire to be accepted and loved. This is usually encountered in the cult's courtship phase (called "love-bombing"), but not sustained by the group over the long haul. Once in, it is all work and no play.
- The cult leader can also push our greed button with the aforementioned promises of hundredfold (or even a thousandfold) in return for our investment. It is sometimes called "sowing your seed." The old nature loves to gamble. This is one of the crafty schemes that has been working for many years. The cult leader gets the "seed" and we are left with an empty plot.

Now we can understand at least a little bit of the tricks men play and how they prey. Memorize Ephesians 4:14. Be aware of the "cunning and craftiness of men." We have been warned.

—GRF

NEWS UPDATES

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Despite his believing that people have turned to the Bible because of his erroneous and, as he admits, sinful predictions, Camping fails to see how much damage his false predictions have done, including causing an unbelieving world to scoff at the idea that Jesus will return again, as He promised to do. Christians and the Bible are mocked and ridiculed because of Camping's failed predictions.

—JGS/MKG

A RIVER OF RED INK

More than a decade following the last service of the famed "Pensacola Revival," the church staff and membership of the Brownsville Assembly of God are still feeling reverberations from this so-called spiritual outpouring. The meetings reportedly drew 5,500 people four nights a week and lasted six years. Yet the results — or more correctly, the aftermath — of the revival left the church on the brink of financial collapse; a fact little known outside the church family according to a recent Associated Press report.

By the time the revival, called "A River is Flowing," dried up, it had amassed \$11.5 million in debt. That figure has been reduced to \$6.5 million after the sale of property and expense reduction. The Rev. Evon Horton, the church's current pastor, hopes to wipe out the remaining debt through a donation campaign which he claims God gave to him in a dream. "We can be debt-free if just 7,000 of the millions of people who attended the revival help out" by giving \$1,000 each toward the debt removal, Horton said.

The AP article indicated that the "paid staff is down to six from around 50." Also it said Sunday attendance at the church's two services was between 800 and 1,000, and that "most pews go empty in the 2,200-seat sanctuary."

At the height of the revival services, it was more than Holy Ghost power that was flowing at Brownsville — large amounts of cash were flowing as well. Following months of investigative work, the *Pensacola News Journal* published a series of articles which included the financial benefits acquired by the revival's leadership. The newspaper estimated that for 1997, "the total revival revenue was between \$4.3 million and \$5.4 million for that one year." It reported that the offerings from the Friday evening services — said to be a weekly amount of \$20,000 — were given directly to the revival's evangelist Stephen Hill. The church's pastor, James Kilpatrick, as well as the revival's "theologian," Michael Brown, were also harvesting their own fiscal fortunes, purchasing homes and property in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The church itself began buying homes adjacent to its campus, then razing them for parking. Horton told the AP "he's still unsure what happened to all the money."