

THE VERDICT:

Count one: Both the Ananda church and Walters were found liable on the charge of "constructive fraud", with a finding of "malice and fraudulent conduct".

Count two: Both the Ananda church, Walters and the Senior Minister were found liable for "intentional infliction of emotional distress" with a finding of "malice" and a finding of "despicable conduct" against the church.

Count three: Both Ananda and the church were found liable for "negligent supervision"; that the church had a duty to control Walter's behavior, and failed to do so, with a finding of "malice and fraud" on the part of the church.

The jury also found that the Senior Minister had made "unwelcome sexual advances".

Friday, February 6, there will be depositions concerning assets, which will be weighed when considering punitive damages.

In addition, Ananda ministers Asha and David Praver reportedly said they do not want to comply with the judge's order to appear tomorrow with records and testimony concerning Ananda's assets in Palo Alto and Mt. View. They reportedly said they will be hiring their own attorney.

Awards for "compensatory damages":

\$595,000 in compensatory damages against Swami Kriyananda and the Ananda church.

\$30,000 in compensatory damages against the Ananda Senior Minister.

Monday the jury will hear testimony on Ananda and Swami Kriyananda's financial records, for the assessment of punitive damages.

*Punitive Damages were also awarded to the plaintiff in the amount of \$1,000,000 (one million dollars). Punitive [exemplary] damages are awarded after actual damages. Punitive damages serve to warn others that certain conduct will not be condoned. They are typically awarded in lawsuits where a defendant has acted in a willful, intentionally malicious way.

Also in 1998, Ananda agreed to pay an additional \$200, 000 to settle two additional related lawsuits. One of these lawsuits was brought against Ananda because Ananda admitted hiring [and paying with Church tax-exempt money] for the theft of trash [privileged client-attorney information] from the plaintiff's lawyers' office.

Commentary:

For too long now, through ignorance or design, Ananda's leaders and many followers, have chosen to follow personality over principle, to pledge their "obedience and loyalty" to Donald Walters, rather than the basic moral and ethical standards of society.

During the three and half years of this lawsuit and continuing to date, Ananda vilifies anyone who dares to speak out, condemning them as "negative", "liars", "embodiments of evil" or in league with dark secret conspiracies.

Kriyananda and Ananda leaders have consistently refused to accept any responsibility or accountability for their actions.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "The world looks like a mathematical equation which, turn it how you will, balances itself. Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty."

After deliberating almost a week, an impartial jury of American citizens has weighed the evidence, and found Ananda wanting.

It is now time for Ananda to stop the vilification and denial, to accept responsibility, to realign itself with established codes of moral and ethical behavior. To do less will only take Ananda further down the path of public condemnation and ultimate self-destruction.

Far from wanting to see such destruction, it is the hope of many that through a return to the principles of honesty, accountability and humility that Ananda may yet return to the spiritual principles which it claims to follow.