

Gary Ezzo and Anne Marie Ezzo reply to the Christian Research Institute's (CRI) April – June 1998, Journal feature, "More Than a Parenting Ministry: by Mrs. Kathleen Terner and Mr. Elliot Miller.

Introduction by Gary Ezzo

In June 1998, Christian Research Journal (CRJ) released an eleven-page article critical of Growing Families International (GFI) and those who implement our curricula. Certainly, criticism by itself is not a problem. Often, it can be constructive. In the past, criticism has helped us refine our material and evaluate what we believe and why we believe it. Occasionally, there have been sobering and wise observations and helpful reminders that have aided us in our ministry. Certainly, the CRJ article contributed in that sense.

For example, it is always good to be reminded of present and potential areas of weakness. Do we sometimes see evidence of an "elitist attitude" among GFI parents? Yes, we have seen it, although not to the extent portrayed in the Terner/Miller review. While the display of an elitist attitude among major ministries and their constituents is not uncommon, it certainly is not something Anne Marie and I or the GFI staff will ever promote or tolerate. We appreciate CRI's reminder of this.

Second, we appreciate the questions dealing with accountability. In addition to the accountability provided by our local church leadership, there are several godly men to whom we are accountable for our conduct and our theology. However, the Terner/Miller review clearly revealed a need to make this information more publicly known. We'll speak more about this later.

Third, we were again reminded that those of us in leadership must continue to actively encourage both our class leaders and class participants to maintain a humble attitude and gracious spirit in parenting. Proverbs 25:11 compares words that are fitly spoken to "apples of gold in settings of silver." We will continue to exhort our parents to allow their words to reflect the spirit of this verse, so that while intending to be helpful and encouraging to others, they are not perceived as intrusive or judgmental.

Fourth, we found that the article served as a helpful reminder of the importance of not just rightly dividing the Word of God, but rightly communicating it as well. As we do with all critical reviews, we have gone back to our material noting areas in need of improvement. When valid, constructive criticism is given, we are always open to making appropriate changes.

As we read through critical reviews, we do so knowing that we can always learn something. By God's grace we strive to be learners. Sometimes God sends friends to effect growth in our lives. Sometimes He sends critics. We thank God for both. Whether it is the need to make a point more clearly or revisit an idea, something can be gained. To that end, we trust in the grace and patience of God to assist us. We appreciate CRI's contribution to our personal growth.

* * *

Having said those things, we wish we could leave the matter here on a positive note and move forward with the ministry that God has given us. We cannot do that, however, because we believe what appeared in the CRJ article, “More Than a Parenting Ministry,” went beyond the boundaries of objective reporting and legitimate criticism.

Further one has to understand all the players. What makes “More Than a Parenting Ministry” unbelievable (beside the more than ninety completely false statements, forty misleading statements, and fifty-seven distorted conclusions about GFI,) is Mrs. Turner herself. Many of her statements and explanations follow no line of coherent theological logic particularly in light of what the Ezzos’ actually teach. That might be because Kathleen Turner, is not Bible trained in any formal sense, nor is she a professional researcher, an expert on cults, or a CRI staff person.

To accurately state her credentials, she is an attachment parenting/La Leche League proponent and mom who carried into her two articles personal parenting bias that clashes with GFI’s popular Christian worldview. The fact that Kathleen Turner and Hank Hanegraaff use or did use Dr. William Sears as a pediatrician, we are told, is only a coincidence! However, for those who understand the significance of this connection, the Turner article with its hostile tones and numerous inaccuracies now has an understandable context.

Our presentation of the facts will be forthright, and we believe they will speak for themselves. As you read through this response, keep in mind that while it is lengthy, it is not exhaustive.

* * *

Introduction

“The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him” Proverbs 18:17 (NKJV).

This proverb reminds us that, if we are to arrive at truth, we must recognize that facts have moral weight. For example, a court reporter wrote a story about Mr. Smith who ran a red light. The judge asked Mr. Smith, “Did you run the red light?” “Yes,” Mr. Smith answered. The judge asked, “Have you ever done that before?” Mr. Smith again answers, “Yes.” With just those facts being reported, the reader will naturally conclude that Mr. Smith is a law breaker guilty of running traffic lights. But what was not reported are the facts that Mr. Smith is an ambulance driver and that he was rushing an expectant mother to the hospital in that role.

When the reporter uses some relevant facts but omits others, a reader will naturally come to a completely different conclusion than what is accurate. This not only distorts the truth of a matter, but defines the author’s integrity. Facts are important—all of them. A good journalist reporting on courtroom activities would provide all pertinent information so that the reader could make a sound evaluation by giving proper moral weight to all the facts. A biased journalist has a greater interest in getting the reader to agree with his or her viewpoint. That journalist writes so as to

persuade readers to accept personal biases by carefully selecting which facts to report and which to omit. So once again is the case with Kathleen Terner.

Those familiar with the GFI ministry can count in multiples the number of half-truths and misquotes contained within the Terner/Miller article and the number of relevant facts left out. Usually when this frequency occurs in reporting, either a bias or ill motive is present. Certainly a bias was evident in this case, particularly with Kathleen Terner. As one CRI supporter observed, "The author's presupposition in support of attachment parenting and demand feeding and negativity toward PDF (Parent Directed Feeding) were ridiculously obvious."¹

Andy Walker, pastor of Country Oaks Baptist Church and School in Tehachapi, CA, agrees with that assessment.² He was interviewed by Mrs. Terner and came away with the distinct impression that their conversation was nothing more than a reporter looking for facts to fit her bias. In an unsolicited letter to GFI he wrote:

"Kathleen Terner's 'interview' with me was very brief. She called to confirm whether or not we used GKGW as an entrance requirement for our school. I confirmed that we do and proceeded to give her context. The context of that entrance requirement is to use GKGW as a practical screening tool to ensure as far as possible that we spend the bulk of our time on education and not discipline problems.

She did not seem interested in pursuing our motives, our posture or whether GKGW had divided our church (it hasn't). This is peculiar since her article's theme is cultic behavior. Why didn't she ask if these tendencies were present in our church/school? My overall impression then was that she was looking for endnotes for her finished article. My impression now is that she set out, not to gain true understanding, but to find all she could to validate her own bias. That's not journalism, let alone Christian journalism.

If she had sought understanding in our case she would have asked:

1. Do you allow people into the school who haven't taken GKGW? Yes we have and do.
2. Has GKGW divided your church or resulted in people leaving your church because they feel less spiritual than others? No it hasn't.
3. Do you promote GKGW in such a way that people's spirituality or worth as a parent is measured by their allegiance to GKGW principles? No I do not. We are gracious and non-proselytizing in our demeanor and approach to GKGW, PFP, RMI, etc.
4. Have there ever been any babies in your church that have failed-to-thrive as a result of parents schedule feeding? No, there have not.
5. Do you think Gary Ezzo believes that Jesus hanging on the cross provides a scriptural MANDATE to let your baby cry in the crib? No, and neither do I.
6. Do you think chastisement (spanking) removes the actual guilt of sin from your child? No, and neither does Gary Ezzo.
7. Do only GFI oriented parents attend your church? No, there are members and visitors from a variety of parenting philosophies.

8. Do you promote GKGW from the pulpit as the only way to parent? No, I do not. And I would be opposed to anyone who did!

My concern for this casual mention of our school and church in an article emphasizing ‘cultic’ behavior should be obvious. How do you prove cultic behavior? Mrs. Terner cited examples. Thus our church and school are cast in a ‘cultic’ light simply because Mrs. Terner didn’t bother or chose not to seek understanding in her ‘interview’ with me.” [END]

Given Mrs. Terner’s history, we believe that both the assessment of the CRI supporter and Pastor Walker are correct. In the past, Mrs. Terner has functioned, at least in part, as an activist for the La Leche League/ attachment parenting philosophy of childrearing. (To say there are slight extremist tendencies with some members of this persuasion would be an understatement.)³ Last year (1997) Mrs. Terner spearheaded an extensive writing campaign against the Ezzos utilizing many voices who share her bias.⁴

Thankfully, however, the negative impact of Mrs. Terner’s article was greatly limited because the Ezzos’ ministry is not based on their word or their curriculum, but based on the many witnesses and testimonies of changed lives and people who know the Ezzos’ hearts, their material, and what they believe.

We divided the remainder of this response into three broad categories:

1. Examining a sampling of misquoted sources.
2. Examining some of the criteria and examples CRI used to draw their conclusions.
3. Examining the veracity of various statements and assertions.

(Editor’s Notes: You will notice throughout this response that some words or statements are underlined. We did this to draw the reader’s attention to the specific misrepresentation we are addressing. Also, throughout this review, we have used CRI, Christian Research Institute, and CRJ, Christian Research Journal, interchangeably.)

I. EXAMINING A SAMPLING OF MISQUOTED SOURCES

We feel the most appropriate place to begin this section is with the statement of CRI President, Mr. Hank Hanegraaff. On the “Bible Answer Man” broadcast of July 28, 1998, he promised the following to a caller named Steve regarding what CRI would do if anything in the GFI article was not correct. Here are his words:

“Let me make a promise to you [Caller Steve]. If there is anything in this article that is taken out of context to make a point that is not valid, I want to know about it. I did not write this article, but I still want to know about it. I had, when this article came out, I had the researchers on this check and double check their sources. I had other researchers verify the sources so that the type of claim you just made would not be possible. Now, if something has slipped through in some way that the researchers who have given their lives to this kind of detail did not detect and something slipped through and you let me know, we will definitely make a revision, a correction. If it is a substantial point, it will be made in a very substantial way, because we do first-rate, primary

research. In other words, it's not about secondary sources or anecdotes; it is about primary research. And the point is, if there is something here that is not correct, then you let me know what it is specifically, and we will deal with it."

