
News Release



Wall Watchers

2514 Plantation Center Drive
Matthews, NC 28105
www.wallwatchers.org
www.MinistryWatch.com
www.thegoodsteward.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 28, 2004

Contact: Michael Barrick
(866) 324-7097

MinistryWatch.com calls for establishment of an independent commission to take over governance of Trinity Broadcasting Network

Dubious theology, likely personal enrichment and refusal to be authentically transparent all lead to call for dramatic steps

MATTHEWS, N.C. – Newly revealed facts and allegations regarding questionable financial transactions at Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) – initially reported in the Los Angeles Times – coupled with MinistryWatch.com’s previous concerns about the dubious “prosperity theology” often heard on TBN and the unusually large profits and investments generated by TBN’s operations, have caused MinistryWatch.com to issue a second Donor Alert for this ministry.

Among the facts revealed in the articles is that Mr. Crouch and his family live a life of luxury. The couple enjoys, courtesy of ministry funds, a combined salary of nearly \$800,000. They also have at their disposal TBN owned-properties that include two mansions in Newport Beach, Calif.; a mountain retreat in Lake Arrowhead, Calif.; a ranch in Texas; a \$7.2 million 19-seat Canadair Turbojet; and at least 30 other homes. Wall Watchers CEO Rusty Leonard observed, “Their exorbitant lifestyle is apparently financed by well-meaning donors who would naturally expect that their hard-earned money would go completely to further the Gospel of Christ, not to personally benefit the Crouch family.”

Other matters also deserve attention, said Mr. Leonard, “TBN’s board of directors is apparently made up of just three Crouch family members, preventing independent oversight needed to protect donor interests and in contrast to the best practices utilized by many other excellent ministries. Matthew Crouch, son of Paul and Jan Crouch, controls a for-profit company that has received \$32 million from TBN during the past five years to produce movies such as ‘The Omega Code.’ This raises serious questions about potentially harmful related-party transactions that might further enrich the Crouch family.

Mr. Leonard said, “Our concerns have only increased as a result of TBN’s public response, which is at times both caustic and misleading.” He continued, “Accordingly, MinistryWatch.com is recommending a dramatic plan of action for the restoration of donor confidence in TBN. We are calling for the establishment of an independent commission to take over governance of TBN and thoroughly investigate and review what future steps should be taken to restore the world’s largest Christian television network to a place where authentic Christian theology is espoused and transparency in all activities is the norm.”

The plan outlined by MinistryWatch.com would allow for a full investigation of the issues by a newly formed, completely independent commission of Christian leaders.

The specific recommendations include:

1. A commission of respected Christian leaders, composed of experts in counseling, theology, financial affairs, and other appropriate disciplines be put in place to establish a pathway of restoring Paul and Jan Crouch to a proper relationship with Jesus.
2. A new board of directors be selected who could lead TBN in a new direction where respect for the ministry’s mission and donors’ rights are the sole concerns.
3. The new board should also do a thorough overhaul of the ministry to put it on a path to teaching authentic Christian theology and which operates in a manner that rejects self-serving actions and is respectful of donors’ intent.
4. Future board composition should draw upon talents, treasures and time and be composed in a manner that guarantees independence.
5. The board should ensure that whistleblower protection and document destruction policies are in place, as required by law.
6. The board should establish an independent audit committee, with at least one board member a financial expert and other board members trained in accounting terminology.
7. Paul and Jan Crouch should step aside from leadership positions until this process is completed and the commission has concluded that true repentance has occurred. The commission would decide if the Crouch’s should return to any leadership position, as executives, board members or on-air personalities.

Mr. Leonard commented further upon TBN’s response to the newspapers’ articles, saying, “Since these facts and allegations have become public, TBN responded in a press release that demonstrated an attitude of arrogance and which lacked the humility one might expect from a Christian organization. This should be of grave concern to

Christians because nonbelievers following this story may develop false lifelong impressions about Jesus Christ based upon TBN's aggressive response."

Indeed, said Mr. Leonard, TBN's methods are ironic. "At present, the defense offered by TBN seems to be hypocritical in that it reflects a lack of faith in the Lord's provision for the future of the ministry. Since TBN regularly asks its viewers to step out in faith and make donations larger than they feel able to do because 'the Lord will ultimately provide for the donor's needs,' it seems odd that TBN itself is so lacking in a similar faith! In essence, TBN's response indicates that TBN wishes its donors to trust in the Lord's provision so that TBN will not have to!"

