

WAPO DISCOVERS C STREET

Kudos to Citizen92 who first asked where Tom Coburn and John Ensign lived together, which led me to figure out that it was at "the Family's" C Street residence. Because, now that TPM and I keep posting on the connection between a shady Christian group and the latest Republican affairs, the WaPo has decided to cover it (or at least the house, without much discussion of "the Family," and certainly no link to the blog that first covered it).

Mostly, though, the WaPo catches people trying to disassociate from the hypocritical adulterers.

First, at least one resident learned of both the Sanford and Ensign affairs and tried to talk each politician into ending his philandering, a source close to the congressman said. Then the house drama escalated. It was then that Doug Hampton, the husband of Ensign's mistress, endured an emotional meeting with Sen. Tom Coburn, who lives there, according to the source. The topic was forgiveness.

"He was trying to be a peacemaker," the source said of Coburn, a Republican from Oklahoma.

Although Sanford visited the house, there is no indication that he was ever a resident; when he was in Congress from 1995 to 2000, the parsimonious lawmaker was famous for forgoing his housing allowance and bunking in his Capitol Hill office. But it is not uncommon for residents to invite fellow congressmen to the home for spiritual bonding. There, Sanford enjoyed a kind of alumnus status. Richard Carver, president of the Fellowship Foundation, said, "**I don't**

think it's intended to have someone from South Carolina get counseling there."

But he posited that Sanford turned to C Street "because he built a relationship with people who live in the house."

People familiar with the house say the downstairs is generally used for meals and prayer meetings. Volunteers help facilitate prayer meetings, they said. Residents include Reps. Mike Doyle (D-Pa.), Bart Stupak (D-Mich.) and Zach Wamp (R-Tenn.), Ensign and Coburn. None of the congressmen agreed to be interviewed for this article. **But associates of some of Ensign's housemates privately worried that the other residents would be tarred by the scandals.**

"That two fell doesn't prove that the house – which has seen many members of Congress pass through and engage in Bible studies – doesn't mean that the house has failed," said conservative columnist Cal Thomas, who once spoke to a group of interns at the house. "If that was the standard, the whole Congress would be corrupt." [my emphasis]

Sorry, Cal Thomas. "The whole of Congress" does not practice the same kind of sanctimonious hypocrisy. And "the whole of Congress" does not exploit moralistic platitudes to accrue power.

So while you may not think it a failure for an organization that tries to mobilize faux Christian spirituality in pursuit of power, it is a failure that "the Family" owns.