While we appreciate Mr. Hanegraaff's words, they need to be directed toward the following examples. Here are some quotes attributed to people (primary sources) who, according to their testimonies, never heard from Mrs. Turner, Mr. Miller, or anyone at CRI, and who never made the statements presented as quotes. This in addition to the fact that they do not agree with the statements attributed to them.

Example One: CRJ (Pg. 45, endnote 60) "While Dunning does not work for GFI, in the past he has admitted his inability to hold Ezzo accountable." Source cited: 11 December 1997 e-mail from Phil Johnson

Primary Source not contacted by CRI: Mr. Jim Dunning

The above statement is used to support "the Ezzo's apparent lack of any true accountability" (CRJ Pg. 19). Mrs. Turner based this statement on an e-mail she received from Phil Johnson and not from any direct conversation with Jim Dunning. Jim Dunning supposedly told Phil Johnson, who told Kathleen Turner, who reported it as fact in her article. We personally would not describe that routing as primary research.

Mr. Dunning informed GFI that he was not contacted by anyone on the CRI staff to verify the accuracy of Phil Johnson's memory or to get a quote. We do not know what Mr. Johnson's e-mail of December 1997 said, but Mr. Dunning was quite clear about one thing—it did not accurately represent his view on the matter. According to Mr. Dunning, he remembers a comment he made back in 1992 when he was assigned to be Gary Ezzo's lay elder at Grace Community Church. His comment was not a negative one, nor was it meant to portray Gary as a reckless cavalier who acted independently of his spiritual authority. Rather, according to Dunning, he did state that Gary's ministry involvement at Grace and GFI was so big that he personally could not hold Gary accountable because he wasn't involved enough in Gary's ministry. He was not stating that Gary was unwilling to be accountable or had acted in an unaccountable way.⁵

Let us assure the reader of these things: The Ezzos remain in submission to a collection of wise and godly associates both here and around the country. They listen carefully to their counsel and will continue to do so. The Ezzos have spiritual and theological accountability and pastoral oversight. Gary and Anne Marie do have ministry direction accountability and personal action accountability. No major ministry decision is made without the approval of their regional directors. They have a complete medical advisory board made up of pediatricians, family practitioners, obstetricians, psychiatrists, board certified lactation consultants, and general practitioners.⁶ In spite of their busy travel schedule, they meet regularly with their home fellowship care and accountability group.⁷

Example Two: CRJ (Pg. 11) "Debra and Pat Baker were involuntarily 'released from membership' and even barred from unofficial church functions after voicing concerns about PFP [Preparation

for Parenting] at Covenant Fellowship of Philadelphia.” Source cited: 21 September 1993 letter to Pat and Debra Baker and 3 December 1993 letter to Pat Baker from Covenant Fellowship of Philadelphia.

Primary Source not contacted by CRI: Covenant Fellowship of Philadelphia (CFOP)

In support of this assertion, Mrs. Turner and Mr. Miller cited two letters from Covenant Fellowship of Philadelphia (CFOP) dated September 21, 1993 and December 3, 1993. We would assume that, since they endnoted the letters as substantiation for the Bakers’ claim, they had them in their possession and read them.

GFI has the letters in their possession. When one reads the correspondence between CFOP leadership and the Bakers, a much different picture emerges from what Turner and Miller reported. The following is an excerpt from that 1993 letter written by two of their former pastors. It starts by reviewing a previous May meeting with the Bakers.

“. . . I followed our meeting with a letter dated May 26th [1993] outlining the issues and requesting that you clarify your relationship to this church. . . One month later, I sent a follow up letter since we had received no word from you. In this letter I again appealed that you respond as soon as possible. Six weeks passed and still no answer. Becoming deeply concerned by your silence, I sent another letter requesting a response and suggested three dates for a possible meeting to discuss these issues. . . Unfortunately, your lack of response to our many appeals has changed our understanding of this situation. The only logical conclusion to your silence seems to be that you do not intend to resolve these issues or continue membership here at Covenant Fellowship. . . it appears as though God is now calling you elsewhere. Therefore, we have released you from membership at Covenant Fellowship. . .”

Turner and Miller stated that the Bakers were “involuntarily released from membership after voicing concerns about PFP,” but according to what we just read, CFOP was pursuing the Bakers for several months. After repeated attempts and with no response, CFOP did what many churches do in such cases, drop non-attendees from their membership roles.

Furthermore, according to the Pastor of Family Ministries, Marty Machowski, no one on CFOP’s staff was contacted by CRI to verify if the Bakers’ claim was accurate.⁸ This was significant to the church leadership because earlier this year a secular publication, the Wall Street Journal, contacted the church to ask about the same situation. The reporter listened to the other side of the story, and in the end did not include it in her article.⁹ CFOP was surprised that a Christian organization did not abide by the same ethical standard of journalism.

Example Three: CRJ (Pg. 44, footnote 7 in regard to the Grace Church statement about GFI) “In response one, the Ezzos promised a ‘thorough examination’ of the issues by their own elders at Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship . . . None of the elders, however, even contacted Johnson, the author of the Grace Statement, to discuss Grace’s concern. Source Cited: Phil Johnson’s response number two to the Grace Statement of November 1997.

Primary Source not cited by CRI: The Elders at Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship.

Like the example of the reporter and the ambulance driver, Mrs. Turner's and Mr. Miller's statement leaves out some very important facts. They are correct in stating that the Elders of Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship (LHEF) did not contact Phil Johnson directly. There was a good reason. According to Phil Johnson and the statement itself, Grace's October statement came from the elders of GCC. While Phil Johnson crafted the wording of the Grace Statement, he was not on the Grace Church Elder board. He was in the past but stepped down for some reason. He did not return to the board until January 1998. Neither Phil Johnson nor any GCC elder attempted to make contact with LHEF's elders before they posted their statement about GFI. They didn't even contact Gary. Further, under subsequent review, the Grace Statement was revised and replaced by a new Grace Church Statement released by the Grace Church elders on March 21, 1998, the first statement having been rendered seriously inadequate on facts.

The elders at LHEF did review the Grace Statement and felt there were problems with the statement's historical content, theological concerns, and the manner in which the matter was handled. (Obviously, the Grace Church Elders agreed.) Nonetheless, LHEF's elders were deeply concerned about bringing understanding and reconciliation where needed. As a result, on November 20, 1997, the elders at LHEF sent response letters to every member of Grace's elder board.

In addition, one elder at LHEF, Jim Dunning, met personally with John MacArthur right after the Grace Statement was released. In the letter and personal meeting, LHEF elders invited Grace's elders to meet, pray, and discuss the issues of their statement. The elders at Grace chose not to participate in those meetings.

Shortly thereafter, a pastor in the immediate area respected by Grace, GFI, and LHEF offered to mediate a meeting between the parties. Again, LHEF's elders agreed but Grace's elders did not. It was not until GFI sought the third party assistance of Mr. Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries that Grace Church began to reconsider a meeting and revisit their October statement. Subsequently, the statement was changed, but only after Ken Sande caught and confronted Phil Johnson perjuring his story.¹⁰ (Perjury is Ken Sande's word, not GFI's.)

Example Four: CRJ (Pgs. 43-44) "Katharine West, a registered nurse and lactation consultant who has been working with GFI followers for 10 years, acknowledged that although many of the children turn out well, depression is not unusual. She said of a baby on the Ezzos' program who was not gaining weight well: 'I'll lay dollars to donuts this baby is clinically depressed and somewhat withdrawn (has already learned that the world does not come when needed, so no longer cries when there are needs), yes? I've seen it too many times.'" Source Cited: 1 November 1997 public post to LactNet (internet discussion group for lactation consultants).

Primary Source not contacted by CRI: Miss Katharine West

The Turner indictment continues. According to Miss West, CRI never contacted her to get a quote, to verify that what was going to be printed was accurate, or to receive her permission to use any

of her statements. Furthermore, she stated that what Turner was attempting to quote was horribly misleading on two accounts. First, it was completely taken out of its original context, and second, it was taken from a LactNet forum discussion that was ten years old, (1988), but presented as if it was recent. Katharine did comment on a case that was ten years old (1988). West confirmed that the situation had to do with a baby who had an extended hospital stay and came home with a colostomy. The only connection to the Ezzos' material (Preparation for Parenting) was that the mother was following a routine with the baby similar to the one at the hospital. According to Miss West, she was not saying that Preparation for Parenting caused this baby to be depressed or causes babies to be depressed. She disagrees with Mrs. Turner's inferences and conclusion.¹¹

Example Five: CRJ (Pg. 12) "Gary Ezzo contacted the directors of the Grace to You ministries in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand and asked them to carry his tapes and books along with those of John MacArthur." Source Cited: None

Primary Source not contacted by CRI: The directors of Grace to You New Zealand, Australia, and Canada

According to Clarrie Pearson of New Zealand, Andrew Zerks of Australia (he recently resigned), and David Cotnoir of Canada, directors of the Grace to You ministries in their respective countries, the Turner/Miller statement is inaccurate. They informed us that no one from CRI contacted them. According to Clarrie Pearson of New Zealand, they (the Pearsons) pursued the Ezzos to let them carry the material. In Australia, the Zerks wanted to carry the material because they themselves were blessed by it. In Canada, the Ezzos' ministry was already established with its own representatives when Grace to You Canada was formed.¹²

Summary

Based on the examples above, there is a significant disparity between Mr. Hanegraaff's statement that the researchers for this article did primary research, and that sources were checked and double checked with what actually happened. At least five times primary sources never heard from Turner or Miller, were wrongly quoted, or what was written does not accurately reflect what the sources told GFI they believe. It does appear that the reporting was more than bias, it partially fabricated.

