

GFI Corrects Errant Reporting of Christianity Today's
"Unprepared to Teach Parenting" By Kathleen Turner (C.T: November 2000)

For those who get discouraged after reading articles similar to the one cited above, and hurt for the Ezzos and wonder how they cope with so much reporting nonsense, they'll tell you their secret. When faced with troublesome moments, Gary and Anne Marie have a choice to make. They can stew over the false portrayal of the events of the past, or replay every misleading statement in their mind until they really get depressed, or angry, or they can step back, take a few deep breaths, and try to see this as God sees it.

They can choose to tell themselves, "Okay, we just read someone's envy, jealousy or pain and someone is now trying to hurt us. But God knows the integrity of our hearts. He is the expert when it comes to judging the character of Christian leaders. He is capable of holding back the fruit of ministry for reasons of sin, or multiplying a blessing around the world for reasons of favor." With all glory given to the Lord, the fruit of this ministry as witnessed in the life of the GFI community of parents and their children is the greatest defender of who the Ezzos are and how they live their public and private lives.

So, how do the Ezzos personally deal with such out of context reporting? Perspective. When there are over four million precious children whose lives have been guided by moms and dads who love God and appreciate what GFI means to their family, it is hard to dwell on a story that champions the prejudice of others. The Ezzos focus on the evidence of God's love that surrounds them. The sky is blue, the leaves are turning into a rainbow of colors, the grandchildren are coming over to spend the night, three people were saved in their *GKGW* class last week, and tomorrow the sun will come up again.

Regarding Mrs. Turner's article. For those who need to hear it directly, it is enough to say the Ezzos have never been dismissed from any church at any time, nor asked to leave a church, nor confronted on sin issues of such severity, nor have they left any church under a "cloud" of suspicion. Presently, Gary and Anne Marie are in a well established, evangelical fellowship, under normal elder accountability, and continue to minister their gifts with freedom of conscience and full support of their church body and spiritual leadership.

The GFI National Administrators reviewed the claims reported in the *Christianity Today*, an independent counsel of four Godly men called together from around the country and did the same, as well as the Ezzo's pastor and elders, and other local church leaders. None could find evidence to support the type of reporting contained in the November 2000 issue of *Christianity Today*.

To correct some of the less significant comments reported in CT, Gary does have a fully earned Master of Arts degree from Biola University (Talbot Seminary 1985) with a Christian Education emphasis. It is not a work study degree as suggested by Mrs. Turner. To our knowledge BIOLA University does not offer work study master's degrees program. Gary has never intentionally misled anyone about any other degrees. He does not accept the title Doctor, in public or private. He has never pastored a church called His Vantage Point, nor has he ever been asked to step down from any church position for "divisive conduct." There is no cover-up of "embezzled" funds from GFI and no one has was reported to the IRS.

On and on we can go with bits and pieces of small and large falsehoods and fabrications that produced the mosaic of *CT's* story, but does GFI really a need to? One only needs to consider the players. The author was Kathleen Turner. Her pediatrician is/ or formally was William Sears, she is a faithful follower of the La Leche League/Attachment Parenting philosophy, and she works with a contact of the same interest at *Christianity Today*. Her star witnesses included disgruntled former employees of GFI and Christian leaders who the Ezzos personally confronted on matters of leadership sin. The story ran nine months after the supposed events she was reporting took place, (although she reported it as if it took place yesterday) and four months after a third independent review found the claims incredulous. With that type of mix, one cannot expect much more from *CT* in way of journalistic integrity than what we read. It fairly represented *Christianity Today*.