

IN THE STATE COURT OF DEKALB COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

MAURICE ROBINSON,)
)
 Plaintiff,)
)
 vs.)
)
 EDDIE L. LONG;)
 NEW BIRTH MISSIONARY)
 BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.; and)
 THE LONGFELLOWS YOUTH)
 ACADEMY, INC.,)
 Defendants.)

CIVIL ACTION NO.

COMPLAINT

COMES NOW Maurice Robinson, Plaintiff in the above-captioned matter, and respectfully states his Complaint against Defendants Eddie L. Long, New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, Inc., and the Longfellows Youth Academy, Inc. as follows:

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1.

Defendant EDDIE L. LONG (“Defendant Long”) is an individual who resides and can be served at 1267 Greenridge Avenue, Lithonia, Georgia 30058-2220 in DeKalb County.

2.

Defendant New Birth, Inc. (“New Birth”) is a non-profit corporation organized under the Laws of the State of Georgia, with its principal office located at 6400 Woodrow Road, Lithonia, Georgia 30038-2437 in DeKalb County.

3.

Service of process may be perfected upon New Birth by serving its registered agent,

Elder Maurice Waddell at 6400 Woodrow Road, Lithonia, Georgia 30038-2437 in DeKalb County.

4.

Defendant Longfellows Youth Academy, Inc. (“Longfellows”) is a nonprofit corporation organized under the Laws of the State of Georgia, with its principal office located at 6400 Woodrow Road, Litonia, Georgia 30038-2437 in DeKalb County.

5.

Service of process may be perfected upon Longfellows by serving Defendant’s registered agent, Morris Manning & Martin, LLP, 3343 Peachtree Road, Suite 1600, Atlanta, Georgia 30326 in Fulton County.

6.

Jurisdiction is proper in this Court.

7.

Venue is proper in this Court.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

8.

Defendant Long is the Bishop, senior pastor and chief executive officer of Defendant New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, Inc.

9.

New Birth has grown to over 25,000 members since Defendant Long first served as pastor in 1987.

10.

Defendant New Birth’s website proclaims, “[A]s a man of vision, Bishop Long is revered

locally, nationally and internationally as a dynamic man of leadership, integrity and compassion.”

11.

In addition to acting as the Bishop, head pastor and chief executive officer of Defendant New Birth, Defendant Long also heads several offshoot ministries, including Defendant Longfellows Youth Academy.

12.

Defendant Longfellows Youth Academy is a tuition based program for young men, aged 13 through 18, which purports to train young men to love, live and lead as they proceed on their “masculine journey.” The Longfellows program reputedly seeks to create committed men of God, and learning life lessons and key leadership principles.

13.

Defendant Long personally participates in the Longfellows program as a pastor, counselor, mentor and confidant to the young men enrolled.

14.

At all times material hereto, Defendant Long has established a confidential relationship with Plaintiff Robinson, while acting as Plaintiff Robinson’s spiritual advisor, Bishop, and leader of the Defendants’ ministries.

15.

Defendant Long has utilized his spiritual authority as Bishop and leader of Defendants’ ministries to coerce certain young male members and employees of Defendant New Birth and pupils of Defendant Longfellows into engaging in sexual acts and relationships for his own personal sexual gratification.

16.

Defendant Long has a pattern and practice of singling out a select group of young male church members and using his authority as Bishop over them to ultimately bring them to a point of engaging in a sexual relationship.

17.

Although the majority of Defendants' congregation is likely unaware of the aforesaid practices, many of Defendant Long's victims are known throughout the Church as the "Spiritual Sons" of Defendant Long.

18.

Defendant Long uses various rituals in the Ceremony including candles, exchange of jewelry, and discussion of Biblical verses that reinforce the spiritual and God-like connection between himself and the young man.

19.

During services to the congregation at large, Defendant Long uses pastoral sessions to discuss Biblical verses that indicate to his "sons" that the Spiritual Son should follow his master.

20.

Defendant Long uses monetary funds from the accounts of Defendant New Birth and Defendant Longfellows, among other corporate and non-profit corporate accounts, to entice the chosen Spiritual Sons with cars, clothes, jewelry, and electronics.

