

**BREAKING THE SILENCE:  
A RESPONSE TO BILL ALNOR'S CRUSADE AGAINST CRI**

by Elliot Miller

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## CHAPTER SUMMARIES

### **Introduction: Why This Book?**

Over the past thirteen years the integrity of the Christian Research Institute (CRI) and its president, Hank Hanegraaff, have been subjected to sustained Internet, media, and word-of-mouth attacks that have largely become the mission of one man: William M. "Bill" Alnor. While Alnor has not been successful at utterly destroying CRI, he has been successful at keeping the perception of controversy alive, and through this he has also been successful at eroding our influence in the body of Christ and our financial support.

Some time ago it reached a point where there were so many allegations that we could not possibly answer all of them, but we do want to provide concerned and conscientious individuals with enough information to see that the allegations can be satisfactorily answered. Although responding to Bill Alnor is the immediate purpose of this book, it also provides a highly instructive case study in errors to avoid when pursuing both discernment ministry and Christian journalism.

### **Chapter One: The Vision of CRI**

The Christian Research Institute was founded by Dr. Walter Martin in New Jersey in 1960. Walter's vision was to take the research of "top apologetics" and make it accessible to lay people as "pop apologetics" (as opposed to "slop apologetics") so that they would become confident in their faith, discerning of doctrinal error, and able to make a compelling defense of the hope that lies within them to cultists, occultists, atheists, and unbelievers of all kinds. In the late 1980s Walter came to understand that it was time for him to pass the leadership of CRI to the next generation. In late 1988 he announced that, while he would remain the public face of CRI, CRI board member Hank Hanegraaff would take over its day-to-day direction. Just one-half year later, in June 1989, Walter Martin died.

In the years that followed Hank did a phenomenal job of moving Walter's vision toward fulfillment by transforming CRI from a niche ministry mainly reaching the Christian countercult community to a major, high-profile ministry reaching the body of Christ at large. Since 1995 the ministry has had to weather the repeated onslaughts of Alnor and his associates, but it has stayed on course with its original cause concept and continues to bear abundant fruit for the Kingdom of God.

## Chapter Two: The Fruit of CRI

CRI is playing a vital role in bringing apologetics and doctrinal discernment to the masses. For example, *Bible Answer Man* (BAM) listener Susan Mudd tells us, "I started listening to the *Bible Answer Man* in 2003 because a co-worker told me about some things she had learned from the program and I...wanted to counter what she was telling me. The total opposite happened....I have been saved." Alan Mulkey says that finding BAM was like coming "across a lighthouse in a stormy sea. I finally found someone who not only could explain what was wrong with this Word of Faith Theology, but also had the conviction to stand up and refute error when it is evident....Your show was a life raft for me."

Pastor Ed Young of Second Baptist Church in Houston speaks for many Christian leaders when he says to Hank, "You have kept the church...straight in orthodoxy, in understanding basic doctrinal truths....I think you are God's man for your calling for just such a time as this." It is this undeniable and critically important equipping work of God's people in sound theology, apologetics, critical thinking, and interfaith evangelism that Bill Alnor has been assaulting and working overtime to destroy.

## Chapter Three: Alnor as News Editor

As editor-in-chief of the *Christian Research Journal* I began accepting news stories from Bill Alnor in the Summer 1987 issue and one year later I appointed him to be our news editor. He brought to the task an acute nose for news but it was not long before a pattern of factual inaccuracy and tabloid tactics surfaced in his stories. A disturbing tendency toward crusader journalism, in which he claimed a divine mandate to go after allegedly corrupt Christian leaders, also emerged.

Walter Martin expressed his preference that Alnor be fired. Instead, in May 1989 I stipulated to Alnor that if he wished to maintain his position he would need, among other things, to make every effort to interview all parties in a story, avoid hearsay, and steer clear of anonymous sources. Alnor agreed to these terms and also said he would abandon his crusade against a leading Christian apologist. For two years thereafter there were no notable problems with Alnor's work but then, over the following two years, the same problems resurfaced in five additional articles. One of those problematic articles concerned a controversial Christian group called Set Free Christian Fellowship. The article deeply troubled Hank, who by this time had succeeded Walter, because it made no serious effort to balance serious allegations against Set Free with the other side of the story.

Alnor also launched a vigorous crusade against Set Free's leader Phil Aguilar that was independent of CRI but confused the public as to CRI's position on the group because of Alnor's association with the *Journal*.

It was clear that Alnor's approach to countercult ministry irreconcilably differed from CRI's and his reckless journalistic practices had returned with a vengeance. In February 1992 my six-member editorial board unanimously advised me it was time to fire Alnor. Alnor found out about this decision before I was able to break it to him, called me about it, and arranged to leave a paper trail to make it appear that he resigned. However, sufficient written documentation and witnesses exist to corroborate that Alnor's exit from the News Watch department was initiated by CRI and not by Alnor.

#### **Chapter Four: Alnor as Director of EMNR**

Alnor proceeded to revive his old ministry, Eastern Christian Outreach (EChO). In late 1993 the Evangelical Ministries to New Religions (EMNR), on whose board I sat, accepted Alnor's offer to serve as its executive director, despite my misgivings. EMNR was created to bring unity and cooperation among countercult ministries, but Alnor was driven to take sides in conflicts that erupted in the countercult community. This he did when he expressed to *Christianity Today* his support of a former EMNR board member's controversial inclusion of an EMNR member ministry in his book on "Churches That Abuse."

In March of 1994 CRI experienced its own controversy as Brad Sparks, a former CRI employee, sued the ministry for laying him off and included numerous outrageous allegations of illegal activity in his complaint. Sparks organized a group of disgruntled former employees and they broadly disseminated their anti-CRI materials. Once again, Alnor could not refrain from getting involved and sent Hank a February 6, 1995 letter ostensibly to promote "restoration." Contrary to that purpose, Alnor repeated numerous unproven allegations as if they were facts and blind copied the letter both to Hank's fiercest adversaries and to the press, who all received the letter well ahead of Hank. He said, "*I am on the verge of moving out of neutrality and opposing you....*"

I found Alnor's conduct so inappropriate for the director of EMNR that I called an EMNR board meeting to deal with it. I mentioned to the board similar problems that Alnor created for CRI that led to his being fired. Alnor replied that I was lying and claimed that he resigned. The EMNR board told Alnor that he could continue as director only if he backed off from CRI. Despite Alnor's

apparently strong desire to retain his position, he proceeded to disseminate demonstrably false and injurious information about CRI in his newsletter and clearly had some level of involvement with a rumor that Hank had taken a bribe from Phil Aguilar. In fact, this demonstrably slanderous story provides an excellent example of how anti-CRI rumors are conceived, take on a life of their own, and refuse to die.

### **Chapter Five: Alnor as Relentless Opponent of CRI**

By early 1996 Alnor's continued inability to refrain from divisive activity and his abuse of EMNR funds cost him the executive director position. No longer constrained by the EMNR board, he was free to join forces fully with those who were opposing CRI, and he quickly moved to the forefront of such activity. He and his associates would obtain Hank's speaking itinerary and send defamatory materials to the churches and other venues to which Hank would be arriving. He worked to develop "moles" within CRI who would keep him aware of CRI's activities. Through this information he was able to contact new personnel to give them a "friendly heads up" about the troubles at CRI, thus enlisting new moles and perpetuating the very troubles about which he contacted them.

In 2001 Alnor announced on his *Christian Sentinel* Web site a "shift of focus" that would be "real and permanent" to an even greater emphasis on "exposing hypocrisy and corruption in religion." He stated that this shift would involve "tracking and cataloguing the scandals within the church as a part of an important worldwide service..." He acknowledged that some would call this work "gossiping" and "muckraking" but clarified that "we don't mean anything personally by it." He also pointed out that "the famous 'muckrakers' of the early part of the 20th Century...did their reforming work because they believe God wanted them to."

### **Chapter Six: Mail Fraud?**

On January 19, 2005 Bill Alnor posted an article on his *Christian Sentinel* online magazine that reported that Hank Hanegraaff was soliciting funds to make up for donations that apparently had been lost in the mail by the Rancho Santa Margarita, California post office over a period of up to three months. Alnor said he contacted the same post office and no one was aware of a problem with CRI's mail. Alnor then filed a complaint with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service alleging that CRI was perpetrating mail fraud.

Alnor's *Christian Sentinel* article opened with, ""Christian Research Institute (CRI) President Hank Hanegraaff has become the focus of a federal criminal mail fraud investigation sparked last week by an unusual 'urgent memo' fundraising appeal letter he released on Friday on CRI's website." CRI had become used to Alnor making allegations of unethical activity against the ministry, but to claim that CRI was under a federal criminal mail fraud investigation went over the line. CRI's board of directors observed that this false claim was getting traction in the press and disturbing CRI's donors, and so they decided that the facts needed to be established in a court of law.

Alnor's legal team of the ACLU and the law firm of Ross, Dixon, & Bell moved to have the case stricken from the court on the basis that it violated free speech protections enshrined in California law. The trial court judge rejected their motion but Alnor appealed and in 2007 he obtained a two-to-one decision from the Court of Appeal to have the lawsuit overturned. In his August 7, 2007 update on his Web site Alnor proclaimed, "Victory! CRI/Hank Hanegraaff loses merit less [sic] defamation law suit against Bill Alnor!"

A public statement released by CRI after the appellate court's ruling summarizes CRI's position on both Alnor's mail fraud allegation and the lawsuit:

On February 28, 2007, the three-judge Court of Appeal in California unanimously agreed with the trial judge that a preponderance of evidence showed that journalist William Alnor made false and negligent statements regarding the Christian Research Institute and its president Hank Hanegraaff. The panel was split, however, on whether to impose liability on Alnor for his false statements. The issue on which they could not agree was whether Alnor made the statements with actual malice, beyond negligence, knowing them to be false allegations, which constitutes the extremely high threshold public-figure plaintiffs must meet in order to impose liability for false statements.

CRI's purposes for bringing this matter to court were (1) that the ministry be vindicated of Alnor's outrageous charges and (2) to expose his unprofessional and harmful journalistic practices. We are satisfied that the judgments rendered in the Court of Appeal's decision accomplishes both of those purposes; that is, CRI is vindicated of Alnor's charge of mail fraud and Alnor's credibility as a journalist is seriously damaged. We believe an objective reading of the Court of Appeals' decision can yield no other conclusion. Furthermore, CRI's decision to file suit is supported by the



fact that both the trial court judge and the presiding judge of the court of appeal determined that clear and convincing evidence of actual malice was presented by CRI.

### **Chapter Seven: Abuse of Funds?**

On his Web site Bill Alnor urges Christians “NOT to contribute financially to CRI” and comments that Hank “has pretty much ruined [CRI] by making it a money machine.” In the July 2003 issue of *The Christian Sentinel E-Update* Alnor reported that CRI was undergoing a compliance review by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) that had uncovered problems with the CRI board and also with expenditures.

Alnor’s report contains both false and misleading statements, partly due to a premature and inappropriate public statement ECFA made that they later corrected. In the end, ECFA issued a public statement that should be reassuring to CRI’s donors. It affirmed that ECFA had closely monitored CRI’s response to their requirements and they were satisfied CRI was now in full compliance with their standards. They also clarified that “the deficiencies in compliance with ECFA Standards found at CRI were not willful on the part of the ministry, nor was the ministry’s accomplishment of mission objectives, consistent with donor expectations, negatively impacted.”

