

# Critiques and Commentaries of Concern Regarding Growing Families International

## Notes:

- Since Growing Families International is a religiously-based organization but also publishes secular material, these critiques and commentaries reflect both religious and secular perspectives. Many well known Christian leaders have voiced public concerns over GFI's teachings. These leaders are listed on page 10 of this bibliography.
- Under each section below, items are listed chronologically, from most current to least, with undated items listed at the end of the section.
- Key articles and critiques of utmost interest to researchers are highlighted in **bold** print.
- An index of items available on the internet, many of which are also listed below, can be found at <http://www.ezzo.info>. A current copy of this bibliography is available on the web at: <http://www.ezzo.info/bibliography.pdf>
- A chronological timeline outlining GFI's history and controversies is available on the web at: <http://www.ezzo.info/Timeline/timeline1.htm>

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## CHILD DEVELOPMENT/PSYCHOLOGY

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## General

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“A Response from Roy Maynard: Roy Maynard responds to accusations from Gary Ezzo,” July 13, 1996.  
<http://www.fix.net/~rprewett/maynard.html>

**“Where Did Eric and Julie Abel Go?”** by Eric and Julie Abel. The Abels held leadership positions within GFI but resigned over concerns regarding accountability and integrity.

<http://home.earthlink.net/~ericabel.GFI.htm>

E-mail address: ERICABEL@aol.com

Also cited in Terner and Miller, April-June 1998 and October-December 1998, listed above.

Letter of concern to her church by Lois L. Huneycutt, PhD. Discusses medical, child development, theological, and cultural concerns with the materials, as well as the division that results.

Letter of concern to their church by Steven Rein, PhD and Kateri Allison Rein. Discusses a variety of concerns. Dr. Rein manages a website with information on GFI.

<http://www.ezzo.info/Rein/letter.htm>

“GROWING KIDS: Is it God’s Way?” By Lisa Marasco, BA, MA, IBCLC.

<http://www.fix.net/~rprewett/lisa.pdf>

“Parenting of Infants: Some Controversies.”

<http://www.ezzo.info/Articles/parent.htm>

### Publicly Stated Concerns by Christian Leaders

Steve Arterburn, founder of New Life Ministries: response to questions on New Life radio show.

Rich Buhler, radio pastor and counselor: commentary on radio broadcast.

CareNet, umbrella organization for crisis pregnancy centers: letter to affiliated centers, December 1996.

Dr. Randy Carlson, President, Family Life Communications: response to questions on Parent Talk radio show, January 2002.

<http://www.flc.org/>

Barbara Curtis, author: “Whose Way, After All?—An Open Letter to Those in the Church Whose Purpose is to Serve the Family,” June 16, 1996. Curtis is a mother of eleven, author of *Small Beginnings* and *Ready, Set, Read!*, and has written for more than 35 magazines, including *Guideposts*, *Journey*, *Christian Parenting Today*, *Moody Monthly*, and *Parent Life*. She conducts frequent workshops for mothers of toddlers.

<http://www.fix.net/~rprewett/curtis.html>

**Dr. James Dobson**, President, Focus on the Family, Radio Broadcast August 25, 1999: response to on-air question.

<http://www.ezzo.info/Focus/dobsontranscript.htm>

Kathy Eshleman, wife of the director of the Jesus Film Project of Campus Crusade for Christ: letter of concern, July 18, 1997. Also cited in Terner and Miller, April-June 1998 and October-December 1998, listed above.

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**Focus on the Family:** letter of concern regarding GFI, original letter 1993 with revisions at varying intervals, current revision released August 20, 1999. Although the wording of Focus on the Family's letter has varied, the organization has consistently stated that it does not recommend GFI's materials to its constituents. See also Terner and Miller, October-December 1998, listed above.

**Grace Community Church: "A Statement Regarding Gary Ezzo and Growing Families International by the board of elders of Grace Community Church."** Gary Ezzo developed his materials while a staff member at Grace. The church has publicly disavowed all association with GFI. Original statement issued October 16, 1997: <http://boards.parentsplace.com/messages/get/ppezzo8/21/2/1/1.html?outline=-1>  
Revised version: <http://www.fix.net/~rprewett/grace-ezzo-final.html>

Rev. Doug Haag, pastor of family ministries, Evangelical Free Church, Fullerton (California): theological review in "Religious Parenting Programs: Their relationship to Child Abuse Prevention," presented by the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Orange County Parenting Program Review Committee (listed under "child Development/ Psychology," above).

**Hank Hanegraaff, president, Christian Research Institute:** commentaries on radio broadcast of *The Bible Answer Man*, July 28, 1998, October 6, 1998, October 8-9, 1998, October 26, 1998, October 27, 1998, March 25-26, 1999.

Cynthia Henseler, Minister to the Family, at the 15,000-worshipper Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, pastored by Rick Warren.

