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On Becoming Baby Wise: Gary Ezzo's Chivalrous Child-Rearing Ethic

The world of evangelical child-rearing advice can be overwhelming. Dominated by individual, charismatic, media-savvy, male personalities, the advice network jockeys for the position of the sole advisor for the evangelical audience. James Dobson, John MacArthur, Hank Hanegraff, and William Sears frequently dole out instructions on how to have a happier, more godly family. All have roots in California, all share the same evangelical creed, and all insist that mothers should focus their attention primarily on their children and their home.

The latest evangelical advisors to enter the child-rearing fray are Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo of Growing Families, International (GFI) in Simi Valley, California. They do not advertise and have gained an international following through word-of-mouth alone. GFI estimates 1.5 million families have participated in GFI classes globally.¹ The organization offers classes, publishes texts, produces videos, and sponsors an Internet forum all to help families “grow kids God’s way.”² Appealing to every stripe of evangelical denominations as well as Mormons, Roman Catholics, and Jews, the Ezzo “approach” is not necessarily new or unusual. Rather Ezzo articulates enduring notions of child-rearing coupled with specific practical advice that gives parents confidence. The Ezzo ethic is so appealing that pediatricians urged Ezzo to publish a non-evangelical version to pass out to their patients, the result being *Baby Wise* and *Baby Wise II*.

This sounds plain enough within an evangelical subculture. Yet Ezzo and his approach have been under vicious attack from secular and evangelical critics alike. Secular criticisms may be explained as the media's misunderstanding and mistrusting separatists' religion.³ Evangelical criticisms, however, are more mysterious to the scholarly outsider. They seem to foment from church politics and ratings battles within evangelical media outlets.⁴

In order to understand the Ezzo approach to child-rearing and how parents actually use it in their homes, I interviewed five Ezzo mothers at length. I met these ladies in the GFI Internet forum and through other personal contacts. Asking them to describe their homes and their hopes for their children revealed that Ezzo offers these evangelical parents an alternative to the "Attachment Parenting" (AP) approaches so popular in evangelicalism. AP disheartened these women and made their home unmanageable. Ezzo, however, gave them a set of procedures that provided self-assurance. I talked to Lindsay Morgan,⁵ who is a lactation counselor and mother of three: an infant, a toddler, and a pre-teenager. Amelia Nichols, a contact for GFI ministries in the Midwest, holds a part-time job and has four children. Amy Hamilton is an editor for an evangelical press and mother of two: a toddler and a pre-schooler. Ann Randall Gilbert is a college instructor with a toddler. And finally, Lillian Williams works as a technical support engineer, a technical writer, and a college instructor as well as a mother of a preschooler and a toddler.

The purpose of this paper is to unpack the Ezzo method through an ethnographic analysis of GFI texts and conversations from GFI supporters. Since Ezzo's main critics are AP parents, I will intertextualize Ezzo within this opposition. Ezzo's critics typically characterize his approach as tyrannical and Attachment Parenting as egalitarian. After reading AP and Ezzo materials and talking to Ezzo parents, however, the argument can clearly be made that Ezzo's take on child-rearing is a relief to tired families. Since Ezzo's supporters have received so much unsubstantiated and negative press recently, I attempt to give them an empathetically critical hearing. My research did not include

interviewing AP parents since I chose to limit my analysis to understanding Ezzo parents and their motivations. The distinctions between AP and Ezzo ethics are not as clear as Chris Jenks' archetypes of the Dionysian child and Apollonian child;⁶ but rather both AP and Ezzo approaches are an interactive discourse that redefines the parent and the home and, thus, the child as well. While Attachment Parenting defines the parent-child relationship as an intimate friendship, Ezzo defines the parent as an orderly teacher who trains a child to perform a beautiful, separated morality.

Attachment Parenting: Mother as Intimate Friend

One side in the evangelical child-rearing spectrum clearly belongs to William Sears—a California-based, evangelical pediatrician endorsed by the La Leche League and primary mouthpiece for “Attachment Parenting” (AP). He summarizes AP in eight “baby Bs”: birth bonding, breastfeeding, babywearing, bedsharing, believing in baby’s cries, building a support network, boundary building, and balance.⁷ He claims: “The parental relationship a child has in his early formative years has a direct bearing on his eventual relationship with God. If a child has learned trust, discipline, and love from his parents, he will be prepared to transfer these concepts to God.”⁸ Sears happily describes the maternal attachment as a mother’s “addiction” to her child.⁹ Since the baby has had to endure the trauma of birth,¹⁰ God intends the mother to reproduce the womb environment in her child-rearing approach. Therefore, AP discourages any parental, or more accurately *maternal*, separation from the child.

Much of Sears’ book is devoted to standard pediatric advice such as introducing vegetables into the child’s diet, proper doses of baby analgesics, and treating the common cold. His most controversial advice, however, is in reference to breastfeeding, babywearing, and bedsharing.

Breastfeeding should continue into the toddler and even the preschooler years as a way to offer “a securing lift, a pick-me-up during times of stress.”¹¹ Whether the stress relief is for the child or the mother, Sears does not specify. He gushes that “a nursing toddler is a beautiful sight” and

fondly recalls a “nursing conversation” from a set of his patients in his office after the child finished nursing: “Mommy’s Moo. No caffeine. No sugar.” He nostalgically reminisces about his four-year-old’s decision to stop nursing announcing “I don’t like it anymore.” Since Sears’ wife was pregnant with their next child, the four-year-old claimed, “I’ll wait till the baby comes then the good milk will be back.” From this anecdote Sears reminds his readers that “the age at which a baby evolved from oneness to separateness should be respected for each individual mother-infant couple.”¹² Yet in practice the child alone makes the decision, not the mother, since she must be ever-available to her little one. The mother is still the disempowered member of a “couple,” completely subjected to the whims and needs of the child other.

Babywearing means “carrying baby many hours a day *before* baby needs to fuss.” “Being nestled in a sling is like an outside womb. The mother’s walking motion reminds baby of the rhythm he enjoyed in the womb. The sling encircles and contains the Infant who would otherwise become agitated and waste energy flinging arms and legs around.” The mother, then, can perpetuate the security of the womb by preserving the same disposition. After months of carrying the infant inside her body, Sears recommends artificially lengthening that position outside the body. Like an amulet almost, the baby is “worn” as a matter of pride and as a jump on fashion since “during the next decade you will see fewer strollers and more slings. It’s a great time to be a baby.”¹³

Bedsharing is also “according to God’s design” and is “more an attitude than a decision about where baby sleeps. It is an attitude of acceptance and mutual trust whereby an infant trusts his or her parents as a continually available support resource during the night just as the infant trusts them during the day.”¹⁴ It can work well only if “it is done with the attitude that God has intended.”¹⁵ Bedsharing also contributes to natural family planning since it elevates a woman’s prolactin,¹⁶ as well as, at the very least from this critic’s perspective, foiling the logistics of future conceptions. In dispelling myths about the family bed, Sears answers the question about disturbed

sexual intimacy: “Nonsense! Absolutely not! This may be the bed where he was conceived. How can love between two parents adversely affect the product of their love? As a father of seven who has practiced the concept of sharing sleep, I do not think our babies have ‘come between us’ that much.”¹⁷ He advises against seeking medical advice about bedsharing because doctors are reared in “detachment and separation philosophy” and have ignored “God-given maternal instincts.”¹⁸ The text even illustrates specific positions to encourage the sleep bonding between the mother-infant couple. He urges fathers that “king-size beds are a wise investment for all new families and are actually cheaper than buying a lot of unnecessary furniture.”¹⁹ He generalizes that most children “wean themselves” completely from bedsharing by age four.²⁰ He is “absolutely certain” that there are no psychological harms from the family bed and, in his “opinion,” that “this is God’s design for sleeping for most families.”

