

Crouch Family's Deep Roots in Assemblies of God

Paul Crouch Sr., founder of Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), the world's largest Christian television enterprise, passed away Nov. 30. He was 79.

Crouch, who succumbed to a decade-long battle with degenerative heart disease, was born in 1934 in St. Joseph, Mo., to Andrew and Sarah Crouch, Assemblies of God missionaries to Egypt. He was a 1955 graduate of Central Bible Institute (CBI), later known as Central Bible College (AG), in Springfield, Mo.

After graduating with a degree in theology from CBI and marrying Janice (Bethany), Crouch became a bivocational associate pastor in a small AG church in South Dakota for several years, where he also worked at radio station KRSD-AM and later KRSD-TV.

In 1962, Crouch was appointed as the audio visual representative for the Assemblies of God, overseeing a film and audiovisual studio in Burbank, Calif.

Crouch was credentialed with the Assemblies of God from 1957 to 1975. He began the TBN ministry in 1973 with the goal of providing Christian programming as an alternative to secular television. Although TBN had humble beginnings, it has since grown into a 24-hour family of networks that reach across the U.S. and around the world.

According to the TBN website, today TBN and its 26 global networks and affiliates reach every inhabited continent on 80-plus satellites and more than 20,000 television and cable affiliates, as well as via the Internet.

Unknown to most, the Crouch family has deep roots in the

Assemblies of God. Crouch's father, two uncles and an aunt were all in attendance at the founding General Council of the Assemblies of God in Hot Springs, Ark., in 1914. Crouch spent some of his early childhood in Egypt with his Assemblies of God parents, who are buried in Springfield, Mo. His older brother, Phil Crouch, served with distinction for many years as president of Central Bible College.

George O. Wood, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, was among the first of two hosts of daily teaching programs when TBN began with rented cameras in small quarters in Santa Ana, Calif. Wood taught Bible, and Dr. Jack Hayford taught on prayer.

"At that time, there was just the one UHF station," says Wood, "but Paul—despite serious threats to the viability of the then-new venture—believed in his dream and endured with tenacity. The result today is that his vision for Christian television became reality.

"Only eternity will reveal the number of persons saved, healed and helped through the ministry that Paul pioneered and led for these past 40 years. Our Assemblies of God family extends its love to the Crouch family."

Wood has sent a personal letter of condolence to Jan Crouch, Crouch's wife and co-founder with him of TBN.

In addition to his wife, Jan, Crouch is survived by sons Paul Jr. and Matthew (Laurie), grandchildren and one great-grandchild. At this time, a public funeral is not planned for Crouch. However, TBN will celebrate Crouch's life with a television special airing at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. (PST) Sunday and again at 2 p.m. (PST) Monday on all TBN networks.