



STATEMENT DG-234

A MATTER OF BIAS?: Examining the Response of Growing Families International Criticism

by Kathleen Turner and Elliot Miller

In its April–June 1998 issue, the *Christian Research Journal* published an extensive evaluation of Growing Families International (GFI), the Christian parenting ministry headed by Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo.¹ While acknowledging GFI’s popularity (over a million reported followers around the world) and noting that “a number of the parenting ideas in GFI materials are sound and have benefited families who have used them” (p. 12),² the article evaluated the widespread controversy associated with the organization. Our conclusion: “GFI has provoked unprecedented public censure from Christian leaders because, although it is not a cult, it has consistently exhibited a pattern of cultic behavior, including Scripture twisting, authoritarianism, exclusivism, isolationism, and physical and emotional endangerment” (12).

It was our desire that the Ezzos would acknowledge the seriousness of the problems associated with their ministry. We hoped they would take constructive steps to reform their use of Scripture, root out the authoritarian, exclusivist, and isolationist tendencies in their ministry, and lessen the potential for physical and emotional endangerment of children in their programs.

Instead, however, GFI has responded to our article much as they have responded to other Christian critics. They issued a statement saying they wished to address their concerns toward us privately, but at the same time they *publicly* accused us of “withholding facts, telling half-truths,” and “removing statements from their appropriate context,” and they promised to provide *more* details to those who contacted them directly.³ When we asked for examples that would substantiate their concerns prior to agreeing to meet with them, they continued to make similar charges publicly for three months without providing any substantial written documentation.⁴ They finally issued a 16,713-word (not including attachments) public critique of our 10,696-word article, questioning our motives, accusing us of duplicity and demagoguery, characterizing us as wicked liars, and challenging the accuracy of our statements, sources, and quotes, even to the point of debating minutiae.⁵ This follow-up *Journal* article will demonstrate the accuracy of our original comments, provide more detailed information on the comments in question, and indicate even more clearly the need for constructive action on GFI’s part.

A MATTER OF BIAS?

Throughout their critique GFI accuses us of having a “bias” against their work that led to inappropriate conclusions about their ministry.⁶ Although we could point to several reasons why this is not true, the most obvious difficulty for GFI in sustaining this allegation is the fact that we are far from alone. An overwhelming number of other nationally recognized, reputable Christian organizations and leaders have publicly expressed many of the same concerns and conclusions.

Dr. John MacArthur’s Grace Community Church (Grace), where the Ezzos’ programs were developed and first taught, issued two public statements warning others of problems they have experienced as a result of GFI programs. Their current statement specifically expresses concerns both with GFI’s use of Scripture and with the isolationism, elitism, and division they have observed firsthand.⁷ Their previous statement also noted Gary Ezzo’s “repeated tendency to avoid accountability.”⁸ According to Phil Johnson, who wrote both of the Grace elders’ statements, “Our concerns about Gary’s lack of accountability are by no means resolved.”⁹

Indeed, John MacArthur himself has written to CRI stating that the *Journal* article “clearly and objectively articulates the glaring weaknesses with the overall focus of Gary’s material.... We wholeheartedly support your conclusions.”¹⁰

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Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family (Focus) has also issued statements of concern regarding GFI. Their current statement acknowledges that some have benefited from GFI's materials but expresses concern with GFI's exclusivism and misuse of Scripture. It further notes that Focus has received reports of failure to thrive in infants "subjected to the Ezzos' program" and affirms that "for these reasons we have chosen not to recommend the Ezzos' material."¹¹

Kathy Eshleman, whose husband, Paul, heads The JESUS Film Project of Campus Crusade for Christ, issued a letter alerting staff mothers that she believes GFI's "medical assertions [are] questionable," "their application of Scripture to parenting is erroneous," and "the potential consequences upon child development are hazardous."¹²

Pastor Chuck Smith has addressed the GFI controversy at least three times on his Southern California radio program, affirming that he is "against" GFI programs. He characterized the programs as "rigid," "strict," "legalistic," and "severe," and he explained, "I don't think they really prove from the Bible that theirs is truly a godly method." He expressed concern about the potential for children on the program to become rebellious and "estranged from God," and he further noted that the Ezzo teaching has become somewhat "cultish" and has "created a lot of division within the body of Christ."¹³

Dr. Bruce Narramore and Dr. Grace Ketterman, both nationally respected Christian authorities on child development, have individually raised concerns about the potential long-term impact of GFI materials on children (11, 43).

Christianity Today, *World* magazine, and *Group* magazine have all published articles addressing concerns about GFI.¹⁴ In addition, *Christian Parenting Today* "does not endorse or provide editorial coverage for BABYWISE" (the secular version of GFI's program for infants, *Preparation for Parenting [PPF]*).¹⁵

It is not plausible that all of these respected Christian leaders and organizations are biased against GFI. Nonetheless, we now turn to GFI's specific allegations against our original *Journal* article.

PRIMARY SOURCES NOT CONSULTED

After placing great stress on a statement Hank Hanegraaff made on the radio that our research was based on primary sources, GFI supplies five alleged examples of inadequate primary research. This resulted, they say, in a distortion of the facts.¹⁶

It is first of all ironic that GFI would criticize us for not contacting primary sources. They are arguably the most primary source of all, and yet when Kathleen Turner approached them with a list of questions to ensure accuracy in our article, they refused to answer any of them.¹⁷ Furthermore, as shall be demonstrated below, primary sources were used in each of the examples GFI cites, and we stand behind the accuracy of our statements.

FOCUS DOES NOT RECOMMEND THE EZZO'S' MATERIAL

In their critique of our article, GFI challenged our quotes from Focus's statement (11), claiming that Focus's desire is to maintain a "neutral stance" with respect to GFI's work.¹⁸ Contrary to GFI's claim, we quoted Focus's statement directly and accurately. In addition, Paul Hetrick, a Vice-President at Focus, affirms, "It is not our desire to maintain a purely neutral stance with respect to GFI. We do not recommend GFI's materials."¹⁹

DUE DILIGENCE NOT DISPLAYED BY THE EZZOS' CHURCH

In addition to mentioning Grace's concerns with GFI, our first article noted inadequacies in GFI's responses to Grace's statement. For example, in GFI's first response to the Grace statement, "the Ezzos promised a 'thorough examination' of the issues by their own elders at Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship [LHEF]....None of the elders, however, even contacted Johnson, the author of the Grace Statement, to discuss Grace's concerns" (44).