Like babywearing, bedsharing is a third-world cultural practice, Sears claims, and as such it should be embraced by Western cultures as more “traditional.”²¹ He, too, “predict[s]” that the family bed will become more popular because it “never left the intuitive hearts of mothers.”²² AP often trumpets its “cultural-sensitivity” since it embraces third-world ways for a disconnected first-world home. Yet the third-world model is reserved only for the feminized home; the first world moves on in modernized splendor without criticism. That is, while the women are encouraged to maintain their more natural “third-world” ways in the realm of the domestic, the first-world of business and politics is left untouched and uncritiqued. Women are to remain third-world; the masculine first-world need not change.

The “addiction” to attachment that Sears praises is also disturbing. In Sears’ ethic, a woman becomes wholly defined by her role as mother to an infant. Consequently, she must sustain the early mother-infant roles or the even earlier mother-fetus positioning. She must also crave pregnancy and infants since they fulfill and define her. Into the toddler and preschooler years, the mother still

nurses as a “pick-me-up” for the child and herself since breastfeeding is “the most womanly” of “arts.” Her entire identity is maternal and nurturing.

Striving to maintain the pre-birth conditions, Sears’ method is potentially troublesome not only for mothers, but also for children. To theorize the womb as a conflict-free, blissful environment to which we all want to return is to ignore the restrictions implicit in the womb. That is, by continually nurturing, wearing, and sleeping with a child, the parent is not allowing for the child’s freedom but rather imposing a nostalgic set of constraints on the child. Babywearing, for instance, restricts the infant’s limbs from perhaps necessary exercise while making the mother look particularly nurturing and devoted—particularly feminine. Their fetishizing the womb, therefore, hinders both mother and child. The AP method is potentially confining emotionally as well. The tremendous responsibility on the child to decide when to stop infant rites can be burdensome. While Sears casts the child as having complete freedom and security, the onus of such life-changing and (m)other-involved decisions may be overwhelming. While Sears assumes that AP liberates children, the method may be too restrictive for child as well as mother.

Sears’ supposed “cultural-sensitivity” and child-rearing advice, then, is potentially oppressive. He wants to immortalize the pregnant woman as perpetually nursing, perpetually carrying, perpetually sleeping with her baby. Separating from the child is not her decision, but the child’s alone. This attachment way is God’s way, Sears claims,²³ since just like God is ever-available to us as His children, so must we be ever-available for our children. While God’s accessibility assumes omnipotence, mortal human parents, or mothers in actuality, are obligated to retain the same convenience at all times. In sum, Attachment Parenting merely reifies standard gender roles and re-articulates them in terms of freedom, fashion, and faith.

Followers of AP are very committed and passionate about their method and quite vocal in defending it. With the La Leche League—a highly vocal political organization—backing them, AP

parents are quick to critique alternative approaches. Most all the evangelical critics of GFI have roots in Attachment Parenting. When I began my research on GFI, I was bombarded by several e-mails from AP mothers urging me to reconsider my research.²⁴ After I read several web sites excoriating the Ezzos, the evidence against them was clearly more vicious than substantial, more bitter than concrete.²⁵ At the intersection of the highly-charged worlds of evangelicalism, parenting, and the media, ill-tempered and unsubstantiated allegations become the norm.

The Ezzo Ethic: Parent as Teacher

With Attachment Parenting as a foil, Gary and Marie Ezzo offer not a radically new approach to child-rearing, but instead a rather conservative, practical, and eclectic articulation of pre-existing attitudes within conservative evangelicalism. Both AP and the Ezzos define the parent as the child's first exposure to God. Yet while AP defines God as an intimate Friend, the Ezzos focus on God as an ordered Teacher. What Attachment Parenting coddles, Ezzo trains. Although both methods overlap in specific creeds and some advice, the initial groundwork for their child-rearing advice is vastly different. The dominant themes in the Ezzo texts are family-centered parenting, order, balance, and flexibility.

First of all, in the Ezzo ethic, the initial controversy begins with a seemingly radical change in the definition of the family. They critique the culture's assumption that the child should be the center of the home. Instead, the child is a "welcome addition"²⁶—a term frequently quoted among all my interviewees. The family as a whole—not any individual member—is "the primary social unit of every society" and "the most important . . . worth protecting and keeping."²⁷ This deferring a child from the center of attention to a participant in a group gives security and confidence to a child, they claim. It proves that "she belongs to something bigger than herself—she belongs to her family."²⁸ Belonging means participating in relationships, not dominating them.

From this ethic, then, Ezzo assumes that “raising children is a family affair,”²⁹ requiring parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. But foundational to happy children is a happy marriage. The marriage relationship is primary and “transcends all other relationships.”³⁰ One of my interviewees, Ann Randall Gilbert, credits the Ezzo advice for strengthening her marriage. “It’s created a oneness. We’re a team.” A “team” metaphor—“a husband and wife who are committed to each other”³¹—is dominant in Ezzo’s articulation of marriage. Only as a team can parents be truly effective. “The greatest overall influence you will have on your children will not come in your roles as an individual, but in your joint roles as husband and wife.”³²

When the marital relationship is made beautiful, what impressionable child would not want to be part of the family? When two are mysteriously and beautifully united in marriage, what child would not seek the comforts of that togetherness? The best years of parenting will flow out of the best years of marriage.³³

This stable relationship comforts the child and woos them to obey. A happy marriage, then, is the best motivation for a child to be happy. The child is primarily soothed not from the breast or from the mother, but in the parents’ relationship. With the parents as the center of the home, GFI critics worry that children will be overlooked and disempowered. They reason that by giving more attention to the child, s/he cannot be abused. GFI, however, reasons that children do not want individual attention or agency, but group membership. Thus, the child is not neglected, but is treated as another member of the precious family circle.

Secondly, with the model of God as Teacher, the Ezzo approach encourages parents to establish order within their home. Like an elementary school teacher, the parents are to have a “lesson plan.” Maintaining order begins in the first few weeks after the baby arrives. Ezzo proposes an “infant management” system to encourage parents to “[pay] attention to your baby’s needs for outward structure and attention to his developing emotions.”³⁴ He claims that this approach will aid

the physical, intellectual, and emotional health of the child.³⁵ This emphasis on order first appealed to interviewee, Amelia Nichols: “One of the main points that I remember is that God is a God of order, and He wants us to have some kind of order.”

