

Another Trademark Lawsuit

Walter “Chick” McGill has a very small independent Adventist church in Tennessee. He has sent me several emails which provide a partial picture of developments. It is difficult to learn all that is involved, since there is a sparsity of data available at this time and McGill is on the road, traveling.

About eight months ago, McGill received notice from Vincent Ramik, the General Conference trademark attorney, that he, McGill, must stop using the name “Seventh-day Adventist Church” on his church sign and “SDA” on his websites. (Three times the September 17, 1981, issue of the *Review* said that Ramik is a faithful Roman Catholic: “I am a Roman Catholic.”)

In reply, McGill said that he was not going to retract the names, regardless of what might happen to him as a result.

Many months elapsed; and then two times, in May 2006, Ramik sent a seven-pound package, containing the entire complaint. (“Complaint” is the legal term for the bulky official lawsuit papers.)

However, at the time of those deliveries, McGill was on a lengthy trip to various localities. On June 2, he emailed friends as, on this portion of his journey, he was headed to Ontario, Canada.

Along with that email, he sent other papers which included correspondence back and forth between Ramik and an international trademark mediation board in Switzerland, known as the *WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center*, and two-way correspondence between WIPO and McGill’s group.

Ramik had mailed a copy of the complaint to them, and hired them to arrive at a decision in the matter.

On May 27, WIPO notified the McGill group that Ramik had requested their mediation and that Sherry Smith had been assigned to the case: D2006-0642.

Carefully reading through all of the brief back-and-forth emails, I came across an explosive paragraph, which I do not believe that McGill and his group recognized for what it was. Here it is, in a brief email from Ramik to WIPO, which WIPO forwarded a copy of to McGill:

“Sent: Monday, June 05, 2006. Subject: Attn: Smith, Sherry Re: Case D2006-0642.

“Dear Ms. Smith:

“Complainant’s second attempt at delivering by courier the complimentary Complaint and Annexes to Respondent was undeliverable and returned to our office on this date.

“The reason for nondelivery was Rec. [recipient?] out of town 3 months.”

“Should the [WIPO] Center meet with like difficulties of notification and commencement of administrative proceedings, Complainant requests that upon Respondent’s default the dispute be decided at earliest convenience by a single-member administrative panel. *AT&T Corp. v. John Zuccarini d/b/a Music Wave and*

Ravae Club Berlin, Case No. D2002-0440.

“Respectfully submitted, Vincent L. Ramik, Attorney for Complainant.”

I am not an attorney; but, since the mid-1980s, I have written and compiled a very large amount of data on the various trademark lawsuits, plus some other legal turmoils in which various church entities have been involved. So I am becoming somewhat experienced at this.

From the surrounding email data, *both before and after the above email was sent* by Ramik, it is obvious that McGill does not realize the ramifications of what is being planned. I have tried to phone him, both at his church and at his cell phone, without success. If I succeed in getting in contact with him, I will awaken him to the situation.

Here is my paraphrase of the above email by Ramik:

“I have twice sent the complete lawsuit papers to McGill, and both times the packages have been returned to me, with the notification that he will be gone till September.

“You will soon be sending him various legal papers also. On behalf of our client, I am requesting that when your paperwork is also returned without being delivered to him,—that you immediately appoint one person at WIPO to render a final decision in this case.”

There you have it; Vincent Ramik is planning to use the same devious method he used in the Hawaii lawsuit. Without giving McGill an opportunity to present his side of the matter—Ramik is requesting a quick settlement—without McGill being present and without having submitted any defense material in his behalf.

After receiving the above Ramik email from WIPO, McGill mentioned, in a covering email to three friends, including myself, that he is still looking for a low-cost attorney who could help him prepare a legal reply in this case. —*What he does not know is that the rug is about to be pulled out from beneath him!* He will be given no opportunity to present his defense at all! By the time he returns in September, he may face a warrant for his arrest.

This entire situation has been very cleverly handled. “The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.”