GFI does not dispute our accuracy. They charge the *Journal*, however, with leaving "out some very important facts." GFI asserts that LHEF had a "good reason" for not contacting *Grace to You* executive director Johnson: he "was not on the Grace Church Elder Board" at the time the board affirmed and released the statement.²⁰ While Johnson was not on active status at the time, he was still a member of the board of elders, has been since 1985, participated in the meeting when Grace affirmed its statement, and is now again active.²¹

Additionally, GFI has publicly drawn attention to the fact that Johnson was the *author* of the Grace statement, even in their response to Grace,²² which was "reviewed" and "approved" by the LHEF elders.²³ Furthermore, Gary Ezzo has repeatedly

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portrayed his meetings with Phil Johnson, mediated by Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries, as integral in his conflict with Grace Church.²⁴ The LHEF elders could not have conducted a “thorough examination” without contacting Johnson, and Johnson points out that they still have not done so as of this writing.²⁵

PATTERN OF CONTROVERSY

Our concern about the divisive effects of GFI in evangelical churches today was intensified when we discovered that the Ezzos had been associated with similar controversy in previous years. While this certainly warranted mention in our original article, we chose not to focus attention on past problems. Since GFI has challenged this claim, however, we will provide additional substantiation for our assertion.

Division in New Hampshire

GFI claims that it “could not possibly be true”²⁶ that when the Ezzos left New Hampshire to come to Grace in the early 1980s, their church at that time, Lakes Region Community Church, “was divided due to controversy over Gary Ezzo, with the church accusing him of exhibiting authoritarian and isolationist tendencies” (12).

Although there will always be a number of different perspectives regarding division in a church, it is clear that the church where Gary was pastor-teacher was concerned enough about his actions to ask him to step down. Whereas we based our original comments on consistent firsthand testimony from *three* witnesses, others since then have affirmed the accuracy of our comments.

Despite the complexities of their situation, leaders from the church affirm: “As indicated in the CRI article, our experience with Gary Ezzo in New Hampshire paralleled the problems that subsequently have been experienced by many others, such as his authoritarianism, exclusivism, and division. As a result of these problems, the church congregation met and decided to ask Gary to step down as pastor-teacher and elder.”²⁷

GFI suggests that people with questions about this event contact a particular staff member at GFI. They do not mention that this staff person is Gary Ezzo’s brother-in-law and one of two former elders who left the church with Ezzo.²⁸

The Formation of the Ezzos’ Church

GFI denied our statement that “Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship, where the Ezzos now attend, took form essentially as a splinter group from Grace — because of controversy regarding Gary Ezzo” (11). GFI further denied that “the establishment of Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship...had anything to do with the Ezzos or GFI.”²⁹ Yet John MacArthur himself has affirmed to CRI that he considers this a splinter group from his congregation and that he so informed the people involved, in writing, at the time.³⁰ As to Ezzo’s involvement, Phil Johnson recounts, “Gary himself admitted to me that he was involved in helping start LHEF from the beginning — while many of the founding group still had membership at Grace Community Church.”³¹

Why Several Original Leaders Left GFI

GFI challenged the credibility of our affirmation that “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” (12). GFI questioned our description of the Williamses and Abels by misquoting us and then challenging the misquote. In addition, they indicated that these couples left not because of concerns with the Ezzos, but because the Ezzos believed their departure was necessary.³²

Both the Williamses and Abels not only stand by their original statement but also have provided CRI with extensive documentation to support it.³³ They consider GFI’s statements to be “false and libelous.”³⁴

The Ezzos themselves have characterized the Abels in writing as their “senior advisors and best friends.”³⁵ Moreover, Eric was Director of Ministries of Growing Families International Educational Services (GFI’s not-for-profit arm) and performed similar functions at GFI as well until September 1994.³⁶ Dirk Williams was president of GFI in 1989.³⁷ Both couples were on the first GFI board, traveled out of state with the Ezzos, taught at national leadership conferences, were featured in or helped produce GFI

tapes and videos, and were regular radio guests on the Ezzos' program. Julie and Cheryl were both key contributors to the GFI Contact Mom ministry.³⁸ To question their status as "key original leadership couples" is disingenuous at best.

Both of these couples also clearly initiated their own departures, both clearly due to concerns about integrity. In March of 1994, Eric Abel wrote Gary Ezzo asking for immediate action on three key points, including "accountability for Gary Ezzo and G.F.I. staff." Abel noted that he had expressed these concerns before without sufficient response from Ezzo.³⁹

In June of that year, Abel wrote again, noting that little progress had been made with his concerns.⁴⁰ In August, the Abels suggested arbitration between them and the Ezzos. On August 28, the Ezzos replied, "We have given much thought to your suggestion of arbitration....and have decide [*sic*] to let things stand just as they are. There is no need for arbitration."⁴¹ On September 1, Eric Abel submitted his resignation from "any authoritative role" and soon left GFI completely.⁴²

Beginning in February of 1993, Dirk Williams wrote the Ezzos a number of letters expressing his desire to move on to projects other than GFI, and the Ezzos replied several times, asking the Williamses to consider continued involvement.⁴³ Williams's letters expressed his frustration over Gary's unwillingness to be truthful with him and answer questions about the editing process of GFI's toddler program, authored by the Williamses.⁴⁴ The Williamses severed their ties with GFI by June of 1993.⁴⁵

Released from Membership

As an example of division associated with GFI, our original article stated that "Debra and Pat Baker were involuntarily 'released from membership' and even barred from unofficial church functions after voicing concerns about *PPF* at Covenant Fellowship of Philadelphia" (CFOP) (11).

GFI challenged this statement, noting that the Bakers had not responded to a letter of concern sent to them from CFOP in a timely manner. GFI stated, "CFOP did what many churches do in such cases, drop non-attenders from their membership roles."⁴⁶

The Bakers contradict GFI's implication. They insist they attended church every Sunday during the months preceding their being "released" from membership.⁴⁷ Financial records from the church itself demonstrate that they had consistently given to the church during that period.⁴⁸

Furthermore, the very letter that GFI selectively quotes from makes it clear the church action was based on the Bakers' disagreement with the church's teaching on the family, which included teaching from *PPF*: "We have released you from membership at Covenant Fellowship....The pastors' philosophy on family life represents many fundamental differences which we will aggressively teach in the future. Wisdom would dictate that you need a church home which supports rather than challenges your strong opinions."⁴⁹

Finally, while the Bakers had indeed failed to respond to a letter of concern from the church in a timely manner, they also explained and apologized for their late response, reiterated their respect for the church leadership and their desire to continue in membership at the church, and asked the church to reconsider its decision.⁵⁰ The church replied within two days, refusing to reverse its decision. Later they sent the Bakers a letter barring them from even unofficial church meetings.⁵¹

The *Journal* statement was accurate and based on written documentation from both of the primary sources — the Bakers and CFOP.