21.

Defendant Long's Spiritual Sons are taken on public and private jets to U.S. and international destinations, housed in luxury hotels and given access to numerous celebrities including entertainment stars and politicians.

22.

Defendant Long's Spiritual Sons are placed on the payroll of Defendant New Birth and become paid employees of Defendant New Birth.

23.

Typically, when the young males, confused by the sexual contact with Defendant Long, find girlfriends or engage in sexual contact with females pursuant their own personal desires, Defendant Long initially attempts to block those relationships by increased contact and spiritual talk as to the covenant between the Spiritual Son and himself.

24.

Plaintiff Maurice Murray Robinson is one of the young male Spiritual Sons described above.

25.

Maurice Murray Robinson ("Plaintiff Robinson") was born on October 25, 1989.

26.

In 2003, Plaintiff Robinson and his family joined New Birth Missionary Baptist Church.

27.

Plaintiff Robinson's mother enrolled Plaintiff Robinson in Defendant Longfellow Academy.

28.

Plaintiff Robinson was 14 years old at the time of enrollment in Defendant Longfellow Academy.

29.

Bishop Eddie Long began to spend personal time with Plaintiff Robinson when Plaintiff

Robinson was fifteen (15) years old.

30.

At some point in time, after joining the Church, Plaintiff Robinson was placed on the payroll of Defendant New Birth.

31.

Plaintiff Robinson would accompany Defendant Long to the gym where Defendant Long would have Plaintiff Robinson rub lotion on Defendant Long at Defendant Long's direction.

32.

Andrew Moman, an employee of New Birth, purchased a Chevrolet Malibu for Plaintiff Robinson's use.

33.

Defendant Long took Plaintiff Robinson on several overnight trips to various destinations including, New York, New York, Turks and Caicos and Auckland, New Zealand.

34.

Defendant Long took Plaintiff Robinson to Auckland, New Zealand for Plaintiff Robinson's birthday on October 25, 2008 (the "New Zealand Trip").

35.

During the New Zealand Trip, Defendant Long placed his mouth on the penis of Robinson.

36.

Following the New Zealand Trip, Defendant Long regularly engaged in sexual touching, and other sexual acts with Plaintiff Robinson.

37.

Defendant Long would use Holy Scripture to discuss and justify the intimate relationship between himself and Plaintiff Robinson.

38.

Plaintiff Robinson was regularly given cash by Defendant Long.

39.

Defendant Long and/or Defendant New Birth paid for college tuition at Perimeter College for Maurice Murray Robinson.

40.

In or about 2009, Maurice Murray Robinson traveled to Ohio with Bishop Eddie Long where Defendant Long engaged in sexual acts with Plaintiff Robinson.

41.

In or about 2009 Maurice Murray Robinson traveled to Connecticut with Bishop Eddie Long where Defendant Long engaged in sexual acts with Plaintiff Robinson.

42.

On or about May 19, 2010, Plaintiff Robinson sought spiritual and grief counseling from Defendant Long because the death of Plaintiff Robinson's best friend.

43.

During the May 19, 2010 counseling session, Defendant Eddie attempted to engage in sexual relations with Plaintiff Robinson.

44.

Defendant Long's May 19, 2010 sexual advances in the immediate aftermath of the death of Plaintiff Robinson's best friend caused Plaintiff Robinson great anger and anguish.

45.

In early June, 2010, Plaintiff Robinson received an inquiry from a fellow Spiritual Son as to whether Plaintiff Robinson had engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Defendant Long.

46.

The May 19th sexual advance by Defendant Long, combined with the revelation from the telephone call from another Spiritual Son, created a desire to hurt Defendant Long by taking the items most precious to Defendant Long.

47.

Employees and agents of Defendant New Birth, including Andrew Moman, Anthony Render, and April McLaughlin often accompanied Defendant Long and Plaintiff Robinson on the overnight trips and knew that Defendant Long was sharing a bedroom with Plaintiff Robinson.

48.

At all times relevant and pertinent to the claims alleged herein, Defendant Long was in a confidential relationship with Plaintiff Robinson defined by O.C.G.A. § 24-9-22.