II. EXAMINING SOME OF THE CRITERIA AND EXAMPLES CRI USED TO MAKE THEIR CONCLUSIONS

Mrs. Turner and Mr. Miller stated that GFI possessed five characteristics of a cult. It is not that CRI is wrong to be concerned about such things, but when reporting their concerns, their facts must be realistically aligned with actual vulnerabilities and be supported by substantial evidence, not hearsay and anecdotal information. After reading the article, we believe that the examples of cultic characteristics used to describe GFI were so broad that their description could be made to fit any major ministry across the country that believes in biblical authority, discipleship, and the Word of God.

Terner and Miller stated that GFI's behavior parallels the characteristics of cults in significant ways, including the following:

1. Scripture twisting and de facto assertion of extra-biblical revelation
2. Authoritarianism
3. Exclusivism
4. Isolationism
5. Physical and emotional endangerment

Upon the review of these charges, it seems evident that Mrs. Terner and Mr. Miller came to their conclusion, not because they launched an objective investigation and the facts compelled it, but because they began with a predetermined bias and sought out examples to support their conclusion.

The need to prove text predetermined conclusions often leads to the employment of two deceptive tactics in reporting: duplicity and demagoguery. Do you remember the reporter and the ambulance driver? "Duplicity" can be used to cause one to believe something other than the truth of a situation. This is usually done by withholding pertinent information in order to lead the reader or listener to a conclusion different than what is accurate, or to provide partial quotes and extrapolate them as representative of the whole.

"Demagoguery" is an impassioned appeal to prejudice. It is the practice of taking statements of opponents and ascribing new meaning contrary to what is actually intended. In the Terner/Miller article, examples include removing phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from their context and exhibiting them as appalling examples of thought. (cf. Matthew 27:46, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" CRJ pg. 15; "The redemptive role of biblical chastisement," CRJ pg. 18; "Children are not to be told the details of sexual intercourse, even the night before the wedding," CRJ pg. 44).

Consider the following examples Terner and Miller's steady employment of duplicity and demagoguery:

1. Scripture twisting and de facto assertion of extrabiblical revelation.

CRJ (pg. 15) Terner and Miller stated that the Ezzos "often use Scripture without regard to context to justify unbiblical or extrabiblical doctrines."

Before we respond to specific examples in the article, we want to affirm the following:

- GFI's view of Scripture is solidly evangelical.¹³
- GFI encourages pastors to examine our materials against the Word of God.
- The Ezzos would never intentionally misstate doctrine to make a point or for any reason.

We believe on matters of essential biblical teaching that it is the church's responsibility to guard sound doctrine (2 Tim. 2:2; 3:16-17; 4:3, 4). In our opinion, neither GFI nor CRI should be telling

the church what is and is not sound doctrine. For that reason, in matters of doctrine and faith the leadership of GFI defers to the pastors and elders in the many local churches using GFI curriculum.

Example One: "If the Father did it. . ."

CRJ (Pg. 15) Terner and Miller relied on a statement from Focus on the Family distributed prior to April, 1998 about GFI in which, "They [Focus on the Family] said the Ezzos have 'repeatedly cited Matthew 27:46—. . . 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' in support of their teaching that mothers should refuse to attend crying infants who have already been fed, changed and had their basic needs met. 'Praise God,' writes Gary Ezzo on page 122 of *Preparation for Parenting*, 'that the Father did not intervene when His son cried out on the cross.' We see no way to make such an application of this verse without completely disregarding its original context and purpose."

Response: First, when Focus on the Family was informed they were misquoting the Ezzos on this point, they dropped it from their correspondence as demonstrated by their most recent public statements.¹⁴

Second, the Ezzos do not for one minute believe or teach that Jesus hung on a cross to teach that mothers should refuse to attend crying infants. The context in which the Ezzos used Matt. 27:46 was dealing with the false notion popularized by attachment parenting proponents that God always responds to us "on demand." Replying to that false assertion, the Ezzos were pointing out that our Heavenly Father's nonintervention in the suffering of His son is the ultimate example that speaks against the fraudulent notion that love always requires immediate intervention. Non-action does not always equate to a lack of love. It wasn't true at Calvary nor is it true in parenting.

The Ezzos were not providing an exegesis of the text. They were not saying, "This is what Matthew 27:46 means." What they did was to extrapolate a legitimate secondary application of the text (God's non-intervention at Calvary) to demonstrate a broader reality that God is not a celestial genie that responds on-demand to every cry cue. In addition, the *Preparation for Parenting* workbook clearly states: "This example is not meant to minimize the significance of Christ's crucifixion nor to justify letting a baby cry under any circumstances, but it is used to demonstrate that God does not always respond to our cry-cues immediately and without thought"¹⁵ as some attachment parenting mothers insist.

Example Two: "Sobermindedness and Maternal Instinct?"

CRJ (Pg. 15) "Not only does GFI take Scripture out of context in an effort to lend biblical support to its own views, but also the views themselves are often controversial and potentially dangerous. For example, they teach that maternal instinct is an unbiblical concept and therefore imply mothers should ignore any intuitive alarms they may hear when following the GFI program."

Response: The fact is that nowhere in their teaching do the Ezzos suggest that mothers should ignore any "intuitive alarms." The reason? The Ezzos do not consider intuition and instinct to be the same thing, no more than they would equate "instinct" and "impression of the Holy Spirit"

as sources for information and decision making as stated by Terner and Miller.¹⁶ Instinct (both as a term and as a concept) is frequently associated with Darwin's theory of evolution. According to evolutionary theory, man is essentially an animal, albeit a higher order of animal. For clarity, the Ezzos try to stay away from that term.

The difference between "intuition" and "instinct" may appear to be nothing more than wrangling over words, and indeed at times such arguments are nothing more than mere semantics. But not in this case. The Ezzos believe that discussions over "instinct" indicate there are differences in parenting methods which exist at the more important philosophical level—man's origin. The Ezzos' teachings arise from and are consistent with their biblical world and life view. Thus, they believe that wherever and to whatever extent physical drives, reflexes, and impulses exist, they must be kept within the boundaries established by God's creative will and work revealed in the Bible. We believe the Bible directs parents to train and instruct their children, and not merely respond so as to gratify a child's impulse (Deut. 6:4-9; Eph. 6:4).

The Bible is silent when it comes to animal instinct, but it is not silent when it comes to the difference between man and animals. The animals, like the plants, were called into existence by the Word of God (Genesis 1:24-25); man came into existence by the Breath of God (Genesis 2:7). He was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26).

Here are some points that the Ezzos make and that Mrs. Terner and Mr. Miller are criticizing: "What crying does for the person hearing it is to arouse emotions that in turn stimulate the thought process to allow for assessment. . . Stopping to think in a moment of crisis will help any parent gain self-control, which then leads to proper assessment and right behavior. . . How should you respond when your baby cries? Unless you sense your baby is in danger, take a moment to listen and assess his crying. After a brief assessment, take the appropriate action."¹⁷

Example Three: Theological Confusion

A. CRJ (Pg. 16) "Although the Ezzos affirm the true gospel, their central emphasis on the redemptive role of 'biblical chastisement' (a particular method of spanking) has led them into murky theological waters."

Response: To our knowledge, this is the first time that this aspect of the Ezzos' teaching has been interpreted with such a unique twist. Mrs. Terner's statement is a bit murky. The Ezzos do not believe or teach that spanking leads to a child's salvation. That would be heresy in the highest degree. It would appear as if Terner and Miller linked one's guilty position before God in an unredeemed state with a child's guilty conscience when disobeying a parent. But theirs is an inaccurate conclusion. One is a state of guilt that has to do with a child's relationship with God. The other is a condition of guilt which has to do with a child's relationship to his parents. These are two separate, though related, human realities and two related but distinct biblical concepts.

The Ezzos hold a mainline evangelical view of the true gospel. At the very beginning of *Growing Kids God's Way*, they affirm the following about salvation: "Many children raised in Christian communities have a clear knowledge of God but may not know Him personally. They need to be saved. Jesus Christ said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except

through me' (John 14:6)."¹⁸ They go on to say, "The ultimate issue in parenting is the salvation of the child. And it is true that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9)."¹⁹

B. CRJ (Pg. 16) "In cases where children deliberately disobey the standard, discipline must consistently follow, and the Ezzos dogmatically affirm that spanking is the appropriate form of discipline."

Response: With no reference given in the article, it is difficult to understand the basis of Mrs. Turner's/Mr. Miller's assertion. But in order for them to come to this conclusion, they had to ignore major portions of the GKGW chapters on discipline.

Here are a couple quotes from the GKGW discipline section that stand in direct opposition to the Turner/ Miller conclusion:

"Since we know offenses range from infrequent and minor infractions to open defiance, correction should reflect the degree of the offense. Generally speaking, a child's foolishness falls into one of three levels:

1. minor infractions that call for verbal correction,
2. infractions that need some action and which call for more than a verbal reprimand, and
3. offenses that require the full weight of the law."²⁰

In GKGW, when the "full weight of the law" does not come by natural consequences, ". . .then it needs to be created artificially by structured consequences. Structured consequences come by way of isolation, loss of privileges, or logical consequences, restitution or chastisement."²¹ In addition, the discipline flow chart, one of the most significant parts of the program, shows chastisement as simply one "form" of correction, not the "way" of correction. While biblical chastisement is a legitimate form of correction, by no means do the Ezzos teach it "dogmatically" as the only method. For more on this subject, the reader is directed to the "Elements of Discipline" chapter in GKGW.

