

In 1989 eleven year old Ian Lundman died from diabetes. Ian's mother, a Christian Scientist, who believes in the power of prayer to heal physical illness, tried to cure him by praying, as he went into a coma, rather than by having treatment with insulin initiated. Douglas Lundman, Ian's father, who was divorced from Ian's mother at the time Ian died brought a lawsuit against her, as well as against three other individuals: Ian's stepfather, a Christian Scientist Practitioner who prayed for Ian from his own home, and a Christian Science nurse, who was present in Ian's home during the time his condition deteriorated. After a seven week jury trial the jury awarded Douglas Lundman 1.5 million dollars. This was the first award ever obtained against members of the Christian Science faith in a case involving the death of a child. A state court of appeals upheld the jury's award. This past spring the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the Court of Appeals award, which left it standing as a final judgment.

Was the decision of the Minnesota State Court of Appeals morally justifiable? If so, why? If not, why not?

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