



# News Release

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12300 Ford Rd. · Suite 212 · Dallas, TX 75234 · 972.267.1111 · 972.267.3535 (fax) · www.alarryross.com

**FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:**  
Phillip Roth            972-267-1111

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **JUDGE ORDERS LIBEL SUIT TO PROCEED** **Harvest House Publishers' Motion to Dismiss Denied**

**HOUSTON, June 20, 2003** - In a case that is being followed closely by the evangelical Christian and publishing communities, State District Court Judge Kent Sullivan has dismissed a motion for summary judgment and ruled that a lawsuit for libel filed by plaintiffs Living Stream Ministry, the Local Church, et al. proceed against Harvest House Publishers and co-authors, John Ankerberg and John Weldon. The decision was handed down June 13. A trial date of January 12, 2004 has been set. Both Living Stream Ministry, the Anaheim-based publishers of bibles and the writings of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee, and Harvest House Publishers of Eugene, Oregon, are members of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

"Our case is not based on theological or doctrinal issues, which have no place in a court of law," said Barry Langberg, lead attorney for the plaintiffs, "but on the fact that the defendants' book, the *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions* attributes to my clients heinous crimes and other despicable behaviors while proclaiming the 'virtue of intolerance' toward the groups it condemns."

"We have worked earnestly to pursue a Christian reconciliation to this dispute outside the court system," said Chris Wilde, spokesman for Living Stream Ministry. "Harvest House Publishers and its authors chose to ignore our year-long efforts to resolve this issue," added Dan Towle, spokesman for the Local Church, "and instead initiated legal action in the matter which left us with no alternative but to seek the relief of the court."

"We are satisfied that the court has decided the suit should go forward," Towle said. "Based upon both the evidence and the law in this case, we feel confident that, when it goes to trial, we will prevail."

For background on this case, including copies of official court documents, go to <http://www.localchurch-vs-harvesthouse.com>.

Editors: For additional information or interviews, you may contact:

Chris Wilde with Living Stream Ministry  
[chris@lsm.org](mailto:chris@lsm.org) (714) 226-1720  
Dan Towle with the Local Church  
[danslawsuitinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:danslawsuitinfo@yahoo.com) (714) 606-2689  
Barry Langberg, the Plaintiff's Attorney  
[blangberg@stroock.com](mailto:blangberg@stroock.com) (310) 556-5800