

From GFI Response to Christianity Today:

Attachment One: Review Committee's Findings

GFI Regional and Independent Committee Report Summaries and Findings

In our attempt to stay above reproach and respond prudently to Living Hope's accusations, we invited two committees of men, independent of each other, to come to Los Angeles, review the charges, and evaluate the context of our departure. One review was taken up by the GFI Regional Administrators. Prior to their arrival they invited the Elders of LHEF to meet with them. Their desire was not to criticize the elders but given the far reaching influence of the GFI ministry, it seemed necessary to give the Elders a forum to express how they reached their conclusions and on what basis they brought their charges. The Elders refused to meet or provide any substantiation for their claims. At this time we believe it would be best to let the committee's reports speak to the rest of the issues. The GFI Regional Administrators wrote:

"We examined the allegations presented in writing to the Ezzos, reviewed other significant documentation and interviewed a number of relevant individuals. Unfortunately, we were denied an audience with the elders of Living Hope to review any evidence supporting their charges. Accordingly we could not ascertain their validity. We have seen the Ezzos' documentation that refutes the Elder's charges and believe the documentation has merit. However, we did not overlook the concerns that the discipline process raise. From our review we arrived at the following conclusions.

We cannot endorse the way that the discipline process was carried out by the Elders of Living Hope. In spite of our efforts towards reconciliation, the matter is at an impasse, although pursuant to our efforts, we believe Gary attempted to fulfill Romans 14:19. Regardless, we have encouraged Gary to continue to humble himself and submit to the principles of reconciliation by continuing to pursue the elders regardless of their public decision. As a result of our review it is our collective confidence that we can continue to affirm the Ezzos and endorse their ministry as they walk in integrity and speak the truth of God's Word in love. We continue to recommend the GFI materials to disciple families in biblical principles." [Regional Administrator's Committee Summary July 10, 2000]

The second committee was independent of GFI organizationally and came from such diverse locations as Ohio, Oklahoma, Central California, and Montana. The committee was made up of a Senior Pastor, an Elder Board chairman (of a church of 5,000 members), a Christian Attorney, and seasoned Christian businessman. Specifically the committee was asked to evaluate and examine the evidence and merits of the allegations made against the Ezzos, and whether due process of biblical discipline (Matthew 18: 15-17; 1 Timothy 5:19), was followed. The Independent Committee's wrote:

"We met with Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo and prayerfully considered the events that led to the elders of Living Hope Evangelical Fellowship (LHEF) bringing church discipline charges against them. Before going to California we wrote the pastor and elders of Living Hope asking them to meet with the Ezzos and the committee. The pastor declined our repeated invitations to meet and as a result we were left to examine their charges with the best evidence available to us. From that we concluded the church had not presented evidence to substantiate their charges, and in any event, Gary and Anne Marie had made reasonable efforts to reconcile with those who had been offended. Furthermore, we encouraged the Ezzos to continue their efforts to be reconciled with these men. Thus:, after looking at all the information and documentation which was available to us, we could not confirm any factual evidence supporting LHEF's claims. As a result, we could not endorse LHEF's actions and conclusions. We continue to affirm, support and bless Gary and Anne Marie and the ministry God has entrusted to their care." [Independent Committee Review July 14, 2000]

These two reviews were followed by other comprehensive investigations including one done by our pastor and elders. Each has resulted in similar conclusions.