C. CRJ (Pg. 18) "The Ezzo's unbalanced emphasis on the parents' role seems to flow out of their theology of the will. . . the Grace Statement links their view with Pelagianism."

Response: Turner and Miller's comments regarding the "will" and the "flesh" and "Pelagianism" are inaccurate and demonstrate confusion over the very heresy to which they refer. Quoting the Grace Statement does not booster their credibility on this issue.

The statement referred to regarding the Ezzos' "theology of the will" comes from a part of the GKGW audio series in which Gary Ezzo discussed what was wrong with the parenting cliché, "break the child's will, not his spirit." He was not discussing the doctrine of depravity he was discussing a cliché. (For exact wording on this topic, please see GKGW 4th edition, pgs. 214-215; 5th edition page 195.)

The point that Mr. Ezzo made was that it is not a child's ability to choose (will) that gets him in trouble, but his wrong choices. The Ezzos are not talking about the direction of the will (the choices children make that are right or wrong), but the capacity to make decisions. The "will" in that regard is morally neutral. It is the Ezzos' goal to help parents train their children to make right behavior decisions and not to authoritatively break the child's power of decision making.

Regarding the 5th century heresy of Pelagianism: Pelagius asserted that man is born without the stain or influence of original sin. From that starting premise, he concluded that the immaterial aspects of man's being, including the human will, are void of any corrupting agent (original sin). As such, Pelagius believed the human will to be morally neutral. Clearly he meant that the will is not influenced by sin. We believe he was wrong in that assessment. The will is no more exempt from the influence of sin than the mind and the emotions. Again, the direction of the will and capacity of the will are related but not the same thing. The Ezzos clearly teach the doctrine of the depravity of man and original sin.

Simply put, Pelagianism cannot be ascribed to someone who holds to the doctrine of original sin because the acceptance of original sin and the belief that the will is morally neutral are antithetical concepts in Pelagianism.

D. CRJ (Pg. 18) "Essentially the Ezzos are suggesting that if parents faithfully 'grow their kids God's way,' God will be obligated to save their children, for the parent can train the child to a point where he or she will be receptive to the gospel. This is a serious confusion of grace and works (Roman 4:4-5; 11:6; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5)."

Response: This is yet another preposterous statement. Clearly the Ezzos teach and believe that there is nothing man can do to obligate God. God cannot be manipulated and any effort in that regard is wicked. The suggestion that right parenting obligates God to save children is a perversion of the gospel and runs completely contrary to what the Ezzos teach.²²

Furthermore, using the title "God's Way" according to Turner and Miller (CRJ pg. 18) gives the material the status of divine revelation. CRI's decision to isolate the Ezzos in order to criticize them on this point is at least unfair and perhaps even suggests seditiousness. Many people before and since have used that phrase or something like that phrase in the title of their books. For example:

- *Choices: Finding God's Way in Dating, Sex, Singleness, and Marriage* by Paula Rinehart
- *Free from Bondage God's Way*, by Kay Arthur
- *Raising Kids God's Way: A Biblical Guide for Christian Parents*, by Kathi Hudson
- *Your Family, God's Way: Developing and Sustaining Relationships in the Home*, by Wayne Mack
- *Preparing for Marriage God's Way*, by Wayne and Nathan Mack
- *God's Way to Health, Wealth, and Wisdom*, by Adrian Rogers
- *The Moment to Shout: God's Way to Face Walls*, by Luis Palau

What we mean by "God's Way" and we suspect what these other authors mean is that our book reflects a commitment to the authority of Scripture.²³ Thus, "God's Way" is not meant to

communicate anything other than what the Westminster Confession describes as that which is either directly taught in Scripture or by good and necessary consequence can be deduced from Scripture.

2. Authoritarianism

Example One: CRJ (Pg. 12) “Meanwhile, parents can’t baptize their infants at Christ Episcopal Church in Plano, Texas unless they commit to attending the GFI program *Growing Kids God’s Way* (GKGW) as part of their baptismal covenant.”

Response: We support a church’s right to set up prerequisites. Grace Community Church requires engaged couples wishing to be married in the church to attend a class with the main text entitled, *Preparing for Marriage God’s Way*.²⁴ Again, at Grace Community where Gary Ezzo pastored for many years, a parent cannot have a child dedicated at the church unless he or she goes through a mandatory dedication class or get married without going through a premarital class. To apply the charge of “authoritarianism” to Grace Community Church because they set those requirements is wholly without merit. The same would be true for churches who use our curriculum in a similar fashion.

Example Two: CRJ (Pg. 19) “The Ezzos set up specific class rules that limit debate. The Ezzos’ tape ‘Starting a Parenting Ministry’ discusses ‘four basic rules’ for a GFI class. Gary Ezzo explains one: ‘We tell them that there are no debates in the class. . . We will not debate an issue in the class . . . We do not accept any debates in the class.’”

Response: Here Turner and Miller provided a partial quote and by doing so implied something other than what the Ezzos teach. Yes, the Ezzos suggest that class leaders avoid the entanglements of debates, but they also clearly provide the qualifying context. Clearly they are not insinuating that parents be discouraged from asking questions, but that debating questions or points of view with other students or leaders robs class members of precious time. If a person wants to drag out a point and debate it, the Ezzos are asking them to be courteous enough to do it after the class time or during the week when there are no time restraints. The Ezzos’ suggestion is moral, not sinister or suppressive as the article implies.

Example Three: CRJ (Pg. 19) Turner and Miller criticize the Ezzos because they instruct parents “. . . not to initiate a conversation about the parenting principles they are learning in the class.”

Response: Ask any GFI staff or leader around the world why the Ezzos suggest that and you will be told, in contrast to the cultic portrait painted by Turner and Miller, that the Ezzos are actually encouraging parents to walk humbly before God. Here again is an example of how a partial quote redirects the readers from what the Ezzos actually say to the conclusion of the reviewers. According to the same “Starting a Parenting Ministry” tape, the Ezzos tell parents to apply the principles first at home. Then, if someone asks why their children are so well behaved, parents are then encouraged to freely share what they are learning. At the same time, the Ezzos caution parents to avoid the prideful thinking and attitude that can come as a result of being in a parenting class and that can lead to telling other parents how to raise their children when they

have not asked for help. They also go on to give reasonable exceptions in order to help parents keep this exhortation in its proper context.²⁵

The GKGW Leader's Guide expresses the same reason behind this instruction: "Remind parents not to initiate the sharing of principles they are learning with those outside the class. Parents should make the application of the principles in their own life and let their families be the advertisement. Then when questions arise, feel free to share what you have learned. If the students apply the principles, eventually people will ask them why they are different and then they can give God the glory!"²⁶

Example Four: "According to Turner and Miller, the Ezzos leave "questions unanswered" or "attack the Questioner" CRJ (Pg. 19). They write: "Ezzo has written to people who question him calling them 'primitivistic,' 'marsupial,' 'prideful,' 'disgruntled,' and 'theologically naive,' among other adjectives. After reading PFP thoroughly, Joel and Kathryn Kuhlmann wrote the Ezzos with questions quoting liberally from PFP and the Bible. Their letter was returned with Gary Ezzo's handwritten margin comments . . ."

Response: It is difficult to respond specifically to these allegations, because Turner and Miller did not provide any context, let alone a single complete sentence in regard to Mr. Ezzo's use of these terms to support their claim. The Ezzos have all the letters on file and are more than willing to sit down with Mr. Hanegraaff and a neutral third party to review the context in which these words appear. Do the Ezzos really do that, or do they simply expose the background of those who make some outrageous claims?

We do take issue with the Kuhlmann example. Turner and Miller used the Kuhlmanns as a couple humbly seeking answers to their legitimate questions and "quoting liberally from PFP and the Bible." Their letter, according to Turner and Miller's comment, "was returned with Gary Ezzo's handwritten margin comments . . ." (CRJ Pg. 19)

Was this an accurate representation of the Kuhlmanns? Consider these facts. First, much of what the Kuhlmanns wrote did not come directly from PFP, but rather it came indirectly from a compilation of misquotes and false statements circulating among La Leche League/attachment parenting internet bulletin boards. As such, Mr. and Mrs. Kuhlmann simply passed on someone else's misquotes that circulate frequently among these groups.

Second, even though the Kuhlmanns had no children at the time (although they were considering adoption), Pastor Richard Encinias, one of our GFI state directors, gave the Kuhlmanns several hours of his time answering their questions.

Given that so much time was already spent answering questions, we found it unusual for a couple to be so insistent that Gary Ezzo respond personally to their letter. Our interests in this couple were further sparked by the inadvertent receipt of an e-mail to Mrs. Kuhlmann from Mrs. Kathy Nesper of Apple Tree Family Ministries (Oct 4, 1996) and a note hand written from Kathy Kuhlmann to a staff member at her church named "Chip." The following interchange puts the entire Kuhlmann matter into perspective. In her e-mail, Mrs. Nesper wrote:

Dear Joel and Kathy [Kuhlmann]

“I am one of those with whom Lisa Marasco has shared your letter to Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo. I’m Kathy Nesper, president of Apple Tree Family Ministries. . . ATFM teaches a more attachment-type parenting style as biblical . . . Now you said, I think, that you’d managed to turn the version GFI returned to you, with their hand-markings on it, into a PDF file as well and you’d forward it once we had managed to expand the unmarked-up version. So may I ask you PLEASE to send us the marked-up version before we all go into fits of curiosity or something. If you send it to me, I’ll forward it to others. . . I would particularly like to share it with Chuck Smith’s daughter at Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa. . .”

In response to this e-mail, Kathy Kuhlmann out of fear that this group would be discovered, wrote the following:

“Chip— — This is the e-mail note we left you last week. As I mentioned, we received a request from the writer (Kathy Nesper) that her name and ministry not be shared and the same with any mention of Chuck Smith’s daughter. This is the only document and piece of information I respectfully ask you not to share. . . we do not want Gary Ezzo to have their names and know of their involvement. Thanks Kathy.”

Scripture teaches that there are times to answer questions and there are times when answering is not the right thing to do. GFI receives hundreds of questions every week. Though they wish they could, the Ezzos cannot possibly personally respond to all of these questions. Sometimes GFI staff sense that the questioner’s motives are not honorable. But, because man cannot see the heart as God does, the Ezzos and/or GFI personnel typically offer help anyway. In rare occasions, such as this one, impure motives surface. In those situations, an honest answer does not cause the tension to go away. When the questioner is not genuinely seeking truth, we have found that tensions increase the more effort we expend in attempting to answer their questions.

Example Six: CRJ (Pg. 19) “They [the Ezzos] have claimed to have a ‘network’ of ‘hundreds of pediatricians’ who provide them with ‘expert medical advice,’ but they have refused to provide the list when asked.”

Response: First, we do not provide names and address of medical professionals who support the program for the same reason that we will not provide this type of information about anybody in our customer database. We have an agreement with them to protect their privacy. In the past, when the information of a few of these individuals was discovered by a group of attachment parenting/La Leche League mothers, these doctors were harassed. One of our medical advisory board members, a Professor of Pediatrics on the East Coast, received over fifty insulting e-mails and faxes from attachment parenting/La Leche League proponents in just two days. Included in these messages were compilations of false reports, misrepresentations, and fallacious assertions about the Ezzos. Some of the material used in these messages were from Kathleen Turner’s previous writing against the Ezzos. Unfortunately, this was not an isolated incident.

Second, with their permission, we have included the names of our medical advisory board in the latest editions of *Preparation for Parenting* and *On Becoming Babywise* for the public record, but we will maintain our agreement with them to protect their privacy.

3. Exclusivism

Example One: CRJ (Pg. 27) “Parents are told that children raised on GFI’s system will turn out superior to those who are not.”

Response: While that statement is never made in the Ezzos’ curriculum, many parents do prefer their teaching over other parenting philosophies such as Attachment Parenting or Reality Discipline for social, moral, emotional, and academic results. Parents who follow the attachment parenting philosophy could possibly feel just as strongly. They believe their method is superior and that is why they adhere to it. We do not believe this is either exclusive or cultic, rather it is a matter of choice.

Example Two: “The GFI ‘Community’” CRJ (Pg. 27) “Countless parents have described feeling like outsiders in their own churches, being rejected by people who used to be their friends and being made to feel less spiritual, all because they were not parents of the GFI ‘community.’”

Response: It is, of course, practically impossible for Terner and Miller to interview “countless” parents. While the Ezzos do not teach parents to avoid relationships with non-GFI parents, it is not alarming or unusual that like-minded people seek out one another for fellowship. Home schooling families tend to flock together as do seminary couples in a church. In and of itself, that is not a problem. If a family acts in an exclusive manner, it is NOT on direct suggestion from the Ezzos or GKGW material.

4. Isolationism

Example One: CRJ (Pg. 27) “One of Grace’s key concerns pertains to the result of such thinking: ‘GFI parents tend to insulate their children from other children — including Christian children — who are not part of the GFI ‘community.’”

Response: Parents who have low standards or low expectations for their children’s conduct, or who are inconsistent in their training, have nothing to lose by letting their children play with well-behaved children. Unfortunately, the opposite is not true. Parents have a moral obligation to control the flow of negative influence and peer pressure on their children.

GFI parents are no different. Most parents try to insulate their children from other children whose behavior is continuously disruptive, rude, out of control, and disobedient to their parents. In short, these parents tend to act on the wisdom of I Cor. 15:33, “Bad company corrupts good morals.” This is not a matter of whether or not the parents implement the GFI materials or have gone through a GFI class. The issue is whether or not certain children are a negative influence.

Example Two: “A closed system” CRJ (Pg. 27) “Parents are also shielded from the advice of other parenting experts.”

Response: Shielded? We cannot find postmillennial writing at the Calvary Chapel bookstores we’ve been in. We suppose that there are no Benny Hinn books on the CRI shelves. We know there are no Bill Hybels or Larry Crabb writings in Grace Community Church’s Book Shack. And we could guarantee that there are no *Babywise* books in the La Leche League catalog. Would Terner and Miller accuse those ministries of “shielding” for doing the same thing? We think not.

How could GFI shield parents from other parenting experts even if we wanted to? It should be clear to all that would be impossible. It is true that we provide resources that are consistent with our biblical philosophy of child rearing. Why would we want to offer resources which support practices that we believe are ineffective and even subbiblical? In addition, our list of recommended reading is not something we consider exhaustive.

In direct contrast to the Terner/Miller assertion, the Ezzos as authors actually encourage parents to check out all their parenting options and then decide for themselves what is best for their family. The Ezzos state right up front in their writings:

“ . . . parents guided by the Holy Spirit have the ultimate responsibility and duty to research the parenting philosophies available today. Because every philosophy of parenting has a corresponding pathology, we invite new and expectant parents to consider, evaluate, and decide for themselves which philosophy is most consistent with biblical thought and what they want their family to be like. Review your parenting options, examine carefully all the alternative theories, observe the end product, and then decide which parenting stratagem is right for you, especially when it comes to infant nurturing.”²⁷

Example Three: “Isolated from the Materials”

CRJ (Pg. 43) “In addition to limiting exposure to outside influences, GFI also shields its followers from up-front exposure to the materials themselves. They are not given them until the second week of class — after they have signed an agreement to attend for a set number of weeks.”

Response: There is a very good reason why parents are not given their workbooks until the second week. The first meeting is only an informational meeting. That is when interested parents come and find out what the class is all about. Here, the course content is surveyed, GFI material reviewed, class outlines and topics discussed, questions asked, and answers given. After that, parents who desire to sign-up for the course can do so. The next meeting is the first meeting of class. That is when they receive their workbooks.

In addition, anyone can call GFI and get any books and tapes at will. In fact, Mrs. Terner has done exactly that on a number of occasions. One can also borrow a complete book from a friend who went through the class. It is difficult to reconcile this practice with cultic behavior.

Example Four: CRJ (Pg 43) “Even then they are only given one chapter at a time after it has already been presented in class.”

Response: As with the previous example, Terner and Miller implied surreptitious intent on the part of GFI. Evidently Mrs. Terner and Mr. Miller are unfamiliar with the fact that many ministries do exactly the same as GFI with regard to weekly class handouts. For example, in Bible Study Fellowship, lessons are given out one week at a time even for the discussion leaders.

Why do we recommend to our class leaders that GKGW parents receive only one chapter at a time each week? GKGW is an inductive study, with each chapter building off of the previous. It is our desire that parents understand and apply the appropriate relational and moral foundations in parenting before learning other topics such as how to apply biblical discipline in the lives of their children.

5. Physical and Emotional Endangerment

Most of this section in the CRJ review dealt with PFP and *Babywise* and represents Mrs. Terner's bias. Regardless, to this date, GFI has yet to receive one documented case from any medical professional linking the use of *Preparation for Parenting* and *On Becoming Babywise* to failure to thrive in infants. Noteworthy is the fact that Dr. Robert Bucknam, the coauthor of *On Becoming Babywise*, has never experienced in his practice a failure-to-thrive (FTT) or dehydration case in more than 2,000 babies as highlighted and reported in the *AAP News*, (May 1998). Even more remarkably, none of the members of our peer advisory board have seen any cause and effect link between feeding a baby every 2 1/2 to 3 hours as advocated by Babywise and PFP with FTT and dehydration.²⁸ If problems exist, it is usually due to nursing technique or mechanics and not a basic routine.

Mrs. Terner and Mr. Miller stated that the Ezzos are opposed to demand feeding and believe it to be a harmful practice. Actually, for the sake of clarity, it is not demand feeding that they are opposed to but specifically the extreme "attachment parenting" style of demand feeding. They believe that based on all the evidence, the attachment parenting approach puts children at risk for FTT and dehydration.²⁹

III. EXAMINING THE VERACITY OF VARIOUS STATEMENTS AND ASSERTIONS

Example One: CRJ (Pg. 11) "Focus on the Family has received numerous reports of failure-to-thrive in infants subjected to the Ezzos' program Preparation for Parenting (PFP) and does "not recommend the Ezzo material."