Third, Ezzo is quick to temper the goal of order with the terms “balance” and “flexibility.” He reminds his readers that “sometimes people redefine order to mean rigidity, and that leads to imbalance. Balance includes both structure and flexibility.”³⁶ One of his most unusual devices to maintain balance in marriage is “couch time”:

When the workday is over, take fifteen minutes and sit on the couch together as a couple.

This should take place when the children are still up, not after they are in bed. Explain to them, “No unnecessary interruptions are allowed because this is Mommy and Daddy’s special time together. Daddy will play with Chelsea afterward, but Mommy comes first.”³⁷

While the quotation obviously assumes that Dad is the primary attention-giver and that all family members vie for his concentration, Ezzo hopes that parents will openly demonstrate the primacy of marriage regularly in front of their children. By privileging a quiet time with each other, the parents, Ezzo hopes, can *balance* their lives. By sitting down in front of the child and focusing on each other rather than on her, the parents and the child benefit, he claims. The parents have a chance to keep in touch, and the child knows that her parents still love each other.

This practice seemed to be the most difficult for parents to maintain with a busy schedule. Lindsay Morgan and her husband have “couch time” around the kitchen table after dinner while their oldest is doing the dishes, their toddler is playing on the floor, and their infant is cat-napping. Her toddler does not like his parents being distracted from him. Amy Hamilton also admitted that she and her husband were not consistent with couch time but said that her two children “do notice, and they don’t like it at first. They want to be in on it.” Eventually, Hamilton’s children accepted the practice and even anticipated it. Thus, as toddlers, children are not initially pleased that they are not

the center of attention. While AP would scold parents for being selfish, Ezzo argues that this small frustration trains the child to be unselfish. To this outsider, “couch time” seems rather artificial and stiff within this system. Perhaps this artificiality accounts for how difficult it is for most parents to keep up with “couch time.”

Lastly, within order and balance, Ezzo stresses flexibility. In our conversation, Morgan quickly told me “the biggest word in Ezzo is *context!* Context keeps a person from being a legalist.”³⁸ Ezzo scolds his reader not to “be a legalistic parent. Legalists create prohibitions by elevating a method over a principle. They fail to consider the context of a given situation, stubbornly citing rules instead.” He reminds parents that they are “endowed with experience, wisdom, and common sense. Trust these attributes first, not an extreme of emotion or the rigidity of the clock.”³⁹ That is, parents must use their heads and not follow artificial constraints. Adaptation to context proves that a parent is “in control.”⁴⁰ For instance, “parents should be gracious and appreciative” of nursery workers and baby-sitters and not expect them to be “obligated to maintain” your routine.⁴¹ Parents should also teach their children to adapt to context since, as Hamilton stated, “a child who grows up learning context is going to be able to make his own decisions.” Parents, then, need to be an example of wisdom and graciousness so that their children will learn to be wise and kind as well. When defined as examples, parents must be consistent demonstrations of the ideal they desire for their children.

Family-centered, ordered, balanced, and flexible—an Ezzo home should demonstrate these ideals. Yet these standards are not unique to Ezzo or to evangelicalism. What is most controversial about the Ezzo approach comes in his more specific and most practical advice. While giving concrete directions about infant feeding and sleeping, Ezzo hopes to instill a consistency that will lay a “godly” foundation for the future parent-child relationship. Overwhelmingly, Ezzo parents credit his advice for giving them terrific parenting success.

Infant and Child Care: The Ezzo Approach

Referred to as an “infant-management concept,” Ezzo’s *Baby Wise* aids the parents in satisfying the “needs of a new baby and of the entire family. This plan will not leave mom ragged at the end of the day, nor in bondage to her child. And dad won’t be excluded from his duties, either.”⁴² That is, Ezzo’s system assumes that parents will have responsibilities outside of newborn care. Directing opposing demand feeding, Ezzo recommends “Parent Directed Feeding” (PDF):

Our conviction is that a baby should be fed when he or she signals readiness. With PDF, a mother feeds her baby when the baby is hungry, but she takes advantage of the first few weeks of life to guide the baby’s hunger patterns by a basic routine. This is cooperative parenting. Because routine feedings wonderfully influence the hunger metabolism of an infant, the mother guides feeding times for her baby to meet the baby’s needs, as well as those of the entire family. Both parent and child cooperate in this effort. Because the child is a welcome member and not the center of the family, and because he or she is not as emotionally fragile as attachment theorists believe, everyone wins—baby, mother, father, and the sometimes forgotten siblings.⁴³

PDF is a “proactive approach” to baby care that instills a stable pattern for sleeping and eating for baby, freedom for mom, participation for dad, and parental attention for siblings. While babies may know that they are hungry, they need “parental guidance” to manage their “hunger patterns.”⁴⁴ Like a teacher, the mother guides her newborn into adapting to the family unit. Teaching begins very early in an Ezzo home, with the baby, he claims, learning to sleep on her own.⁴⁵ As a result, Mom gains confidence and “is not enslaved to her child, since the program allows her to keep life’s demands in balance.”⁴⁶ A PDF mom is self-assured since she knows her baby’s patterns and can easily identify a problem.⁴⁷ Dad can be “involved” in the infant “management team” too.⁴⁸ Older children benefit since they are included in Mom and Dad’s routine.

According to Ezzo, all family members need routine. “What is critical to optimal development, is the presence of routine in one’s parenting.”⁴⁹ Therefore, inconsistency—the bane of good parenting—must be controlled even from infancy. “Infants put on a routine become confident and secure in that routine. Their lives have order, and they learn the lesson of flexibility early in life.”⁵⁰ Having order creates confidence in the Ezzo ethic since within order, life is predictable and controllable. Order is also divine and thus a reminder of God’s presence in the home.

Accompanying *Baby Wise*’s discussion of baby care is a critique of the Attachment Parenting notion that identifies breastfeeding as the primary way to calm baby and toddler. “The good news is that a mother’s breasts are not the only source of comfort for a baby.”⁵¹ Ezzo reminds his readers that parents are to change a wet baby, relieve a sick baby, put a sleepy baby to bed, and feed a hungry baby. The breast cannot and should not meet all of a baby’s needs. “If you use one source exclusively—nursing, for example—you are just stopping the cry and not necessarily comforting your baby.”⁵² The Ezzo approach, then, sees parenting as not exclusively maternal or physical, but rather as adaptive training. Since the parent adapts to the child’s needs on a case-by-case basis, the mother’s work especially is not over-extended, but directed specifically to baby’s needs.

