

TBN DONATION DOLLARS HARD AT WORK

The *Los Angeles Times* has reported that Trinity Broadcasting Network's Jan and Paul Crouch have purchased a \$5-million "palatial estate." The Harbor Ridge mansion is located in a prestigious guard-gated Newport Beach, Calif. community. The home is said to have nine bathrooms, an elevator, a six-car garage, a climate-controlled wine cellar, and tennis court.

Last November, the *Times'* "Hot Property" column stated, "Jan Crouch had been wanting a bigger yard for her dogs, sources said."

TBN's attorney, Colby May, maintains that the Los Angeles newspaper is mistaken in its report. "The Crouches didn't buy the \$5-million house, the ministry did. And the Crouches don't intend to move into it, May insists. It's for use by overseas guests who visit the ministry," the *Times* stated. It also noted that "May couldn't explain why Hot Property was told that Jan Crouch wanted more room for her dogs."

In a separate report in the *Orange County Register*, it was disclosed in January that "Televangelists settle \$40 million plagiarism suit." The article stated, "Orange County-based televangelists Jan and Paul Crouch have settled the plagiarism lawsuit filed against them by West Virginia minister Sylvia Fleener, who alleged that the Crouches stole liberally from Fleener's 1997 doomsday novel, 'The Omega Syndrome,' for their successful 1999 film, 'The Omega Code.'"

The suit was filed in July 2000, and was resolved just prior to going to trial on January 2, 2002. In settling the case out of court, the Crouches admitted no wrongdoing, and the terms of the settlement were confidential. However, Fleener said in a statement on her web site that "the matter was concluded in a manner acceptable to both parties." Daniel J. Quisenberry, Fleener's attorney, told the *Register* that his client is pleased with the settlement.

The Crouches also received additional negative publicity in an editorial piece in the *OC Weekly* magazine section of the *Orange County Register*. The feature from the Nov. 30-Dec. 6 edition stated, "Always bizarre, TBN's Crouches are on a crazy roll." The satirical article described "the Crouches' own 'teaching' [as] essentially Christianity for Smurfs, where, if you'll tithe sufficiently to them, ebbingything gonna be hunky dunky down im lil' Smurfland. Great bounty will come to you, your money

worries will be over, and you will have great abs. It's in the Bible!"

Writer Jim Washburn penned his lampoon after viewing the Crouches on TBN's fund drive last fall. "What I gathered after watching for a while is that individuals sunk in hopeless debt were urged to send in \$3,000 (or at least a down payment of \$300) along with copies of their outstanding bills," Washburn wrote. Crouch and Company promised to burn the bills sent in with the donation. This would release God's miraculous power to free the TBN faithful from debt.

Washburn also likened the gaudy TBN headquarters in Costa Mesa, Calif. to Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. As the secular media exposes the excessive, extravagant, and unrestrained lifestyles of the Crouches and their televangelist colleagues, the world will continue to be shown an erroneous picture of Christ and His Church.

—MKG

WATCHTOWER LINKED TO UNITED NATIONS

Hypocrisy has once again been uncovered in the policy and procedures of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. The Jehovah's Witness organization has, for nearly a century, denounced the United Nations and its predecessor, the League of Nations. The apocalyptic sect has repeatedly branded the UN to be the beast described in the Book of Revelation. However, last fall it was discovered that the Watchtower had, for the past decade, been granted associated status, appearing on the list of non-governmental organizations (NGO) of the UN.

A report in *The Guardian* cited a former Jehovah's Witness as saying, "There is a glaring inconsistency which has emerged between the WTBS's frequent portrayal of the UN as an evil organisation and its behind-the-scenes attempts to curry favour with that organisation. ... By no stretch of the imagination could the WTBS be considered to share the ideals of the UN charter unless you supposed that destruction of the UN by God is consistent with that charter."