Response: We would be surprised if Focus on the Family had documented evidence of "numerous" failure-to-thrive cases legitimately linked to *Preparation for Parenting* and did not share it with us. In fact we are sure they have no medical evidence of a single case that can affirm a relationship between what the Ezzos teach and an infant suffering. If they do, we invite them to bring evidence of such to us. According to the Focus on the Family public statement (April 1998), the Ezzo material has been "implemented among some Focus staff members with great success." Furthermore, according to the same public statement from Focus on the Family, they state that a non-recommendation of the GFI material "should not be interpreted as a pronouncement of

negative judgment of the Ezzos; it is actually an expression of our desire to maintain a neutral stance with respect to their work.”³⁰

We at GFI would be more than willing to enter into some comprehensive studies comparing the PDF outcomes with attachment parenting outcomes, including infant weight gain, failure to thrive rates, sleep skills attained, mother fatigue factors, and a host of other developmental categories.

Example Two: CRJ (Pg. 11) “GFI programs have repeatedly produced division among Christians. Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship, where the Ezzos now attend, took form essentially as a splinter group from Grace — because of controversy regarding Gary Ezzo.”

Response: No. Sadly neither statement is true. We say “sadly”, because like makeup applied to an untidy blemish, the statements above mask rather than explain actual events. Neither the establishment of Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship nor the departure of other Grace Community Church members in 1996-1997 had anything to do with Gary Ezzo or GFI. Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship came about as a direct result of an unresolved crisis of credibility within John MacArthur’s staff.

Gary and Anne Marie actually have no first-hand experience with the details of the fallout, nor do they know what prompted hundreds of long-time members to leave Grace Community Church. What they do know is the concerns regarding issues of integrity in the leadership of the church voiced by these members were very consistent with those held by the Ezzos. Some of the departing members sought out Dave Maddox (the former Dean of Students at Master’s College, where John MacArthur was the President) and asked him (not Gary Ezzo) to pray about starting a new church with an emphasis on family and evangelism. Dave Maddox was a natural choice for these people as he for years assisted Gary Ezzo in teaching at the Joint Heirs Adult Fellowship Sunday School class.

A new church did start in January of 1997. John opposed this church and initially wrote letters and made public decrees calling the actions of Dave Maddox and his followers “factious”, and insisted the new church be shut down. Dave Maddox responded in writing, answering MacArthur point by point, defending his actions, and countering his charges claiming he had been slandered and lied against. In the final analysis both men were less than honest with each other and the Christian community at large.

A few months later, the reproach was turned on the Ezzos for attending Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship. According to a former key elder at Grace Community Church, Gary’s presence at the church gave Dave Maddox and Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship “credibility.” As a result, Gary was branded “disloyal,” the rumor mongering began, and the public criticism went from a trickle to a raging river. None of these actions were very spiritual because the voice of revenge trumped the voice of reason.

Example Three: CRJ (Pg. 12) “All three original key GFI leadership couples who worked with the Ezzos to develop, teach, and promote GFI’s programs (Eric and Julie Abel, Dirk and Cheryl

Williams, and one other couple who asked not to be named) have decided to leave GFI at different points in time. The reason expressed by them all: strong concerns about the issue of integrity and the content and impact of the programs.”

Response: Like all ministries which have known rapid growth over the years (especially in the very beginning) there are people who come and go. And like all large ministries, some of those departures are necessary. ³¹

Mrs. Turner and Mr. Miller implied that the Abels and Williams left the ministry of their own accord. We are thankful for their ministry contribution in the early years, but their departures were voluntary only to the extent that they left after the Ezzos had to ask both couples to step back from public ministry. The Williams left in 1993. The Ezzos are very sorry that in 1994 circumstances beyond their control forced them to bring their public ministry with the Abels to a close. This was done with the counsel and encouragement of friends and family. It is enough to say a ministry relationship with Eric, did not work out well. He was retained by GFI in the graphics department until 1996.

Example Four: CRJ (Pg. 12) “When the Ezzos left New Hampshire to come to Grace in the early 1980’s, the church (now called Lakes Region Bible Church) was divided due to controversy over Gary Ezzo, with the church accusing him of exhibiting authoritarianism and isolationist tendencies.”

Response: The Turner/Miller description of events in New Hampshire could not possibly be true. Lakes Region Christian Church did go through an unfortunate split in the Summer of 1983. At this point, the Ezzos were already living in California and had left the church nearly nine months before. In November of 1982, three of seven elders including Ezzo resigned their position over integrity issues surrounding the principal of their Christian school John Wentzel, the man who was CRI’s primary source. The three families would not compromise their convictions that the church was first, not the school. Nine months later, the remaining elders adopted the same conviction about Mr. Wentzel. Only then did LRCC split for the first time, never to recover.

Using the above example as the proof text that Gary exhibited authoritarianism and isolationist tendencies is highly questionable. When one considers that her accusations surfaced sixteen years after the Ezzos left the church and her source was the man whose actions later split the church, we believe the use of such an example further validates GFI’s concerns about lack of journalistic integrity found throughout the entire CRJ article.

Example Five: CRJ (Pg. 12) “He (Gary Ezzo) was able to use Grace’s employees, mailing lists, and tape duplicating equipment to provide these materials.”

Response: That statement is dualistic. Right up until 1988, all materials written by pastors of Grace Church were published and marketed by the church. Grace Church, not the individual pastors, controlled the sale of material, the duplication of the tapes, and all mailing lists. The pastors had some control over content but no control over duplication or distribution. They did not receive royalties. All profit from the books and tapes went to the church not the pastors.

It was not until 1988, when the Grace Church Elder Board shut down Grace Church Publications, that instructions were given to all pastors to form their own private and personal ministries and publish their own material for use at Grace Church or anywhere else. Pastors Fred Barshaw, Tom Lovejoy, Jim George, and Gary Ezzo together went down to Los Angeles City Hall and each filed DBA papers for their respective ministries. The action was necessary because one cannot legally sell material to the public without collecting sales tax for the state. From that point forward, all pastors had to compensate the church if they used any of the duplicating services. At no time did any pastor have access to the Grace Church mailing list.

Example Six: CRJ (Pg. 12) “In 1987 the Ezzos formed GFI as a non-profit corporation along with five other Grace couples. In 1989 the Ezzos asked the other couples to dissolve the non-profit corporation and GFI became a for-profit corporation.”

Response: The above statement is partially true. While it is true that in 1987 the Ezzos were involved with five other couples in forming a non-profit corporation, the logistics and details of forming the non-profit were left to the other couples. In 1988, it was discovered the couples overlooked one major detail—they failed to file with the Internal Revenue Service and thus never secured a federal tax identification number. That meant all donations and tax deductible receipts for the year had to be returned. Over the next year, the responsibility to straighten out the legal entanglements created by the mistake fell to the Ezzos. The Five couples realized they were not ready to handle the management of a non-profit. They voted to dissolve the nonprofit.

The Ezzos saw these events, then and now, as God’s merciful intervention. Upon the advice of their attorney, the Ezzos decided to take responsibility for their own ministry and fund it themselves through wise money management rather than donations. They formed GFI to facilitate their ministry to local churches. This structure doesn’t put a financial burden on local churches—it supports itself. This structure has served them and the Christian community well for all these years.

Furthermore, the non-profit entity was formed a year later with a more business-wise board of directors. While it receives donations, it does not actively solicit donations. Neither the Ezzos nor any immediate member of their family sits on the Christian Family Heritage Board of Directors.

Example Seven: CRJ (Pg. 44) “Children are not to be told the details of sexual intercourse, even the night before the wedding, but instead are to be instructed in sex education using the diagram of a flower.”

Response: Unfortunately the conjunction “but instead” used by the authors misleads their readership because it takes two independent facts found in the Ezzos’ teaching and creates Mrs. Turner’s fallacious conclusion.

Reflections of Moral Innocence is a teaching series directed toward parents of two to twelve-year-olds and not young adults. That being the case, Turner and Miller are correct when they imply that the Ezzos do not believe four and five year old children should be told details of

sexual intercourse. For young children the Ezzos recommend that parents use a morally neutral object, such as a flower, to begin the process of communicating biological facts to their young children. The Ezzos, however, do not suggest that parents on the night before their adult children's wedding begin instructing them in sex education using a flower as suggested by Turner and Miller. And if a parent has to describe that actual act of sexual intercourse in detail on the eve of their child's wedding, then it is the Ezzos' opinion that adequate proactive and progressive preparation has not taken place. When and how parents prepare their son or daughter for the consummation of the wedding night is discussed in the context of the entire *Reflections of Moral Innocence* series and specifically addressed on tape eight, question sixteen. There the Ezzos respond by saying:

"All sex education is progressive. That is true. It is progressive. You are not only communicating biological truth; you are communicating moral truth. Hopefully, this is being done through the course of your child's life. . . What is going to happen on that wedding night is going to happen. They don't need a manual; it will naturally happen. There may be some things Mom wants to share and there will definitely be some things that Dads want to share, especially the sensitivity and the gentleness, but I think that we don't want you parents to be concerned, overly concerned, that you are just turning your young children loose and they are not going to know what to do. Just like you knew what to do, they will know what to do. Let them enjoy discovering each other."

Example Eight: CRJ (Pg. 43) ". . . the Ezzos instruct parents to feed newborns every three to three-and-a-half hours. . ."

Response: In earlier printings of PFP, parents were instructed to feed their infants on a 2 1/2 to 3 hour routine from the beginning of one feeding to the beginning of the next (see pgs. 80, 84, 97, 114, 115, 116-117, 194). However, there were a couple of places where other time increments were slightly different. These must be the few places from which Mrs. Turner and Mr. Miller were quoting while ignoring the rest of the book. As is the case with their entire curriculum, once a point of confusion is discovered, it is changed promptly. That was true in the printings that were available to CRI before releasing their review (Jan. 1998). The confusion was removed and only the following was stated:

"As a general rule, during the first two months, you will feed your baby approximately every 2 1/2 to 3 hours from the beginning of one feeding to the beginning of the next. Sometimes it may be less and sometimes it may be more, but this time frame is a healthy average. . . In actual practice a 2 1/2 hour routine means you will nurse your baby 2 hours from the end of the last feeding to the start of the next, adding back in 20 to 30 minutes for feeding to complete the cycle."

32

Example Nine: CRJ (Pg. 43) "While GFI's infant program includes charts for parents to monitor wet diapers, they do not have instructions to check for stools, a key fact in determining if a baby is getting adequate nutrition."

Response: This statement is obviously false. In Preparation for Parenting: “Healthy growth indicators include signs that: 1. Your baby has five to seven wet diapers a day (some saturated). 2. Your baby’s urine is clear (not yellow). 3. Your baby in the first month has two to five or more yellow stools daily.*”

Asterisk footnote: “After the first month, your baby’s stooling pattern will change. He may pass only one large stool a day, and as infrequent as one every five days. Each baby is different. Any concerns regarding elimination should be directed to your pediatrician.”³³

Healthy Baby Growth Chart Indicators.

1. Number of wet diapers per with clear urine (Norm per day: 5 to 7).
2. Number of wet diapers with yellow, concentrated urine (Norm per day: 0).
3. Number of yellow stools. (For the first month 2 to 5 or more per day. After the first month, number will vary.) (Underline emphasis added.)³⁴

CONCLUSION

Let’s return to Mr. Hanegraaff’s statement of July 28, 1998. He said:

“Let me make a promise to you. If there is anything in this article that is taken out of context to make a point that is not valid, I want to know about it. I did not write this article, but I still want to know about it. I had, when this article came out, I had the researchers on this check and double check their sources. I had other researchers verify the sources so that the type of claim you just made would not be possible. Now, if something has slipped through in some way that the researchers who have given their lives to this kind of detail did not detect and something slipped through and you let me know, we will definitely make a revision, a correction. If it is a substantial point it will be made in a very substantial way, because we do first-rate, primary research. In other words, it’s not about secondary sources or anecdotes; it is about primary research. And the point is, if there is something here that is not correct, then you let me know what it is specifically and we will deal with it.”

If we take Mr. Hanegraaff at his word, we assume these examples of error and hence inaccurate reporting will serve as a starting point for future meetings and public corrections. This response does not end the conflict; it only moves it to a new level of public interest. We still believe that the biblical thing to do is for GFI and CRI to meet with a neutral third party that will either affirm CRI’s methods, ethics, and conclusions or challenge them. Clearly, there is error somewhere.

As in the past, if GFI has failed in any way, corrections will be immediate and comprehensive. If CRI has done nothing wrong, then it should not be a problem for them to sit in a room with a neutral observer or observers and present their case. We are willing and invite any group of pastors who desire to see this conflict brought to a biblical conclusion to join us in asking CRI to meet and discuss the issues.

In closing, we want to encourage all readers of this response (pastors, elders, and lay men and women) to exemplify the spirit of the Bereans (Acts 17:11). Our greatest desire is to honor God in all we do and say. Our teachings are framed within a Biblical worldview. It would horrify us to

think that we are inadvertently misrepresenting truth. That is why we invite pastors, elders, and lay people to read our resources and to continually evaluate them in light of the Word of God. We are not fearful of biblical examination—quite the contrary, we invite and applaud it. Our desire is to be good Bereans and we trust and pray that this is the desire of an increasing number of Christians across our land. [End]

ENDNOTES:

1. Letter on file at GFI from Mr. Dave Lowman to Mr. Paul Young, Vice President of CRI, and Mrs. Kathy Hanegraaff, forwarded to GFI by Mr. Lowman. Quote used with permission.

2. Pastor Walker is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Seminary and currently a candidate for Doctor of Ministry at Westminster Seminary. Quotes used with permission.

3. For well documented exposure to the extreme side of the breast-feeding movement, see *Bottle Feeding Without Guilt: A Reassuring Guide for Loving Parents*. Peggy Robbins, (Prima Publishing, 1995). For a basic review of the attachment parenting psycho-logical construct, see *Preparation For Parenting, Chapter Two*, or *On Becoming Babywise, Chapter Two*. For further information, see the following websites:

“<http://www.phenomenalwomen.com>”,

“<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ridge/1363/bfpage.html>”,

“<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/5262/bflink.htm>”,

“<http://www3.islandnet.com/~bedford/brstfeed.html>”, “<http://promom.org/body.htm>”, and

“<http://www.cs.colorado.edu/~kolina/Home.html>” (This last website is the home page of Kate Hallberg, referenced in Endnote #89 in the CRI article.)

4. On March 5, 1997, Mrs. Kathleen Turner authored a lengthy “Letter of Concern to the American Academy of Pediatrics,” in which she attempted to discredit both the *Preparation for Parenting* and *On Becoming Babywise* material. In addition to her letter, she gathered over eighty signatures and quotes from a practical “Who’s Who” list of attachment parenting and La Leche League proponents, including Dr. Paul M. Fleiss, Kathryn Dettwyler Ph.D, Jan Barger, and Dr. Williams Sears. Dr. Sears, whose parenting ideas are not without controversy, is considered by many to be the chief spokesman for those of the attachment parenting/La Leche League persuasion. He also serves as the Hanegraaff’s pediatrician. Given that Kathleen Turner is not a CRI staff person and has never previously written or researched anything for CRI, and given her history of bias against GFI, her association with Dr. Sears, and Dr. Sears’ long history of bias against GFI, we asked CRI how these associations may have influenced the article. On October 1, 1998 Stephen Ross responded by saying, “. . . the Hanegraaff’s relationship to Dr. Sears had nothing whatsoever to do with the publishing of our article. Dr. Sears is a Christian pediatrician on our health-care plan . . .” (Emphasis in the original).

5. Conversation with Jim Dunning, September 25, 1998.

6. The medical advisory board is listed in the latest editions of *Preparation for Parenting* and *On Becoming Babywise*. The reason why GFI does not make more information public regarding the medical advisory board is stated under Category II, Authoritarianism, Example 6.

7. Conversation with Phil Hanson, Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo’s House Fellowship Shepherd and elder, September 25, 1998.

8. Phone conversation with Gary Ezzo and Pastor Marty Machowski, and follow-up conversation with Pastor Machowski and Mark Severance, October 7, 1998.

9. Conversation with Marty Machowski, and confirmed in a conversation on October 8, 1998 with Barbara Carton, reporter from the Wall Street Journal.

10. For more information on the meetings that took place, please see the Grace Church/GFI Ministry Status (May 13, 1998) document on GFI's website. This document was approved for distribution by Phil Johnson, Executive Director, Grace to You; Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries; and Gary Ezzo of Growing Families International.

11. Telephone interview with Katharine West, August 17, 1998.

12. Phone interviews between Gary Ezzo and Clarrie Pearson, Andrew Zerks, and David Cotnoir the week of August 10, 1998.

13. GKGW Leader's Guide Pg. 15 states, "We believe the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God (literally God breathed), inerrant, verbally inspired, and infallible."

14. Focus on the Family statement regarding GFI, April 1998.

15. Preparation for Parenting. Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo. 5th edition, 5th printing, Summer, 1996. Pg. 142.

16. We have theological concerns regarding CRI's implications on this topic. On the bottom of page 15, Terner and Miller wrote: "When the Bible calls us to sobermindedness, it is never to the exclusion of utilizing emotion, instinct, or intuition as sources for information and decision making." On the top of page 16, they seem to place the "impressions of the Holy Spirit" and "the leading of instinct" on the same plain. If they believe what they printed, we can unequivocally say we are at odds with their views on this issue.

17. Preparation for Parenting. Pgs. 151-152. (5th edition.)

18. *Growing Kids God's Way*. Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo. 4th edition, 15th printing, Spring 1997. Pgs. 16-17.

19. Ibid. Pg. 33.

20. Ibid. Pg. 196.

21. Ibid. Pg. 201.

22. For a more thorough explanation of what the Ezzos teach regarding the doctrine of salvation, the importance that parents place upon their children's salvation, and the means of grace in parenting, please see the "Foundations" chapter of GKGW, especially pages 13, 16-17, and 33-34.

23. GKGW. Pg. 9. On the first page of the Introduction of *Growing Kids God's Way*, the Ezzos write: "In the title *Growing Kids God's Way*, we place our emphasis on God's Way—meaning the way of the Lord. We serve an ethical God. Moral rightness flows from His being. His ways are in accord with His unchangeable character. In short, God is absolutely perfect and His moral law is a reflection of His holy character (Psalm 19:7). More than that, He has shown man what is good and what is required of him (Micah 6:8). We all must learn the way of the Lord and instruct our growing children in it."

24. Preparing for Marriage God's Way. Dr. Wayne Mack and Nathan Mack. Virgil W. Hensley, 1995.

25. Starting a Parenting Ministry (audiotape). *Growing Kids God's Way* Leader's Guide. Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo (4th edition, 1st printing, Fall 1997) Pg. 25.

26. *Growing Kids God's Way* Leader's Guide. Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo (4th edition, 1st printing, Fall 1997) Pg. 25.

27. Preparation for Parenting. Pgs. 19-20. A very similar quote is found in *Growing Kids God's Way*, page 15.

28. Bucknam, Dr. Robert. "Babywise said to help mothers regulate infants' sleep, feeding." AAP News. May, 1998.

29. See *Bottle Feeding Without Guilt: A Reassuring Guide for Loving Parents*. (Prima Publishing, 1995) Pgs. 37-39.

30. Focus on the Family statement regarding Growing Families International.

31. It is enough to say years of internal peace settled in over the GFI ministry, once Eric was removed from his leadership position.

