

Title: "Excerpts From "Everything I Would Want to Know if I Were Contributing to the InterVarsity Immanuel Approach Training Fund""

May 27, 2024

Greetings all,

As an addendum to the InterVarsity update from last week, I wanted to share several sections from the "Everything I would want to know if I were contributing to the InterVarsity Immanuel Approach training fund" document, including a new section that I just wrote.

Websites with no charges/subscription fees: When I discuss our ministry finances with people, a question that often comes up is, "Why don't you pay for your ministry work by charging a subscription fee for access to all of the fantastic material on your websites?" I realize that this is not *directly* related to the InterVarsity IA training fund, but my perception is that any issue related to overall stewardship competence and conscientiousness will affect people's intuitive discernment when they are deciding where to send their hard-earned dollars in response to the overwhelming number of requests for charitable donations that constantly pour into our inboxes.

So here is the quick summary regarding our decision to not charge for access to our websites: When someone hears about a new ministry resource of some kind, such as the Immanuel Approach, they will be much more likely to explore it and pursue it if they can quickly and easily find good, free information about the new resource. Even with no fee, just needing to fill out a registration form that requires contact information will dramatically reduce the number of people who explore and pursue. I know this is true for me -- if I am exploring some new topic or resource, and all of the websites I find as I begin my research require registration and/or subscription for all of the good stuff, I will often just drop my fledgling exploration into the new topic/resource and move on to one of the many other issues/questions/topics/tasks clamoring for my attention.

In fact, in recent conversations with a business consultant, he mentioned fascinating research results regarding this very phenomenon. As we all know, a very common strategy is for the developer of some new resource to initially offer it for free. Initially, the new video game, or the new software for counting your calories and tracking your exercise, or the new medical information website is free. But then after you have been using the new video game (or software, or website) for a while, and have come to really like it, you get the notice, "for only \$9.99/month, you can continue using our wonderful product." The fascinating finding from research studying this common start-up marketing technique is that, *consistently*, around **90% of users** promptly drop out when new product developers start charging. And these studies don't even talk about the people who will be less likely to ever even try the new product, now that it is no longer free.

Our sense is that the Lord wants us to offer a generous buffet of excellent, easy-access, free introductory material to make it as easy as possible for as many as possible to explore and pursue the Immanuel Approach. (Our hope is that once people really engage with the Immanuel Approach, and discover how profoundly effective and life-giving it is, they will eventually buy a couple of books and a few training DVDs, and maybe even contribute to the InterVarsity IA training fund. But we want to make it as easy as possible for people to get a really good, strong start.)

Income from books, DVDs, online courses: Just like not charging for our websites, income from our books and other products is not directly related to the InterVarsity IA training fund. But I'm guessing that at some subtle, intuitive level, many people's internal algebra includes thoughts along the lines of, "Yes, it's certainly reasonable that Dr. Lehman wants to be reimbursed for at least some of the time, materials, and hard costs that he puts into the InterVarsity Immanuel Approach adventure, but there are other causes that need the money more. The Lehmans must be making quite a bit of money on all of those books and DVDs and online courses – they don't really need my support."

In response to this possible internal algebra, a few concrete data points might be helpful. For example, with *Outsmarting Yourself*, I have spent more than 10,000 hours writing, editing, publishing, and managing sales. (This includes work on the first edition, second edition, and digital edition.) After subtracting costs for publishing consultation, proofreading, professional indexing, printing, shipping, and 25% commission for the team that does our fulfillment, we make \$15 for each book sold. We have sold about 6,750 books so far, which multiplied by \$15/book and divided by 10,000 hours = \$10.12/hour for the 10,000 hours invested over the past 17 years since I first started working on *Outsmarting Yourself*.

And the numbers are even worse for the *The Immanuel Approach* (big lion book) and our DVDs. Regarding the big lion book, my perception is that MANY use the free resources from the website, but far fewer buy the actual book. Regarding our DVDs, my perception is that MANY watch the free preview/trailer versions of our live ministry sessions, and find them to be excellent, inspiring intro appetizers for the Immanuel Approach, but very few ever buy any of the actual DVDs.

People are often surprised that sales of our material are so minimal, in light of the many thousands of people around the world who are using the Immanuel Approach. A big piece of the explanation is that most of those who get really excited about the Immanuel Approach, and then actually start providing training, quickly develop their own material. And we actually encourage this, because the Immanuel Approach spreads more quickly and sinks in more deeply when those who provide training make adjustments to help their IA training material be optimally synchronized to their particular cultural setting, to their specific audience, and to their own personal experience. When trainers do this, they are much more comfortable with the material they use and much more enthusiastic regarding the training they provide. The bottom line is that they provide more training, and the training they provide is more effective.

The only downside is that they increasingly promote and sell their own material, as opposed to promoting and selling our material.

No franchise fees or royalties from other IA trainers, writers: Just income from our books and other products, franchise fees and royalties are not directly related to the InterVarsity IA training fund. But I was recently talking to a colleague who commented, “I’ll bet a lot of people are thinking, ‘...The Lehmans must be raking in the dough from royalties and franchise fees – they don’t really need my support.’” In response to this possible internal algebra, a couple of additional data points might be helpful: 1. We do not receive any franchise fees from the other ministries or individuals providing Immanuel Approach training; and 2. We do not receive any royalties from the written and video material that others have prepared regarding the Immanuel Approach.

One might reasonably ask, “So why don’t you require franchise fees from anyone who charges for Immanuel Approach training, and why don’t you collect royalties for written and/or video materials that are clearly based on your work? Then you wouldn’t need to ask people for money.”

The answer is that we are trying to support and encourage these ministries and individuals who are helping to spread the Immanuel Approach. Many of these ministries and individuals are struggling to support themselves and their Immanuel Approach work. If I asked them for franchise fees and royalties, it could make the difference between being able to continue and not being able to continue. My not asking them to send me a percentage enables them to keep doing what they are doing.

Thank you again to those of you who are helping to support the InterVarsity Immanuel Approach training fund.

Blessings,

Dr. Lehman/Karl

Want to support the Lehman’s Immanuel Approach work? Click here for more information:
<https://www.immanuelapproach.com/supporting-lehmans-immanuel-approach-work/>