**Phil Johnson, elder, Grace Community Church and executive director, *Grace to You* radio broadcast:** "Questions about Growing Families International, Grace Church, and Gary Ezzo," December 11, 1997. (A follow-up to the October 16, 1997 Grace Community Church Elders' Statement.) **Also, a written response to questions about Grace Community Church's Statement dated December 11, 1997 is available at:** <http://boards.parentsplace.com/messages/get/ppezzo8/21/2/1/1/4.html>

Dr. Grace Ketterman, psychiatrist and author: cited in Terner and Miller, April-June 1998, listed above.

Dr. Kevin Leman, author: written statement to inquirers.

**Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship: Elder's Statement Regarding Gary Ezzo's Church Discipline, Granada Hills, California.** Public statement about character issues and the Ezzos' excommunication from Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship, November 1, 2000. This is an expansion of the original statement dated April 30, 2000. [http://www.ezzo.info/LHEF/lhef\\_nov\\_2000.htm](http://www.ezzo.info/LHEF/lhef_nov_2000.htm)

**Dr. John MacArthur, pastor-teacher,** Grace Community Church: Public Statement about character issues and the Ezzos' excommunication from Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship, July 25, 2000. <http://www.ezzo.info/GCC/macarthur.htm>

**Dr. John MacArthur, pastor-teacher,** Grace Community Church: letter published in *Christian Research Journal*, July-September 1998, p. 46.

Kevin A. Miller, editorial director, *Christian Parenting Today* magazine, November 2, 1998: cited in Terner and Miller, October-December 1998.

Kathy Nesper, president, Apple Tree Family Ministries: cited in Patterson; Frame; and Terner and Miller, October-December 1998, listed above. See also "Response to Growing Families International," December 31, 1998 under "General," above.

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Dr. Clifford Penner, psychologist and author: cited in Giles, listed above.

Father Val. J. Peter, Executive Director, Boys Town, Nebraska: letter to *Our Sunday Visitor*, April 1998.  
Rev. Chuck Smith: commentary on radio broadcast of *To Every Man an Answer*, January 9, 1998, September 21, 1998.

Dr. Tedd Tripp, author of *Shepherding Your Child's Heart*: internet commentary at <http://www.ezzo.info/Misc/tripp.htm>

Rev. Marvin Warman, Mdiv, MFCC and Joyce Warman, Warm an' Loving Ministries: letter of concern, October 28, 1997. Rev. and Mrs. Warman teach pre-marital courses at Lake Avenue Congregational Church and lead marriage seminars throughout the United States.

### Indirect Critiques

These do not name Growing Families International, but they refer directly to concepts embodied in GFI's teachings.

*Children of the Self Absorbed: A Grownup's Guide to Getting Over Narcissistic Parents*, by Nina W. Brown, EdD, LPC, New Harbinger Publishers, 2001.

"Bonding and Discipline," by Jeanne Marie Laskas, *Washington Post Magazine*, May 28, 2000, p. W31.

**"Unto the Least of These—Godly Parenting of Your Baby—Myths and Reality," by Rebecca Lewis.** William Carey Library, 2000. Ordering information: (626) 798-3827. Also available at <http://www.ezzo.info/Lewis>

"Left to Cry," by Missy Gregory, *Above Rubies*, August 1999, No. 51, pp. 8-9. Ordering information: P. O. Box 681687, Franklin, TN 37068-1687, (931) 729-9861.  
<http://gregivins.brinkster.net/article.html>

"Train up a Child in the Way He Should Go," by William Sears, MD, *Mothering*, March-April 1999, pp. 68-76.  
<http://www.mothering.com/> Click on Articles, then Special Articles from Issue 93, March 1999.

"A Good Night's Sleep," by Barbara Curtis, *Christian Parenting Today*, January-February 1999, p. 48.

*Kids in Danger*, by Ross Campbell, MD (with Carole Sanderson Streeter), Chariot Victor Publishing, 1999, Chapter 7, pp. 155-161.

***Raising Great Kids: Parenting with Grace and Truth*, by Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend in cooperation with Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS), Zondervan, 1999, e.g., pp. 55-56, 69, 71, 81, 99, 123, 124.**  
*Successful Christian Parenting*, by Dr. John MacArthur, Word, 1999.

*Becoming the Parent God Wants You to Be*, by Dr. Kevin Leman, Navpress, 1998, e.g., p. 11.

*The Complete Book of Christian Parenting and Child Care*, by William Sears, MD and Martha Sears, RN, Broadman & Holman, 1997, pp. 1-18.

***Help! I'm a Parent*, by Dr. Bruce Narramore, "A Word of Caution," Zondervan, 1995, pp. 55-57.**

*Boundaries*, by Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend, Zondervan, 1992, pp. 185-186.

*Recovering from Churches that Abuse*, by Ronald Enroth, PhD. Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

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*By Hook or By Crook: How Cults Lure Christians*, by Harold Bussell, McCracken Press, 1993.

*Churches that Abuse*, by Ronald Enroth, PhD. Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.

*The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse*, by David Johnson and Jeff VanVonderen. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1991.