After infant feeding, infant sleeping receives much attention. The *Baby Wise* advice regarding sleep parallels Richard Ferber’s popular text, *Solve Your Child’s Sleep Problems*. Both advise putting child to bed awake so that they learn to fall asleep on their own.⁵³ Both discourage sleep props such as pacifiers.⁵⁴ Both discourage rocking, cuddling or nursing to sleep.⁵⁵ Both encourage routine in both sleeping and feeding.⁵⁶ Both advise parents to let their babies “cry it out” the first few nights of sleep training with proper parental intervention at regular intervals.⁵⁷ Since Ezzo’s text so closely resembles Ferber’s, both must also be satisfying a critical need in contemporary American homes. Children and parents are obviously suffering through many sleepless nights. Ferber does not comment on bedsharing, while Ezzo critiques it as “passively abusive” and misguided since the

child's "security is based on proximity, not relationship."⁵⁸ "Parents don't need to be in bondage to their baby's sleep needs. A routine allows infants to establish healthy sleep patterns and to be put down in the crib *awake*."⁵⁹

Ezzo parents cite his sleeping advice as initially the most appealing and most satisfying aspect of the approach. Hamilton's son slept through the night at 12 weeks, Gilbert's preemie at 11 weeks, and Lillian Williams' two babies at 5-6 weeks. Morgan remembers her first (non-Ezzo) child's difficulties with sleeping since "we had the pacifier, we were getting up two to three times a night to find" it. She calls the method "teaching your baby how to sleep" that "helps them establish that pattern [so that] they will not rely on nursing to get to sleep. It brings a certain stabilization and predictability. You help baby learn to sleep on his or her own." Gilbert's preemie had difficulty staying awake during feeding, and, consequently, she did not adhere to a schedule. Therefore, these Ezzo parents have been quite successful with the Ezzo sleeping routine although each adapts the approach to her home. These mothers, then, are far from rigid and use the approach to suit their baby and their family.

While discussing feeding and sleeping, the *Baby Wise* text is extremely careful to offer baby growth charts to prescribe proper weight gain for infants.⁶⁰ The authors enumerate six reasons for Failure to Thrive: improper nursing technique, nature, lifestyle, poor release of milk, feeding too often, and feeding too little. The last reason is the primary barb that media critics throw at Ezzo's method itself although the text specifically warns against it.⁶¹ *Baby Wise* urges parents to avoid "hyperscheduling": "The hyperschedulist insists on a strict schedule, often nursing her baby no more often than every four hours. Enslavement to the clock is almost as great an evil as a mother who is in bondage to thoughtless emotions."⁶² Perhaps Ezzo's text has morphed into a more nuanced articulation over the years, but the *Baby Wise* books as they are printed now are very careful

to offset any hint at rigidity. The focus continually returns to the parent's flexible wisdom, rather than an external schedule or the child's demands.

In reference to Attachment Parenting, Ezzo quips that a mother is “not a marsupial” and a baby is not “a kangaroo joey.”⁶³ Parents must do more than carry and children more than hang on. When asked about AP, Ezzo parents wonder if attachment parents “like the dependency.”⁶⁴ Gilbert mentioned: “I have a sister-in-law who's very much into [AP]. . . . She was horrified that when I'm working and [my son's] in the nursery, I give him a bottle instead of nursing him all the time.” Gilbert reasons that AP “puts undue stress on the children” by making them “the leader” in the home. Morgan takes exception to AP's notion that the breast is the primary means of parental (maternal) comfort. “If my baby is not hungry, I choose to comfort him in other ways.”⁶⁵ That the parent chooses is a common trope among Ezzo parents. Whether feeding or comforting, these contemporary parents obviously feel the demand approach strips them of their own agency. By reinforcing their informed discernment, they believe that their babies benefit more than from the demand approach.

Combining infant feeding and sleeping into the child's routine, Ezzo suggests turning the typical Eat-Sleep-Wake pattern of an infant's life to Eat-Wake-Sleep. The usual Eat-Sleep-Wake pattern encourages the child to eat herself to sleep. As a result, nursing, bottles, and pacifiers become a necessary “prop” for the baby to sleep. The baby is also sleepy while she eats and may not consume enough in one sitting. The Ezzo approach rotates this typical pattern to Eat-Wake-Sleep which allows the child to go to sleep on her own without feeding and to get a complete meal at each sitting.

When I asked her to describe the typical day in her home, Lindsay Morgan was quick to point out to me that she follows a “routine” and not a “schedule.” She proceeded to articulate a well-organized day as she and her husband manage their home with an adolescent, toddler, and

newborn. By the time the infant wakes, she has dressed and had her “quiet time”—an evangelical term for personal Bible study and prayer. She takes care of her infant’s immediate needs, and then her toddler is up and eats breakfast. She plays with her infant while her toddler has “playpen time”—an Ezzo term for individualized and bounded play. Baby then goes down for his first nap of the day, and Lindsay squeezes in some “personal time” to read or respond to e-mail. Playpen time is complete at this point for the toddler, and he and mom play together—coloring, finger-painting, letter-learning, etc.—followed by reading together. The toddler eats and then naps while the newborn is waking up for his lunch as well. Baby sits in his swing or other baby paraphernalia while mom does household chores nearby. Soon he will be down for another nap, and mom finally gets her lunch. After the toddler wakes and has a snack, his older brother is due home from school. They play together while Lindsay makes dinner. Dad arrives from his job as principle of a Christian day school around 6:00 P.M., and the family promptly eats together. The newborn is fed and changed and put down for a cat nap during this time, if needed. From 7:00-7:30 the parents have “couch time” around the dinner table followed by family devotions. From 8:00 on, the baby naps, the toddler sleeps for the night (after Dad has read to, sung to, and tucked him in), and the adolescent finishes homework while Mom or Dad supervises. Just before Lindsay and her husband go to bed themselves, she wakes her infant to give him a midnight snack for the night.

While quite a busy day for a family of five, this outsider wonders if Morgan could accomplish as much as she does *without* such a well-planned day. Her background is in elementary education, and she has professionally managed daycare centers in the past. She methodically speaks of her day like a school teacher would talk about her teaching schedule. Her many “times”—quiet time, personal time, couch time, circle time, playpen time—has a definite classroom ring and signifies a deliberate attempt to balance her attention. This discrete classifying of her day allows her

to meet her extending responsibilities. Without the “times,” perhaps, balance and flexibility is not possible within Morgan’s use of the Ezzo ethic.

The other interviewees described a fairly general routine centered around waking, eating, playing, and working—not as specific as Morgan’s. Nichols spoke of her day’s routine in broad terms and yet was pleased by the routine the Ezzo approach emphasizes. Since she home-schools her children, the routine allows her time to focus on her older children even with her newborn. Gilbert was gratified that the method smoothed her baby’s transition to daycare. Her maternity leave was twelve weeks, and by that time her preemie “was in a regular sleeping time, regular eating time” that she could predict. Williams is a self-employed computer consultant, and routine keeps her life manageable.

The feeding and sleeping routines allow Ezzo parents to maintain with their lives. Parents credit Ezzo’s approach with transforming their homes. When parents talk about their “pre-Ezzo” child-rearing, they remember anxiety and ineffectiveness. “I was totally clueless what to do with this child. She screamed and hollered all the time.” With Ezzo, however, their comments are glowing. Nichols’ later children “were happy all the time. There were times they did fuss and cry, but I was able to figure out why. . . . [I could] stop and think, ‘he’s not wet, and he’s been fed.’” She describes the method as a “blessing”: “We’ve got a plan. Therefore, we aren’t uptight. We all have fun together. . . . We have been freed. We do have a lot of freedom now.” Her babysitters and relatives “love it . . . because it’s so predictable.”