There are two major reasons why many Christian organizations decide not to apply for membership in ECFA. First, ECFA sets limits to the salaries that can be paid to members of an organization so that they are reasonably proportionate to the income generated by that organization. Second, ECFA prohibits principals of the organization from receiving the profits of any books or other materials they have written that are sold by the organization for promotional purposes. ECFA was established to address abuses in these areas, and supporters of a ministry can be reasonably assured that if that ministry is a member in good standing with ECFA its salaries and fund-raising practices are consistent with its nonprofit purposes. The truth is that CRI not only *meets* but *exceeds* ECFA standards because whenever CRI sells a book by Hank or any other CRI author, all of the profits go back to the ministry regardless of whether the book was used for promotional purposes.

One would think Alnor must be the standard-bearer of financial integrity in light of the way he so self-righteously goes after other Christians. He neglects to mention that EChO/Christian Sentinel is not and never has been a member of

ECFA, even though they do sell their products online on their “Christian Sentinel Store” page. Furthermore, he has given no indication whatsoever that he operates by ECFA (or any other) financial ethics standards. Considering that he has on many occasions concluded that Hank and CRI are guilty of misdeeds on the basis of mere hearsay, Alnor cannot survive scrutiny by his own standard. As far back as 1996 EMNR and CRI were contacted by former staff people of Alnor’s EChO, alleging that they had witnessed Alnor abuse EChO and EMNR funds and lie to staff, supporters, and leaders of his church on several occasions.

### **Chapter Eight: Plagiarism?**

In an August 2004 editorial in the *Christian Sentinel*, Bill Alnor wrote: “The evidence is overwhelming: Christian Research Institute (CRI) President Hank Hanegraaff has engaged in serious instances of repeat plagiarism.... My investigation that was part of my study of plagiarism in the religious media also underscores what action Christians should take concerning Hanegraaff and CRI: A complete boycott.” In the chapter in his doctoral dissertation on plagiarism devoted to Hank, Alnor writes, “Most of the plagiarism allegations lodged against Hanegraaff stem from three of his books that he wrote prior to his takeover of CRI. They were *Memory Dynamics*, *Memory: Your Key to a Rewarding Education* and *Personal Witness Training*....”

Alnor provides a table with parallel columns demonstrating similarities between Hank’s *Memory: Your Key to a Rewarding Education* and Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas’s *The Memory Book* that he believes prove Hank plagiarized Lorayne and Lucas (L&L). They include the fact that both L&L and Hank use the shape of Italy like a boot, the acronym HOMES for the Great Lakes, and the acrostic “Every Good Boy Does Fine” to remember the treble clef as examples of how association can help with memorization. He documents that both L&L and Hank use the sounds of the same letters to represent different numbers, such as the number two being represented by the letter n. Finally, Alnor points out similarities between “peg words” Hank and L&L use to help their readers remember numbers, such as the number one being represented by a tie.

Alnor demonstrates no understanding whatsoever of the field of mnemonics (memory assistance) in which both Hank and L&L were writing. For instance, none of the examples he cites to prove Hank plagiarized L&L in the first seven of the nine rows in his table were created by L&L but are part of the public domain and are commonly used by teachers of mnemonics.

As to the examples in the remaining two rows, these do not constitute plagiarism either. Every allegation of plagiarism against Hank is based on faulty assumptions and in this case one such assumption is that the memory-triggering devices used in mnemonics are proprietary to whoever created them. Mnemonics is in some respects a science and as such it is developed collectively and progressively by innovators in the field. Each new author in the field is not expected to start from scratch and reinvent the basic constituents, symbols, or language of the field (e.g., peg words or associations) simply for the purpose of not repeating what has already been developed before. Hank did not plagiarize L&L any more than they plagiarized earlier mnemonics writer David Roth or Roth plagiarized Felix Berol, who published his book on mnemonics just four years prior to Roth's. Each of these authors, including Hank, used peg words and other memory devices that previous authors employed while also adding new peg words and other distinctive innovations that justified the addition of a new book to the literature. None of them claimed that that all the ideas they were presenting were their own, and Hank, more than any of the others, acknowledged his indebtedness not only to ancient but also to contemporary sources.

As if all this were not bad enough, Alnor, who has set himself up as an authority on plagiarism, is guilty of plagiarism in the very creation of his plagiarism chart! Alnor thinks he escapes this by stating immediately above his table, "Some of this original chart created by the author is based upon examples originally given in an article that first appeared in the Internet in 1995," but careful analysis reveals that *all* of the examples first appeared in that article. Contrary to the clear implication of the word "some," Alnor contributed no new examples—only the chart format is new. Alnor's replication throughout his chart of the 1995 article's distinctive typos proves that he only drew his quotes from that article and strongly suggests that he never interacted with the primary sources at all in this research on Hank that helped earn his doctorate.

Alnor proceeds to write: "Some scholars have also looked at Hanegraaff's borrowings from [D. James] Kennedy[*'s Evangelism Explosion (E.E.)*]. . . . So far the most thorough study of the alleged plagiarism was written by Robert M. Bowman, Jr., who produced a 26-page scathing report on the plagiarism. . . . The scholarly study includes 15 pages of tables showing similarities between Hanegraaff's work and Kennedy's that highlights 89 sections (many entire paragraphs) of his book in which Hanegraaff lifts from Kennedy."

Bowman too created a chart with parallel columns to display similarities between Hank's *Personal Witness Training* (PWT) and Kennedy's E.E. For example, in a simulated evangelistic visit to a home, Kennedy has the E.E. practitioner asking, "How did you happen to attend our church?" while Hank has a PWT practitioner asking, "Earl, how did you happen to visit our church?"

Just as the charge that Hank committed plagiarism of L&L was based on faulty assumptions, so too the charge that he plagiarized Kennedy. One such unwarranted assumption is that Hank is taking Kennedy's material and "passing it off as his own." Not only does Hank acknowledge his indebtedness to Kennedy in PWT but the manner in which he acknowledges him implicitly but clearly acknowledges E.E. Contrary to what some believe, Hank's incorporation of E.E. material into PWT wasn't news to Kennedy. Kennedy was the one who first asked Hank to create an inherently memorable version of E.E. (which, at its heart, is what PWT is) before deciding against it because E.E. was too well established in different translations internationally to be changed. Hank also sent Kennedy prototypes of PWT as he was developing it. In the mid 1980s Kennedy even had Hank teach an early version of PWT to his congregants at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church.

The faulty conclusion of plagiarism could have been avoided if the right questions were asked:

1. *What kind of publication is PWT?* PWT is a training manual to help believers win souls that was never professionally published. A training manual is not the place to unfold new ideas but rather to lay out step-by-step proven methods for doing something effectively. While E.E. is almost entirely written in standard paragraph form with fully developed prose, PWT is largely written in outline form with blanks for the student to fill in at every point. It is properly a workbook. E.E. is more properly a study book.
2. *Why was PWT written?* PWT was written to make the E.E. gospel presentation more user friendly by packaging it in an inherently memorable format. This format was Hank's creation and provided a strong justification for publication. Furthermore, Hank added many additional innovations to the gospel presentation that go beyond what is found in E.E.
3. *Who was PWT written for?* PWT was created when people to whom Hank was teaching E.E. one night a week and Bible memorization another night

asked him to make E.E. inherently memorable in a manner similar to what he had done with the Bible. Does Alnor really expect us to believe that these people thought Hank created the E.E. material he was now teaching in a memorable format? Does he expect us to believe that Hank was trying to make them think that?

The plagiarism allegations need to be put in context. At the time they were originally made some people held the opinion that Hank was unqualified to take the place of Walter Martin. When Hank began to write material such as *Christianity in Crisis* that would seem to contradict that view, some alleged that Hank's materials were ghostwritten. The plagiarism charge was another attempt to discredit Hank's claim to the leadership of CRI: "Even when he writes he's incapable of producing anything original."

The people who cling to this ghostwriter/plagiarist characterization of Hank are chasing after the distant echo of a rumor that was long ago discredited. There is absolutely no evidence that Hank uses a ghostwriter and the allegation is laughable to anyone who works closely with Hank. Furthermore, none of the professionally published books that Hank has produced since he came into his own at CRI remotely approach even the broadest definitions of plagiarism. After fifteen years of Hank's daily hosting the *Bible Answer Man* and his creation of a truly impressive body of work it is astounding that we still need to have this discussion about his qualifications to lead CRI.

### **Conclusion: Consider the Source**

These allegations will not end. Bill Alnor behaves as though his reason for living is to bring down Hank Hanegraaff and with him CRI. We are called to the defense of the gospel, not of ourselves, and we cannot justify diverting any more of our precious time from our ministry objectives than we are using here to answer Alnor and company's never-ending allegations. We trust that the information in this book is sufficient to assure you that we do have answers to Alnor's allegations. We request that in the future, when Alnor would have you believe that he is doing God a service by attacking a fruit-bearing ministry, you will consider the source of the attack.

## INTRODUCTION: WHY THIS BOOK?

*As I've done different searches on the Internet, one thing that never ceases to amaze me is how many people seem to think it is their God-given duty to set themselves up as judge, jury and executioner of those doing public work throughout the body of Christ and presuming they have all of the facts. A dangerous practice. I wish someone would write a book condemning it.  
"The first to present his case seems right, til another comes forward and questions him." Proverbs 18:17 (NIV).  
—Cindee Martin Morgan*

Over the past thirteen years the integrity of the Christian Research Institute (CRI) and its president, Hank Hanegraaff, have been subjected to sustained Internet, media, and word-of-mouth attacks that have largely become the mission of one man: William M. "Bill" Alnor.<sup>1</sup> With a few exceptions it has been the policy of CRI not to respond publicly to the accusations of Alnor and those who are working with him. It was our experience that if we wrote one thousand words in our defense, they would write ten thousand words to try to rebut our defense, and then we would need to answer the new allegations in their rebuttals, and so on. We found ourselves being diverted from our calling to defend the gospel into the infinitely less fruitful and meaningful activity of defending ourselves. We therefore kept busy doing the work to which we were called and hoped that eventually our antagonists would find something more constructive to do. Many of them did, but Alnor has proven to be a man obsessed.

It truly seems to be Alnor's life mission to destroy the reputation of Hank Hanegraaff and to bring down the ministry of CRI. Every few years we can expect a major new attack, either directly perpetrated by Alnor or perpetrated by others with Alnor's clear encouragement and assistance. These attacks will usually first be launched on the Internet and then will escalate to the major Christian and secular media. To make matters worse, with few exceptions, Alnor and those working with him have been given ample room to tell their stories while CRI's side of the story has been inadequately represented, and the words chosen by the reporters have sometimes implied guilt for CRI where no guilt had

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<sup>1</sup> I might also mention Jackie Alnor, Bill's wife, who has aided and abetted him throughout his campaign.

been proven.<sup>2</sup> The very fact that such allegations have been reported in respected news outlets such as the *Los Angeles Times* and *Christianity Today* gives them an aura of credibility, and Alnor and company have exploited this perception to the fullest advantage. While Alnor has not been successful at utterly destroying CRI, he has been successful at keeping the perception of controversy alive, and through this he has also been successful at eroding our influence in the body of Christ and our financial support.

Our decision not to respond publicly to the ongoing relentless attacks of Alnor has allowed the gradual creation of a complex body of unanswered allegations. The use of the Internet to spread and embellish these allegations has resulted in the perception for some people that “where there’s smoke there must be fire,” and our silence has been taken by some as an admission of guilt. Some time ago it reached a point where we could not possibly answer all of the allegations, there were so many. We have no expectation that the contents of this book will satisfy people with a similar mindset to Bill Alnor, but we do want to provide people of a different mindset, who have been touched by the ministry of CRI but are disturbed by some of the allegations, with enough information to see that we do have satisfying answers to them. We therefore are making available for the first time *Setting the Record Straight*, a document that was prepared to answer the original allegations in 1995 but never published (see appendix D). The present text will answer the most common serious allegations that appeared after the preparation of the 1995 document.

