



THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

22nd March 2012

Mr A Hozack,
General Manager
Red Bull Holdings South Africa (Pty) Ltd
2nd Floor,
Black River Park North,
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Obeservatory
Cape Town
7925

kelly.orgill@za.redbull.com

Dear Mr Hozak,

Re : **Red Bull advertisement**

We acknowledge with appreciation your immediate withdrawal of the advertisement you screened referring to Jesus in your cartoon promoting Red Bull. The most significant reason you attributed to this Ad is that you have always used cartoons in a "light hearted way" to advertise your products. As Christians we do not seek to appear as those who lack a sense of humour or are intolerant of nuances which may even have a dig at our faith. However, that is precisely the problem with your advertisement it had no sense of being subtle, indirect or imaginary. Instead, it made direct reference to "Jesus" and went further to actually make a mockery of our faith, views and beliefs in Jesus with no sensitivity to Christian viewers, whatsoever. Thus, I am sure that you can understand the sharp reactions of Christians and people of other Faiths to this advert.

In our understanding Ads are not a mere quick thumb-suck, it is carefully thought through with considerable effort, time, research and analysis of the target audience and its possible impact on the market. Added to this is the realization that the timing, launching and release of an Ad are part and parcel of the projected plan of promotion. The fact that you chose a theme specifically referring to "Jesus" and released during the time of Lent reflects, without a shadow of doubt, the deliberate and intentional promotional guise that was employed. Ads can be also used to spark controversy so that products are "unconsciously" spoken about giving it 'undue' publicity and promotional coverage. If the latter was the intention, then your company was not only insensitive but certainly most misguided in not realizing that the majority of Christians and even people of other faiths would not support your products anymore.

In spite of the fact that you have withdrawn the Ad, we must admit that we do not feel that this is adequate for the reasons cited above. The sincerity of your apology would be seen in a public announcement using the very mediums you have used to promote your products. Perhaps another act of goodwill might be a donation of a minimum of One Million Rand to charity/charities of your choice since the very Jesus, whom you had wrongfully portrayed, teaches us to care for the poor, sick, needy and orphaned.

As the UPCSA, we have appreciated the stance of the Roman Catholic Church on this matter and its

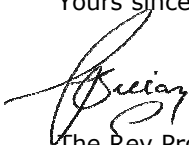
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call to its members to not buy your products during Lent and to give that same money to charity. We must advise that our failure to see any sense of sincere apology, which we have not seen as yet, will leave us with no choice but to request our members to abstain from supporting your products. Our Church is extended to the countries of Zimbabwe and Zambia as well and, of course, our members there will be requested to do the same. Our prayer and hope is that your sincerity would give you the *wings* to do what is honourable and right in respecting the beliefs and faith of other people as you promote your products, bearing in mind that ultimately what matters most is not the product but the people themselves.

We are looking forward to an immediate response to our letter so that we may decide what to do next.

Yours sincerely,



The Rev Prof Jerry Pillay
General Secretary



The Rt Rev Dr George Marchinkowski
Moderator

28 March 2012

Reverend Professor Jerry Pillay
Right Reverend Dr George Marchinkowski
BY EMAIL: gensec@presbyterian.org.za

Dear Reverend Professor Pillay and Right Reverend Dr Marchinkowski

RED BULL ADVERTISING

Thank you for your letter and for the opportunity to further explain how our company has responded to this issue.

I was concerned to read that you do not believe Red Bull has expressed a sincere apology for the advertisement which caused offence to yourselves, your constituency and other members of the community.

In any event, I would like to make it clear to you that our company apologises unreservedly for the offence the advertisement caused. As we have said on a number of occasions, we certainly did not set out to offend but we accept that was the unintended consequence and, for that, we are genuinely sorry.

As you would be aware, the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa (**ASA**) has reviewed the advertisement in accordance with the established complaints process and ruled that there was a breach of the ASA Code. As such, the ASA has imposed the appropriate penalty under the ASA Code.

Red Bull South Africa respects the decision of the ASA and will ensure full compliance with its ruling.

With respect to your request for a donation to a charitable organisation, globally Red Bull supports the charity Wings for Life - an organisation that supports and finances the most promising research projects worldwide aimed at healing the injured spinal cord.

We believe this is vitally important work which will hopefully, one day, deliver enormous relief and benefits to sufferers of this debilitating injury no matter where they may live in the world.

I do hope I have been able to satisfy your concerns.

Yours faithfully

RED BULL HOLDINGS SOUTH AFRICA (PTY) LTD

Arun Hozack
General Manager