Evangelical and secular media lament Ezzo’s infant-care recommendations. They accuse the method of contradicting medical advice and of causing malnutrition while no specific causal proof exists. Yet in fact, Ann Randall Gilbert first heard about Ezzo from the obstetric nurse in the neonatal unit when her son was born. Gilbert remembered that “the nurse in the hospital recommended it to me, and so many of her colleagues had recommended it to her.” Gilbert and

Williams' GFI class leaders were both medical doctors who highly endorsed the materials. Thus, the Ezzo approach does not clearly contradict medical experts, but rather is one articulation of a method that, while conservative perhaps, is often recommended.

After the baby has matured, Ezzo offers another plan for child care. While the infant care program features a routine, the child-rearing advice overwhelmingly focuses on unselfishness or, as he puts it, "the preciousness of others." Since "we are all precious to God," we must be kind to others.⁶⁶ Parents must "train" children to be mannerly. Even toddlers must learn the "interrupt rule" and "high-chair manners." When correcting a child, parents, too, must be considerate of the child and others nearby. Ezzo mentions that if, for example, your child forgets to say "thank you" after receiving a complement, scolding the child would be disconcerting to the complementer. Instead, the parent should say: "I'm sorry, we're working on that."⁶⁷ As one mother put it, "Everything you do needs to be considering someone else."⁶⁸

Within the theme of unselfishness, manners, first of all, become important even for children since, Ezzo argues, "Children, by nature, can be the cruelest members of any society. But children whose hearts are properly shaped can be vessels of honor used by God, bringing mercy to those who know not mercy and grace to those who know no grace."⁶⁹ Lindsay Morgan described manners as "showing respect for others and their time for others and their property." The "interrupt rule," for instance, is one very practical procedure to teach children this respect. "When your children need to interrupt, have them rest their hand on your side or your shoulder and wait silently until you acknowledge them. . . . This gesture beautifully displays respect for you and the one to whom you are speaking. . . . Then take care of the child's needs."⁷⁰ Anne Hamilton describes the interrupt rule as follows:

We have the interrupt rule where she must touch us. . . . where the child does not do that annoying "Mommy, Mommy. . . ." or just start talking or, what is often thought of as polite,

“Excuse me. Excuse me.” If I’m talking on the phone or to someone else, . . . [she is] to come over and put her hand on me. And I’m to let her know that I know, I put my hand on her hand. . . . It’s great.

The interrupt rule, then, acts as an agreement between parent and child, a “signal” for attention. Each recognizes the other as needing space or time and gracefully and graciously communicates that need. Ezzo talks about the interrupt rule as a “beautiful gesture” that “displays” mutual respect. In other words, this procedure is a courteous act intended to beautifully demonstrate Christian unselfishness.

Secondly, the children must honor the parents’ authority. Ezzo stresses “first-time obedience” as “absolutely essential to proper family government. If your children lack obedience, your efforts are minimized, if not totally in vain. . . . But if they are continually disobedient, you will be thwarted in your efforts to train their hearts. . . . Teach him to obey according to the character of true obedience—immediately, completely, without challenge, and without complaint.”⁷¹ The notion of “true obedience is often more difficult for the parent than for the child,” and parents must not “exasperate [their] children” by “exercis[ing] their authority without thought. Biblical authority is not whimsical or inconsistent.”

Gilbert described how she urges her son to obey immediately. “When we say ‘no,’ we refrain from using a loud voice. We want him to respond to the word and not the tone. . . . Being consistent is the hardest thing.” The primary method for “motivating” your child to obey is through encouragement. “Young children are more apt to take ownership of their behavior when they hear themselves verbalize the rules of conduct and receive praise for the right answers.”⁷² Hamilton illustrated how she motivates her daughter to obey.

They talk about getting your child to obey. One thing is to pre-activity encouragement. . . . [When we visit the doctor, I say beforehand,] “Now Ellen when we get there, when Dr.

Harding walks in the room, What are you going to say?” “I’m going to say ‘Hi.’” “How about saying his name? Don’t you like to hear your name?” “Okay. I’ll say ‘Hi, Dr. Harding.’”

This type of pre-encouragement goes hand-in-hand with post-approval. Continually Ezzo emphasizes the effectiveness of praise. Punishment is a negative statement, but “verbal and physical affirmation go[es] a long way when a child knows his actions please his parents. When your child senses how pleased you are, he is more prone to accept additional responsibility freely.”⁷³

Third, the goal of Ezzo parenting is to train children to discern the “moral reason why.” Ezzo emphasizes a separated, higher moral standard for Christian families. He defines moral character as “the quality of a person’s personality” which must be more “Christian,” more “excellent” than “the moral mediocrity found in the mainstream of our society.” What makes this morality a higher standard according to Ezzo is that it is action-based.⁷⁴ That is, parents must not only prescribe behavior to their children, but also justify it within the evangelical ethic. “Parents often tell their children what to do, but not why they should do it. . . . It is not enough to teach your children how to act morally; they must learn to think morally. Knowing the virtuous motivation for behavior prevents robotic behavior. Children who do all the right things without knowing why they are right are moral robots.”⁷⁵ Thus, from preschool age and up, children should hear not only “Do this.” but also “Here’s why you should do this.” Ezzo calls this the “moral reason why.” When parents give a “moral reason” to their children, parental instruction is kept in check, and children learn to apply those principles to other situations. The child can take “personal ownership of his parent’s values.” Hamilton described the “moral reason” as “giving your child the reason instead of just telling them to do it” so that the child “can transfer that information to other” situations:

Then you are teaching them to deal with concepts instead of just rules. [The moral reason why] helps thinking skills, helps with reasoning. . . . I think that [Ellen] is able to take

circumstances from one situation and apply them to other situations. Not to mention that she is an obedient child. I know that she is going to obey me. And if that continues, I can see that we are going to have a great relationship later. I can trust her. And she can see that I'm doing things for her own good.

Thus, whereas Attachment Parenting attempts to establish immediately a notion of equality between parent (mother) and child, the Ezzo ethic sees "equality" as a long-term, gradually developing goal. Hamilton here articulates a confidence in herself and her daughter's judgment. Since she seizes every opportunity to communicate her personal values to Ellen, Hamilton knows that her daughter will know her parents' morality and own it for herself.

Lastly, while children must be taught to be other-focused, parents must train themselves to be equally respectful of their children. While Ezzo places parents as the children's authority, he is careful to insist that both parents and children are equally accountable to God. To avoid the extremes of authoritarian and permissive parenting, the parent must follow "biblical ethics." "The moral rules for the parents are the same for the child. There is no double standard."⁷⁶ Hamilton credits Ezzo with reminding her that parents do not "know everything" and that they, too, need tempering.

When interacting with a child, Ezzo insists upon "preserving the dignity of the child." Gilbert describes her take on her child's dignity by admitting that "yelling at the child does nothing. It just publicly embarrasses them. . . . I don't want to make him feel that he's bad." Hamilton credits the Ezzo method with empathizing with her child's sensitivity about special toys.