The article, which appeared on the British newspaper's web site, also explained that "To qualify, organisations must show that they share the ideals of the charter, operate on a non-profit basis, 'demonstrate interest in UN issues and proven ability to reach large or specialised

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revelations from the throne and people really think you are a cut above all Christians. The “special anointed vessel that God speaks through” is the persona at all other times, except when caught flatfooted in gross sin and failure.

In what appears to be a crisp, well-planned, and carefully crafted letter, Liardon admitted to his congregation that he had engaged in a homosexual liaison. But he was quick to say it was “short term.” It was an obvious attempt to minimize the sheer sinfulness and evil that had been done. Apparently, having sex with another man then is not all that bad — as long as it is just once or short term. Moreover, “professional and church counseling” will have him back to normal in three months. However, people with that kind of sin propensity also lie, deceive, and cover up, so who knows? Romans 1 indicates that there is a moral twistedness that is very perverse when one is involved in this type of sinning.

Liardon assured his shocked followers that he would go to a “professional counselor.” Others in certain Charismatic camps would do an exorcism, which probably would be as effective.

What would it sound like if Isaiah, Jeremiah, Paul, or John stood up and told their congregation that they had sex with a man! Then to top it off said, “I am sorry, I am going to the local professional counselor. See you in three months!” Their flock would (and should) be reaching for the nearest stones. Whatever happened to the power of the Gospel, grace, the Holy Spirit, Scripture as sufficient for reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness? Where are the biblical perimeters for discipline and sanctification in Liardon’s revelations about himself?

This is not an appeal for non-forgiveness, but a call for common sense and a biblical approach. At the very least, more time is needed with the Church calling the shots as to if or when Liardon should return without time tables.

Nowhere in his statement does Liardon call what he did unmitigated sin, or what the first chapter of Romans calls it: “ungodliness and unrighteousness” (v. 18), “uncleanness, lust” (v. 24), “vile passions” (v. 26), “against nature” (v. 26), “shameful...error” (v. 27), “debased” (v. 28) and “sexual immorality...wickedness” (v. 28). Rather, Liardon claims it is only a short term moral failure.

Nowadays, admission alone means almost automatic restoration. No one seems to think about one having to build trust, prove themselves, and have a time period to demonstrate repentance. After all, what Liardon admitted to can be a life-dominating sin that will not go away with a trite confession. Even a minimalist view recognizes a year of accountability and real change before

being readmitted to ministry, especially where trust has been shattered. Paul says clearly that real repentance must be radically demonstrated, and that does take time (2 Corinthians 7:8-11). This observation and time table is to be set by others, not the offender.

Though Liardon has others offering “accountability, counseling and authority,” there are no names or specifics, but only his word. Last December, PFO sent three written requests to the Liardon’s ministry and church for specific information. All of our inquiries went unanswered. Three phone calls to the organization always found its public relations person “on the other line.” So much for accountability. One can be sure that Liardon’s staff are playing this close to the vest.

A hard, cold, and brutal fact that Liardon seems unaware of grasping is that in the future, people are going to look at him in terms of that sin, and parents will feel queasy about having their boys around him and will always wonder. It would be advisable for him to be in a lesser ministry (which will never happen), and one away from any kind of association with the prior sin. Other men will feel uncomfortable around him. Some impressions can never be overcome. Restoration to God and restoration to public ministry are two distinctly different things. Sometimes they have to be distinct for practical reasons. Pointing to David does not help us since David was an absolute monarch and the reigning King of a nation. The comparison is not equal to eldership.

The spinning, downplaying of the enormity of Liardon’s sin, and the announcement of a time table did not drive the congregation right then and there to their knees in horror, shame, sorrow, weeping, and repentance, but as reported by the *Los Angeles Times*, they gave Liardon “a standing ovation.”

Jimmy Swaggart set the timetable for his own return and shortly thereafter was seen cruising again. Pride goes before a fall, and easy repentance, spinning sin, and quickly arranged timetables can only play into more failure and more future disasters for Liardon and his devoted followers.

