

Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa. These two factors prompted the departure of a substantial number of church members. While *Charisma* magazine reported that the church's 2008 membership decline was 30 percent, according to an article in the *St. Petersburg Times*, "Some 50 percent of the 22,000-member congregation left in the aftermath, dragging collections down by half." Paula left Tampa and Randy settled in as sole pastor. The church's two morning services were combined into one.

Less than a half year later, Kristen Hernandez-White, 30, Randy's daughter from a previous marriage, died April 30, 2008, of cancer. She had been diagnosed with a brain tumor in December 2006.

Last November, Evangelical Christian Credit Union, which holds the mortgage for White's church, filed foreclosure proceedings against Without Walls. The bank claimed in court documents that the church had defaulted on its loan, which was due in August. According to reports, the credit union demanded repayment of both a \$1 million loan that was due in August and a \$12 million loan, made in December 2003, for expansion of its church property in Tampa. Then the California-based lending institution initiated a foreclosure proceeding involving a \$12.5 million loan on the church's satellite campus in Lakeland.

White immediately went on the defensive. The Sunday following the foreclosures, he delivered a 90-minute sermon. He spent 30 minutes addressing the foreclosures, and then devoted the remainder of his sermon to disputing various charges contained in articles from the *Tampa Tribune*.

White vowed to fight the move by the lender and said he would try to continue to negotiate. But if the talks fail, it was announced that the church will consider other options, including refinancing, selling the church, or filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The *St. Petersburg Times* reported White as saying, "I'll be damned if I'm leaving. I promise you this: I will handcuff myself to that column right there because right is right and wrong is wrong. We are a great church, and the devil has tried to take us out every single way that he can."

The church and the credit union for months had been negotiating terms of the loans. When White refused to sign a modified version of the loan agreement, the credit union began foreclosure proceedings. According to Jac La Tour, spokesman for the credit union, "We worked with them for a number of months to reach an agreement. When that process was unsuccessful, we had to file foreclosure. It wasn't a quick decision." White explained to his church members, "I could've signed the modification agreement, everything would've gone away, but if we hiccup they would've owned it all."

According to *Charisma*, "White said the credit union initiated the action because of its own financial struggles.

He claims the ECCU decided to confiscate the Tampa property after learning the church had a waiting buyer who was paying \$33 million." La Tour denied White's allegation. Both the Tampa and Lakeland church properties have been on the market since March of last year.

The church has also made plans to repay the \$1 million loan which was due in August with money it received from the sale of a \$1.4 million piece of property at the Lakeland campus.

Then, in December, the church faced fines for several fire code violations. In February 2008, Tampa fire department officials inspected church buildings and discovered numerous safety-related issues, including emergency lighting, exit signs, and fire extinguishers. The church was also to have its alarms and sprinklers checked out to ensure that they were in proper working order. Last December, the *Tampa Tribune* reported that a Tampa Fire Rescue spokesman said, "the church hasn't made any of the repairs or hired an inspector to check out the sprinklers and alarms."

Despite all the tribulation, White vows to stay the course. WTSP-TV, the CBS-affiliated station in Tampa and St. Petersburg, reported, "The pastor does not plan on resigning right now."

—MKG

## EVANGELICALS AND CATHOLICS TOGETHER CO-FOUNDER DIES

The Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, who co-founded the group Evangelicals and Catholics Together, died Jan. 8, at age 72, of cancer. Neuhaus was hailed as "an eminent Catholic intellectual" and in 2005 was named by *Time* magazine as one of America's 25 most influential evangelicals.

Neuhaus, the son of a Lutheran pastor and a Lutheran clergyman himself, converted to Roman Catholicism in 1990 and was ordained a priest the following year. He wrote, "I was 30 years a Lutheran pastor, and after 30 years of asking myself why I was not a Roman Catholic, I finally ran out of answers that were convincing either to me or to others."