[This is] so interesting. They talk about that there are certain things when people interfere your domain, you feel upset. There's nothing wrong with that. That's your inside telling you that they are doing something wrong. Children have those feelings too. Probably your child has some toys that you just need to put away when company comes. . . . They just don't

want someone to touch that. . . . [Ellen] has this [toy] giraffe, [named “Gaffy”] and Gaffy goes all over. When someone else comes, they don’t play with Gaffy because it bothers her to see other people play with that. [Some people think] there’s some sort of virtue in that kind of sharing. . . . An adult might let a only special friend look at [those special things] . . .

Why would we not let our children have those special things?

The child, then, has the same feelings as adults, but not the same judgment or the same skills.

Frequently, Ezzo describes a childhood frustration in terms to which an adult can relate. Just like an adult has special items to preserve, just like an adult wants to be respected, just like an adult wants to be heard, so does the child. Nevertheless, the child may not know how to react to those feelings, and as such, s/he requires adult intervention and training. Manners, first-time obedience, moral reasoning, and preservation of a child’s dignity all work together under Ezzo’s emphasis on the “preciousness of others.” Both parents and children are responsible for upholding this unselfishness.

The most controversial thing perhaps about Ezzo’s child-care advice is that he offers such concrete advice to parents. The previously-mentioned interrupt rule is one such practical procedure, but two other frequently cited practices are baby signing and the “appeal.” Ezzo does not claim to have created baby signing, but he gives a “moral principle” behind it. Children learn whining—“an unacceptable form of communication that becomes annoying to the listener is left unchecked.” The problem is not the whining itself, according to Ezzo, but the “lack of communicative alternatives.” He recommends starting at eight months of age and suggests that parents go to their local library to find books in order to teach their baby signing.⁷⁷

All the parents to whom I spoke used baby signing with great success. Morgan and Nichols used an extensive number of signs and continue to use them into their children’s school years in order to politely instruct their children in public. Hamilton, Williams, and Gilbert used a moderate number limited mostly to “please,” “more,” etc. Hamilton’s children were more verbal early, and

signing was not as useful. “It’s hard to make them start signing please when they can talk,” she argued. Nichols called the method “a good little witnessing tool” since when people would ask, she “could tell them about [her] church.” Morgan gave an articulate explanation: signing “alleviates [the child’s] frustration. It virtually eliminates whining. [Children] have a receptive vocabulary, not an expressive vocabulary” [at an early age]. And I knew from experience that it did not delay the onset of speaking.” An alternative communication tool to help the child express herself is what baby signing is all about. Ezzo, then, assumes that the child’s feelings are significant and need to be heard in a gracious, beautiful way.

To temper the parents’ decisions and to enable the child to communicate, Ezzo explains the “appeal.” Only after the child has learned first-time obedience, Ezzo instructs parents to teach their children to appeal their instructions. He admits that “appeal” is an odd word choice but likes that it sets the procedure apart from the regular vocabulary and adds a serious tone for both parent and child. If the child discerns that the parent’s instruction is not well-informed, the child is taught to say, “Mom, may I appeal?” The parent is to stop and focus all attention on the child’s argument. After the child has been heard, the parent is to modify her/his instruction accordingly. Hamilton raved about using the appeal with her four-year old.

That is great. She’s really got it. . . . [Ezzo] talks about that there are times when you as the parent do not have all the information. And you make some sort of edict not having all the information, and kids really have a legitimate thing that you need to know that might change your mind. And the rules are [that] they have to approach you in humility, in the right way. And they have to supply new information. Saying “Well, I want to” is not acceptable. That’s not new information.

Hamilton gives the example of Ellen, her four-year-old, who at dinner was dawdling over drinking her milk. Lee, her father, reminded her, “Ellen, drink your milk.” After several tries, the milk was

not gone, and the meal was nearly over. After one last paternal instruction, Ellen chirped, “Daddy, may I appeal? The milk is sick.” Lee checked it, and the milk had soured. Hamilton credits the appeal for eliminating temper tantrums since it gives the child a means to express difference.

To the outsider, the appeal seems like an overly formal and perhaps rigid operation for the home. However, seen as a procedure—like a parliamentary motion—the appeal, as well as baby signing and the interrupt rule, work as an agreement between parent and child. The procedure implies the entirety of the Ezzo ethic: first-time obedience is demonstrated since the child begins to obey before appealing; moral reasoning is used since the child must reason why the parent should reconsider and the parent must hear the child’s argument; and the preciousness of others is highlighted since the child must speak graciously and the parent must respond kindly. The goal of all these procedures is to teach children as well as parents to display a beautiful evangelical godliness.

Giving Parents Confidence: The Ezzo Goal

Outside of specific topics and baby care advice, my conversations with Ezzo parents revealed some general themes about their own parenting worries and successes. All the interviewees expressed anxiety over child-rearing. All felt inadequate or lost with the paltry amount of advice they had received. Several times in our conversation, Ann Randall Gilbert mentioned that her first days as a mother were panicky. “I don’t know what to do with this kid. What do I do? . . . I had no idea. What am I supposed to do with this kid? I guess he was a premie. And I was so desperate for some ideas about something.” Nichols, as well, was dissatisfied with the typical advice. “Everybody said, ‘Feed the baby whenever. If it cries, feed it.’ Our lives were pure chaos. And I was always worried, ‘Am I doing this right?’ I didn’t have any confidence.” Hamilton was overwhelmed by her first baby. “I was totally clueless what to do with this child. She screamed and hollered. But it was pretty soon into it that my sister said, ‘You have to read this book.’”

With the Ezzo method firmly in place, however, the mothers had confidence. Nichols described her relief, stating that now “I know my baby. I know him. I didn’t really know [my first one]. . . . [The newborn] can start fussing, and I know he’s tired, he needs to go to bed. I can figure him out.” Gilbert also was relieved that the approach “helped me get organized so that I could predict his schedule. I like how it put structure to my day. . . . [Colin] got accustomed to that. He knew what [a nap] was, and it wasn’t a problem. . . . I could count on him.”

Early on, *Baby Wise* bolsters a disheartened parent, reminding them to trust their intuition. Anne Marie Ezzo describes GF’s goal as “‘put[ting] courage into’ and through that encouragement” so that “God empowers them.”⁷⁸ By following the Ezzo approach, Williams trusted herself because she knew her baby. “It just boils down to ‘mom and dad know best.’ They know best. And they know their children best. . . . You are responding to your children’s needs. You are just taking advantage of those early weeks to guide them into a routine. . . . My baby is not always crying because she’s hungry. She may be crying because she’s tired.” The Ezzo parents perceive the conventional wisdom of demand feeding to be a panacea that merely palliates baby’s troubles rather than solving them. They feel that Ezzo’s approach reminds them to have confidence in their own intuitive wisdom.

