

Santa Cruz 'Archbishop' Wolsey faces new suit

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Self-styled Canadian archbishop William Franklin Wolsey's troubles with disenchanting members of his flock in British Columbia have spilled over into a \$2.7 million civil suit filed in Santa Cruz County superior court last week.

Peter R. and Richard A. Hagman, members of the Canadian Temple Cathedral of the Universal Christian Apostolic Church in Vancouver, are charging the archbishop and other church officers with fraud and diversion of church funds for their own personal benefit.

The suit claims the funds have been diverted by various improper methods, such as false financial reports and "intermediate shell organizations," including a church established in the Santa Cruz area by the archbishop.

A similar action now before the British Columbia Supreme court charges Wolsey with having siphoned off approximately \$400,000 from the Canadian temple to his "American Catholic Church, registered as a non-profit corporation under California state law.

The church is located in an old campgrounds known as Leprechaun Woods, at 1611 Branciforte Dr.

Canadian litigants claim Wolsey and his priests are operating the campgrounds solely for their own profit and that it is not really a church.

John Seidlinger, Santa Cruz county assessor, says Wolsey and his priests have failed to comply with his request for a certified financial statement this year on their tax exemption claim as a non-profit organization. As a result, Seidlinger says he has asked the state tax people to look into the claim before granting it.

The brothers Hagman declare in their suit that the Canadian church also was operated solely

for profit and that Wolsey misrepresented himself as a legitimately consecrated archbishop.

Wolsey's "immediate predecessor, Harold Nicholson, had no theological training whatsoever and had spent the majority of his life as a restaurant waiter," the suit says.

And in turn, it continues: "Nicholson's own predecessor Hugh de Willmatt Newman, had appeared in various British courts claiming the right to dukedoms and other titles, while supporting himself as a secretary in a bicycle shop and a maker of paper hats."

"In fact, Wolsey's claim as a legitimate churchman is a product of his imagination," the suit says.

Despite this, according to the suit, Wolsey claimed theological and academic titles which ranged from a string of varied doctorates to "Prince of Aragonia, Marquis of Diaz De Vivar and the Third Degree of Free Masonry of the Spiritual Center of S.O.M.A. of Egypt and Italy."

Titles of other persons named in the suit (including the Hagmans' brother) also vary: Robert Arthur Young, His Grace Archbishop and the Most Reverend Doctor Arthur Young.

Bernice Gaved Wolsey (the archbishop's fifth wife, according to the suit) Her Grace Archbishopress, Mother Abbess and Mother Superior.

William Carl Hagman, His Grace, Bishop of the Right Reverend Dr. William Vannerus-Hagman and Father Paul.

Robert Arthur Voice, His Grace and The Most Reverend Doctor Robert Arthur Voice.

Leonard William Markowetski, His Grace and The right Reverend Leonard William Markowetski.

John Harrison Badham, His Grace, The Right Reverend Dr.

Robert John Harrison-Gadham and Bishop Abbot.

Jessie Marie Anderson, Her Grace, The Right Reverend Dr. Jessie Marie Anderson and Bishopess.

The Hagmans claim they and other persons interested in the "common fund" of the Canadian temple expended time and donated real and personal property to the fund during the years 1947 to 1971.

The fund amounted to over \$1.7 million worth of cash, securities and real property. Legal control over the assets was transferred to Wolsey and the others with the understanding they would be used for charitable purposes, the suit says.

The diversion of the funds for personal use came to light last year when a receiver's report in the Canadian litigation revealed improprieties, the suit adds.

The Hagmans are asking the court to enjoin Wolsey and the others from transferring or conveying the property prior to adjudication of the suit and they are asking for legal title to the assets of the church's common fund.

In addition the suit asks for damages of \$1,796,436 and punitive damages of \$1 million.

Lawyer Robert B. Yonts Jr., who filed the suit in Santa Cruz, said this week he may have difficulty in locating Wolsey.

"Nobody but Young and Hagman seems to know exactly where he is," said Yonts.

"Wolsey apparently has not been seen by anyone, outside his immediate followers for some time," Yonts said.

The district attorney's office made an informal inquiry into Wolsey's whereabouts last month, when Wolsey failed to show up at Yonts' office last month, but never got an answer as to precisely where the archbishop was, an investigator said.