First, Ramik arranged that the lawsuit would be handled in a European court, so it would be totally out of a U.S. federal court. In this way, there would be no public hearing which Adventists could attend. Second, he is arranging matters so a quick decision will be made, without McGill having time in which to defend himself.

After that, Ramik will demand that McGill remove his signs—or be sent to prison. I am at press time (on June 5), so cannot tell you more just now.

For the entire story of the trademark lawsuits, purchase 8½ x 11 copies of our 79-page *Story of the Trademark Lawsuits* (\$7.00 + \$2.50) and our 102-page *Florida Trademark Trial* (\$8.00 + \$2.50). —vj

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June 8: I was able to speak with McGill by phone this morning. WIPO says they will proceed to the case within 20 days and require his immediate response. The case may be settled by the time you read this.

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HOW TO GO FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY IN ONE EASY LESSON
— AND BE WELCOMED BACK AFTERWARD

Alex Bryan Plants a Church

In the early 1990s, when Gordon Bietz was president of Southern Adventist University, at Collegedale, Tennessee, Alex Bryan was in attendance as a theology student. The two became friends.

By the time Bryan had graduated, Elder Bietz had become president of the Georgia Cumberland Conference. Bietz arranged for Alex to be appointed as pastor of a new, experimental church in the large city of Atlanta.

This was one of the “church plantings” that was heartily encouraged by the leadership of the North American Division and frequently praised in the 1990s by leaders in *Review* articles. These “planted churches” use entertainment as the means of bringing people in off the streets, having them accept Christ by faith, and then baptizing them before they change their minds; all the while it is hoped that, by providing them with continued entertainment, they will hang around and help the denomination “grow.”

The church planting arrangement, which started in the mid-1990s, differed from the celebration church pattern of the late 1980s in only one way: *new churches are started*, and only hard-core liberal Adventists are invited to attend and help.

In contrast, under the celebration pattern, Adventist pastors tried to change *existing* Adventist congregations into entertainment centers. But that had the effect of causing faithful believers to leave those churches, while bringing in few new members to replace them.

In order to receive training for conducting celebration churches, Adventist pastors all across America were sent, at conference expense, to the Milwaukie SDA Church, on the south side of Portland, Oregon. There they received instruction from its pastor, David Snyder, in the intricacies of turning a staid, historic Adventist congregation into a semi-Pentecostal affair. Sabbath morning meetings consisted of somewhat wild band music; tightly dressed women singers; lots of drum music; brainless theatrical skits; and rather brief, shallow saved-by-grace sermons. (By the early 1990s, Snyder had left the Adventist ministry and quickly became a Protestant minister, pastoring a Sunday church. In 2004, the pastor of the other, largest celebration church left his wife and married the woman senior pastor of a nearby Adventist Church, breaking up two families.)

From the mid-90s, down to the present time, pastors slated to start “planted churches” have been sent to the immense Willow Creek Church, on the south side

of Chicago. Here they are taught every possible aspect of entertainment church services—ways to attract people off the street and keep them coming back to experience the music, motion activities, and all the rest.

For much more on this, see my 84-page, 8½ x 11, *Celebration Tractbook* and my 44-page, 8½ x 11, *Truth about Church Planting*. Both are full of information.

A faithful historic believer, who regularly attends an Adventist church in the Atlanta area, wrote this:

“The church that Alex started was essentially a rock-and-roll church. I visited there once—and let me tell you it was a loud, hard rock Adventist church! They had drums, electric guitars, singers; and while the music played, it was not uncommon for people to stand in the aisle and wave their arms in the air. I went once to see what it was about, and could not stand it.”