Ironically, these notions of trusting intuition and maintaining balance are dominant themes in Sears’ Attachment Parenting advice as well. As a new mother learns to respond immediately to her baby, according to Sears, she is “becoming a sensitive Christian.” “God designed a mother to pick up her baby (and usually nurse him) when he cries.”⁷⁹ A mother will receive a “peaceful feeling” upon nursing her crying baby giving the mother “immediate gratification” and a “feeling of rightness.” Feeling good and feeling right—qualities of friendship—are troped in Attachment Parenting, whereas doing good and doing right—qualities of duty—are emphasized in the Ezzo ethic. While friendship and duty do overlap, the accent in each position is revealing. AP gains

confidence from a comforting sentiment, Ezzo from an effective choice. AP places mother's milk as the magic potion to end baby's frustration, thus, requiring the mother's body to be ever-available; Ezzo underscores a parent's calculated action, thus, requiring a parent's attention (mother or father) to be ever-ready.

All the interviewers referred to the Ezzo phrase “when a woman becomes a mother, she doesn't stop being a wife, daughter, sister, friend, or neighbor.”⁸⁰ That is, a woman should not seek her whole feminine identity in motherhood alone, but in a variety of relationships. Most of the mothers to whom I spoke went back to work soon after the baby was born. Gilbert returned within eight weeks and was relieved “to be back just with people who talked. . . . It was nice just to have my own thing that I was doing.” Williams was glad that she had her maternity leave to establish the routine so that later sleeping or eating problems were pre-empted. “Since [my daughter] was nine months old, I've been able to [work from home]. This sets up the guidelines to do it when your child's an infant. You don't have to wait.” Therefore, the Ezzo approach seems to give these women a plan to re-enter their world.

When it came to the Ezzo procedures, every parent to whom I spoke was grateful for this practical side. Many evangelical advisors talk in general terms, but Ezzo tackles the mundane, day-to-day practice of child-rearing. Hamilton found the pragmatic advice the most useful for her:

I like the idea that it gave me concrete things to do. And I feel like that we probably adapted some of the things. . . . You go into parenting—this huge job, the biggest job of your life—with absolutely no training. You know, this is really a starting block. Here are some things you can do. Here's a starting place. *So* many of them are so practical.

Giving confidence, encouraging diverse identities, and getting practical are just a few of Ezzo's benefits to the evangelical parent. He also offers a way to be separate from “the world.” Every Ezzo parent to whom I spoke also considered themselves detached from the secular world.

Ezzo assumes this separation when he defines “Christian” character as “moral and social excellence.” “God calls His people to a divine standard, not the moral mediocrity found in the mainstream of our society.”⁸¹

Yet Ezzo also assumes that his listeners will participate in their culture, raising “morally responsible” children who will be productive members of this “free society.”⁸² Lindsay Morgan concluded our interview by sharing a story proving Ezzo’s success to her. “This is why we do this,” she concluded. Several families using the Ezzo approach in her town were under the care of the same doctor. He was impressed by these “polite” children and finally asked why all these children were so “different.” They invited him to their church, he attended and converted to evangelicalism. I related this story to every other interviewee. While they had not had such experiences, all were delighted with this clear demonstration of their excellence before the world.

From the interrupt rule to the well-rested parents, from baby signing to confident families, the goal of the Ezzo ethic is to construct attractive evangelical homes to woo outsiders toward their faith. Morgan’s final story as well as Ezzo’s general tropes of beauty and attractiveness prove that for these evangelicals, their separatism is not reclusive, but publicly exhibited. They offer an alternative to what some would call potentially oppressive demand parenting—an alternative that privileges the family over the individual child, the parents’ wisdom over the child’s whim, God as Teacher over God as Friend.

This separation as attraction trope can explain the typical Ezzo reaction to criticism. Ezzo’s critics, I believe, assume that children have no agency in today’s troubled world and that the home must be a child’s haven. The intense passion that most AP parents express against any alternative parenting proves that they believe children are at grave risk. To create a child’s haven, they assume the child must have complete freedom even at the risk of the parents’ autonomy. Since parents are the typical abusers, they must assume, parents must be disciplined by their innocent, well-meaning

children. Yet by sublimating the mother to the child, perhaps these well-meaning AP theorists are putting children even more at risk. If any person, whether parent or child, feels subsumed, rage will inevitably result.

As an alternative, Ezzo offers his chivalrous ethic for the home. Built upon a maturing mutuality (rather than an initial one) and unselfishness (rather than subjugation), Ezzo articulates practical means to give parents and children agency. Since medical advice about infant care is itself conflicted, that Ezzo offers an alternative to demand feeding approaches cannot be controversial in itself. Ezzo instantiates parent as authority in order to guide a child's behavior, but insists that children's feelings are as deeply significant as adults' and that parents' obedience to God is as paramount as a child's. He suggests unusually elegant procedures to establish an agreement between parent and child of mutual responsibility. He privileges training over indulging, teaching over conceding.

The commitment that the Ezzo approach demands is indomitable. Parents must give reasons, teach procedures, remember manners, interpret signs, be respectful, perform pre-activity encouragements, etc. In sum, Ezzo parents must talk to their children a lot! American parents, in general, take great pride in their parenting skills, are reluctant to admit failure and are recalcitrant toward advice. Perhaps this necessary commitment and seemingly radical redefinition of the family are what stir the media debate.

Yet when asked about the media controversy, most of the Ezzo parents to whom I spoke were indifferent or detached from the whole spectacle. Hamilton never had heard of it and Gilbert remembered something mentioned in a parenting magazine that she easily ignored. Williams and Nichols were somewhat disappointed, but none the worse for wear. Williams guessed that "parenting is... something we [all] take pride in, and you see so many people doing this, and it's opposite of what you do. And so you think "That's not the way I did it and my kids turned out

fine!” Morgan, active in the GFI community, was exasperated by the media’s unethical practices, claiming that the “*Washington Post* article was an outright lie.”⁸³ She knew the people quoted in the article personally and knew that their words had been twisted.

After I mentioned the debate, most concluded that engaging their critics was pointless. Instead, the women reasoned that their objectors must be shown a better way. In other words, for these women trying to practice their faith in their homes, portraying a beautiful example of Christian morality was superior to arguing about it. They were detached but not absent from the discussion. Rather than to deliberate, they choose to demonstrate. Rather than speak, they display. Rather than engage, they woo. Their separated lifestyle is tempered by an desire to make evangelical Christianity beautiful.

Endnotes

¹ Anne Marie Ezzo, e-mail to the author, 29 April 1999.