GKGW Required at Churches

We also noted in our original article that "parents can't send their children to the Country Oaks Baptist Church school in Tehachapi, California, unless they have completed" GKGW (12). No other reference was made to the church.

GFI quoted the church's pastor, Andy Walker, complaining that his church was "cast in a 'cultic' light simply because Mrs. Turner didn't bother or chose not to seek understanding in her 'interview.'"⁵² Yet even in GFI's critique, Walker acknowledges that he *does* use GKGW as an entrance requirement at his church's school, that Turner did verify this fact with him directly, and that he did have an opportunity to explain the context for his decision.

The *Journal* did not state that Walker's church is cultic, nor that it had specifically been divided because of GKGW. Nonetheless, we stand by our implication that this requirement is inherently divisive. We do have on record a testimony from a family who stated that they tried to enroll their children in the school and even offered to bring their children in for evaluation, but they were

refused entrance because they had not completed the *GKGW* course.⁵³

THE RISE OF THE EZZO EMPIRE

Many who are familiar with the popularity and controversy associated with GFI have wondered how the Ezzos' parenting ministry could have grown so rapidly. In just over 10 years, GFI has expanded into 93 countries, reaching more than a million followers. Seventy thousand parents attend GFI classes at local churches every week (12). The *Journal* noted that this growth was possible partly through the Ezzos' connections with John MacArthur's Grace Community Church, where Gary Ezzo was once Pastor of Family Ministry, and with its radio and tape ministry, *Grace to You (GTY)*. This was not, as GFI protests, a "charge" against the Ezzos in any way, but simply a much-needed explanation for GFI's exponential and worldwide growth. Although it was not endnoted in the article, we had obtained this information directly from the Executive Director of GTY Ministries, Phil Johnson, who oversees all of the GTY ministry — a primary source.⁵⁴

SCRIPTURE TWISTING

GFI Materials Misuse Matthew 27

GFI also criticized some of the facts we used to support our claim that their ministry exhibits five characteristics of a cult — Scripture twisting and extrabiblical revelation, authoritarianism, exclusivism, isolationism, and physical and emotional endangerment (of children). Concerning Scripture twisting, GFI faults us for quoting a public statement from Focus on the Family that noted that 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" (15).

GFI says they are concerned with our use of Focus's statement because "when Focus on the Family was informed they were misquoting the Ezzos on this point, they dropped it from their correspondence."⁵⁵ Focus's current statement, however, once again expresses concern with GFI's misuse of Matthew 27. In addition, Focus Vice President Hetrick states, "Focus did not misquote the Ezzos; we quoted their materials accurately."⁵⁶

In defense, GFI's critique states, "The Ezzos don't for one minute believe or teach that Jesus hung on a cross to teach us that mothers should refuse to attend crying infants." Rather, the "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."⁵⁷ To employ this idea in the context of a discussion of how mothers should respond to their crying infants, however, is to use Christ's suffering to justify a practice of letting a baby cry. Since Christ's suffering on the cross for our sins was a *unique* event for a very specific purpose, it should not be used even indirectly to justify letting infants cry. Furthermore, God *did* answer Jesus' cry on the cross (Ps. 22:24).

Sobermindedness vs. Maternal Instincts

One of our key concerns in evaluating GFI's misuse of Scripture was the extent to which the materials use the Bible to dismiss or downplay maternal instinct or intuition. We commented that the Ezzos "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" (15).

Although GFI denies our statement is true,⁵⁸ we based it on a number of GFI quotes included in the article, which pit against "reason," "assessment," and "sobermindedness," not only "instinct" but also "feelings," the "heart," "what feels natural," and "noncognitive responses" — all of which they equate with "unchecked emotionalism." The Ezzos hinge their defense on a supposed distinction between instinct and intuition, identifying the first with "Darwin's theory of evolution" while now saying they accept the second.⁵⁹ The Ezzos are apparently unfamiliar with what *intuition* means, defined by the *American Heritage Electronic Dictionary* (version 1.0) as, "The faculty of knowing as if by instinct, without conscious reasoning."

The real issue is not the use of the one word *intuition* but rather whether "noncognitive responses" such as the heart and feelings play a legitimate role in parenting. In the quotes cited, the Ezzos insist that they do not. Since *intuition* is clearly a form of *noncognitive response*, the Ezzos are either confused or they have changed their position, while persisting to defend statements they no longer believe.

Chastisement and Cleansing Guilt

In discussing the Ezzos' philosophy on chastisement, we commented, "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" (16).

GFI complained about this statement, saying, "The Ezzos do not believe or teach that spanking leads to a child's salvation."⁶⁰ But we clearly affirmed this to be the case. What we did discuss (and quote) in the original article was the Ezzos' troubling reference to chastisement removing the guilt, or reminder, of sin from a child. We criticized their lack of theological clarity and qualification on this point, and nothing in their rebuttal invalidates this criticism.

The Ezzos have yet to resolve a quandary in which their peculiar and biblically unsubstantiated doctrine that spanking cleanses a child from the guilt of sin puts them. If a child's guilt before his (or her) parents is so distinct from his guilt before God that it requires a form of cleansing separate from the blood of Jesus Christ, does that mean that the child could have a clear conscience before God while having a defiled conscience before his parents — or vice versa? The Ezzos would probably, and understandably, answer *no*. But then, logically, spanking *would indeed* be necessary to receive forgiveness before God. Again, they clearly do not believe that. Their teaching on this point, therefore, remains confused, self-contradictory, and open to serious misunderstanding and misapplication.

Living "under the Weight of Sin"

The Ezzos' made it clear that offenses that call for chastisement (spanking) require chastisement, lest "the child lives under the weight of the sin" (16). What offenses call for chastisement? We noted, "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" (16; emphasis added).

