

Benny Hinn the Subject of IRS Inquiry

Televangelist's Finances 'Routine,' Says Ministry Spokesman

By Allie Martin

IRVING, Texas – The IRS is investigating televangelist Benny Hinn's ministry about its operations and finances. A spokesman for the ministry says the agency's questions, however, are routine.

More than a year ago, a Dallas-based organization known as Trinity Foundation contacted the IRS about the status of Hinn's ministry as a church. According to the *Dallas Morning News*, the Internal Revenue Service has now questioned Hinn's ministry through a church tax-inquiry letter. Ministry spokesman Ronn Torossian says the IRS actions were routine and should not be confused with a formal audit, and that the ministry cooperated fully with the IRS.

Trinity Foundation is watchdog group for televangelists. Although Hinn's ministry was formally renamed the "World Healing Center Church" five years ago, Trinity Foundation president Ole Anthony says the ministry does not meet the legal definition of a church.

"Claiming himself to be a church, he doesn't have any accountability," Anthony says in reference to Hinn. "He has a revolving door board of directors, and any time somebody disagrees with him, he changes the board." Anthony accuses the televangelist of using the ministry's income – which he puts at "well over a hundred million a year" – as a "personal piggy bank."

Trinity Foundation, which has investigated Hinn for well over ten years, has criticized the televangelist for his lavish lifestyle, which includes a \$10 million parsonage in California.

"Can you imagine ... spending 11,000 a night for a hotel room when you're on a side trip and charging it to the ministry?" Anthony asks. "Or thousands and thousands of dollars given to his wife and kids to go on shopping sprees? This isn't the way of God's people," he contends.

Early last year, another watchdog group – Wall Watchers – called for the IRS to investigate Hinn's ministry. That group has issued a "donor alert" about the ministry, urging contributors withhold giving to Benny Hinn Ministries.

Allie Martin, a regular contributor to AgapePress, is a reporter for American Family Radio News, which can be heard online.

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MinistryWatch.com Donor Alert

http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/pdf/MWDA_053105_BennyHinn.pdf

MinistryWatch.com Reflections article, "Not the Preacher's Life"

http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/pdf/Reflections_BennyHinn.pdf