Mr. Leonard noted also, "Moreover, TBN's claim that its houses are a valuable investment is also not credible. It seems odd that a ministry with supposed large contractual payments in the future would seek to fund these with investments in residential housing. Such a strategy is unheard of in investment circles."

Additionally, said Mr. Leonard, "The assertions that it 'operates publicly' and that it 'has more accountability and oversight than virtually any other organization, regardless of size' are simply ridiculous, as TBN's financial transparency falls far below the accepted norms for respected Christian ministries. The only documents that TBN releases to the public are those it is required by law to release. Unfortunately, these documents do not come close to providing the needed information to exonerate the ministry from the present charges of self-dealing and mismanagement.

"Together, these events have led MinistryWatch.com to again recommend that donors to TBN prayerfully consider supporting other ministries that are well-governed, financially transparent and efficient, demonstrate program effectiveness, and are theologically sound. Any number of ministries demonstrating these criteria can be found on the www.MinistryWatch.com website."

- 30 -

Want to know more? *The Los Angeles Times has done a number of articles about TBN. Some may be archived and require a fee, while others may still be available by completing a free registration process. Articles include:*

[A Pastor's Empire](#)

September 21, 2004

One of the best things about your coverage of the scandals of Paul and Jan Crouch and their Trinity Broadcasting Network ("Pastor's Empire Built on Acts of Faith, and Cash," Sept. 19) is that it provides me some relief from reading about the scandals of...

[TBN's Promise: Send Money and See Riches](#)

September 20, 2004

By William Lobdell / Times Staff Writer

Pastor Paul Crouch calls it "God's economy of giving," and here is how it works: People who donate to Crouch's Trinity Broadcasting Network will reap financial blessings from a grateful God. The more they give TBN, the more he will give them.

[A Challenge to TBN Growth](#)

September 20, 2004

By William Lobdell / Times Staff Writer

Televangelist Paul Crouch often blames Satan for the difficulties he encountered building Trinity Broadcasting Network into the world's largest Christian broadcaster.

[Pastor's Empire Built on Acts of Faith, and Cash](#)

September 19, 2004

By William Lobdell / Times Staff Writer

Pastor Paul Crouch looked into the camera and told his flock that Trinity Broadcasting Network needed \$8 million to spread the Gospel throughout India and save 1 billion souls from damnation.

[Crouch to Stay Chief of TBN Despite Gay Sex Allegation](#)

September 14, 2004

By William Lobdell / Times Staff Writer

While the Christian community buzzed Monday about allegations that televangelist Paul Crouch had been involved in a homosexual tryst, Trinity Broadcasting Network officials said their leader would continue "God's call" as the network's president.

TBN Responds: *TBN has not posted a response to the L.A. Times stories on its own Website, though it has been published on the Website, www.CovenantNews.com.*

To schedule an interview with Mr. Leonard or for any questions regarding this or other Wall Watchers activities, please contact Michael Barrick at 866-324-7097, 828-238-6468 or email mbarrick@wallwatchers.org.

[About Wall Watchers](#)

Founded in 1998, Wall Watchers is a donor-supported nonprofit Christian ministry located in Matthews, N.C. Its objective is to help donors become more responsible givers by providing them with unbiased information about the largest Christian ministries in the country. Through its free donor empowerment website, www.MinistryWatch.com, Wall Watchers provides users with detailed descriptions, financial information, financial efficiency ratings, transparency grades, and commentary about the ministries it researches. Armed with this information, Wall Watchers believes that donors' confidence in their giving will increase leading to higher levels of giving and more effective giving. At www.thegoodsteward.com, more than 1,200 archived articles on sound biblical teaching and stewardship from a variety of experts can be found at no charge. Wall Watchers' Websites are accessed more than 50,000 times each month by those donors looking to increase their understanding of biblical stewardship and improve the effectiveness of their giving. As a result, Wall Watchers websites are the most utilized websites in the world on the topic of Christian stewardship and philanthropy. To learn more about Wall Watchers, visit the ministry's informational web site www.WallWatchers.org.