—GRF

NEWS UPDATES

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audiences’ and have the commitment and means to conduct effective information programmes about UN activities.”

A statement released by the UN confirmed that the Watchtower had “applied for association with DPI [Department of Public Information] in 1991 and was granted association in 1992.” In light of the Watchtower’s

repetitive denouncements, the UN itself expressed surprise that the sect was accepted on its NGO list, *The Guardian* reported.

Critics of the Watchtower have suggested that the UN association — which was concealed from its membership — was planned in order to gain credibility and acceptance of the sect by governments, such as France, which are antagonistic toward the religious body. A Watchtower spokesman in Britain attempted to diminish his organization's double standard, stating, "We do not have hostile attitudes to governing bodies and if we are making representations on issues to the UN we will do so."

However, just hours after the British media divulged the Watchtower's blatant hypocrisy, leaders of the Jehovah's Witness organization hurriedly "requested termination of its association" with the UN. According to the UN statement, based upon this request, "the DPI has made a decision to disassociate the **Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York** as of 9 October 2001."

—MKG

MORMONS PARTNER WITH KRISHNAS TO BUILD TEMPLE

For years the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has worked hard to shed its cult image and establish itself as just another "Christian church" down the street. Now they may be trying to extend those perimeters to become just another "religion" down the street.

In January, CBS journalist Charles Osgood reported that Mormons in and around Spanish Fork, Utah have volunteered labor and money to build a Hare Krishna temple near the city. Osgood's article stated that a "Mormon bishop donated 25 thousand dollars to the Krishnas' planned new temple" and that during "the past few years, 4000 Mormons have done serious labor, digging trenches, creating an artificial lake, [and] installing siding."

Osgood's report added that upon its completion it will be "the first Hare Krishna Temple to be built from scratch in the U.S." The complex will "feature 200 elaborate columns and archways, hand-carved teak doors and a freshwater lake with lilies and koi." Construction will have been done exclusively by Krishnas and Mormons working together.

The Hare Krishnas believe that there are many paths to God, while the LDS church teaches that ultimate salvation is achieved only through its church and ordinances.

—MKG

APPOINTMENT OF WICCAN CHAPLAIN DENOUNCED

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections decision to appoint a Wiccan priestess as a prison chaplain has come under fire from one of its state's representatives. In December, Rev. Jamyi Witch — who changed her last name from Welch "because I am one" — was selected for the office which comes with a \$32,500 annual salary.

However, State Representative Mike Huebsch criticized the DOC's hiring of Witch and introduced legislation to strip funding for her post. He insisted that "taxpayers shouldn't be forced to accept this hocus-pocus." Huebsch's drive gained the support of his colleagues, one of whom maintained that Witch's appointment was "morally dangerous."

According to a report on WiccaNet, the DOC "is standing its ground in their choice of hiring Rev. Jamyi Witch." DOC officials claim that "Witch met the position's requirements and that it would be unfair and illegal to bar her from serving because of her faith," the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported.

Prior to being chosen for the full-time salaried position, Witch had voluntarily ministered to Wisconsin inmates for the past two years. She is one of two chaplains at the Waupun Correctional Institution, a maximum security facility. Her duties as chaplain will include coordinating religious ceremonies and services for all inmates. Wiccans are closely associated with paganism, believing in gods and goddesses, and worship nature.

—MKG

SCIENTOLOGY BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN

Following the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, The Church of Scientology has initiated a nationwide billboard crusade. More than 1,100 billboards will appear in a dozen cities across the nation, including New York.

The signs will promote telephone counseling to anyone affected by the events of Sept. 11. The billboards, carrying the headline "Something CAN Be Done About It," provide a toll-free telephone number "that connects callers with trained volunteers, called 'Volunteer Ministers,' who offer Scientology-based counseling," according to a Religious News Service report.

The campaign is estimated to cost \$1.1 million and will be financed through the donations of Scientology church members.

—MKG