Although responding to Bill Alnor is the immediate purpose of this book, it also serves a larger and ultimately more important purpose. It provides a highly

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<sup>2</sup> A classic example of this phenomenon was the August 15, 1994 *Christianity Today* article by John Kennedy, “Making Radio Waves,” which included the subhead, “When Leaders Stumble” (<http://www.ctlibrary.com/ct/1994/august15/4t9042.html>). The examples of stumbling leaders that the article provided were the following radio hosts: (1) Darrow Parker, who resigned after confessing to “personal failure and marital infidelity,” (2) David Hocking, whose program was terminated after he admitted to “moral failure in recent months that led to sexual sin,” (3) Bob George, whose show was pulled after he “pleaded no contest to soliciting a prostitute,” and (4) Hank Hanegraaff, who, according to his accusers, “withdrew CRI from [the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability] in 1992 so that he could keep \$500,000 in book royalties from *Christianity in Crisis*; secretly borrowed \$100,000 from CRI as a down payment for an expensive residence; and intimidated, manipulated, and fired workers without cause.” The question begs to be asked: what is wrong with this picture? Hank was lumped in with three “leaders” who had confessed to serious sexual sin, whereas his alleged improprieties were all unproven and denied by both Hank and CRI. In fact, each of these three allegations will be soundly refuted in the course of this book (see especially appendix D).

instructive case study in errors to avoid when pursuing both discernment ministry and Christian journalism. Alnor typifies to a great extent what is wrong today in both fields. CRI is a discernment ministry and one of the services we provide the body of Christ is to teach discernment skills. To those who are pursuing discernment ministry or journalism as well as to Christians generally who wish to grow in sound principles of ministry and Christian thinking, the narrative and analysis provided in this book offer a significant learning opportunity.

In the broader scheme of things Bill Alnor is a minor player, but in the Internet age someone sitting in the back of a trailer with a modem can succeed at redefining a ministry or a Christian leader for a vast public through a strategic use of the Worldwide Web. Now, more than ever, Christians need to learn the right questions to ask when confronted with damaging allegations made against someone whose ministry they have benefitted from and trusted.

**August 25, 2010 Postscript:** The main body of this work (including the text immediately above) was completed in the fall of 2008, and just as we held the 1995 document, *Setting the Record Straight* (appendix D in this book) back from publication, so we have done with this book, allowing ourselves as much time as needed to weigh prayerfully the matter of proceeding to publication.

In some ways the situation has changed since I began writing this book. Bill Alnor has assumed a lower profile in the battle against CRI. His Web site, which is footnoted frequently in this book, is now defunct.<sup>3</sup> In other, more significant respects, however, the situation has *not* changed. As recently as three weeks ago (on August 4, 2010), Alnor presented a paper at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) that, as he described it to colleagues on an apologetics e-mail list, “has to do with allegations of plagiarism directed at CRI president Hank Hanegraaff in allegedly lifting materials from Jerry Lucas’s work.”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Alnor’s false and damaging allegations are as prominent as ever, whether in his own articles that are now featured on other people’s Web sites, or in newer material written by other authors who often not only repeat but embellish his errors.

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<sup>3</sup> References to Alnor’s site can still be checked out by accessing Google’s “WayBackMachine” (<http://www.archive.org/>), typing or pasting in the URL given in the footnote, and clicking on the date that corresponds to the one given in the footnote.

<sup>4</sup> From a July 30, 2010 e-mail from William Alnor to the apologetics list AR-Talk with the subject line, “AEJMC paper on Jerry Lucas/Hanegraaff plagiarism.”



While we sincerely pray for Alnor, his long and fierce opposition to a fruit-bearing Christian work has eternal consequences and continues to demand a response. Appendixes have been added to answer further allegations made by Alnor's collaborators who have moved into the forefront of the assault on CRI.

**PART ONE:  
THE VITAL ROLE OF CRI**

## Chapter One: The Vision of CRI

Before I discuss Bill Alnor and his allegations I think it's important to appreciate fully just what it is he has been persistently opposing, hindering, and attempting to destroy. The Christian Research Institute was founded by Dr. Walter Martin in New Jersey in 1960. Walter was a pioneer in the field of cult research and, as a countercult/apologetics/discernment ministry, CRI was the first of its kind and today is the largest and most influential of many such ministries.

Walter's vision was to equip Christian missionaries and churches with the information they needed to protect their sheep from being devoured by modern-day wolves—the cults on the mission field and at home. His vision for CRI was also to equip lay people with an understanding of the essentials of their faith, the errors of the cults, and how to turn the tables on the cults by making their followers the Christian's very own "mission field on your doorstep." This would be accomplished by using the cults' errors as springboards to witness to their followers about the true Jesus and the true gospel. Walter referred to his vision for CRI as "pop apologetics," which he contrasted with "top (scholarly) apologetics" and "slop apologetics." His goal, which he often repeated, was to take the best research of "top apologetics" and make it accessible to lay people, so that they would become confident in their faith, discerning of doctrinal error, and able to make a compelling defense of the hope that lies within them to cultists, occultists, atheists, and unbelievers of all kinds.

How do I know all this? Because Walter hired me to serve as a research consultant at CRI in 1976, when he was building a completely new staff after relocating to California two years earlier. I answered correspondence, took phone calls, served as Walter's teaching assistant at Melodyland School of Theology, edited *Bible Answer Man* programs for rebroadcast, and did extensive research and analysis for use in Walter's books. Walter came to trust me particularly as an expert on the Eastern cults and the occult. A couple years later, when a financial crunch necessitated the release of most of the staff, I was one of three researchers he retained. The next year (1979) I relocated to Missouri for eight months after becoming engaged to a woman there, but I continued to work for CRI full-time on a contract basis. When I returned to California after the engagement broke up, I was on the verge of launching a church-planting ministry, but Walter appealed to me to come back to CRI to head up his research department and serve as editor of his fledgling magazine, *Forward*. I had always felt torn between pastoral work and apologetics and was seeking to combine

them; however, after a year of prayer I had to conclude that God had not confirmed a call to the church-planting work but was indeed opening the door to do a major work at CRI. While I've continued to contribute my pastoral and teaching gifts to whatever church I've been a member of, from that point on I knew apologetics ministry at CRI would be my life's work.

Over the decade that followed I had the opportunity to enjoy sweet fellowship with Walter Martin as we worked to move CRI more fully into the vision that God had given him for it. He explained his vision for CRI many times, both to the staff and to me personally. Walter understood that I embraced the vision God had given him as my own. He therefore entrusted me with steering the course of the ministry's flagship publication and overseeing all of the research department's literary output, responsibilities I hold to this day.<sup>1</sup> As I began to transform the *Forward* newsletter into the *Christian Research Journal*, Walter told my father over lunch that this would one day be one of the most important magazines in the Christian world. Far be it from me to boast about any of this; my purpose is simply to express my sense of CRI as a work of God and to make clear my calling to this work and my understanding of its purpose, as validated by its founder's unwavering trust in me to carry on the most central part of the work apart from his own ministry.

The *Journal* was a step forward toward the fulfillment of Walter's vision, but to a large extent CRI remained a small-scale ministry. Walter was on the road most of the time and lacked both the time and the management skills to move CRI effectively into fulfillment of the vision for it that had been driving him for nearly three decades. Walter was also keenly aware that, with the health complications resulting from his diabetes, he was a "walking time bomb," as one CRI administrator told him in my presence, with his assent.

In the late '80s Walter came to understand that for the ministry's sake he needed to step aside and let a man of God's own choosing lead the ministry into the new millennium. I saw many men brought into Walter's office. Some were even allowed to share the *Bible Answer Man* microphone with him; but Walter did not

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<sup>1</sup> Walter originally appointed me Senior Research Consultant, which involved overseeing all of the activity of CRI's research department, including publications, correspondence, phone ministry, public speaking, and the whole range of personnel supervision responsibilities. I soon found the job description too broad, and, wanting to concentrate on CRI's literary output, I obtained Walter's blessing to separate the position of editor-in-chief from that of senior research consultant. I filled the former position and Brian Onken was the first to be hired to fill the latter position, the title and exact responsibilities of which would change somewhat over time.

find the man he was looking for. Around this time, however, a bright, youthful (late thirties) man from Georgia joined the CRI board and began spending time around CRI. Walter was extremely impressed not only with his contributions to the board but also with his integrity, vision, business acumen, communication skills, memorization skills, and ability to teach memorization and apologetics to others. Everyone at CRI seemed likewise to be impressed with him. In late 1988 Walter announced that this man, Hank Hanegraaff, would be joining CRI in the position of executive vice-president. This was effectively the CEO position, as Walter, though remaining president of the board, announced that he was turning the day-to-day direction of the ministry over to Hank and he would continue only as CRI's "spiritual leader." He explained that by this term he meant he would continue to serve as the public face of CRI and to provide guidance to the staff as needed on theological/apologetic issues.<sup>2</sup>

Just one-half year later, in June 1989, Walter Martin passed on to meet his Lord. Though some people have subsequently attempted to rewrite history, there was no controversy at the time about who should take over the ministry because Hank had already taken it over while Walter was still alive. In the 1995 document that we are now making available in appendix D of this book, *Setting the Record Straight*, I describe in more detail than I will here the phenomenal job Hank did of transforming CRI from a niche ministry mainly reaching the Christian countercult community to a major, high-profile ministry reaching the body of Christ at large. In just a few years the listening audience of the *Bible Answer Man* broadcast had grown from thousands to millions and the readership of the *Christian Research Journal* had grown from five thousand to thirty-six thousand.

Since 1995 the ministry has had to weather the repeated onslaughts of Alnor and his associates, but it has stayed on course with its original cause concept and continues to bear abundant fruit for the Kingdom of God. Walter used to say, "We need to get the hay out of the loft and put it down on the barn floor where the cows can eat it" (i.e., CRI's mission is to make top apologetics accessible and understandable to lay people). This is exactly what Hank Hanegraaff does like no one else in the body of Christ. Employing acronyms, alliteration, and other

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<sup>2</sup> I have on file my own handwritten notes from the staff meeting where this was announced. I have always been a compulsive note taker and memo saver and so I can document virtually all of the information recorded here. There is also the recorded Bible class at Newport-Mesa Christian Center in which Walter introduced Hank to his students as the one who was taking over the reins of CRI (see appendixes A and B) and the endorsement Walter wrote concerning Hank that was published in the CRI newsletter (quoted in appendixes A and D).

memory aids, Hank has familiarized hundreds of thousands of Christians with the essentials of, and evidences for, the Christian faith. With an estimated listening audience in the millions, Hank has been a vital voice in the wilderness of Christian broadcasting. He demonstrates daily both to Christians and to listening nonbelievers that Christianity has a rational basis and that there are answers to the best arguments the enemies of the faith can dream up. When it comes to countering the errors and excesses of TBN and many TV and radio preachers, Hank is the only biblically sound and sane voice that many listeners hear.

My profound conviction is that CRI is a work of God that God called Walter Martin to begin and Hank Hanegraaff to extend. All of the priorities and goals that Walter set for the ministry described above have remained central to CRI and are being realized to an extent to which I have no doubt Walter would be pleased. I knew intimately the calling, anointing, priorities, and vision of Walter. Over the past twenty years I have also come to know intimately the calling, anointing, priorities, and vision of Hank. There is no conflict between the two. The latter picked up the work the former began and ran with it.