GFI questioned whether this was an accurate representation of the Ezzos' teaching.⁶¹ Their materials, however, quite clearly state that deliberate disobedience requires chastisement (i.e., spanking as defined by GFI): "Offenses that require chastisement are those related to rebellion. Rebellion is a heart issue that includes defiance, disrespect, disobedience, and any willful failure to learn to remember."⁶²

GFI Linked to Pelagianism

GFI's response to our discussion of their theology of the will (18) says,

Terner 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....

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 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.⁶³

Because we never accused the Ezzos of holding to Pelagianism, they are knocking down a straw man. We simply noted that the Grace statement links them to Pelagianism (without identifying them as outright Pelagian), while also noting that not all Christians would take it that far.

Although we did not state it in our original article, we would classify the Ezzos' view as semi-Pelagian. This means they believe in original sin but also hold to the freedom of the unregenerate human will; that is, they believe unsaved man is depraved but not *totally* depraved — his will is *influenced* by sin but not *enslaved* to it. Nothing either in the original quote we cited nor in their rebuttal refutes this classification.

If Gary Ezzo does not believe in the freedom of the unregenerate human will, he needs to state his position more clearly. Even in the above quote, GFI states, "Pelagius believed the human will to be morally neutral." When Ezzo uses the same phrase to describe his own view,⁶⁴ what else does he expect people to think?

It is quite clear (even from GFI's response) that Ezzo did mean his statements in the way we interpreted them, for he proceeds to build his teaching that parents can "train their children to make right behavior decisions" on the assumption that the child's will is autonomous and morally neutral. This leads to the problem noted in our article that "the role of the Holy Spirit in shaping Christian character truly seems nonessential (although certainly helpful) in the Ezzos' system" (18). As we suggested in our article, even many other semi-Pelagians (e.g., Arminians) would find this lack of emphasis on the grace of God disturbing, and this is our real concern with the Ezzos' teaching — not the fact that it is semi-Pelagian.

Is God Obligated to Save Our Children?

Perhaps because of their philosophy of the will, the Ezzos seem to place an excessive emphasis on the role of parents in shaping the character of their children. We noted that "essentially the Ezzos are suggesting that if parents faithfully 'grow their kids God's way,' God *will* be obligated to save their children..." (18; emphasis in original).

Although GFI objected to this comment, we believe that our original article adequately demonstrates our point. Further evidence is provided by Gary Ezzo's similar comments in a March 1996 *Table Talk* article regarding "the importance of *securing* your child's salvation" through "training in biblical virtues and values" that "arouse within a child a consciousness of God and eternity" (emphasis added).⁶⁵ In contrast, no biblical passage, correctly understood, states that parents can secure their children's salvation.

AUTHORITARIANISM

Our original article noted, that the Ezzos lack true accountability to either church elders or a board of directors, that they set up rules that limit debate for their followers, and that they have responded to critics by not answering their questions or by attacking them (19). Through these and other means, they have developed an authoritarian style of leadership.

Jim Dunning

With regard to the Ezzos' "apparent lack of any true accountability" (19), we stated that Jim Dunning, one of Gary's elders at LHEF at the time of our article, has in the past "admitted his inability to hold Ezzo accountable" (45).

Jim Dunning and GFI both agree that Dunning had stated in the past that "he personally could not hold Gary accountable."⁶⁶ What they dispute is the implication that this was Gary Ezzo's fault. They assert that it was merely a lack of awareness of GFI operations that made it difficult for Dunning to hold Gary accountable.

At least *three* witnesses who were elders at Grace Church at the time, however, affirm that it was clear what Dunning really meant: "Kathleen Turner's report about Jim Dunning was accurate, and the connotation those remarks carried in the *Journal* article was also accurate. Our perspective on this is based not merely on a single comment, but on separate comments Mr. Dunning made privately to each of us — as well as a statement he made before the full board of elders at Grace Church. It was clear to everyone at the time that Jim Dunning was frustrated with Gary Ezzo and blamed Gary for the lack of accountability."⁶⁷

A Network of Hundreds of Pediatricians?

In the same context, we also noted that 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" (19).

GFI responded by noting that they have just started printing a list of their "medical advisory board" in the latest editions of *PFPP* and *BABYWISE*.⁶⁸ This is not the list of "hundreds of pediatricians" the Ezzos have claimed to receive advice from, however, but includes only 32 M.D.s, not all pediatricians,⁶⁹ whose familiarity with and input to the GFI materials has been questioned.⁷⁰

Class Rules That Limit Debate

Discussing the Ezzos' rules that limit debate in class and initiation of discussion elsewhere, we quoted directly from the leadership tapes and provided GFI's context for both. We also made it clear that parents are allowed to ask questions at the end of class (19).

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Despite all this, GFI charged us with providing only partial quotes and not giving the context.⁷¹ They even went so far as to provide the very same context we mentioned, as if we had not already given it.

Questions Unanswered or the Questioner Attacked

Evaluating the Ezzos' troubling responses to critics, we noted that "Ezzo has written to people who question him calling them 'primitivistic,' 'marsupial,' 'prideful,' 'disgruntled,' and 'theologically naïve,' among other adjectives." We also quoted some disturbing comments Ezzo made in response to a letter from Joel and Kathryn Kuhlmann, a couple who — in anticipation of soon becoming parents — had written with questions about *PPF* (19).

Ironically, GFI responded to these very charges by attacking the Kuhlmanns further. GFI said the Kuhlmanns had "impure motives" and were not "genuinely seeking truth," and they implied they were part of a conspiracy with others who are critical of the Ezzos.⁷² While it is true that the Kuhlmanns had contact with two Ezzo critics, this occurred only *after* they had already sent their letter to the Ezzos and *because* they had received unsatisfactory responses to some of their inquiries about GFI.⁷³

GFI attempts to support their conspiracy theory by saying they "found it unusual for a couple to be so insistent that Gary Ezzo respond personally to their letter," especially since "Pastor Richard Encinias, one of our GFI state directors, gave the Kuhlmanns several hours of his time answering their questions."

