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November 9, 2015

Dr. Gregory Tomlin
c/o Christian Media Corporation
Christian Examiner
74 Trinity Place
New York, NY 10006-2003

Re: Your October 28, 2015 "Commentary"
How the Grinch stole Christmas—at Dover Air Force Base.

Dear Dr. Tomlin:

Our office represents Mikey Weinstein and the Military Religious Freedom Foundation. Mr. Weinstein has contacted us concerning your recent article in the *Christian Examiner*.

Having read your October 28, "Commentary" several thoughts immediately come to mind.

1. You seem unaware that a person can be libeled by innuendo.
2. You seem bizarrely concerned that Mr. Weinstein happens to be Jewish.
3. You don't seem to understand either the mission of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation or what might be described as the constitutional distinction between secular and sectarian activities associated with the military.
4. I gather you generally believe you're being persecuted because you're Christian.
5. Despite what you infer, the Foundation is not an Atheist group—which I imagine you know full well.

Mr. Weinstein is now a celebrated civil rights leader. The Foundation has been nominated a number of times for the Nobel Peace Prize and, whether you like it or not, or believe it, is trying to help ensure freedom of religion for everyone.

The Foundation's principal work is advising active duty members serving in all branches of the United States Military. Given his unique experience as an honor graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, a former Air Force Legal Officer (JAG), and as a member of the White House Legal Staff during the Reagan administration and former General Counsel to H. Ross Perot and Perot Systems Corporation, he is unusually qualified to help them deal with ongoing religious discriminatory intolerance confronting them while serving.

Most of the Foundation's armed forces clients are, in fact Christian, but Mr. Weinstein and the Foundation work for the continued free expression and practice for those of all religious beliefs, or no beliefs.

That brings us to the circumstances at Dover Air Force Base. You seem to either be misinformed, or to have not taken the time to inform yourself, about the circumstances there.

All aside from the constitutionally mandated rule concerning separation of church and state, there are of course, specific regulations relative to the military. The Foundation has never had any objection to Christmas, or to what was called Operation Christmas Child. The concern, on behalf of a number of the Foundation's Dover clients was the manner in which the project was communicated in direct violation of military regulations. Nothing prevents military personnel from speaking with regard to a Christian charity; or any other charity for that matter. It is the time, place and manner in which it is done that either violates military regulations, and the Constitution, or not.

Please understand that what is so greatly offensive and inaccurate about your letter is your weaving of insinuations between "How the Grinch stole Christmas—at Dover Air Force Base," that the Foundation is somehow an anti-Christian group and/or "atheist" organization, that the Foundation somehow hates Christianity, and your gratuitous observation that Mr. Weinstein happens to be Jewish.

Lt. Col. Tasker didn't "cave in." He simply reacted, appropriately, when it was pointed out that what had been done was a direct violation of military rules. The Christmas project should have been handled on a secular basis through the Chaplain's office, not through the Commander.

Although Mikey Weinstein happens to be Jewish, the great majority of the Foundation's Board, Advisory Board, Volunteers and Supporters are in fact Christian. Of the nearly 43,000 Foundation military clients approximately 96% are Christian.

Did you ever stop and wonder what would happen if military commanders and personnel would simply be careful to comply with the rules in the first place? If they had, the project at Dover Air Force Base would have been handled through the Chaplain's office. That would have been perfectly appropriate. In turn, no client of the Foundation would have felt it necessary to report it to the Foundation. In turn, the Foundation would have had no need to point out the violation of military rules to the commanding officer. In turn, those like you, would not have felt

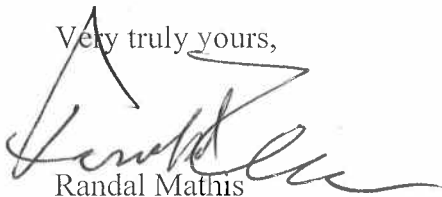
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persecuted and then apparently felt compelled to publish an article while on the “surface” espousing one thing, in reality spreading hatred and inaccuracy by innuendo. One other thing also seems clear. People like you don’t seem to realize, or perhaps more accurately don’t seem to care that espousing such inaccuracies over the Internet means that it gets repeated over and over again; hundreds and thousands of times. As a consequence of your article, there are in all likelihood many people who have read it and think that the Foundation is an Atheist and anti-Christian group. Likewise, there are probably many who think that the change made by Lt.Col. Tasker in response to Mr. Weinstein’s expression of concern (which you insinuate may be due to Mr. Weinstein being “Jewish”) somehow brought the Christmas program to an end. None of those things are true.

Those things having been said, that brings me to my role in this. Mr. Weinstein’s interests are for a free, open, lively and on occasion even heated debate. Expression of opinion is one thing; maliciously making false statements, or false statements by innuendo, is quite another.

If you want to write about Mr. Weinstein and the Foundation and their activities in a critical way, that is certainly your right. But, if you are going to do it, at least research the facts, verify things you are going to attribute to them and make an effort to be accurate and fair about it. To the extent there is any question about what that means, I would suggest that you discuss it with Christian Media Corporation’s legal department. While you are there, you might pass along my request that they immediately notify their insurance carrier of the circumstances. That will probably help insure coverage in the event this proceeds further and will give the insurance company an opportunity to talk with you and answer questions about libel, slander and both by innuendo at the same time.

Very truly yours,



Randal Mathis

RM/lf

cc: Mikey Weinstein