Now, Walter was not perfect and Hank is not perfect (neither am I, for that matter!). The enemies of this work have often focused on the human flaws of either man and tried to exaggerate and embellish them until the picture that emerges is one of a corrupt, hypocritical, even evil man. But I knew Walter up close and I know Hank the same way, and Walter was, and Hank is, a man of deep faith, conviction, love, and commitment to God and the calling that He has placed upon him. I never saw Walter flinch from proclaiming the truth no matter what the consequences (and there often were great consequences), and I've never seen Hank flinch from the same calling, despite comparable consequences and even greater opposition. I know both sides of every story that was ever told about Walter and that has ever been told about Hank, and I have never seen one incident that would truly qualify as a scandal, or that would cause me to question my own ability to serve at CRI in good conscience. I'm not asking you simply to take my word for it; this present response and *Setting the Record Straight* will specifically address the major charges that have been made against Hank and help you understand why my support for Hank is unwavering, even as it was for Walter.

Some argue that CRI doesn't emphasize the cults as much as it did under Walter and thus has steered off course. This is a simplistic analysis. CRI has always cast a very wide net and was never anything near exclusively concerned with the

cults. From the day I started at CRI Walter stressed that CRI's focus was the cults, the occult, and general apologetics, and numerous topics unrelated to cults fit under the headings of the latter two categories. To these three categories could be added heresies and aberrant teachings within the church and the encouragement of critical thinking among Christians with issues such as conspiracy theories, which were always prominent in CRI's focus. Any topic was fair game for Walter on the *Bible Answer Man*, and CRI made available Walter's taped lectures on such ethical issues as abortion and homosexuality. All of these remain the focus of CRI today.

In the 1970s cultism was sweeping America's youth and so the cults naturally loomed larger on CRI's radar screen. By the 1980s the wave of new cults was already passing and other apologetic challenges for the lay Christian came to the fore, such as the New Age movement (representing the occult) and the Word of Faith movement (representing heretical and aberrant Christian teachings). Walter wrote and spoke extensively on these topics, as did the research staff of CRI. Had Walter lived into the 1990s and the present decade he would have been equally concerned with such challenges as postmodernism, the laughing revival, and the current upsurge of atheism. Walter's passion was for lay people to become equipped, whatever the theological and apologetic challenge, and he would have adjusted his approach so he could constructively influence the entire Christian community. He would not have chosen to remain in a countercult ghetto while the major apologetic challenges facing Christians shifted to other areas. Nevertheless, CRI continues to see the cults as its first of several areas of specialization. Cults that continue to thrive, such as the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses, remain a central focus of both the *Bible Answer Man* and the *Christian Research Journal*.

## Chapter Two

### The Fruit of CRI

Prior to CRI, apologetics was almost the Christian church's best-kept secret. It was largely cloistered in our seminaries and hidden from the view of lay Christians and the unbelieving population at large, where it was needed the most. For almost half a century, CRI has been at the forefront of moving apologetics beyond the confines of Christian academia and placing it into the heads, hearts, and hands of Christians everywhere. We are taking the best apologetic thinking by the best minds in church history and communicating it in a popular and memorable way, through means such as: (1) the *Bible Answer Man* broadcast heard nationally through the Bott Radio Network and XM satellite radio and heard internationally over the Internet; (2) the *Christian Research Journal* sold through Christian and secular book stores and available by subscription through CRI and secular retailers such as Amazon.com; (3) the search engine on our equip.org Web site, where hundreds of high-quality resource documents on every kind of apologetics and discernment topic are available free of charge; (4) our equip.org e-store, which makes locating and purchasing highly recommended, readable, relevant, and reliable apologetics books, DVDs, and CDs as easy as a few clicks of the mouse; and (5) our customer service department, which offers direct assistance via phone, mail, and the Internet to people seeking answers to a wide gamut of questions pertaining to the Bible, Christian doctrine, apologetics, Christian discernment, the cults, the occult, and the world's religions. In short, CRI is in the business of mainstreaming apologetics, and we are doing it to an extent unsurpassed by any other ministry in the world.

Down through the years and up to the present day, the testimonies of people whose lives have been impacted by CRI continue to pour in to our offices. Here are just a few samples gleaned from literally hundreds of testimonies that we have received over the past eighteen months:

**Susan Mudd:** I started listening to the *Bible Answer Man* in 2003 because a co-worker told me about some things she had learned from the program and I listened not because I believed but because I wanted to counter what she was telling me. The total opposite happened, unexpected as well. I was hooked. I was interested, I was intrigued, I was humbled! I ended up purchasing *The Journey*, the study bible for spiritual seekers and have not been sorry. I have been saved. I accepted Jesus Christ as my savior one



day in my car on the way to work, overwhelmed with sorrow that I had waited so long in my life to start my walk down this road (53 years old). I know wherever the road leads me it will always be in the direction of Christ and may God bless and keep every single one of you who put so much into this ministry. I am sure there are countless individuals who have found God through your ministry.

**Allen Mulkey:** I happened to stumble on your broadcast on KQCV in Oklahoma City....It was like I had stumbled across a lighthouse in a stormy sea. I finally found someone who not only could explain what was wrong with this Word of Faith Theology, but also had the conviction to stand up and refute error when it is evident...Your show was a life raft for me. It came along at a time when I was beginning to feel alone in my struggle against this faulty theology....Listening to you and using some of the resources of CRI has helped me in my walk with God. In short I have become a better teacher, a better person, and more equipped to handle the everyday attacks on my faith.

**Tim Tia:** I got saved when I was 17 years old and started out in a Charismatic church that was basically a faith in faith type church....One day when driving down the road, listening to the radio, I heard Hank Hanegraaff the first time and I began to be offended by what he was saying about teachers that I respected. Then he played tapes, and when I heard those tapes my love for Christ and the Word of God rose up in me and I began to really study the Word of God. That led me into ministry and I went to seminary and continued to listen to Hank, and so many lives have changed.

**Man (message left on *Bible Answer Man* voice mail, October 10, 2007):** On Monday, November 24th, 2003 Hank had someone call in. He was a Mormon and Hank talked to him and asked him if he wanted to invite Christ into his life and the man chose to do that. I listened and I prayed at the same time and asked Jesus into my life and that was the turning point in my life. So I really want to thank Hank for being on the air and for all the work he's done and I can honestly say that he played a part in saving my life.

**Woman (message left on *Bible Answer Man* voice mail, April 9, 2007):** Hi Hank. My son would listen to your show and I was a Jehovah's Witness

and you caused me to have doubts. I'm now a Christian and you helped get me out of that cult. I'm so thankful.

**Man (message left on *Bible Answer Man* voice mail, April 28, 2007):** I'm a member of the Worldwide Church of God and I want to express my deep appreciation to Hank Hanegraaff and CRI for your positive support of the Worldwide Church of God in the major changes that we've made from our cultic beliefs in the past to embracing Jesus Christ now as the focus of our church. I listen to you on a regular basis and I deeply admire your willingness to stand for truth no matter the cost. The Worldwide Church of God knows what that's all about and I firmly believe as you do that truth matters.

To such testimonies from lay Christians could be added ringing endorsement after ringing endorsement from major Christian leaders. As the following samples illustrate, these leaders are unambiguous about the importance of CRI to their own ministries and to the body of Christ at large.

**Joni Eareckson Tada,  
Joni and Friends International Disability Center**

Hi, Hank.... You know in our ministry among people with disabilities, we encounter families who have some hard-hitting questions about the Bible, and what it says concerning suffering, and believe me, we know the importance of giving God's Word to people straight. That's what you do. Especially, in this postmodern world, everybody wants to do what's right in his own eyes, but I am so grateful that you cut through all that to give us the absolute and unyielding truth of God's Word. You've been doing it for years, and it's just our prayer that God will grace you with the strength and the wisdom to keep sharing the biblical worldview for years to come.

**Jack Graham,  
Prestonwood Church, Plano, Texas, and PowerPoint Ministries**

In a day in which truth is so often on the scaffold, it is so vitally important that Christians think clearly and biblically, and this is why Hank Hanegraaff gives us the straight stuff when it comes to the Word of God—the testimony of Christ.... I'm so thankful for Hank, his personal integrity, his commitment to truth, and the ministry that God has given him, and therefore, has given to us.

**Ed Young**  
**Second Baptist Church, Houston Texas**

Thank God for you Hank, and the fact that God has used you so magnificently, and you have kept the church, the body, the believers, straight in orthodoxy, in understanding basic doctrinal truths, and I'm so grateful to you as my friend and my brother. You mean much to thousands and thousands of people in America and around the world....I think you are God's man for your calling for just such a time as this. How we need good biblically minded individuals to accurately divide the Word of Truth. You've got the fundamentals down and you understand "in the essentials there is unity, in nonessentials there is diversity," and you put that together so we can understand what God is doing in His body of believers at this moment. Thank you Hank for being there, for being available; for your faithfulness in your personal life, in your family life, and your commitment to Jesus Christ, to His church, and to the Kingdom.

**Chuck Colson**  
**Breakpoint**

The *Bible Answer Man* is one of the most stimulating, exciting programs on Christian radio. I love to be on it because Hank is such a great interviewer and it's always provocative and it always comes down on exactly the orthodox Christian position on issues. I think it provides a great service...it is defending truth in an age that has disregarded truth.

It is this undeniable and critically important equipping work of God's people in sound theology, apologetics, critical thinking, and interfaith evangelism that Bill Alnor has been assaulting and working overtime to destroy. What comparable contribution do he and his ministry make to the body of Christ? The vast majority of his work has concentrated on attempting to bring down Christian leaders and ministries, with CRI receiving the lion's share of his attention. If it boggles your mind that anyone could do this, and that anyone could support someone who does this, it should! I can't pretend to fully understand what makes Bill Alnor tick, but I can supply the historical context that will at least provide some insight into why he is concentrating so much of his energy on Hank and CRI.

**PART TWO:  
BILL ALNOR'S HISTORY WITH CRI**

### **Chapter Three: Alnor as News Editor**

In 1985 we transformed the *Forward* newsletter into a full-fledged, subscription-based, quarterly magazine. It was my goal that we would have a viable news department in the magazine that would keep our readers informed on significant developments in the worlds of the cults, the occult, and Christian apologetics. To develop that department I needed to find a professional journalist who was conversant not only with religion but with the cults and apologetics. I found then, as I have continued to find, that a journalist who fits that description does not come along often. Around that time I became acquainted with Alnor, who had been a reporter for a Pennsylvania daily newspaper and more recently had been the editor of *National and International Religion Report*. He was also a member of the Christian countercult community. Alnor expressed interest in the news editor position and sent me his résumé, which looked impressive. In the Summer 1987 issue I began accepting news stories from him and one year later I placed him in the position of news editor, which included writing most of the news stories. (Alnor was never an employee of CRI. He was a part-time freelancer working across the country from CRI's headquarters.)

At first the arrangement seemed to be working out well. When he would submit to me his list of story ideas for the next issue, it was obvious that not much taking place in our field was escaping him. Although his work typically required intensive editing, it was packed with information and through his contributions we were doing a better job of staying on top of the important stories. Our News Watch section expanded by one to two pages and was becoming more of what I envisioned it to be.

#### **A Pattern of Factual Inaccuracy**

It did not take long, however, before I began to receive negative feedback concerning Alnor's work. CRI's administrator at the time expressed her concern that his articles had a gossipy feel to them, reminding her of how the tabloids would tarnish people's reputations on the basis of innuendo and conjecture rather than hard proof. The same concern was raised independently by a few different people, and each time it troubled me more, no doubt because at some level I perceived it to be true, but I had such a strong desire for things to work out with Alnor that I suppressed these disquieting thoughts.