This comment is both misleading and inaccurate. Richard Encinias met with the Kuhlmanns *because he was one of their pastors at that time*, and even then he met with them only for one hour before they sent their letter. Ironically, it was Encinias who had suggested that the Kuhlmanns write Ezzo with their concerns in the first place.⁷⁴ (Kathryn Kuhlmann recalls that Encinias did this only after questioning the genuineness of her Christian faith and suggesting that she was probably an evolutionist, because she rejected the Ezzos' materials and used the word "instinct" with regard to mothering.⁷⁵)

Finally, GFI dismissed the Kuhlmanns' concerns, saying, "Much of what the Kuhlmanns wrote did not come directly from *PPF*, but rather it came indirectly from a compilation of misquotes and false statements circulating among La Leche League/attachment parenting internet bulletin boards." Not only have the Kuhlmanns never had any involvement whatsoever with La Leche League, but also a full 34 percent of the text of their letter consisted of direct quotes from *PPF*!⁷⁶

Sadly, this additional and unsubstantiated attack on the Kuhlmanns and others cited in GFI's response only further illustrates our concerns about GFI's treatment of critics.

Mischaracterizing Turner's Background

GFI responded to our article in a similar fashion. They said they agree with one reader that coauthor Kathleen Turner is "in support of demand feeding." GFI further claimed that Turner has "functioned at least in part, as an activist for the La Leche League/attachment parenting philosophy of childrearing" and has "spearheaded an extensive writing campaign against the Ezzos utilizing many voices who share her bias."⁷⁷ Such characterizations of Turner and her ability to write an objective article are grossly misleading.

First, we know of no professional organization dedicated to infant health or knowledgeable about breastfeeding that does *not* support demand feeding. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP),⁷⁸ International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA),⁷⁹ World Health Organization (WHO),⁸⁰ and even the United States government⁸¹ support it. To require that a critic of the Ezzos not support demand feeding would be to effectively eliminate all challenges based on standard medical advice.

Second, Turner is not and has never been an activist for the La Leche League or the attachment parenting philosophy of childrearing.

Finally, the "campaign against the Ezzos" that GFI refers to was neither a campaign nor directed at them personally, but a letter of concern about GFI's *infant programs* written to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), asking *them* to review and comment on GFI's materials. This letter was reviewed and signed by over 100 health care professionals across the country, including the nation's leading breastfeeding experts and 19 pediatricians who are Fellows of the Academy. GFI's characterization of these events both grossly misrepresents Turner's actions and inappropriately dismisses the concern, knowledge, credibility, and expertise of dozens of esteemed health care professionals around the country.

GFI seems unreasonably to require that critics have no previous concerns with their materials, regardless of how fact-based those concerns may be. Turner's involvement with the letter to the AAP no more invalidates or detracts from her participation in the CRI article than her involvement with the CRI article would disqualify her from future writing on GFI. If anything, as she continues to research and write on the subject, the opposite is true.

EXCLUSIVISM

In addition to authoritarianism, our original article discussed the exclusivist tone of the GFI materials and the ministry itself: Parenting GFI's way is "God's Way," GFI's programs as well as the children it produces are considered superior, and GFI families are advised to "stay within your moral [i.e., the GFI] community" (27).

Would You Want a "Stevie"?

GFI challenged our comment that "parents are told that children raised on GFI's system will turn out superior to those who are not" (27), saying, "That statement is never made in the Ezzos' curriculum."⁸² Though they may not use those words — and we did not claim that they do — this point is clearly made. For example, the extreme contrast between "Ryan," a fictional child in the Ezzos' material raised with GFI principles, and "Stevie," a non-GFI child, leaves little doubt about GFI's claim of superior children.

The GFI Community

We noted that this elitist attitude combined with GFI's missionary zeal can result in division among Christians: "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 part of the GFI 'community'" (27).

GFI responded first by saying it would have been impossible for us to interview "countless parents," and then by claiming that they do not directly suggest families act in an exclusivist manner.⁸³ But our endnote clearly indicates the basis of our claim: "Three critics alone conservatively estimate receiving at least 550 unsolicited reports of such division over GFI programs" (45). Furthermore, our quote of Gary Ezzo immediately after our statement adequately demonstrated that the Ezzos have indeed directly contributed to this we/they mentality (27).

ISOLATIONISM

We noted that GFI also cultivates an isolationist attitude in several ways. GFI responded by pointing to a paragraph in both *PPF* and *GKGW* where parents are encouraged to evaluate other parenting philosophies. They also clarified that GFI's recommended reading list is not exhaustive.⁸⁴ While it is true that they have suggested parents evaluate other philosophies, they have also structured their program so that it impedes parents from doing so. GFI advises parents of newborns to delay the timing of visiting grandparents; lists only six other parenting books on its recommended reading list, three of which are from the 1800s; gives mothers advice through GFI "contact moms," who may have only one or two young children; and maintains an Internet forum discussion area "only open" to "like-minded" parents, where controversial messages have been deleted and unlike-minded parents have been banned (27, 43).

Cult researchers are well aware that contradictory messages are a common practice in cultic movements. Leaders often state an acceptable principle but encourage different, less-acceptable behavior in a variety of ways — and followers respond to the "unspoken rules," often without even realizing it. When challenged, leaders as well as followers simply point to the explicit directives, but more objective observers see the dichotomy.

Parents Are Given the Materials in Pieces

We also noted that GFI "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. Even then they are only given one chapter at a time, after it has already been presented in class" (43).

GFI questioned the relevancy of our examples, stating that parents can order materials by phone and that other organizations also sometimes hand out materials one week at a time.⁸⁵ While this is technically accurate, GFI's many isolationist practices are noteworthy and relevant because of their cumulative effect. This *overall environment* is not the norm by any means.

Grace Noted an Isolationist Attitude among GFI Followers

Perhaps most telling of all is that Grace — the church where the GFI materials were first developed and taught extensively by the Ezzos themselves for years — has publicly and repeatedly voiced concern about the isolationist tendency it has noted among GFI followers.⁸⁶ The most plausible explanation for this tendency is that it is at least subtly encouraged by the Ezzos themselves.

GFI did not question our accuracy in quoting Grace's statement. In fact, their response seemed to support it. While claiming this isolationist attitude of GFI families toward other Christian families is "not a matter of whether or not the parent implements the GFI materials," GFI also affirmed that "parents have a moral obligation to control the flow of negative influence and peer pressure on their children."⁸⁷

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ENDANGERMENT

GFI also did not question our specific comments regarding the many health care professionals and organizations our article cited who have taken the unprecedented action of publicly and independently warning parents about GFI programs. These professionals have raised concerns about the lack of medical substantiation for GFI programs and about infant failure to thrive [FTT] cases associated with them (43).

