

More financial woes for 'prosperity' preachers

David Andreatta • Staff writer • November 14, 2009

A pair of Rochester "prosperity gospel" preachers with a history of financial troubles has lost an expensive Penfield home to foreclosure, and a mortgage lender has moved to seize another house owned by their church in the last month, court records show.

The Rev. Warren and Perdita Meeks, founders of New Born Fellowship Church, were forced to give up their house at 4 Bryden Park in Penfield on Oct. 20. Court papers show the house was sold at a foreclosure auction; a bank submitted the winning bid of \$319,900.

On Nov. 5, another lender filed notice in Monroe County [Supreme Court](#) that foreclosure is pending on a house at 135 Barberry Terrace in Rochester owned by the church. The lender, Centurion Capital Corp., had issued a notice of pendency to secure payment of the \$30,000 mortgage in April 2007 but canceled the notice two months after it was filed.

The church was also recently ordered by a Rochester City Court judge to pay an outstanding debt of \$6,306 to an East Rochester engineering firm.

The episodes follow a *Democrat and Chronicle* report in September that highlighted the rocky financial past of the Meekses and the explosive growth of their church, which, by its count, has amassed 2,000 members and \$4 million in assets since its founding in 1993.

An earlier article also raised questions about the Meekses' primary residence — a 5,400-square-foot tax-free parsonage in Penfield valued at \$595,000 that public records show the couple bought in 2006 and deeded to their church for \$1. The transfer to the church, which is exempt from property taxes, made the house the most extravagant parsonage in the county.

Meeks did not return voice-mail messages left for him at the church and on his cell phone.

Public records show that Perdita Meeks bought the Bryden Park house in 1997 from former Penfield builder Robert A. Amico.

Amico and his sons were accused of orchestrating a multimillion-dollar mortgage fraud scheme in which overpriced homes were sold to unqualified buyers. Amico died before the case was tried, but his sons were convicted.

Perdita Meeks was not charged in connection with the scheme, but her Bryden Park house was listed in court papers as being one of scores purchased with fraudulent documents.

The Meekses have said they lived in the house before moving to the parsonage. The couple has also said that family members and renters occupied the Bryden Park property after they moved out.

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