I take responsibility for bringing Alnor into CRI and for not taking the initiative to terminate our professional relationship with him as problems with his work continued to mount. Many of Alnor's stories were never challenged, but over the four-and-one-half years he wrote for News Watch enough stories were successfully challenged to establish a pattern of factual inaccuracy that would be disturbing to any publisher. It was especially troubling to us at the Christian Research Institute, since we had worked long and hard to establish a reputation for accuracy in research. I also take responsibility for publishing Alnor's errors. Some of them I did catch before they saw print, others I had no means of cross-checking, but still others I could have and should have detected. Writing the following review of Alnor's errors is something of a confessional exercise for me because I must also face and acknowledge several instances of poor judgment on my part.

Alnor's first disputed story was the fourth he wrote for us (Winter/Spring 1988), "Is The Way International Crumbling?" In the following issue we printed a letter from one of the principals of the story, former Way leader John Lynn. In an unprinted portion of his letter Lynn stated "I do not recall William Alnor or anyone else asking me for any facts. Had he done so, he could have avoided the misinformation...." In a May 5, 1988 letter I wrote to Alnor that this observation "gets right at the heart of our concern about your work in general." I then noted for Alnor several valid criticisms Lynn made of his story, the first two of which resulted from not interviewing Lynn, the third of which concerned misrepresenting Way doctrine, and the fourth of which had to do with the use of an unidentified source.<sup>1</sup>

In the Fall 1988 issue (Alnor's second as news editor), the lead story, "Turmoil in the Local Church," was so filled with problems that I had to step in and rewrite it, and my name appears before Alnor's in the byline. Nonetheless, a misrepresentation of Local Church elder John Ingalls still made it into the article because it was based on an interview Alnor conducted with him that I had no direct way of cross-checking. Alnor reported that "Ingalls said the church [in Anaheim] has not achieved a complete break with [sect leader Witness] Lee," and this required a clarification in the following issue that "the church in

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<sup>1</sup>Lynn's four criticisms of Alnor were: (1) he mischaracterized the nature of a group of ex-Wayers that Lynn started; (2) he stated that Lynn accused the Way leadership of error in denying the deity of Christ when, in fact, Lynn himself denied the deity of Christ and the Way leadership error Lynn was concerned about was denial of the lordship of Christ; (3) he erroneously affirmed that The Way teaches the necessity of speaking in tongues to be saved; (4) he cited a characterization of ex-Wayers from an unidentified source that Lynn maintained is totally false.

Anaheim has not broken with Witness Lee, nor does it wish to." When I brought Ingalls's objection to Alnor's attention Alnor replied that he believed Ingalls's concerns were "semantic in nature." I pointed out to him that his use of the word *achieved* "could easily be read as meaning the church is pursuing or considering a complete break with Lee."

In the same Fall 1988 issue more serious journalistic errors occurred in the story "Is Reconstructionism Merging with Kingdom Now?" Kingdom Now is a theologically aberrant "latter rain" charismatic movement that believes in "the fivefold ministry" that includes modern-day apostles and prophets. Reconstructionism is a theologically conservative Calvinist movement that holds to theonomy (the belief that the civil law of Moses remains in force today) and postmillennialism (the belief that Christ will return after the Millennium). About the only beliefs these two camps have in common is that Christians are to "take dominion" over the world politically before Christ returns. Alnor, however, based his article's unlikely premise on the word of a former Assembly of God pastor supposedly turned Reconstructionist named David Baird, who organized a symposium to which he invited leaders of both camps. Alnor quoted Baird in the article as affirming that the symposium was "an attempt to merge Reconstructionism with 'Kingdom Now' theology and it was successful." This is a radical claim that Reconstructionists vigorously denied and subsequent history did not bear out, and yet Alnor provided no countering viewpoint in the article, leaving the impression that it was undisputed fact. Alnor also quoted Baird as stating that "Reconstructionists would agree with the five-fold ministry (as taught by [highly controversial Kingdom Now leader "Bishop" Earl] Paulk and many charismatic teachers) as a historic reality in the church." Alnor further stated that Reconstructionist leader Gary North spoke at the symposium.

We received a long dissenting letter to the editor from Reconstructionist leader Gary DeMar that we printed in the next issue. He pointed out that Alnor never contacted him or any of the other Reconstructionists who Baird invited to his symposium and that Gary North neither was scheduled to speak nor attended the event. DeMar stressed that he was invited to participate in a "dialogue" between the two camps, but the word or idea of "merger" was never brought up. DeMar also emphasized that his purpose in accepting the invitation from Baird, whom he'd never heard of, was to delineate the differences between Kingdom Now and Reconstructionism. Contrary to what Alnor quoted Baird as affirming, DeMar emphasized that he did not know of one Reconstructionist teacher who would agree with the fivefold ministry doctrine.

## Crusader Journalism

This was clearly a botched story of major proportions, and Walter Martin was now expressing concerns about Alnor's errors. At this time Alnor also began to exhibit a disquieting behavior that would later be recognized as a pattern. It emerged in response to a controversy that was raging around Dr. John Warwick Montgomery, a seminal Christian thinker and apologist, the founder of Simon Greenleaf School of Law (which included an MA program in apologetics), and a long-time colleague and friend of Walter Martin. The controversy primarily involved allegations of improper conduct by Montgomery in his role as dean of Simon Greenleaf. Alnor, whose wife Jackie had previously worked as Montgomery's secretary at Simon Greenleaf, took it upon himself to expose what he considered to be Montgomery's breach of Christian ethics, and he used multiple print and broadcast media outlets to accomplish this, including *Christianity Today*. Alnor's pursuit of Montgomery escalated into a heated feud between the two men, with Montgomery threatening to sue Alnor and Alnor threatening to expose Montgomery all the more. Alnor wrote Montgomery's associate Michael Smythe in a January 26, 1989 letter, "Please also tell him that if he wants to sue me, go right ahead....I will not be intimidated; in fact such threats only serve to fortify me. I will continue to write the truth no matter what the consequences are. I would consider such a suit persecution for righteousness' sake. Here I stand." In his letter to Smythe (and also in a letter published in the *Christian News*), Alnor sought to establish his "integrity as an evangelical writer" by stating, "I am the news editor of the *Christian Research Journal* (Dr. Walter Martin)."

## Near Termination and Probation

The cumulative effect of Alnor's inaccurate reporting and his invoking of CRI and Walter himself in his crusade against Montgomery was too much for Walter to tolerate, and he began pressing me to fire Alnor. Before taking such a drastic measure I wrote some strong letters to Alnor in which I laid it on the line as to what he would have to do to retain his job. In a March 10, 1989 letter Alnor agreed that he would no longer refer to CRI or Walter in his campaign to expose Montgomery, and he even agreed to put that campaign behind him. He offered an explanation about his pursuit of Montgomery that would prove insightful into his rationale for what would become a series of crusades to bring negative publicity to disparate Christian leaders. Alnor wrote, "Please believe me when I tell you that I believe my role in exposing the story was directed by the Holy Spirit, which made it impossible for me to duck."



Regarding errors in his stories, I sent Alnor a four-page letter on May 5, 1989, in which I pointed out to him the problems with his articles that had not been cleared up by his attempts to explain them. I then concluded with a list of guidelines for him to follow in his reporting that would correct corresponding problems that had been surfacing with his writing:

To sum up, here are the lessons that can be learned from these experiences for future reporting: 1) Always make a serious effort to *interview all parties* involved in a story. 2) *Carefulness in wording* is crucial (as with the word theology in the merger article, and achieve in the LC article). 3) *Avoid hearsay at all costs*. 4) Whenever possible, *double-check* information obtained from interviews. 5) *Avoid anonymous sources* if possible, and certainly keep them to an absolute minimum. Although news articles do not require as much documentation as research articles, you are still writing for a scholarly journal that has built its reputation on painstakingly accurate research, not a tabloid or even a newspaper. Therefore, your articles should communicate to our readers that they have been carefully researched and are well-documented.

If you can take the time and make the effort to follow these guidelines, then we will be very happy to have you continue as our news editor.  
(emphases in original)

It needs to be stressed that all of these problems and tendencies in Alnor's work and conduct were noted before Hank Hanegraaff came to CRI. If not for my intervention he would have been fired according to the wishes of Walter Martin. Documentation for this consists in my letters to Alnor, my memos to Walter Martin, a letter from Walter Martin to John Warwick Montgomery, Alnor's letters to me, Alnor's letter to Michael Smythe, and letters to the editor to the *Journal*. It therefore cannot be claimed that Alnor's recklessness as a reporter is a charge that CRI drummed up after he took a public stand against Hank Hanegraaff.

Whenever I confronted Alnor about problems with his work he expressed his sincere intention to do better and stressed that he was a team player. Each time he would say this it mollified me and my associate editor, Ron Rhodes. Alnor made his strong desire to continue with CRI clear. He regularly included his position and relationship with CRI as a central part of his bio when speaking or writing publicly, and it seems quite evident that that association helped open other doors for him later on, such as obtaining book contracts with Baker Book

House, which had expressed interest in publishing books by CRI authors and did indeed publish books by several of us. During the two years following my May 25, 1989 letter to Alnor he did perform better and none of his stories were contested.

### **Problems Resurface: The “Set Free” Story**

In June of 1989 Walter died and Hank succeeded him as president of CRI. Between the Spring 1991 and Winter 1992 issues a spate of new problems for CRI emerged from Alnor’s work and conduct that led to the termination of his news editor position beginning with the Summer 1992 issue.

In the Spring 1991 issue Alnor wrote a story on Set Free Christian Fellowship based in Anaheim, California. The article was filled almost from beginning to end with allegations that ex-members of Set Free had made concerning the group and particularly its leader, Phil Aguilar. Twenty-one extremely serious allegations of abuse were specified. No direct quotes from ex-members were included; rather, the article referenced a document that had been compiled and turned over to CRI by Calvary Chapel’s Oden Fong. Other than one sweeping denial, there was no balancing of the allegations with Set Free’s side of the story.

In the following issue (Summer 1991) we printed a poignant reply from William and Kara Schwab of Corona, California, who said they were not members of Set Free but had attended the church a few times and had “witnessed literally hundreds of teenagers come to know the Lord” at Set Free:

...How could such a reputable Christian magazine write such an opinionated, biased article without doing any research, and we quote, “CRI has not yet determined, however, whether it will launch a full-scale investigation of the group.” You printed an article with no knowledge of the material.

...You have taken a stand (whether you agree or not) against a church without doing any research just by printing the article. What right does your publication have in printing information that has not been investigated? Granted, Calvary Chapel is a reputable source and there may very well be truth to it, but what right does a fact-based ministry have in “gossiping” about information floating around without looking into it, thus putting a question on their own integrity. Do we do it for the sake of news? To let others know the “talk of the town”? Does not the Bible call that gossip? Is it

worth the risk of damaging the body of Christ to tell the news? You have now passed over the fine line of truth-seeking and entered into witch hunting. Would the “News Watch” section be better titled as the “Enquirer” or perhaps the Christian “Star”?

In the past your investigations of groups have always included personal quotes of the “victims.” We do not see any there.

....

This letter was a devastating indictment both of Alnor and of CRI. In my reply to the Schwabs I sought to defend the article by pointing out what Alnor had said: he had tried four times to interview Aguilar but Aguilar refused and the representative they did make available for an interview refused to discuss any of the specific allegations. I said the fact that we had not decided to launch a “full-scale investigation” of Set Free did not mean we lacked sufficient information about the group to print the article. But even at the time I was more uncomfortable about this letter than any we had ever printed in the Response section of the *Journal*. It seemed the concerns I had suppressed about Alnor’s work being gossipy that had been raised by some within CRI early on were coming back to haunt me.