49.

At all times relevant and pertinent to the claims alleged herein, Defendant Long was Plaintiff's spiritual advisor as defined by O.C.G.A. § 24-9-22.

50.

At all times relevant and pertinent to the claims alleged herein, Defendant Long was in a confidential relationship with Plaintiff Robinson and was thereby situated to exercise a controlling influence over the will, conduct, and interest of Plaintiff, as defined by O.C.G.A. § 23-2-58.

51.

At all times relevant and pertinent to the claims alleged herein, Defendant Long was involved in advising and counseling Plaintiff Robinson in areas of Plaintiff's personal life.

52.

Defendant Long, through manipulation, coercion, deception and fraud resulting from the abuse of his confidential relationships with Plaintiff Robinson, convinced Plaintiff Robinson that engaging in a sexual relationship was a healthy component of his spiritual life.

53.

Various individuals working for Defendant Long, Defendant New Birth Baptist Church, and the Longfellows Academy, including but not limited to Andrew Moman and April McLaughlin, knew of Defendant Long's sexually inappropriate conduct and did nothing to warn or protect Plaintiff Robinson.

54.

Defendant New Birth, had a duty to warn and protect Plaintiff Robinson.

55.

Various individuals working for Defendant Long, Defendant New Birth Baptist Church, and the Longfellows Academy, including but not limited to Andrew Moman and April McLaughlin, knew of Defendant Long's conduct and did nothing to warn or protect Plaintiff Robinson.

56.

At all times material hereto, Defendant Long, Moman, and McLaughlin acted within the course and scope of their employment for Defendants New Birth and Longfellows.

57.

The course of conduct by Defendant Long described herein was known to individuals working for Defendant New Birth Baptist Church, and Defendant Longfellow, including but not limited to Moman and McLaughlin.

COUNT I
BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY

58.

Defendant Long, as Plaintiff Robinson's pastor, counselor, and bishop, was in a position to exercise a controlling influence over the will, conduct, and interest of Plaintiff Robinson.

59.

Defendant Long had a fiduciary duty not to engage in any sexual relations with Plaintiff Robinson.

60.

Defendant Long had a fiduciary duty not to request Plaintiff Robinson to engage in any sexual relations with Defendant Long.

61.

Defendant Long had a fiduciary duty as the spiritual advisor of Plaintiff Robinson not to coerce Plaintiff Robinson to engage in sexual conduct and relationships with Defendant Long.

62.

Defendant Long had a fiduciary duty as the pastor to Plaintiff Robinson not to mislead or advise Plaintiff Robinson that the sexual conduct with Defendant Long was justified by the Holy Scripture and ordained by God.

63.

Defendant Long breached his fiduciary duty to Plaintiff Robinson and abused his

confidential clerical and pastoral relationship, by requesting and requiring Plaintiff Robinson to participate in sexual acts with Defendant Long in such a manner as to be adverse to the interests of Plaintiff Robinson.

64.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's breach of fiduciary duties, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering and adverse physical consequences.

65.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's breach of fiduciary duties, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered physical pain and suffering.

66.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's breach of fiduciary duties, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT II
NEGLIGENCE PER SE

67.

Defendant Long had a legal duty as the spiritual advisor of Plaintiff Robinson not to engage in sexual conduct with Plaintiff Robinson pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 23-2-58.

68.

Defendant's breach of said duty constitutes Negligence Per Se.

69.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's Negligence Per Se, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical consequences.

70.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's Negligence Per Se, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT III
NEGLIGENCE

71.

Defendant Long owed a duty to Plaintiff Robinson to exercise ordinary care under the circumstances created by his pastoral relationship with Plaintiff Robinson .

72.

Defendant breached this duty of care.

73.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical consequences.

74.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT IV
FRAUD

75.

Defendant Long knowingly and intentionally made false representations of material fact to Plaintiff Robinson by, among other things:

- (a) Representing that the Longfellows Youth Academy was a benevolent enterprises designed to foster the spiritual growth of young men;

- (b) By representing that sexual contact with Defendant Long was a healthy component of Plaintiff Robinson's worship and affiliation with the Church;
- (c) By representing that sexual relations with Defendant Long were justified by the Holy Scripture and ordained by God.

