

# Celebrities Endorse Evangelical Book in Germany

A private Florida foundation uses European celebrities to promote a 20-year-old evangelical text in Germany, raising concerns among the nation's clerics.

The Prince of Prussia, a soccer player, a women's magazine editor and the British pop singer Cliff Richard began endorsing *Power for Living* in print, on billboards, television and radio last December. Tens of thousands of people have requested the 134-page book since then, according to reports in German and American media.

"A strong faith helps in life, and surely in golf," says Bernhard Langer, a well-known German professional golfer, in one of the ads. Langer's managers said he was not paid for endorsing the evangelical Christian text that opposes smoking, homosexuality and abortion, according to *Spiegel*, a German weekly newsmagazine.

The West Palm Beach, Fla., Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation sponsored the controversial ad campaign, which was quickly banned from German radio and television, the *New York Times* reported. Unlike the United States, where the DeMoss advertisements have been widely broadcasted, Germany prohibits broadcast advertising for religious, political or ideological causes.

With assets totaling \$563 million last year, the DeMoss foundation is reported to have spent nearly \$5 million on its evangelical drive in Germany.

"It's a little bit humble," Ralph Push, a Baptist pastor in Hannover, Germany, told EthicsDaily.com. He said little is known about the origin of the campaign, yet people are vigorously responding to the ads.

Push said a member of his church received a copy of *Power for Living* as a gift

from her non-Christian neighbor who ordered it because of the advertising campaign. “The ads make it clear that they don’t want money from people but they are only interested in handing out the book,” he added.

Some 50,000 people requested *Power for Living* during the first two weeks of the promotion, Thomas Gandow, a Lutheran pastor at the Church of Berlin and Brandenburg, told the.

“Even the athletes who advertise for the campaign do not know any details on the background of the DeMoss Foundation,” Reinhard Hempelmann, director of the Protestant Center for Religious and Ideological Issues in Berlin, told the *Times*. “Those who want to spread the Gospel among people and advertise for the Christian faith in public should have the courage to let themselves be seen.”

The book’s Web site gives few clues about who is behind the promotions. The foundation is described as a “philanthropic organization that has no affiliation with sects.”

The purpose of the multimedia campaign is to make people familiar with the “story of the Bible,” according to [www.kraftzumleben.de](http://www.kraftzumleben.de). Site visitors are encouraged to order the book free of charge and fill out a special card if they have further questions.

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