

repetitive denouncements, the UN itself expressed surprise that the sect was accepted on its NGO list, *The Guardian* reported.

Critics of the Watchtower have suggested that the UN association — which was concealed from its membership — was planned in order to gain credibility and acceptance of the sect by governments, such as France, which are antagonistic toward the religious body. A Watchtower spokesman in Britain attempted to diminish his organization's double standard, stating, "We do not have hostile attitudes to governing bodies and if we are making representations on issues to the UN we will do so."

However, just hours after the British media divulged the Watchtower's blatant hypocrisy, leaders of the Jehovah's Witness organization hurriedly "requested termination of its association" with the UN. According to the UN statement, based upon this request, "the DPI has made a decision to disassociate the **Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York** as of 9 October 2001."

—MKG

## **MORMONS PARTNER WITH KRISHNAS TO BUILD TEMPLE**

For years the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has worked hard to shed its cult image and establish itself as just another "Christian church" down the street. Now they may be trying to extend those perimeters to become just another "religion" down the street.

In January, CBS journalist Charles Osgood reported that Mormons in and around Spanish Fork, Utah have volunteered labor and money to build a Hare Krishna temple near the city. Osgood's article stated that a "Mormon bishop donated 25 thousand dollars to the Krishnas' planned new temple" and that during "the past few years, 4000 Mormons have done serious labor, digging trenches, creating an artificial lake, [and] installing siding."

Osgood's report added that upon its completion it will be "the first Hare Krishna Temple to be built from scratch in the U.S." The complex will "feature 200 elaborate columns and archways, hand-carved teak doors and a freshwater lake with lilies and koi." Construction will have been done exclusively by Krishnas and Mormons working together.

The Hare Krishnas believe that there are many paths to God, while the LDS church teaches that ultimate salvation is achieved only through its church and ordinances.

—MKG

## **APPOINTMENT OF WICCAN CHAPLAIN DENOUNCED**

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections decision to appoint a Wiccan priestess as a prison chaplain has come under fire from one of its state's representatives. In December, Rev. Jamyi Witch — who changed her last name from Welch "because I am one" — was selected for the office which comes with a \$32,500 annual salary.

However, State Representative Mike Huebsch criticized the DOC's hiring of Witch and introduced legislation to strip funding for her post. He insisted that "taxpayers shouldn't be forced to accept this hocus-pocus." Huebsch's drive gained the support of his colleagues, one of whom maintained that Witch's appointment was "morally dangerous."

According to a report on WiccaNet, the DOC "is standing its ground in their choice of hiring Rev. Jamyi Witch." DOC officials claim that "Witch met the position's requirements and that it would be unfair and illegal to bar her from serving because of her faith," the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported.

Prior to being chosen for the full-time salaried position, Witch had voluntarily ministered to Wisconsin inmates for the past two years. She is one of two chaplains at the Waupun Correctional Institution, a maximum security facility. Her duties as chaplain will include coordinating religious ceremonies and services for all inmates. Wiccans are closely associated with paganism, believing in gods and goddesses, and worship nature.

—MKG

## **SCIENTOLOGY BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN**

Following the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, The Church of Scientology has initiated a nationwide billboard crusade. More than 1,100 billboards will appear in a dozen cities across the nation, including New York.

The signs will promote telephone counseling to anyone affected by the events of Sept. 11. The billboards, carrying the headline "Something CAN Be Done About It," provide a toll-free telephone number "that connects callers with trained volunteers, called 'Volunteer Ministers,' who offer Scientology-based counseling," according to a Religious News Service report.

The campaign is estimated to cost \$1.1 million and will be financed through the donations of Scientology church members.

—MKG