76.

As a follower of Bishop Long, Plaintiff Robinson justifiably relied on Defendant Long's false representations and was thereby coerced into participating in sexual acts and sexual relationships with Defendant Long.

77.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's fraudulent representations, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical consequences.

78.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's fraudulent representations, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered physical pain and suffering.

79.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's fraudulent representations, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT V
INTENTIONAL INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

(Defendant Long)

80.

Defendant Long intentionally exercised undue influence and abused his position of power as Plaintiff Robinson's spiritual counselor, advisor and pastor to induce and coerce Plaintiff

Robinson into engaging in sexual relations and prolonged sexual relationships with Defendant Long.

81.

Defendant Long physically impacted Plaintiff Robinson by inducing and coercing him into engaging in sexual acts with Defendant Long.

82.

The sexual abuse, coercion and inducement perpetrated by Defendant Long against Plaintiff Robinson was extreme and outrageous.

83.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's conduct, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical consequences.

84.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's conduct, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered physical pain and suffering.

85.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendant Long's conduct, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT VI
NEGLIGENT INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

(All Defendants)

86.

Defendants were negligent as described above and below in exercising undue influence or allowing Defendant Long to exercise undue influence to coerce Plaintiff Robinson into engaging in sexual relations and prolonged sexual relationships with Defendant Long.

87.

Defendants' conduct was extreme and outrageous and directly caused Plaintiff Robinson to suffer severe psychological and emotional distress.

88.

Plaintiff Robinson suffered and continues to suffer damages as a result of Defendants' conduct.

89.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' actions, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical consequences.

90.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' actions, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered physical pain and suffering.

91.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' actions, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT VII
NEGLIGENT FAILURE TO WARN

(Defendants New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, and Longfellows Youth Academy)

92.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellows Youth Academy, by and through their agents, servants, and employees, knew or should have known of Defendant Long's dangerous and exploitative propensities as a sexual predator and unfit agent.

93.

Despite knowledge of Defendant Long's dangerous and exploitative propensities as a sexual predator and unfit agent, Defendants New Birth and Longfellows Youth Academy failed to warn those, including Plaintiff Robinson and his family, who came in contact with Defendant Long.

94.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellows Youth Academy's failure to warn Plaintiff Robinson and his family of Defendant Long's propensities allowed Defendant Long to assume an unfettered position of trust and authority as Plaintiff Robinson's spiritual counselor and pastor.

95.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellows Youth Academy's failure to warn Plaintiff Robinson of Defendant Long's propensities allowed Defendant to coerce and induce Plaintiff into engaging in sexual relationships with him.

96.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' failure to warn, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical

consequences.

97.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' failure to warn, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered physical pain and suffering.

98.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' failure to warn, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT VIII
NEGLIGENT FAILURE TO INTERVENE

99.

Agents and employees of Defendant New Birth and Longfellows knew or should have known that Defendant Long acted negligently and/or coercively as the spiritual advisor to young male church members such as the Plaintiff Robinson and negligently failed to intervene to prevent said conduct.

100.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical consequences.

101.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered physical pain and suffering.

102.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT IX
NEGLIGENT FAILURE TO PROTECT

(Defendants New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, Longfellows Youth Academy)

103.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellow undertook the spiritual care and protection for Plaintiff Robinson within its church and ministries.

104.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellow failed to protect the Plaintiff Robinson from Defendant Long's known propensity to coerce young male church members to engage in sexual acts with him.

105.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' failure to protect Plaintiff Robinson, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical consequences.

106.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' failure to protect Plaintiff Robinson, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered physical pain and suffering.

107.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' failure to protect Plaintiff Robinson, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT X
NEGLIGENT RETENTION

(Defendants New Birth Missionary Baptist Church and Longfellows Youth Academy)

108.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellows knew, or should have known, that Defendant Long had a propensity to sexually contact and exploit young male members of the New Birth congregation and Longfellow Academy.

109.