Hank Hanegraaff, who only became aware of the Set Free story after it was printed, was even more uncomfortable. He basically agreed with the Schwabs’ criticisms of the article and instructed all researchers within CRI that we would never again print an article like this. It was not that Hank was taking Set Free’s side or denying the possibility of abuse; but such damaging allegations should never be printed without substantial evidence and the opportunity for the other side to reply fully. This is how we developed our news stories both before and after Alnor, and it is significant that out of the eleven News Watch stories that have been challenged with at least some justification and/or required retractions or apologies in the Response section during the twenty-three year history of the department, six of them were stories written by Alnor during the five years he wrote for News Watch. (It is also noteworthy that two of the remaining five defective stories were written for us by Perucci Ferraiuolo, a journalist who wrote a total of four stories for us after Alnor was fired and who—under the pseudonym Gunther Sardasian—would later become Alnor’s comrade-in-arms against Hank. His tabloid approach to journalism was so similar to Alnor’s that we honestly could not tell which one of them was writing the articles posted on Ferraiuolo’s now-defunct anti-CRI Web site, *On the Edge*. By sharp contrast, Doug LeBlanc, who has written news stories for us for the past thirteen years, has never had the accuracy of one story challenged; Gretchen Passantino, who

was our news editor for four years, only had one story challenged. Only three stories in twenty-three years that were not written by Alnor or Ferraiuolo have been challenged!)

Although this does not quite mark the end of Alnor's association with CRI, this is a pivotal point in that association and a few key points should be noted about it. First, all of this happened before Alnor's attitude toward Hank turned sour. Second, as correspondence from the time fully documents, Hank's resistance to the campaign Alnor launched against Set Free beginning with this story was the very thing (combined with his subsequent termination) that turned Alnor against Hank. Third, many things that were objectionable about the way Alnor handled the Set Free story have been replicated in the way he has handled the CRI story (indeed, in the way he handles many stories), including: (1) he accepted allegations as true without sufficiently seeking to understand and represent the other side of the story; (2) he went about trying to correct wrongs he believed to be present in a ministry in a way that would be damaging to that ministry rather than in a way that would bring restoration; and, as will become more evident below, (3) he behaved and spoke as though he had a divine mandate for going after a Christian ministry. While we and many other observers perceived such behavior as astonishingly self-righteous and presumptuous, Alnor once again claimed he was simply being obedient to the Holy Spirit.

### **Alnor's One-Man Campaign against Set Free**

Throughout the spring, summer, and fall of 1991 Alnor continued his campaign against Set Free Christian Fellowship. He co-wrote articles for *Christianity Today* and *National and International Religion Report* on it. To be fair to him, there were a number of allegations he was hearing about this ministry that were disturbing. Set Free clearly was a worthy subject for an investigative reporter to tackle, as the recent arrest of Aguilar and other sect members on charges of attempted murder of Hell's Angels members, with whom they got into a brawl, bears out.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, however, he brought his penchant for factual inaccuracy, poor judgment, and sensationalism into his pursuit of Set Free, all the while trying to prod CRI to join him in exposing the ministry.

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<sup>2</sup> See Tony Barboza and H. G. Reza, "7 Christian Bikers Arrested in Orange County Raid," *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 2008, <http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/california/la-me-bikers7-2008aug07,0,6283593,full.story>.

He also committed a journalistic sin that he himself recognized (in a memo to CRI dated May 4, 1991) would disqualify him from reporting on Set Free, a sin that he was particularly prone to and certainly would fall into where CRI is concerned: *he made himself a part of the story while continuing to report on it as though he were an objective journalist.* On October 25, 1991 he sent out a mass mailing to every Calvary Chapel nationwide and to four hundred additional churches in the Southern California area. He warned the pastors that Set Free was planning to open branches nationwide and was targeting Christians and young people in churches such as theirs in an attempt to grow larger. He accused Phil Aguilar of using “cult-like” techniques to control and lord it over his people, although he said he wouldn’t classify Set Free as a cult because it adheres to cardinal doctrine. He said, “I have talked to many people over the last year who have been badly hurt by this hostile group” and alleged that many Spirit-filled believers have been cut off from communication with their children due to pressure from Set Free. He referenced and offered to make available the 318-page collection of testimonials from ex-members compiled by Oden Fong. He then proceeded to make specific allegations against Aguilar and Set Free, and concluded, “If Phil Aguilar or his rap group, ‘The Posse,’ are scheduled to appear at your church, I implore you to consider cancelling all such appearances to protect your flock.”

In a November 30, 1991 letter to Hank, Alnor appealed to Hank to get with the program in opposing Set Free. He sent Hank a sermon transcript in which he claimed “Aguilar claims you endorse him and Set Free thoroughly.” In the five-page letter he attempted respectfully to correct several misconceptions he believed Hank had about Set Free and to fill Hank in on Set Free’s abuses and on the history of both his and Calvary Chapel’s interactions with Set Free. He concluded:

The last thing I would like you to consider as you are reading this is that I would feel better about my unique role with CRI if you had more confidence in my discernment abilities. I am not perfect. But you will see my byline associated with cult research all the way back to 1979. I have a great deal of research experience in cult apologetics, particularly as it relates to groups like Set Free. I know I am seen by some there as being “combative.” I don’t think this is true about myself—I always try to get to the core of cult problems (and related problems) in a Christ-honoring manner. But I never back down when people lie to me, harass me, or try to cover things up. I become a pit bull then. This approach is not only biblical, but it works. Most of the CRI staff has little idea of my work on

the East Coast with various cults. My confrontational style has led to the release of hundreds of people from groups like Set Free.

In a four-page December 6, 1991 letter, Hank responded both to Alnor's letter to him and to his mass mailing to the churches. The following excerpt from the letter includes the main concerns he raised with Alnor:

In a letter you claim to have sent to 300 or more Calvary Chapels, dated October 25, 1991, you cite an article from the Orange County Register which reveals that, "although Phil Aguilar claims to be living under a vow of poverty, he lives extravagantly, and has 20 vehicles registered to his/and or the church's name." Although I have not done exhaustive research on this matter, my preliminary investigation seems to indicate that, rather than being condemned for his lifestyle, Aguilar might well be commended for it. Whether this preliminary observation holds up or not after further investigation, I would point out that making this sort of an inflammatory statement when, by your own admission you have not done adequate research on this matter yourself, is inconsistent with good research and is, in my estimation, hardly fair.

You also mention that, "Aguilar and dozens of Set Free bikers began coming to Oden Fong's Bible studies in apparent intimidation attempts." Again, this statement appears to be inaccurate. Not only has Oden Fong indicated this is an inaccurate statement, but several others with whom I have spoken to date indicate that this is an inaccurate and misleading allegation.

In a recent phone conversation, you indicated to my secretary, Kathie, that your sources told you Phil had taped my previous phone conversation with him, and confirmed to me in a phone conversation that this had allegedly taken place as well. Again, let me point out that even a cursory examination of this issue seems to indicate this is simply untrue and is not even commensurate with Aguilar's style. Rather, it seems more consistent with the practices of some of the others involved in this matter.

Bill, at this writing I have not yet had the opportunity to look into other issues raised in your October 25 letter and the CRI *Journal* news article. However, if your remarks are in fact inaccurate with respect to the aforementioned issues, it gives me some reason for concern that your investigation has not been as careful as one might like it to be and that you

have come to premature conclusions based on evidence that has not yet been fully substantiated. I do not wish to be overly critical at this point, but I am concerned that your letter addressed to pastors across the nation presents a fairly strong statement about the credentialed authority by which you are writing.

Furthermore, I would hope that if in fact the statements sent to these pastors prove to be premature or inaccurate, you would rectify the situation.

Before closing, I would like to bring to your attention three concerns I have with your letter of November 30, 1991.

1. On page two of your letter, paragraph three, you make the statement that Phil is trying to get my endorsement despite what my research staff has “determined.” Let me point out that, as of this writing, our research staff has not made any final determination on the issues regarding Set Free Christian Center.
2. In the last paragraph on page two of your November 30 letter, you mention that you disagree with my reasoning in the matter concerning the *CRI Journal* story on Set Free. My question to you is this: How in the world can you disagree with my reasoning without having any confirmation on what my reasoning is in the first place?
3. On the last page, you comment about my “lack of confidence” in your discernment abilities. Let me quickly point out that discernment is not the primary issue. The only issue that I am raising reflects the accuracy of statements. However, since you mention discernment, let me state that I do question your discernment and motivation in sending copies of the November 30 letter [i.e., Alnor’s letter to Hank] to people at CRI and outside of CRI without giving me the opportunity to first respond.

In conclusion, I want to emphatically assert that I am not in any way suggesting that the fact that you may have made inaccurate statements or errors of judgement with regards to the items mentioned above means that I am discounting either the possibility or the probability that there are indeed substantive problems at Set Free. For all I know at this point, you may be 100% correct in classifying Set Free as a cult from a sociological perspective. But the fact remains that CRI as an institute is not yet ready to make a definitive statement.

My point, Bill, is simply this: Let's not shoot ourselves in the foot so that, if indeed there truly is a problem with regards to substantial matters like authoritarian control or shepherding, we haven't lost our credibility by making inaccurate statements with regard to peripheral matters which can easily be checked out.

Alnor's relentless and reckless pursuit of Set Free was pushing his relationship with CRI to the breaking point. Expressing his concern that CRI was losing confidence in him, he agreed to curb some of his activities regarding Set Free, but unlike the Montgomery situation two years earlier, he refused to put the matter behind him. He wrote to CRI's vice-president of research, Bob Lyle, in a February 20, 1992 letter, "I believe you may have allowed yourself to fall prey to slick words of a con man [i.e., Aguilar] who tried to discredit me any way he could." He wrote, "Please also realize that I don't totally disagree with all of your position. I appreciated what you had to say about not dwelling on peripheral issues such as wealth and matters like that with sticking to biblical doctrine....I am also in agreement with you, obviously, when you said my activities along these lines impacts CRI due to my relationship with the *Journal*." Nonetheless, he went on for most of his eight-page letter attempting to justify his crusade against Aguilar. It was clear that his philosophy of countercult ministry and his methods for doing it sharply differed from CRI, and he couldn't keep himself from getting involved in one situation after another where he would display his differing approach from CRI's before a public that knew he was our news editor.

This chapter in Alnor's relationship with CRI is extremely relevant to our purposes here because it sheds light on his rationale and modus operandi in going after Christian ministries, which he ultimately would use against CRI itself. In that same February 20, 1992 letter to Bob Lyle, Alnor wrote,

In the past my exposé type stories and direct action were instrumental in driving a 300-member cult congregation out of Delaware County, Pa. Public pressure I helped unleash on that group (that was very much like Aguilar's church) led to more than 200 people leaving and to the fringe church changing its name. My exposés on the Church of Bible Understanding...was instrumental in that group's fall from 2,000 members down to 250. I was also instrumental in forcing the break-up of various churches associated with doomsday preacher Brother R. G. Stair....



...Because of my belief that few Christians (many cult ministries included) do not do enough to expose cults publicly in a scriptural manner, I have been willing from time to time to take on the wrath of a cult in order for the truth to come out. This was one of those times. And believe me, I believe I was obedient to God's Word and to the testimony of His Spirit in orchestrating the mailing. I only acted after much prayer and conviction, and as a result of it many churches have wised up to the true nature of the dark side of Set Free.

With these and similar comments Alnor provides us a window into his mind. When he launches a campaign publicly to expose and bring down a presumably corrupt Christian leader he is saying yes to the Holy Spirit at risk to himself so that innocent Christians will no longer be taken advantage of by that leader. While other Christians may be afraid to speak or stand for the truth because of the consequences they will suffer, Alnor has the boldness and selflessness to do so. The more opposition he may encounter from the leader or group, the more Alnor will dig in his heels and the harder he will fight. As he wanted Michael Smythe to tell John Warwick Montgomery, "Here I stand." He is a modern-day Martin Luther.

