

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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