GFI said only that our reporting in this area reflected Turner's bias and that *they* are not aware of any failure to thrive cases associated with their program that *they* consider to be adequately documented.⁸⁸ They further asserted that "based on all the evidence," it is "the extreme attachment parenting approach [that] may put children at risk for FTT and dehydration." The source they cite for this extraordinary claim, however, is a book with a pro-abortion bent that they sell, authored not by a medical professional, but by a layperson who characterizes attachment parenting philosophy as a "cult."⁸⁹

Inaccurate Representations?

GFI challenged our statement that, "While GFI's infant program includes charts for parents to monitor wet diapers, they do not have instructions to check for stools, a key factor in determining if a baby is getting adequate nutrition" (43). GFI says they could have pointed us to the section in *PPF* that instructs parents to check for stools.⁹⁰ They also charged us with not doing our homework when we affirmed that their recommended infant feeding schedule is "every three to three and one-half hours" (43).⁹¹ In both of these cases, however, we accurately represented the fifth edition, fourth printing of *PPF*. GFI did announce that the sixth edition included "advancements," and these changes appear in that edition, but it was not available until the month after our article was published. Furthermore, a number of health care professionals have long expressed concerns similar to ours.

Babies on the Ezzos' Program Depressed?

Our original article noted that "Katherine West, a registered nurse and lactation consultant who has been working with GFI followers for 10 years, acknowledged that although many of the children [on GFI's programs] turn out well, depression is not unusual." The article then quoted from one of her public posts on Lactnet, an Internet discussion group for lactation professionals (44). GFI challenged the conclusion we reached, indicating that (1) the baby West referred to was not connected with their program, (2) the case was 10 years old, (3) we had not interviewed West, and (4) she did not agree with our conclusions.⁹²

To be charitable, we must assume that GFI has not seen the full post we quoted from, because it clearly supports our original statement and in fact does not support GFI's claims. Another lactation consultant had indicated she had a problem case the week of 20 October 1997 involving a mother whose baby was not gaining weight well on four breastfeedings a day, but who liked her routine and did not want to increase the number of feedings.⁹³ Katherine West responded:

I'm ever so briefly out of the lurking shadows to share how I usually answer this kind of Ezzo mom (and I have seen my share). I learned a long time ago (10 years now I've been working with Ezzo parents) that these moms are not offended by a suggestion of ABM [artificial baby milk, or formula]... — once we add in the ABM the baby starts to gain, is far more content (nay, even full and satisfied) and is actually able to stay "on schedule."....I'll lay dollars to

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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. This is the one time ABM is a blessing — once baby starts to get filled up at a feeding and gain weight, their depression lifts.⁹⁴

Note that West specifically refers to the mother with the problem baby as an “Ezzo mom,” that the case was only months old at the time we reported it and only days old at the time of West’s response, and that West clearly refers to both this baby and other babies on the Ezzos’ program who are not gaining weight well as depressed.

Contrary to GFI’s assertion, Turner did contact West (by e-mail) asking for an interview for the article, but West responded that she was too busy to comment. Nonetheless, West’s written, public observations clearly support our statement, and her Lactnet post did constitute a primary source. In addition, her extensive experience with mothers using the Ezzos’ materials made her comments that much more relevant.

Don’t Tell Children the Details of Sex, Even the Night before the Wedding

Finally, we also noted in our original article that the Ezzos teach, “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” (44). GFI says this statement is “fallacious,” apparently because they think our grammatical structure indicated that parents are to *begin* instructing children in sex education using a flower on the night before their wedding.⁹⁵ That is not what we said.

Our sentence made two points. The first, correctly incorporating an adverbial phrase, was that children are not to be told the details of sex, even the night before the wedding. This is clearly supported by Gary Ezzo’s comments in the tapes for GFI’s course *Reflections of Moral Innocence (RMI)* that we endnoted in our article.

Our second point was that children are to be instructed in sex education using the diagram of a flower. In their very critique of our article, GFI acknowledged that two to twelve-year-old children should not be told the details of sex and that they recommend parents “use a morally neutral object, such as a flower, to begin the process” of communicating this biological information.⁹⁶ This is explained in detail in *RMI*. Both points made by our statement are accurate and supported directly by the Ezzos’ own words.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

It is clear that there is significant controversy surrounding GFI. We have provided a thorough response to GFI’s concerns about our original article. The conclusions we have reached are too well documented and have been shared by too many other respected Christian organizations and leaders simply to represent a bias on everyone’s part. Even the Ezzos must acknowledge that there is division in the Christian community surrounding their programs and actions.

Yet they have responded to us, as well as to many other critics, by questioning our motives (are we all really wicked, lying, attachment parenting fanatics bent on destroying GFI?), debating minutiae (does questioning the placement of the adverbial phrase “even the night before the wedding” really address the concerns we raised with their sex education program?), misrepresenting what we said (yes, we *did* provide the context for the Ezzos’ “no debate” and “do not initiate” class rules), and even making misleading and false statements (no, Focus is *not* neutral in its stance on GFI). These tactics obscure the real concerns raised in our article, and their response did nothing to allay those concerns; instead, it further demonstrated them.

With Whom Do the Ezzos Truly Need to Meet?

GFI has repeatedly and publicly suggested that the concerns addressed in the CRI article constitute a Matthew 18 offense that should be handled by private meetings between Gary Ezzo, Hank Hanegraaff, and Ken Sande of Peacemaker Ministries.⁹⁷ Yet our article was not about GFI and CRI but rather concerned GFI’s public teachings and their impact on the public.⁹⁸ Furthermore, a number of significant individuals involved with the Ezzo controversy have *already* attempted, without success, to resolve similar concerns with the Ezzos.