But what if Alnor has prematurely drawn conclusions about the leader or group he's targeted? What if he has never really made the effort to understand their side of the story? What if his sense of divine calling to launch such a campaign makes him feel so justified in his actions that he fails to scrutinize them properly to see if his behavior truly is biblical and led by the Spirit? What if in his zeal to bring others to accountability he never stops to see that he himself is unaccountable?

### **Further Problems with Accuracy**

During the period that Alnor was pursuing Set Free several new stories that he wrote for us generated the same old criticisms of his work. "Substantial portions" of Alnor's Spring 1991 story on the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) "contained faulty information," according to a May 23 letter from WCG Assistant Director of Public Affairs Michael A. Snyder.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Basing much of his story on the anti-WCG *Ambassador Report*, Alnor inaccurately reported the WCG's financial condition, their reason for ceasing the circulation of their *Good News* magazine, the reason for the decrease in circulation of *Plain Truth* magazine (which was an administrative decision to move the focus away from social commentary to religious matters), the number of television stations carrying *The World Tomorrow* program, and that the WCG had "phased out"

His Fall 1991 story, "Roy Masters-linked 'New Dimensions' Magazine Draws Fire" drew fire itself from Roy Masters in the following Winter 1992 Response column of the *Journal*. Masters wrote, "Author William Alnor ignored the first rule of journalism: Get both sides of the story. He never spoke to me nor did he ever bother to contact anyone at New Dimensions magazine." As a result of relying solely on Walter Martin's 1980 book, *The New Cults*, and failing to interview the principals in his story, as I had exhorted him to do in my May 25, 1989 letter, Alnor failed to note a significant movement toward orthodoxy that had occurred in Masters's theology since the publication of *The New Cults*. I found the reply to Masters that Alnor wrote for publication so unsatisfactory (e.g., "As Mr. Masters pointed out, most other reporters did not seek to interview him either"), that I followed it with my own "Editor's note," in which I acknowledged that Masters "admits to past error and seems to sincerely identify with orthodox Christians," but "his theology remains problematic in several areas."

In addition to the six defective News Watch stories that Alnor submitted to us, he and coauthor Ronald Enroth submitted a feature article to us on "Ethical Problems in Exit Counseling" for the Winter 1992 issue that was more riddled with problems than any of his news stories. Furthermore, the problems in the article were all traceable to sections that Alnor, not Enroth, wrote.

The exit counseling article was something I had agreed for Alnor to coauthor with Ronald Enroth because I, too, was concerned about ethical problems in the practice, which involved getting cult members into a situation isolated from the cult and trying to break the cult's "mind control" of the members by persuading them that the cult was not what its leaders claimed it to be. The article Alnor and Enroth submitted, however, proved to be so flawed that soon after publishing it we pulled it out of circulation as a CRI resource document and rank it among the two or three most painfully embarrassing articles we've ever published. To detail all of the problems with this article would require too much space and so I will succinctly list several of the most prominent ones:

- Former cult member Doreen Diorio denied that the description Alnor gave of her exit counseling experience was accurate. She maintained that

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circulation of *Plain Truth* in various parts of the world. Alnor also gave prominence to the erroneous speculations of WCG critic James Walker, who took a skeptical view of the WCG reforms that were eventually proven to be authentic and sweeping. To be fair, Alnor did highlight many of the positive changes that were taking place in the WCG at the time.

- Alnor never told her he would be using what she confided to him in an article or that he was even writing an article.<sup>4</sup>
- Exit counselor Carol Giambalvo stated that Alnor never told her their conversation was an interview, nor did he ask for permission to quote her. Furthermore, he misrepresented her as saying that a committee of exit counselors met to discuss ethical standards for exit counseling and that they “decided” on a set of standards. In fact, no formal association of exit counselors even existed to form a committee, they were not affiliated with the Cult Awareness Network (CAN), as Alnor implied, and they only discussed standards; nothing was decided.<sup>5</sup>
  - Alnor affirmed that prominent exit counselor Steve Hassan was kidnapped during his deprogramming with the Moonies, which Hassan denies. Alnor wrongly wrote that Hassan was resentful toward his deprogrammers when in fact he was grateful. Alnor said Hassan was so bitter after his deprogramming that he wanted nothing to do with it when in fact during the first year after he left the Moonies Hassan actively participated in twelve deprogrammings. Alnor also claimed that Hassan stated that he doesn’t “endorse any kind of situation in which adults are kidnapped” when, in fact, Hassan has written that it is justified in some situations.<sup>6</sup>
  - Alnor stated that highly controversial deprogramming pioneer Ted Patrick “helped found the Citizens’ Freedom Foundation [CFF; the original name of CAN],” which was not true.<sup>7</sup>

As if the numerous errors in this article did not create enough problems for CRI, Alnor also represented CRI poorly in his personal responses to the offended members of the exit counseling and anticult communities. In letters on which he copied me to these people and to others he was writing stories on, Alnor repeatedly used phrases such as, “I am very disturbed at you,” “I am very offended by your statement,” and “I demand an apology.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> July 29, 1992 letter from Doreen Diorio to William Alnor, copied to Elliot Miller and David Clark. Copy on file.

<sup>5</sup> March 16, 1992 letter from Carol Giambalvo to William A. Alnor, copied to Ronald Enroth and Dr. Paul Martin. Copy on file.

<sup>6</sup> November 11, 1992 letter from Steven Hassan to “Mr. Alnor.” Copy on file.

<sup>7</sup> I originally supported Alnor on this point but, after examining documents supplied by CFF/CAN founder Henrietta Crampton proving that Patrick neither called the foundational meeting for CFF nor participated in the organization thereafter, I published a retraction of this assertion in the Spring 1993 issue.

<sup>8</sup> For example, he wrote in a July 24, 1992 letter to CFF/ CAN founder Henrietta Crampton, who had sought to convince him that Ted Patrick had not been involved in the founding of CFF, “Let

Alnor's final article for CRI in the Spring 1993 issue, "Heaven Can't Wait: A Survey of Alleged Trips to the Other Side," required such extensive editing that it had to be postponed an issue and was challenged in the next issue's letters section by the publisher of author Betty Eadie. This adds up to a grand total of eight problematic articles that Alnor wrote for us, which puts him in a class by himself of all the hundreds of authors who have written for the *Journal* in its thirty-one-year history.

### Termination

From his sloppy and sensational stories, to his imprudent public pursuits of Christian personalities, to his contentious communications with his critics, Alnor was poorly representing CRI and in many ways running counter to our philosophy of ministry. Clearly, his continuing in the position of news editor had become untenable. In February 1992 my six-member editorial board, including associate editor Ron Rhodes, unanimously advised me it was time to fire Alnor. I clearly remember Robert M. Bowman, Jr., whom Alnor would later join forces with in opposition to Hank, saying, "He has to go." There was nothing I could any longer say in Alnor's defense and so I yielded and agreed to fire him, on the provision that I would not do so until after he finished his assignments for the upcoming issue. In the meantime I would search for his replacement, so News Watch production could continue without a hitch.

The same month I contacted Russell Chandler, former religion writer for the *Los Angeles Times* and author of a book on the New Age movement, about taking on the position of news editor. Chandler needed time to consider the offer in light of his other commitments. He contacted Alnor to discuss the position and so Alnor became aware of my intention to replace him. Alnor called me at CRI on the night of February 27<sup>9</sup> to discuss the matter and so at that point I was compelled to tell him of our decision earlier than I had planned. I provided him with the reasons why we had reached this decision, specifically his patterns of erroneous reporting and inappropriate behavior for the news editor of the *Journal*.

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me be upfront from the beginning. I am very disturbed at you....I am disturbed over the tone of some your letters to me, particularly the one I got today accusing me of 'knowingly' allowing myself to be an agent of the Church of Scientology. What hogwash! I am demanding an apology from you for saying that." Crampton had reasonably made that statement because the source Alnor cited was a Scientology publication, and Scientology very much wanted to tie Patrick, who had been convicted of kidnapping, with CFF/CAN.

<sup>9</sup> I can specify the exact date of this phone call because Alnor did so four days after the phone call in his March 2, 1992 "resignation" letter to me, on file.

This was a difficult conversation for me because I considered Alnor a friend, I believed he was well intentioned, and I had always had a soft place in my heart for him sufficient to want to accommodate his desire to work for, and be associated with, CRI. He asked me if he could continue to be a contributing editor (i.e., a contributing writer) for the *Journal* and against my better judgment I said yes. He also asked if I would say in the From the Editor column that he was moving on to concentrate on his Eastern Christian Outreach ministry. Since that was indeed what he would be doing, I agreed to do so. A week later, when I received a resignation letter from Alnor dated March 2, I was naively puzzled. I concluded that he was trying to preserve his résumé from a significant blemish.

Although the only article by Alnor that we published subsequent to his being removed from the news editor position was the aforementioned Spring 1993 feature "Survey of Alleged Trips to the Other Side," we continued to list Alnor as a contributing editor through the Fall 1994 issue. He made it clear throughout the period that he wanted it that way, but his relationship with CRI became increasingly strained.

## **Chapter Four: Alnor as Director of EMNR**

Alnor put a lot of his energy into redeveloping his old ministry, Eastern Christian Outreach (EChO) and its publication, *The Christian Sentinel*. From that platform he continued to report on Set Free, TBN, and other topics. He was having books published, teaching journalism at Temple University (and later at Texas A&M University-Kingsville), and pursuing a master's degree (and later a PhD), all of which served to bolster his résumé, but none of which counterbalanced the serious flaws in his methodology and work noted above, which, as we shall see, have persisted to the present. The simple fact is that just as I was taken in by Alnor's aura of credibility, so others can be too. On the other hand, many people in the field of journalism today, including Christians, embrace values closer to Alnor's than to CRI's, practice journalism in a similar manner to Alnor, and would applaud his muckraking, agenda-driven crusades as "courageous investigative reporting." In CRI's view, this fact represents a serious malady in contemporary journalism because truth and fairness are often sacrificed on the altar of being the first to tell or sell a sensational story. Alnor is currently an assistant professor in the department of Communication at California State University East Bay in Hayward, California and is also working with the Spiritual Counterfeits Project in Berkeley.

In late 1993 the Evangelical Ministries to New Religions (EMNR), a network of countercult ministries on whose board I served for over a decade, was in danger of falling apart because everyone involved with it was too busy to devote sufficient time to it. An executive director who had the time and energy to move EMNR forward into fulfilling its vision was desperately needed, and Bill Alnor offered to be that person. I expressed to James Bjornstad, then the president of the board, my concerns about appointing Alnor to this position based on the problems he created for CRI, but since the alternative seemed to be the demise of EMNR, ultimately I went along with it.