Defendant Long, at all times pertinent and relevant to this Count of the Complaint, was acting under color of employment as an employee and officer of Defendant New Birth, and an employee of Defendant Longfellows Youth Academy.

110.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellows were negligent in retaining Defendant Long as an employee and officer of New Birth and employee of Longfellows, as said Defendants knew or should have known that Defendant Long was incompetent or otherwise unable to perform his job duties in an ordinary, reasonable, and lawful manner.

111.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellows were negligent in retaining Defendant Long as an employee and officer of New Birth and an employee of Longfellows, as said Defendants knew or should have known that Defendant Long was engaged in sexually inappropriate conduct with New Birth parishioners and employees, and pupils of the Longfellows Academy, including but not limited to the Plaintiff Robinson.

112.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellows were negligent in retaining Defendant Long as

an employee and officer of New Birth and an employee of Longfellows, since said Defendants knew or should have known that Defendant Long had a propensity to engage in sexually inappropriate conduct with congregants, employees and pupils he counseled.

113.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical consequences.

114.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered physical pain and suffering.

115.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

COUNT XI
NEGLIGENT FAILURE TO SUPERVISE

(Defendants New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, Longfellows Youth Academy)

116.

Defendants New Birth, and/or Longfellows negligently failed to supervise Defendant Long as an employee and officer of New Birth and an employee of Longfellows, as said Defendants knew or should have known that Defendant Long was incompetent or otherwise unable to perform his job duties in an ordinary, reasonable, and lawful manner.

117.

Defendants New Birth and Longfellows negligently failed to supervise Defendant Long as an employee and officer of New Birth and employee of Longfellows, as said Defendants knew

or should have known that Defendant Long was engaged in sexually inappropriate conduct with New Birth parishioners and employees such as Plaintiff Robinson, and pupils of the Longfellows Academy such as Plaintiff Robinson.

118.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered severe emotional distress, mental pain and suffering, and adverse physical consequences.

119.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has suffered physical pain and suffering.

120.

As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff Robinson has been subjected to public scorn and ridicule.

PUNITIVE DAMAGES

121.

The purpose of punitive damages is to punish and deter the Defendants from engaging in harmful conduct to others both now and in the future.

122.

The Defendants acted with willful misconduct, malice, fraud, oppression, wantonness and an entire want of care raising the presumption of conscience indifference to the consequences. Defendants by and through their conduct, have acted willfully, with malice, intending and achieving fraud such that Plaintiff is entitled to an award of punitive damages in accordance with the enlightened conscience of an impartial jury.

The conduct of the Defendants amounts to a specific intent to cause harm as that term is defined by O.C.G.A. § 51-12-5.1 et seq.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Robinson prays for the following relief:

- (a) That process and summons issue against Defendants;
- (b) For trial by jury of twelve (12);
- (c) That judgment for compensatory and special damages be entered against Defendants in an amount to be decided by a fair and impartial jury;
- (d) That Plaintiff be awarded all attorney's fees;
- (e) That Plaintiff be awarded all costs of Court;
- (f) That Plaintiff be awarded punitive damages in an amount to be determined by the enlightened conscience of a fair and impartial jury; and
- (g) That Plaintiff recover such other relief as may be just and proper under the facts

and circumstances of this case.

Respectfully submitted this _____ day of September, 2010.

BRENDA JOY (B.J.) BERNSTEIN
Georgia State Bar No.: 054904
Co-Counsel for Plaintiff

BERNSTEIN FIRM, P.C.
Bldg. 400, Suite 200
1201 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30361
(404) 522-1200
(404) 810-9092 – fax

JAMES (JAY) SADD, ESQ.
Georgia State Bar No.: 622010
Co-Counsel for Plaintiff

SLAPPEY & SADD, LLC

352 Sandy Springs Circle
Atlanta, Georgia 30328
(404) 255-6677
(404) 255-7340 – fax

KATHERINE VENTULETT HERNACKI
Georgia State Bar No.: 727027
Co-Counsel for Plaintiff

HERNACKI LAW FIRM, LLC

400 Colony Square, Suite 200
1201 Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30361
(404) 524-5650
(404) 524-5651 – fax