As others have done elsewhere, Alex quickly learned a very important lesson. The kids on the streets were not interested in going to church on Saturday mornings. Neither are the young adult, unchurched moderns. *People who enter those of our churches which have striped themselves of doctrine—quickly leave.*

Why attend a Saturday church, when there is no worldly sense in doing so? The only reason for such a practice are definite commands given in the Bible,—but the new Z generation doesn’t believe in obeying the Bible. And Bryan, and the other entertainment pastors in our denomination, preach that obeying the Bible is old-fashioned. All that is needed is to accept Jesus and, instantly, one is saved! Well, the Protestants teach that already; and they get together on Sunday.

So, shortly after starting this new type of church, Bryan decided that, instead of holding his church worship services on Saturday,—he would switch them to Sunday morning.

But, after this had continued for a time, Georgia Cumberland Conference officials tactfully suggested that Alex had better change back to Sabbath meetings.

This went on for a number of months; but, ultimately, when he kept refusing to abandon Sunday morning church services,—Bryan was fired.

However, Alex recognized that it was coming; and, so, he prepared his congregation for the event. (The conference made the mistake of not getting rid of him before he won over his church members.) The liberal Adventists in the Atlanta area had initially flocked to his church out of curiosity, but many had become enchanted by the high excitement and loud entertainment

they experienced there. So Bryan carefully transferred their loyalties from the denomination to himself.

When he was finally discharged from the ministry, he took all of his members—about 70—with him.

This is something of a backwards way to plant churches. The denomination is losing more members than it is gaining! Yet “church planting” continues down to the present time.

It does seem that there are those in high places in the denomination who want to eradicate every last vestige of beliefs and standards from the churches, leaving only a hollow shell. Sabbathkeeping continues; but, when the National Sunday Law is enacted, the great majority of our members will find it far easier to submit to the law of the land than to continue observing the Bible Sabbath.

Currently, Alex’s church, located in a northern suburb of Greater Atlanta, is called *The New Community Church of Roswell*. He holds services only on Sunday at 11:00 a.m. That should not be surprising; for neither celebration churches nor their planted offspring were interested in placing the name, “Seventh-day Adventist,” on their church signs.

While faithful believers treasure that name (and sometimes are sued for using it), the liberals among us want to move away as far as they can from it.

—*Oh, by the way, there is more to the story!*

The Carolina Conference is the next conference just north of the Georgia Cumberland Conference.

Their leaders were anxious to provide speakers to entertain their young people at their May 28-June 3 camp meeting at Lake Junaluska in North Carolina. But it is not easy to find way-out, rock-and-roll experts who are

Tuesday Morning with the Young Adults

Wednesday, May 31, 2006

“This was great—the best start we’ve ever had! Our attendance is like we usually have on the weekends at Camp Meeting.” Almost 100 young adults filled room 305 in the Terrace Hotel to hear speaker Alex Bryan present some of “Jesus’ Most Puzzling Words.”

still in the church. But, after scrounging around, they remembered Alex, who had been fired, disfellowshipped, and was now a full-fledged, independent Sunday church apostate pastor. They were not concerned about the fact that, having lured 70 members out of the church, he was an expert at taking people out of the denomination. —*So they invited him to give the young people in North and South Carolina guidance throughout the week at their annual camp meeting!* They also invited Sam Leonor, a young Loma Linda Hospital chaplain.

Bryan spoke at all the morning meetings (11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon) for the young adults. One of the two camp meeting pages on the Carolina Conference website mentioned that Alex continues to write articles for the *Review*.

Go to carolinasda.org, then click on “Tuesday Morning with the Young Adults,” and you will find a description of Bryan’s meetings. (Because it may be removed not long after this tract is mailed out, it is reprinted on the next page.) *My brethren, these things should not be!*

It seems unbelievable that the Carolina Conference would do this. But here is the evidence.

Reprinted below is a portion of the 2006 Carolina Conference Camp meeting website announcement about Alex Bryan's weeklong meetings with the youth of the conference.

Their website:
Carolinasda.org

Reprinted on the left is a portion of Bryan's website, which tells you about him, his Sundaykeeping church, and his doctrinal beliefs (which consist of grace and love).

His website:
thenewcommunitychurch.com