Shortly after his conversion to Catholicism, he began inviting Catholic and evangelical leaders to discuss their differences. These meetings led to his alliance with former Nixon White House counsel and Watergate figure, Charles Colson. Together they edited *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* and founded the ECT group. Colson, in eulogizing Neuhaus, explained that in spite of the "initial uproar among many evangelicals and Catholics," he and Neuhaus progressed

forward and eventually gained the support of “leading evangelicals,” including Bill Bright and James I. Packer.

Yet the movement was not without its critics who said that the ECT document was “a colossal compromise with Rome.” Dallas Theological Seminary would not endorse the document and evangelicals such as John MacArthur, R.C. Sproul, John Ankerberg, and others were actively outspoken about its call for ecumenism. At issue was ECT’s statement, “That we are justified by grace, through faith because of Christ,” which was said to contradict the teaching of Scripture that man is justified through faith *alone* — apart from any human contribution.

—MKG

## POLL SHOWS EVOLUTION ECLIPSES CREATIONISM

A recent Harris Poll shows that Eastern philosophy, naturalism, and paranormal belief continue to maintain a significant acceptance among Westerners. According to the poll, “substantial minorities believe in ghosts, UFOs, witches, astrology, and the belief that they themselves were once other people.”

While 80 percent of adult Americans say they believe in God — a figure which has remained unchanged since the question was last asked by the polling organization in 2005 — more people responded that they believe in

Darwin’s theory of evolution rather than in creationism. The poll indicated that 47 percent of those interviewed accepted evolution, whereas only 40 percent held to creationism. More detailed statistics revealed that, “Catholics are more likely than Protestants to believe in Darwin’s theory of evolution (by 52% to 32%)” and “Protestants are slightly more likely than Catholics to believe in creationism (by 54% to 46%).”

A significant number expressed belief in miracles (75%), heaven (73%), and angels (71%). The poll also disclosed “Sizeable minorities believe in ghosts (44%), UFOs (36%), witches (31%), astrology (31%), and reincarnation (24%).”

When asked about religious writings, only slightly more than a third of those interviewed believe that the Old Testament (37%) and the New Testament (36%) is entirely the Word of God. Interestingly, only 14 percent indicated that the Torah is completely the Word of God. In accenting the inconsistency, the report mentioned that the Torah “is the same as the first five books of the Old Testament” and concluded that, “Presumably many people do not know this.” *The Koran* and *The Book of Mormon* received far less favorable figures in regard to inerrancy, with only 5 percent of American adults regarding either as wholly being the Word of God.

The poll was conducted online during the week of Nov. 10, and included 2,126 U.S. adults aged 18 and over. Results were tabulated and the poll released Dec. 10.

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### PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

- I. THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINELY INSPIRED, INERRANT WORD OF GOD: IT IS IN ITS ENTIRETY THE SOLE AUTHORITY FOR ALL MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.
- II. THE ONE TRUE GOD. IN THE ONE TRUE GOD THERE EXIST THREE PERSONS, BEING: THE FATHER, THE SON JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- III. JESUS CHRIST: HIS DEITY, HUMANITY, VIRGIN BIRTH, SINLESSNESS, DEATH AND BODILY RESURRECTION; WHO WILL PERSONALLY AND VISIBLY RETURN AGAIN TO EARTH.
- IV. THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- V. THE EXISTENCE AND PERSONALITY OF SATAN, HIS TOTAL OPPOSITION TO GOD, AND HIS POWER OVER THE UNREGENERATE.
- VI. THE COMPLETE AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF ALL MEN WHICH MAKES THEM HOPELESSLY LOST WITHOUT THE NEW BIRTH OBTAINABLE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.
- VII. THE FINAL ESTATE OF MAN: FOR THE SAVED, EVERLASTING LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND FOR THE UNSAVED, EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF.
- VIII. THE GOSPEL BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED BEING SUMMED IN THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- IX. THE CHURCH BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST, UNITED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, CONSISTING OF THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR. A LOCAL CHURCH IS AN ORGANIZED ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS UNITED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CARRYING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST.
- X. THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST BEING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL MEN, BAPTIZING AND DISCIPLING THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED.