

“THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO” —A MacVicar-Wang Business Partnership

In April 2007 a group of believers affiliated with Living Stream Ministry (LSM) separated themselves from the Church in Toronto and began meeting independently in a nearby RAMADA hotel. Their leaders, Ron MacVicar and David Wang, denounced the Church in Toronto, calling it a “divisive sect.” These brothers even went to the Ontario law courts with others seeking an injunction against brothers Steve Pritchard and Jonathan P’ng, condemning them as “controlling directors.” The LSM-group accused the Toronto eldership of “supplanting the legitimate [Church] government...with an unscriptural, secular system,” “imposing a hierarchy of control” and “transmuting the nature of the [Church] corporation.” They denounced the current administration of the Church in Toronto as “organizational, unscriptural, hierarchical and Nicolaitan.”

The MacVicar-Wang “Local Church” Business

Given their scathing critique of the Church in Toronto, one would expect Brothers MacVicar & Wang to establish a biblical, spiritual and heavenly church, according to their concepts. However, information has emerged that Brothers MacVicar & Wang recently registered a “General Partnership Business” called “The Local Church in Toronto.” The MacVicar-Wang business was registered on April 10, 2007 under Ontario’s *Business Names Act* with the Companies and Personal Property Security Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. The registered business name is “THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO.” The ID number is 170392229 and the Business type is described as “General Partnership.” The Business Names Report indicates that the two partners behind this “Local Church” business are Mr. Ronald MacVicar (of 39 Caracas Rd., Toronto) and Mr. David Wang (of 29 Emmanuel Dr., Richmond Hill.) The “principal place of business in Ontario” is indicated as 39 Caracas Rd., (R. MacVicar’s home) located a short distance from 671 Sheppard Ave E., the main meeting hall of the Church in Toronto.

Who’s Establishing “Secular Control and Human Organization”?

When the LSM-group, led by Brothers MacVicar & Wang, separated from the Church in Toronto they justified their disassociation on the grounds that the Toronto elders were “implementing a blatantly unscriptural system of church administration,” characterized as “secular control.” They accused the Toronto eldership of imposing a “hierarchy of control,” and establishing an “unscriptural, secular system.” “All of this,” they said is “organizational, unscriptural, hierarchical and Nicolaitan.” [See [Declaration & Clarification](#) April 1, 2007 on lastadam.com] Brothers MacVicar & Wang also charged the Toronto elders with transmuting the “spiritual administration of the church into a human and secular organization.” [R. MacVicar & D. Wang, Letter, dated April 1, 2007, p. 3 on lastadam.com]

After denouncing the Toronto eldership and condemning the Church in Toronto, Brothers MacVicar & Wang turned around and (only 10 days later) established a “Local Church” business Partnership! In view of their harsh critique of the Church in Toronto, we ask--Isn’t “THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO” business Partnership also a human organization, a secular system? Where is the Biblical basis for establishing a General Partnership business? Isn’t this business entity also “unscriptural”? Based on their earlier critique, aren’t Brothers MacVicar & Wang open to the charge of being two-faced, of being hypocritical? They declared “secular control” is a major reason “Why we must separate and disassociate ourselves” from the Church in Toronto. Yet, haven’t these brothers now established their own form of “secular control and human organization”? In view of their strident denunciations, don’t Brothers MacVicar & Wang stand self-condemned? Isn’t their newly-established “Local Church in Toronto” business Partnership an “organizational, unscriptural, hierarchical” “system of secular control”?

Perhaps some will retort that this MacVicar-Wang business Partnership is “merely a practical arrangement” to facilitate renting or buying meeting facilities. An identical argument was made for the Church in Toronto’s charitable corporation and its bylaws. The LSM-group steadfastly rejected this argument. Their criticism continued unabated. In fact Toronto’s LSM-group waged a relentless campaign denouncing the Church in Toronto’s “practical business arrangements.” It would be the height of hypocrisy for the LSM-group to now offer the same justification. We would respond—Why the double standard? Why does the LSM-group condemn others, while giving themselves a “free pass”?

“Controlling Directors” OR “All-Powerful Partners”?

Brothers MacVicar & Wang repeatedly referred to Brothers Steve Pritchard and Jonathan P’ng as “controlling directors.” The disparaging phrase “controlling directors” appears 50 times in Brother Wang’s submission to the Ontario courts. This derogatory term was also used to justify the LSM-group’s forsaking the Church in Toronto. They alleged that the ground of the Church in Toronto is now “obedience to the controlling directors.” Yet are the Toronto Church directors “controlling”?

The directors of the Church are elected every three years by the members of the Church Corporation. Directors serve according to the will of the members and are accountable to the membership. In addition Ontario law imposes a fiduciary duty that they act in the best interests of the corporation. The directors’ control is limited by these provisions and they are subject to the corporation by-laws, hence their ability to exercise control is strictly circumscribed.

Contrast this with the Partnership established by Brothers MacVicar & Wang. They are self-appointed “partners” of “THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO.” There are no other members, directors or partners of this organization. This is a two-person owned and operated business. Other church-members have no legally-recognized status. In the “LOCAL Church in Toronto” business, the two partners—Brothers MacVicar & Wang—own everything, decide everything and control everything. Within the limits of the law, they are accountable to no one; they answer to no one (except each other); their power is absolute. Any funds donated to “THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO,” belong to the two partners, to be utilized however they see fit. Should any property be purchased in the name of “THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO,” it would be owned (not by the Church members) but by the two partners. The assets belong to the MacVicar & Wang business and their utilization is subject to the partners’ wish and whim. The two partners have total control of “THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO,” business (subject only to Canadian law). In contrast to the Church of the Torontonians’ directors, these “partners” have no fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interest of members. This “general partnership” does not require an annual business meeting open to church members; there’s no requirement to present financial accounts to church members. The “senior partners,” Brothers MacVicar & Wang, cannot be replaced, neither are they elected. They are firmly entrenched in the powerful position of “partner” in the MacVicar & Wang “Local Church” business as long as they choose. Clearly the authority of these “all-powerful partners” far exceeds that of any “controlling directors”!

The LSM-group’s leaders denounced the Church in Toronto’s “controlling directors.” They justified their departure on this basis. Yet, a mere ten days after leaving, Brothers MacVicar & Wang established themselves as “all-powerful partners” of the “THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO” business! What is this? Don’t “Actions speak louder than words”? Compared with the Church in Toronto; which system is more controlling, more “hierarchical,” more “Nicolaitan”? Doesn’t this suggest Brothers MacVicar & Wang’s complaints about “controlling directors” were a “smoke screen,” a mere pretext to separate their own followers from the Church in Toronto in order to form their own “Church”?

Genuine Local Church OR "Living Stream Ministry Church"?

Ironically, the MacVicar-Wang business Partnership was registered under the business name of "THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO." Presumably the meeting facilities at the RAMADA Hotel are being rented and bank accounts have been opened under this name. Yet, what are they really? Are they really "The local church in Toronto"? Or are they the Toronto-branch of the world-wide "Living Stream Ministry Church"? These believers met together with other Christians for years as "The Church in Toronto." Now they have separated themselves from the "Church in Toronto," taking the name "THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO." Based upon the name adopted by the MacVicar-Wang business partnership, one might think they wish to emphasize the local nature of the church. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth! Brother David Wang is on record, in a sworn affidavit before the Ontario courts, declaring that we refer the meeting halls in Toronto by number ("Hall #1, Hall #2, Hall #3") because there is one global Church. "We give these locations numbers to de-emphasize their importance and individuality because our understanding is that there is only one worldwide Christian church of believers," Brother Wang said. [Point 6, page 007] Toronto's LSM-group proclaims that they are a local church, receiving all believers. Yet in fact, behind the facade of "THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO," they are the Toronto-branch of "one worldwide Christian church," under the leadership of the "blended brothers" associated with LSM in Anaheim, CA, USA. They are a "Living Stream Ministry Church," here in Toronto.

Watchman Nee emphasized the local character of the churches. He said, "The churches of God are local, ***intensely local***. If any factor enters in to destroy their local character, then they cease to be scriptural churches." [The Normal Christian Church Life, p. 61] He warned that "As soon as the churches are brought under any ministry, they cease to be local and become sectarian." [*ibid*, p. 113] W. Nee called such ministry-controlled churches "ministerial churches." This description exactly fits the Toronto LSM-group currently meeting at the RAMADA hotel. Despite the business name adopted by the MacVicar-Wang partnership, the new label doesn't change the underlying reality—"THE LOCAL CHURCH IN TORONTO" is not a genuine local church; it is an "LSM-ministerial Church."

Concerned brothers

May, 2007

NOTE: The Court documents referred to above are the "Affidavit of David Wang" (Feb 27, 2007) in support of the "Notice of Motion" submitted to the Ontario Supreme Court of Justice by David Wang, Ron MacVicar, David Chao, Anne Chao & Pat Auclair [Court File No.: 07-CV-328478PD2] The judge decisively dismissed the case, rejecting their arguments and ruling that D. Wang & co. should pay court costs.