

Crystal Cathedral Still Expects Miracle Despite Bankruptcy Ruling

The Crystal Cathedral bankruptcy court drama has finally come to an end, but the megachurch's board and membership are still believing and praying for deliverance.

On Thursday, Orange County bankruptcy Judge Robert Kwan ruled that the Crystal Cathedral would be sold to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange for \$57.5 million to satisfy creditors. The Diocese will transform the Protestant sanctuary into a Catholic cathedral.

Despite the ruling, Crystal Cathedral founder Robert H. Schuller and his family refuse to stop believing God for a miracle that would allow them to retain ownership of the Garden Grove, Calif., campus.

"Escrow takes time to close. Nothing is final until the escrow closes," says Sheila Schuller Coleman, Schuller's daughter and a senior pastor at Crystal Cathedral. "Although this decision breaks my heart, I still believe there is still plenty of time for God to do His miracle. It is His church. It is His fight. We know who wins!"

The Roman Catholic Diocese will allow Crystal Cathedral Ministries the full and exclusive use of the church building and most of the rest of the campus for three years. One exception is The Family Life Center, which houses programs for children and youth. The church will have to move out of that space within 18 months.

If the Schullers don't get the miracle they are expecting, the membership will be forced to find a new home.

"If it's God's will for us to move, we believe it will be where He needs us most. It does not mean that our ministry will be diminished. Crystal Cathedral church is not a building," Coleman says. A church is comprised of people who are dedicated to practicing through words and works, 'God loves you and so do we!'"

Crystal Cathedral's board thanked Chapman University, which entered the courtroom on Monday with a new plan to allow the ministry to rent back the core buildings of its campus for \$1 million a month, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Chapman's earlier deal offered \$51.5 million and a lease-back payment of \$150,000 a month.

Chapman University is disappointed with the ministry's decision.

"Chapman University continues to believe that our good-faith offer would have benefited the community and the ministry. The Crystal Cathedral campus presented an interesting opportunity for the university," Chapman said in a statement. "This ruling does not alter our plans to consider new academic programs in the health sciences, nor will it slow our exploration of other opportunities that would enhance our curricular offerings in serving our students and community."

The Schullers' reasoning for denying other offers: Some would have converted the campus to an educational institution rather than keeping it a place of worship.

One of those offers came from Hobby Lobby Stores, which offered \$47.5 million. If its bid had been successful, the Oklahoma-based Hobby Lobby would have leased the property to The King's University for a year and then donated it to the organization. The King's University is a Pentecostal/charismatic Bible college and seminary of which Jack Hayford is founder.