² In response to my e-mail request, Anne Marie Ezzo described the beginnings of GFI: “In February of 1984, we began meeting with a young pastor and his wife who had a 4 mo. old. He pastored the young married’s fellowship group at the church we attended at the time. We met with them every Tuesday night for approx. 9 mo. and during that time he asked if we would disciple 6 other couples from his Fellowship Group. We agreed and met with them every Wed. night from May to Dec. of that year. Evidently there were sufficient changes in their lives and their children that others asked if we would do this again. We decided to hold an ‘Informational Meeting’ in Nov. of 1984 to see how many couples might be interested and what would be required. We had no workbook or thought of any ministry developing at this time. Eighty couples showed up! Needless to say, we were overwhelmed We met with those couples from Jan-Dec of 1985 with breaks in between. In those days, we meet in what we called ‘contract’ periods. At the info mtg. in the fall of ‘85 250 parents showed up to sign up for the 1986 class, the following year we had 600 parents. By now we had a notebook and some audio tapes. In 1989 Growing Families International was started. . . . Our motivation was basically to come along and just help other young couples asking the same questions we had many years earlier. Guess it was working out the biblical principle of Titus 2 - older discipling the younger. We may not have been that much older than some of the couples in years, but just further down the road in our parenting. Plus, God had placed with us early in our lives a desire for the family. We had no idea what He was going to do with that, and actually just thought it was for us as a couple and maybe the families in the church we were involved with in N.H. We enjoyed our children, yes there were ups and downs but, we also wanted to encourage

other parents and help them to enjoy their children and as we say in our series, that their children would also be enjoyed and bless others.”

³ Jenny Deam, “Babies in Danger,” *Ladies Home Journal* (April 1999): 102+.

⁴ Randy Frame, “Growing Criticism: Groups Back Away From Preparation for Parenting,” *Christianity Today* 42 (9 Feb 1998): 96+. Thomas S. Giles, “Are Ezzos Culturally Insensitive?,” *Christianity Today* 42 (9 Feb 1998): 96+. Thomas S. Giles, “The Brave New Baby,” *Christianity Today* 42 (9 Feb 1998): 96+. Steven R. Rein and Kateri Allison Rein, *Concerns about the Ezzos’ Preparation for Parenting Class* (Richmond, VA) Internet. 4/25/99. Available <http://www.mailing-list.net/redrhino/Ezzo/>. Hanna Rosin, “A Tough Plan for Raising Children Draws Fire,” *Washington Post* (27 Feb 1999) A01.

⁵ All identifiers have been changed to protect the subjects’ privacy.

⁶ Chris Jenks, *Childhood: Key Ideas*, (New York: Routledge, 1996) 70-80.

⁷ William Sears and Martha Sears, *Now That Baby Is Home* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998) 12-14.

⁸ Sears xv.

⁹ Sears 7.

¹⁰ Sears 20.

¹¹ Sears 88.

¹² Sears 88.

¹³ Sears 46-48.

¹⁴ Sears 179.

¹⁵ Sears 179.

¹⁶ Sears 182-84.

¹⁷ Sears 185.

¹⁸ Sears 189-90.

¹⁹ Sears 191.

²⁰ Sears 193.

²¹ Sears 48, 189.

²² Sears 189.

²³ Sears 9-10.

²⁴ A few AP mothers offered to mail me their own information about the dangers of Ezzo parenting. I responded affirmatively to each one yet received no information.

²⁵ Steven R. Rein and Kateri Allison Rein, *Concerns about the Ezzos' Preparation for Parenting Class* (Richmond, VA) Internet. 4/25/99. Available <http://www.mailing-list.net/redrhino/Ezzo/>. For evidence of the passion directed at Ezzo's ideas from AP parents, see Amazon.com's reader reviews at <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0880708077/qid=925745579/sr=1-1/002-7433017-1423422> and <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1576734587/qid=925745579/sr=1-2/002-7433017-1423422>.

²⁶ Gary Ezzo and Robert Buckman, *On Becoming Baby Wise* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1995) 17.

²⁷ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 19.

²⁸ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 25.

²⁹ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 75.

³⁰ Gary Ezzo and Robert Buckman, *On Becoming Baby Wise: Book Two* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1995) 15.

³¹ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 19-20.

³² Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 20.

³³ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 21

³⁴ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 41

³⁵ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 155, *Baby Wise: Book Two* 26.

³⁶ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 164.

³⁷ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 26.

³⁸ “Legalism” is a common worry among evangelicals and is a reference to Scripture where Christ frequently reprimands the Pharisees’ strict adherence to the law over grace.

³⁹ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 104.

⁴⁰ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 105.

⁴¹ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 164.

⁴² Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 17.

⁴³ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 39.

⁴⁴ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 54.

⁴⁵ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 42-46.

⁴⁶ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 47.

⁴⁷ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 68.

⁴⁸ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 48.

⁴⁹ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 64.

⁵⁰ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 129.

⁵¹ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 138.

⁵² Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 139.

⁵³ *Baby Wise* 146. Richard Ferber, *Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985) 62-72.

⁵⁴ Ferber 59-62.

⁵⁵ Ferber 59-62.

⁵⁶ Ferber 15-21, 84-89.

⁵⁷ Ferber 63.

⁵⁸ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 59.

⁵⁹ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 58.

⁶⁰ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 86.

⁶¹ Deam 102. Rosin A01.

⁶² Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 90.

⁶³ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 159.

⁶⁴ Gilbert.

⁶⁵ Morgan.

⁶⁶ Gary Ezzo, "Respect for Age," (Simi Valley, CA: GFI International) Internet. 4/25/99.

Available <http://www.gfi.org>.

⁶⁷ Ezzo, "Respect for Age."

⁶⁸ Hamilton.

⁶⁹ Gary Ezzo, "Respect for Peers and Siblings," (Simi Valley, CA: GFI International) Internet. 4/25/99. Available <http://www.gfi.org>.

⁷⁰ Ezzo, "Respect for Age."

⁷¹ Gary Ezzo, "Principles of Obedience," (Simi Valley, CA: GFI International) Internet. 4/25/99. Available <http://www.gfi.org>.

⁷² Gary Ezzo, "Motivating Children Through Encouragement," (Simi Valley, CA: GFI International) Internet. 4/25/99. Available <http://www.gfi.org>.

⁷³ Gary Ezzo, "Helping Children Internalize Values," (Simi Valley, CA: GFI International) Internet. 4/25/99. Available <http://www.gfi.org>.

⁷⁴ Gary Ezzo, "What is Moral Character?" (Simi Valley, CA: GFI International) Internet. 4/25/99. Available <http://www.gfi.org>.

⁷⁵ Ezzo, "Helping Children Internalize Values."

⁷⁶ Gary Ezzo, "The Extremes of Parenting: Authoritarian and Permissive," (Simi Valley, CA: GFI International) Internet. 4/25/99. Available <http://www.gfi.org>.

⁷⁷ Gary Ezzo, "Whining in Children," (Simi Valley, CA: GFI International) Internet. 4/25/99. Available <http://www.gfi.org>. Ezzo is speaking of the following book: Linda Acredolo, *Baby Signs: How to Talk With Your Baby Before Your Baby Can Talk* (Lincolnwood, IL: NTC/Contemporary Pub).

⁷⁸ Anne Marie Ezzo, e-mail to the author, 29 April 1999.

⁷⁹ Sears 29-30.

⁸⁰ Ezzo, *Baby Wise* 39.

⁸¹ Ezzo "What is Moral Character?"

⁸² Ezzo, *Baby Wise: Book Two* 9.

⁸³ Morgan is referring to the following article: Hanna Rosin, “A Tough Plan for Raising Children Draws Fire,” *Washington Post* (27 Feb 1999) A01.