32. PFP pgs. 78-79. (5th Edition) Other similar statements are found on pages: 84, 97, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, and 124.

33. Ibid. Pg. 98.

34. Ten Healthy Baby Growth Charts are located in the back of both the *Preparation for Parenting* and *On Becoming Babywise* books. These charts allow moms and dads to daily track the "Healthy Growth Indicators" of their infant. Many, many parents have expressed how the Growth Charts have helped them to objectively and consistently evaluate the health and growth of their baby. [END]

Letter One to CRI

July 29, 1998

Mr. Hank Hanegraaff
Christian Research Institute
PO Box 7000
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

Dear Mr. Hanegraaff,

My name is Gary Ezzo, and my wife and I head the ministry of Growing Families International. Sitting in front of me is the April-June issue of the Christian Research Journal containing a critical review of our ministry. As a co-laborer in the Body of Christ, we are coming to you to share our concerns with both the tone and the content of Kathleen Turner and Elliot Miller's evaluation.

We know that you have publicly stated that you had your researchers check and double-checked their sources before releasing this article, and that you do not use anecdotal information and secondary sources in your research. Yet so much of the article was based on anecdotal information, and second and even third party sources. In short, we believe the article was gossip-dependent, and tainted with duplicity and half-truths. As president of CRI, and as one who has publicly affirmed the accuracy of this evaluation, you share in the responsibility for the misinformation contained in the article.

As a committed Christian for over forty years, I have sought to focus my life, world view and dealings with others on the guidelines of Scripture. I have been told you seek the same for your life. For that reason, my wife and I seek a meeting with you to discuss this matter. We are coming to you as a brother and sister in Christ because we believe you have sinned against us by spreading a false report delivered into your hands. (Exodus 23:1; Proverbs 6:9).*

If he is available, we know he is already willing, we would also like to invite Mr. Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries to sit in on our meetings. Mr. Sande was extremely helpful in bringing resolution to the Grace Church/GFI conflict last year and can serve as an objective observer.

Further, because we are both heads of large national and international ministries, our mutual actions will be watched closely. We both have a responsibility to the Body of Christ to work through differences in a timely fashion. Therefore, we would like to meet as soon as possible. We assure you that we are very open to correction if correction is needed in any portion of the GFI material.

We look forward to your early response. Our earliest available dates are August 10-12, 1998. I will have my personal assistant, Mark Severance, follow up in this correspondence to arrange possible meeting times. Thank you.

In Christ,

Gary Ezzo
President, Growing Families International

* (Authors Note: This verse should read Proverbs 6:19. The typographical error was acknowledged in a letter to CRI on Oct. 7, 1998).

Letter Two to CRI

August 19, 1998

Mr. Hank Hanegraaff, President
Christian Research Institute
PO Box 7000
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

Dear Mr. Hanegraaff,

A few days ago, I received a letter from Mr. Elliot Miller, the co-author of the article "More Than A Parenting Ministry," (Christian Research Journal April – June 1998). He was responding to our first letter to you in which we requested a personal meeting with you so that we could discuss our concerns with the Journal's portrayal of the GFI ministry. In his letter, he suggested that he

and I first discuss the matter by correspondence, and then, when “[you are] available again we can revisit the question of a meeting.”

In our first letter to you, we cited our primary reason why we desired to meet personally. We are not asking for a meeting because CRI wrote a critical review of our ministry or because your staff got a few facts wrong. We are asking to meet with you because the article was filled with a series of false reports, half-truths, and fallacious assertions, all used to characterize GFI as a “church splitting,” “cultic community,” which it is not.

In our letter of July 29, we cited Exodus 23:1 as a basis upon which we are asking for a meeting. There, God’s people are told not to circulate a false report among their people. The Turner/Miller review was exactly that—a false report publicly circulated among God’s people. Since these statements have been made public and some of them have been reiterated on your broadcast, we believe we have an obligation to set the record straight with our mutual constituency in a public forum. To date we have only answered private inquiries regarding the substance and sources found in the article. We feel it is only ethically and biblically right to present our evidence first to you. As we do that, it is our hope that with new information you will make the necessary corrections, as you stated in your July 18th broadcast, “in a substantial way.” We believe this to be in accordance with the principle of Matthew 18:15.

It seemed that Mr. Miller’s letter implied that a meeting according to Matthew 18:15-17 process would not be necessary because you have nothing against us personally and because the article was a “dispassionate evaluation” of our ministry in response to other’s concerns. His assertion would be correct if his public report had not contained many errors and false charges against GFI. We do believe that as a public service Christian organization, CRI is still morally bound to the biblical process the Lord has given us.

We assure you, we are more than willing to answer any questions or concerns you or your staff may have about what we teach or believe. We trust that you will be willing to do the same for us. If you would like to start with your concern over Matthew 27:46, we will be more than happy to discuss with you our statement and the context in which it appears. You should be relieved to know that we do not believe Matthew 27:46 teaches, or can be used to justify, that parents should let a baby cry. We do not teach that and in fact have never taught that. Please take the opportunity to read the subheading and context in which we refer to this verse. For your convenience, we have attached the appropriate pages from our 1995, fifth edition and 1998, sixth edition series of *Preparation for Parenting*.

As the subsection from which the quote is lifted clearly demonstrates, we were not providing an exegesis or eisegesis of Matthew 27:46. This section of our presentation is dealing with the fallacious reasoning made by some vocal mothers in the parenting community who claim that God’s character would never allow a baby to cry. Therefore, they believe in the same manner that a mother should never, under any circumstance, let her baby cry. As we state in the text, the reference to Matthew 27:46 was not used to justify letting a baby cry. On the contrary, it was used to demonstrate the fraudulent notion that God responds to our cries on demand. Even the 1993,

third edition text made the same point. The point is, no one should redefine God's character to support their parenting beliefs.

For this and many other reasons, we are appealing to you once again, to meet with us, hear our concerns, and honestly discuss how CRI can correct any wrong done as a result of the Turner/Miller review. We equally want to hear from you how we can improve our public efforts as we minister to the Christian community.

We believe it would be prudent and necessary to have a neutral party present when we meet. As stated in our previous letter, we desire to bring Ken Sande, President of Peacemaker Ministries. In addition to Ken, if you would like to bring a third party to the meeting, we would invite you to do that. Regardless, we do need to meet, and we desire to do so in a timely manner.

As was the case with our first letter, we will have our assistant, Mark Severance, follow this letter up with a phone call to pursue possible dates to meet. Many thanks for your time.

In Christ,

Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo

Letter Three to CRI September 17, 1998

Mr. Hank Hanegraaff, President
Christian Research Institute
P. O. Box 7000
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

Dear Mr. Hanegraaff,

Two months have passed since Christian Research Journal released its commentary on the GFI ministry. Up to this point in time, we have withheld making a detailed public response to CRI and the Christian Research Journal in order that we may present our concerns to you in private and in the spirit of Matthew 18:15. Because of the seriousness of our charges, we do not believe that a long, drawn out series of correspondence will serve the immediate need to correct the many inaccuracies contained in the article. In addition to the time delay, a much greater chance exists for misunderstanding and lack of clear communication when there is no face to face dialogue. A prime example is our previous correspondence. We have written many words, sentences, and paragraphs and have not moved any closer to understanding each other or resolving this matter.

Sadly, we are now in receipt of a second letter dated September 4, 1998, from your research assistant Kevin Ross. We were disappointed to read that our second request to meet with you and an objective third party to privately discuss our concerns was again denied. Although we do

not understand or agree with your decision, we must accept both your answer and our responsibility to publicly respond to the article.

On or around September 28, 1998, we will release to the Christian community the first portion of a broader response that will demonstrate how the principle author of "More Than a Parenting Ministry", Mrs. Kathleen Turner, employed a number of deceptive tactics including duplicity and demagoguery. Through duplicity, it seems as though she deliberately attempted to get your readership to believe something other than the truth of the situation. We also believe that pertinent information was repeatedly withheld in order to lead the reader to a conclusion different than what is accurate. Demagoguery, as you know, is an impassioned appeal to prejudice. It is seen in the practice of taking statements of opponents, and ascribing new meaning contrary to what is actually intended. This method is used to create controversy and to justify the reporting of exaggerated concerns. Examples included removing phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from their context and exhibiting them as appalling examples of thought. (cf. Matthew 27:46 "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," pg. 15; "The redemptive role of biblical chastisement" pg. 18; "Children are not to be told the details of sexual intercourse, even the night before the wedding" pg. 44).

All in all, the article was based on anecdotal information, was dependent upon second and even third party sources, and was filled with false assertions built on half-truths. Mrs. Turner even included quotes from people with whom she never spoke and who believe the opposite of what she printed. As we stated in our first letter, as president of CRI and as one who has publicly affirmed the accuracy of this article, you share in the responsibility for the misinformation it contained. Thus, our charge against you is spreading a false report among God's people.

These are very serious charges and we assure you that we would not be making these claims if the evidence of such was scant. While it is not our desire to defame the reputation of CRI or the Christian Research Journal, (that is why we still desire to meet privately), we will be honest and thorough when publicly dealing with how we believe the Christian Research Journal put this article together and the bias of people used to do so. Your article and our response is now a matter of public interest. If you change your mind about meeting with us and a third party, please contact us before September 28, 1998.

[END]

Edited and Revised for Internet Release 2004