Phil Johnson spent hours in reconciliation meetings with Ezzo and Sande and says *none of the substantive issues raised in the Grace Statements were resolved.*⁹⁹

Eric and Julie Abel left GFI after they expressed concerns with the Ezzos’ lack of accountability, and *the Ezzos refused to meet with them and an arbitrator as the Abels had requested.*

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Dirk and Cheryl Williams requested a meeting with the Ezzos and an objective third party on two separate occasions to resolve differences over the handling of GFI curriculum and *the Ezzos dismissed their request*.¹⁰⁰ They note that when “Mr. Ezzo finally was forced into [a Grace Community Church] elder’s inquiry, of the many charges we made, only one was settled and dropped. And yet, he tells others the matters were ‘resolved.’”¹⁰¹

GFI critic Kathy Nesper, president of a Christian parenting and childbirth education organization called Apple Tree Family Ministries, initiated correspondence with the Ezzos because she “sensed rising tension and division among *all* concerned” and “believed a call for unity was needed” (emphasis in original).¹⁰² Over the course of 11 months and 13 letters, Nesper proposed a meeting where the Ezzos and a group of their critics could all “lay the issues openly before several unbiased persons of godly reputation and respected integrity upon whom we agree, for their evaluation and counsel.... There can be no objection to accountability to unbiased godly counselors where there is a sincere commitment to follow biblical principles. I welcome it even if I am found to be at fault, so I can make it right.”¹⁰³ *The Ezzos refused this attempt at mutual public accountability*, accusing Nesper of duplicity and saying, “We have no interest in meeting with nine of your friends to talk about your views on attachment parenting theories, or GFI, or what you like or don’t like about our presentation.”¹⁰⁴

These concerned Christians have gone to extraordinary lengths to resolve the key problems noted by many GFI critics, yet to no avail.

What Next?

Although GFI has many good things to contribute to the subject of Christian parenting, without further action their cultic characteristics will continue to cause division in the Christian community. What is needed is a meeting like that proposed by Nesper, where the concerns of both sides can be aired, objective judgments rendered, actions suggested, and appropriate accountability to the body of Christ instituted and maintained for the future. The results should be made public for the sake of public accountability. Experience to date indicates that nothing less will be adequate.

It is our hope that our careful analysis of the controversy, as well as our response to GFI’s concerns about it, will aid in this process and better equip Christian parents and their pastors to evaluate GFI’s materials. It is our further hope that constructive change can actually take place within GFI. This would not only benefit GFI and its adherents but also is in the interest of Christian unity.

Until such change occurs, we believe further dialogue between GFI and CRI concerning our article would be unproductive. Readers may note that we focused this response on documenting our original article’s accuracy; in general, we did not respond to additional points raised by GFI. This is because such discussions become endless and increasingly petty, with whoever had the “last word” appearing most persuasive. In addition, some things are simply a matter of differing interpretation and may never be resolved to everyone’s satisfaction. We believe the results of our thorough investigation, now published in two issues of the *Christian Research Journal*, adequately demonstrate that we have been both careful and truthful and that GFI’s defenses against criticism are intentionally misleading and sometimes outright false.

At some point, readers need to consider how much evidence must be dismissed or explained away, and how many respectable critics must be doubted, in order to believe GFI. Unhappily, in this case, both sides cannot be telling the truth.

NOTES

¹Kathleen Turner and Elliot Miller, “More than a Parenting Ministry: The Cultic Characteristics of Growing Families International,” *Christian Research Journal*, April–June 1998, 12.

²Page numbers in parentheses refer to our original article.

³30 July 1998 GFI Internet posting.

⁴In letters to Hank Hanegraaff dated 19 August and 17 September 1998, Gary Ezzo offered three alleged examples of errors in our original article pertaining to (1) GFI’s use of Matthew 27:46, (2) an aspect of GFI’s view of chastisement, and (3) an aspect of GFI’s view on sex-education. The first example repeated the very error we had noted in our article (see below). The next two examples merely alleged that we had misrepresented them without indicating how we had done so.

⁵Gary Ezzo and GFI Administrative Staff, “The Community Perspective: A Special Report, A Response to the Christian Research Institute,” Internet publication, 26 October 1998 (hereafter Ezzo and GFI).

⁶E.g., Ezzo and GFI, Introduction; Section Two: Examining Some of the Criteria and Examples CRI Used to Draw Their Conclusions.”

⁷“A Statement Regarding Gary Ezzo and Growing Families International” (Grace Statement Two), issued 20 March 1998 by

Grace Community Church (Grace), Sun Valley, CA.

⁸“A Statement Regarding Gary Ezzo and Growing Families International” (Grace Statement), issued 16 October 1997 by Grace.

⁹15 November 1998 e-mail from Phil Johnson.

¹⁰13 August 1998 letter from John MacArthur.

¹¹Statement received in a 16 November 1998 fax from Focus on the Family.

¹²18 July 1997 letter from Kathy Eshleman.

¹³*To Every Man an Answer*, 9 January and 21 September 1998, KWVE-FM.

¹⁴Terner and Miller, 11, 44, and Ken McDuff, “What’s Wrong with Growing Kids God’s Way?” *Group*, July–August 1997.

¹⁵23 November 1998 e-mail from Kevin A. Miller, Editorial Director.

¹⁶Ezzo and GFI, Section One.

¹⁷11 November 1997 letter from Mark Severance, Assistant to the Ezzos, and 25 November 1997 voice mail message from Severance (saved at CRI).

¹⁸Ezzo and GFI, Section Three: “Examining the Veracity of Various Statements and Assertions.”

¹⁹16 November 1998 interview with Paul Hetrick.

²⁰Ezzo and GFI, Section One: “Examining a Sampling of Misquoted Sources.”

²¹31 December 1998 and 1 January 1999 e-mails from Johnson.

²²E.g., “Grace Church/GFI Ministry Status” (13 May 1998 document on GFI’s web site).

²³Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, “In Response To: Grace Community Church ‘Statement’ Regarding the Ezzos and Growing Families International — Part Two,” 11 November 1997.

²⁴*Ibid.* See also Ezzo and GFI, Section One; 29 July 1998 letter from Gary Ezzo to Hank Hanegraaff.

²⁵17 November 1998 e-mail from Johnson.

²⁶Ezzo and GFI, Section Three.

²⁷Joint statement agreed to by three men who were elders at the time, as well as the founding pastor of the church, the head of one of the founding families, and one of the school’s teachers. (31 October 1998 e-mail from Michael Bemis, 28 October 1998 fax from Richard Moreau, 9 November 1998 letter from Ralph Perrino, 30 October 1998 e-mail from Tom Hightower, 29 October 1998 e-mail from Mike Catron, and 2 November 1998 e-mail from Alice Pinard.)

²⁸E.g., 3 November 1998 e-mail from Catron.

²⁹Ezzo and GFI, Section Three.

³⁰13 November 1998 fax from MacArthur’s office, 27 May 1997 letter from MacArthur.

³¹15 November 1998 e-mail from Johnson.

³²Ezzo and GFI, Section Three.

³³Letters on file at CRI.

³⁴6 November 1998 e-mail from Eric and Julie Abel, 1 November 1998 e-mail from Dirk and Cheryl Williams.

