

Spiritual Counterfeits Project

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MEMORANDUM FROM: Neil T. Duddy
TO: Brooks Alexander
SUBJECT: U.S. Publication of The God-Men
manuscript and possible legal complications
DATE: February 8, 1980

IVP prefers to make a policy decision on whether and how to publish without regard to Switzerland and Lee's motivations. I believe that IVP's ultimate determination, however, must extend beyond these self-imposed boundaries. Lee's motivations must also be considered by IVP, unless their sole purpose is to avoid a legal procedure of any type. Given Lee's state of agitation and flammable nature, though, I'm not sure that even a distilled manuscript would relieve pressure on Lee to sue. In any case, here are some of my reflections:

ADVANTAGES FOR LEE TO SUE IN SWITZERLAND

1. An opportunity to save face at home. The case is argued in a foreign country and the details are not made known to Local Church people in the U.S., or internationally.

a. If Lee loses, he can argue to his church constituency that it was a fluke of law, cite examples of such flukes, and play the misunderstood martyr role--which I believe may be a strong motivation for suing in Switzerland. If this is the case, then he may cite the Swiss ruling as a reason for not suing in the U.S., possible. A loss here, and a detailed court inquiry would be devastating. According to Rapoport, Lee would receive criminal charges from the IRS and the Security and Exchange Commission--definitely a can of worms Lee would not want to open.

b. Should Lee lose, his only cost would be the 30,000 Swiss francs drawn from the Local Church funds-- a nominal fee to save a 40-year-old counterfeit ministry.

2. If Lee and the Local Church win in Switzerland, it will result in the following:

a. Giving Lee an advantage, possibly providing an impetus to sue in the U.S., but it is hard to second guess him.

b. Giving PR leverage for defending himself publicly and privately against the American version, regardless of any modifications IVP may wish to make.

c. A possible disadvantage to Lee would be his delusion in believing that he may win in the states without "ex-terrorizing" his ministry and teaching.

ADVANTAGES IN AN SCP VICTORY IN SWITZERLAND

1. If IVP waits for a verdict, they may publish the manuscript as is, without deleting passages.
2. It will provide interesting PR for the American version to help IVP recover expenses incurred in publishing and possible defense.
3. It provides no structural advantages for a defense of the manuscript in American courts, other than citation as a precedent.

DISADVANTAGES OF A LOSS IN SWITZERLAND

Contingent upon the complaints which yield a defeat in Switzerland, we still have certain advantages:

1. If the business material is cited, we still have back-ups with the primary resource, i.e., Rapoport, whose testimony was unavailable in the Swiss case.
2. If any other materials are cited, we are documented fairly well, should we need them in the U.S.

ADVANTAGES TO PUBLISHING THE GOD-MEN, AS IS, IN THE U.S.

1. Deleting "sensitive material" may result in a minimal loss of impact on evangelical readers. A censored version, however, would remove the impact on Local Church readers, because most people leave the movement due to its financial mismanagement or extreme manipulation (two main sections of "sensitive God-Men material").
2. It confronts a counterfeit Christian, which is expanding through ripping off other Christian groups, at its central nervous system.

DISADVANTAGES TO PUBLISHING, AS IS, IN THE U.S.

1. Anxiety over a possible lawsuit.
2. The actual suit itself.

ADVANTAGES TO CENSORING THE GOD-MEN IN THE U.S.

1. It may prevent a lawsuit, although the suit in Switzerland has presented a broad range of complaints against the text.

DISADVANTAGES TO CENSORING THE MANUSCRIPT

1. Loss of critical impact on Local Church readers, thereby allowing the movement to smolder, waiting for time to erase the actual criticism and its memory.

THOUGHTS

1. What you don't know won't hurt you is true for The God-Men and Witness Lee in America.
2. Footnote the IVP God-Men, using the Schwengeler Verlag version as the source (contingent upon a Swiss victory). This would give Lee an opportunity to complain publicly and an "out" so that he wouldn't be forced to sue.
3. Publish the sensitive data in our SCP newsletter and footnote the IVP God-Men with an SCP newsletter citation.
4. Leak to the Berkeley Barb.
5. Contact John Dart and Ross Chandler for storyline and possible quickie check on whose name appears on the property deed for the place adjacent to Lee's home, when it was purchased and sale price.
6. I believe it is in our best interest to encourage IVP to wait out Switzerland until March 15th (the Ides of March!) and tell them we will pump sales with out best efforts.

Brooks, if you believe this is a noteworthy inhouse memo, you can shape it up for Sire and Nyquist to read. The plane's landing in Boston--15° F.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil

Neil T. Duddy