³⁵28 August 1994 letter from Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo.

³⁶6 December 1998 interview with Eric Abel.

³⁷17 May 1989 letter from the Office of the Attorney General, Charitable Trusts Section, Los Angeles, CA.

³⁸14 November 1998 e-mails from Cheryl Williams and the Abels.

³⁹1 March 1994 letter from Eric Abel.

⁴⁰28 June 1994 letter from Eric Abel.

⁴¹28 August 1994 letter from Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo.

⁴²1 September 1994 letter of resignation from Eric Abel.

⁴³26 April; 6, 11 May; 1 June 1993 letters from Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo.

⁴⁴24, 25 February; 5, 9, 17, 30 May 1993 letters from Dirk Williams.

⁴⁵16 November 1998 e-mail from Cheryl Williams.

⁴⁶Ezzo and GFI, Section One.

⁴⁷5 November 1998 e-mail from Debra Baker. The Bakers were a family of eight at the time and hardly would have gone unnoticed.

⁴⁸31 December 1993 Covenant Fellowship of Pennsylvania (CFOP) Donor History for the year.

⁴⁹21 September 1993 letter from Dave Harvey and Alan Redrup of CFOP.

⁵⁰16 October 1993 letter from Debra and Pat Baker.

⁵¹18 October 1993 letter from Harvey and 3 December 1993 letter from Andy Farmer of CFOP.

⁵²Ezzo and GFI, Introduction.

⁵³24 November 1997 telephone interview with Debra Scherer.

⁵⁴15 November 1998 e-mail from Johnson.

⁵⁵Ezzo and GFI, Section Two.

⁵⁶16 November 1998 interview with Hetrick.

⁵⁷Ezzo and GFI, Section Two.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

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- ⁵⁹Ibid.
- ⁶⁰Ibid.
- ⁶¹Ibid.
- ⁶²Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, *Growing Kids God's Way: Biblical Ethics for Parenting (GKGW)*, 4th ed., 11th pr. (Chatsworth, CA: Growing Families International Press), 210.
- ⁶³Ezzo and GFI, Section Two.
- ⁶⁴See *ibid.*, as well as the quote cited in our original article (16).
- ⁶⁵Gary Ezzo, "Raising Biblically Responsive Adults," *Table Talk*, March 1996.
- ⁶⁶Section One and 28 October 1998 interview with Dunning.
- ⁶⁷Joint statement agreed to in 15 November 1998 e-mail from Johnson, 3 November 1998 e-mail from Tim Peters, and 31 October 1998 e-mail from Lance Quinn.
- ⁶⁸Ezzo and GFI, Section Two.
- ⁶⁹Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, "Acknowledgments," *Preparation for Parenting: Bringing Order to Your Baby's Day and Restful Sleep to Your Baby's Night (PFP)*, 6th ed., 1st pr. (Simi Valley, CA: Micah 6:8, 1998).
- ⁷⁰Katie Allison Granju, "Getting Wise to Babywise," *Salon*, 6 August 1998.
- ⁷¹Ezzo and GFI, Section Two.
- ⁷²Ibid.
- ⁷³2 January 1999 interview with Joel and Kathryn Kuhlmann. The Kuhlmanns wrote the Ezzos on 18 August 1996. Their first contact with Ezzo critics was by e-mail on 28 August and 4 October of that year. CRI has copies of both e-mails.
- ⁷⁴3 November 1998 e-mails from the Kuhlmanns.
- ⁷⁵9 July 1998 e-mail from the Kuhlmanns.
- ⁷⁶13 November 1998 e-mail from the Kuhlmanns. The Kuhlmanns have a complete response to GFI at <http://www.mailing-list.net/redrhino/Ezzo/CRI/Kuhlmann>.
- ⁷⁷Ezzo and GFI, Introduction.
- ⁷⁸E.g., 20 April 1998 "Media Alert."
- ⁷⁹ILCA, *Position Paper on Infant Feeding*, 1994.
- ⁸⁰WHO/UNICEF statement, "Protecting, Promoting, and Supporting Breastfeeding," 1989.
- ⁸¹Innocenti Declaration, WHO/UNICEF joint statement, signed by the United States in 1990.
- ⁸²Ezzo and GFI, Section Two.
- ⁸³Ibid.
- ⁸⁴Ibid.
- ⁸⁵Ibid.
- ⁸⁶Grace Statement and Grace Statement Two.
- ⁸⁷Ezzo and GFI, Section Two.
- ⁸⁸Ibid.
- ⁸⁹Peggy Robin, *Bottlefeeding without Guilt* (Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing, 1996). Since being criticized for recommending this book, GFI's web site posted an acknowledgment that the book is pro-abortion, but they still recommend "reviewing this book for its in-depth exposure of the philosophies of the attachment parenting movement" (25 August 1998 note on GFI's Internet "Reading Resources" page).
- ⁹⁰Ezzo and GFI, Section Three.
- ⁹¹Ibid.
- ⁹²Ezzo and GFI, Section One.
- ⁹³20 October 1997 Lactnet post from Karen Foard.
- ⁹⁴1 November 1997 Lactnet post from Katherine West.
- ⁹⁵Ezzo and GFI, Section Three.
- ⁹⁶Ibid.
- ⁹⁷E.g., Ezzo and GFI, Attachments One and Two.
- ⁹⁸See Elliot Miller's discussion regarding public criticism, "From the Editor," *Christian Research Journal*, July–September 1998, 3.
- ⁹⁹15 November 1998 e-mail from Johnson.
- ¹⁰⁰22 April and 5 May 1993 letters from the Williamses and 26 April and 6 May 1993 letters from the Ezzos.
- ¹⁰¹14 November 1998 e-mail from the Williamses.
- ¹⁰²22 December 1997 letter from Kathy Nesper to Gary Ezzo.
- ¹⁰³18 September 1997 letter from Nesper to Gary Ezzo.
- ¹⁰⁴1 December 1997 letter from Gary Ezzo to Nesper. The Ezzos previously offered to meet privately with Nesper or with her and their respective pastors (e.g., 18 August 1997 letter from Gary Ezzo to Nesper), but she refused and proposed other alternatives, explaining that she was representing a group of critics who should be involved; the concerns were public, not private; and she felt

there should be a written record of their dialogue (e.g., 11 March and 18 September 1997 letters from Nesper to Ezzo). See <http://www.mailing-list.net/redrhino/Ezzo/CRI/Nesper> for more details.

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