### **"Assistant Secretary to the Holy Spirit"**

It was not long before I regretted doing so. Despite the fact that the purpose of EMNR is to bring unity and cooperation among members of the countercult community, Alnor's compulsion to thrust himself into the midst of controversies, and take sides in them, surfaced when former EMNR board member Ronald Enroth included EMNR member ministry Jesus People USA (JPUSA) among abusive churches in his book *Recovering from Churches That Abuse*. Alnor sought

to play a mediatorial role in this dispute while at the same time siding with Enroth against JPUSA, and—speaking as EMNR’s director—he offered quotes critical of JPUSA to *Christianity Today*. This was despite the fact that many members of EMNR and roughly half of its board believed that Enroth’s research methodology was seriously flawed and his conclusions about JPUSA were unwarranted and harmful to a valid ministry.<sup>1</sup>

In March of 1994 CRI was experiencing a financial crisis and so implemented wide-ranging layoffs as a cost-saving measure. One of the employees laid off, Brad Sparks, who had a very short but troubled history at CRI, filed a lawsuit against the ministry the very next business day. His lawsuit contained numerous allegations against Hank and other officials at the ministry. Sparks also organized twenty-four people who either had formerly been employed by CRI or had some association with it (ranging from a spouse of a former employee, to a volunteer, to an attendee of Hank’s Bible study that was canceled) and together they sent a “Matthew 18” letter to Hank, demanding that he meet with them all at once to hear their grievances. The grievances of these people were not all the same but varied widely from individual to individual. Hank always expressed a willingness to meet with these people individually, and did meet with several of them who wished to do so. He was forbidden by his Christian attorney, however, to meet with a group organized by the person who was presently suing him and who could use the proceedings of the meeting in court; besides, the kind of meeting they were demanding was not following the procedure Jesus laid out in Matthew 18. Nonetheless, Hank’s refusal to submit to their demand for a meeting was widely portrayed as a refusal to submit to Matthew 18 and be accountable to the body of Christ. Thus, some of the people who signed the “Matthew 18” letter and some additional people formerly associated with CRI formed a “Group for CRI Accountability.” Just the very fact that there was a “Group for CRI Accountability” received wide attention from the press and the body of Christ and seemed to suggest that there was something amiss at CRI. The issues raised by Sparks’s lawsuit and the Group for CRI Accountability are thoroughly addressed and answered in the previously mentioned document, *Setting the Record Straight* (see appendix D).

It seems reasonable to infer that Alnor’s compulsion to insert himself into the middle of controversies, his sense of divine calling to expose what he believes are corrupt Christian leaders, and his lingering unhappiness over CRI first resisting

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<sup>1</sup> See our review in the Summer 1995 *Christian Research Journal*, <http://www.equip.org/atf/cf/%7B9C4EE03A-F988-4091-84BD-F8E70A3B0215%7D/DS481.pdf>

him in the Set Free matter and then firing him, all made the troubles brewing at CRI too great a temptation for him to resist—despite the sensitivity of his position as EMNR’s executive director. Alnor began to make comments both to me and to the other EMNR board members that Sparks’s lawsuit suggested there were serious ethical problems at CRI, despite the fact that to me and others the lawsuit contained so many patently bogus complaints as to render the entire proceedings suspect. (This is all detailed in appendix D.)

Despite admonitions from the EMNR board, Alnor increasingly involved himself in the CRI controversy, discussing the matter with Sparks and members of the Group and initiating discussions about the controversy with Christian leaders both in the countercult community and the body of Christ at large, as well as sending them unsolicited materials he thought were damaging to Hank. Some of these Christian leaders began to look askance at Hank as a result of Alnor’s activity, while others saw that activity as reason to look askance at Alnor instead. For example, Dr. Norman Geisler asked, “Who does he think he is, assistant secretary to the Holy Spirit?” As Alnor’s relationship with CRI became increasingly antagonistic I revisited my previous soft-hearted (and headed!) decision to retain him as a contributing writer and I removed him from the list.

### **A Dubious Attempt at “Restoration”**

Alnor’s attempt at mediation culminated with an eleven-page February 6, 1995 (wrongly dated 1994) letter that he sent to Hank. The letter was presented as an attempt to bring restoration to Hank’s ministry and relationships with his critics, and it did not list anyone else as receiving copies. Alnor ultimately admitted, however, to sending the letter to the CRI board and twelve additional people, including Brad Sparks, Robert Bowman (who by this time was the chief spokesperson of the Group and appeared to be almost its only remaining active representative), Robert Morey (who had launched a fierce diatribe against CRI in his newsletter and announced his intention to supplant the *Bible Answer Man* with his own radio show, *Truth Seekers*), and Randy Frame, a reporter for *Christianity Today* who had been covering the Sparks lawsuit. Additional people said they were sent copies, including the president of Salem Broadcasting, the network that hosts *The Bible Answer Man*. Indeed, most or all of these people received the letter well before Hank, whose copy did not arrive in the mail until February 20.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In compliance with a directive of the EMNR board, Alnor sent a letter to Hank dated August 8, 1995 in which he apologized for the “harsh tone” of his February 5 letter, for distributing it “to a



In the letter Alnor advised Hank on what he needed to do to make things right, including firing his attorneys, selling his home and cutting his salary, rescinding or greatly modifying in-house documents for employees (which were standard documents in use for “at will” employees), firing his executive vice-president outright, and having Bowman and Morey as guests on *The Bible Answer Man*. (Hank was apparently supposed to overlook the fact that they were both engaged in active campaigns to bring him down.) Alnor also advised Hank, “Do not merge Personal Witness Training with CRI.” (To understand what Personal Witness Training is, and why this advice was completely inappropriate and based on a one-sided inquiry into the facts, see chapter eight and also appendix D.)

In this letter supposedly written to bring restoration but sent to Hank’s fiercest adversaries as well as to the press, Alnor wrote, “*I am on the verge of moving out of neutrality and to opposing you concerning your battle with Brad Sparks, Robert Bowman, and the others in the so-called Committee [sic] for CRI Accountability*” (emphasis in original). Alnor accused Hank of moral and ethical lapses and of abusing his authority, but the examples he cited largely rehashed the allegations of Sparks and the Group, and none of them stood up to scrutiny.

For example, the accusation he put the most emphasis on was that Hank withdrew CRI from membership in the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) just in time to keep all the royalties from his book, *Christianity in Crisis*, rather than give those royalties to CRI, as, Alnor said, the ECFA rules required. In a March 6, 1995 letter to Alnor I responded to this section of his letter to Hank:

You state that Hank lied to you about giving his royalties from *Christianity in Crisis* to CRI. You further endorse Brad Sparks’s theory that CRI withdrew from ECFA so Hank wouldn’t have to follow their rule requiring that he give his royalties to the ministry. Again you demonstrate

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small number of other people before you had the opportunity to receive it and respond to it,” and for “making a comment to Bob and Gretchen Passantino that indicated that the board agreed with me on this matter ‘with the possible exception of one.’” He added, “I am copying this letter to each person to whom I sent the former letter, and by this letter I am requesting that they send this letter to each person that they distributed the last letter.” He added as a P.S., “I am enclosing the names and addresses of those people I sent the February letter to, and I am also sending Elliot Miller a copy of the list.” This is how I know the names of people to whom Alnor sent his February 5 letter to Hank without naming them as recipients on the letter.

your lack of care in getting down to the facts. If you checked with ECFA you would have found that their regulation only applies to those copies of Hank's book sold by CRI for fund-raising or promotional purposes. And, if you checked with CRI you would have found that Hank has always done this. Therefore, *withdrawing from ECFA did not result in any increase in royalties for Hank*. Furthermore, *CRI exceeds ECFA's regulation* because we all forego the royalties for all of our books sold by CRI, not just those used for promotional and fund-raising purposes. By joining Sparks in publicly airing your judgments in this matter you have also joined him in the sin of publicly accusing a Christian leader of unsubstantiated wrongs. By the way, have you given the royalty money from all copies of your books sold through Eastern Christian Outreach—or even just those used for promotional and fund-raising purposes—back to the ministry? I suspect that, even proportionately, Hank's giving has far exceeded yours (and Bowman's) in the very area in which you accuse him.

A statement released by CRI explaining the reason for its withdrawal from ECFA was available to Alnor but he ignored it. It explained that in 1992 CRI withdrew from ECFA as a member in good standing because ECFA had violated its own policies by leaking confidential information to the press that it was uncovering in its review process of member ministries. It turned out that some of those ministries were ultimately exonerated of financial abuse, but ECFA's breaching of due confidentiality in its review process hurt those ministries. In 1995, after ECFA had dealt with the internal problems that led to those violations of its own policies, CRI rejoined ECFA and has been a member ever since.

### **Alnor Reveals His Soul**

I found Alnor's making his letter to Hank public so unacceptable for the executive director of EMNR that I called a special meeting of the board to deal with the problem and I pressed to have him removed from his position. Alnor countered by pressing to have me removed from the board. During that meeting I made reference to the fact that Alnor had created similar problems for CRI, which led to his being fired as news editor of the *Journal*. To my utter astonishment, Alnor looked me straight in the eye and declared that what I said was a lie—he had resigned as news editor in protest of Hank's leadership and he had a copy of his resignation letter, and my *From the Editor* saying he was moving on to his own ministry, to prove it! I now began to realize that I had been set up. He deliberately sent that resignation letter and asked me to write the *From the Editor* so that he would have a paper trail backing up his version of

what happened, and since I told him he was fired over the phone I had no comparable documentation.

I was flabbergasted that a Christian could engage in such calculated deception and then turn around and call the other party a liar, which brings the deception up to the full-blown level of bearing false witness against your neighbor, which is breaking the Ninth Commandment. Before this personal experience, Christian charity led me to attribute Alnor's inappropriate behavior and erroneous claims to mistakes in judgment and not to deliberate distortion of truth. This experience left me no room for doubt that Alnor is a conscious deceiver.

In my understanding and experience of the Christian life, it is impossible to maintain fellowship with God or remain in a healthy relationship with Him if I am knowingly continuing in sin, and yet Alnor has never acknowledged or repented of this sin against me; instead he has continued to repeat it and did so publicly in an article on the now-defunct Web site *On the Edge*, as well as on his own Web site.<sup>3</sup> This and additional misrepresentations of truth documented in this volume that are arguably willful (such as those involved in his mail fraud allegations—see chapter six) raise disturbing questions about his very profession of Christianity. For example, if he is more concerned about how God views him than how man views him, how could he continue in such deliberate deception for so long?

In an April 13, 1995 memorandum from Bill Alnor to the EMNR board Alnor wrote,

Elliot Miller outright lied when he stated on page 2 that Bill Alnor was somehow removed as news editor of the *Christian Research Journal*. "I kept your name listed as a contributing editor," Miller wrote, "Wanting you to save face, I never publicly disclosed why you were no longer news editor."

The facts reveal that Bill Alnor resigned as news editor after a time of much prayer and grief. Elliot Miller never accused Alnor of sloppy fact-gathering or bad reporting for the last four years of his tenure as news editor. In fact, Miller is on record as declaring that Alnor was doing a "great job." Alnor's resignation letter is on file and it specifically states his reasons as (1) his inability to continue to work with Miller due to what

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<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.cultlink.com/news/CRIfraud.htm>.

Alnor believed was a breach of trust and (2) CRI's treatment of its employees. ...

As far as Alnor becoming a contributing writer, that occurred about a week following Alnor's resignation when Elliot called Bill, apparently upset over his resignation, wanting to continue a relationship with Bill. Bill reluctantly agreed to come back as a contributing writer....

In my September 5, 1995 reply to the EMNR board concerning Alnor's memorandum, I wrote, "For me the most disturbing part of this entire memorandum is the section where Bill states that I 'outright lied' about how his tenure as news editor at the *Journal* came to an end. It is disturbing not so much in that he accuses me of lying as in that his recounting of what happened is a very bold rewriting of history that he has to know is an outright lie—unless he has a scary ability to convince himself of his own historic revisionism. This was discussed at the meeting and I hope it was evident to you who was telling the truth...." I recounted for the board the events leading up to and culminating in Alnor's termination as our news editor. I then added:

In light of these facts, it is absolutely preposterous for Bill to say that he resigned because of a loss of trust in my truthfulness, because of CRI's treatment of its employees, and because of how CRI handled the Phil Aguilar story. He so wanted to continue as the *Journal's* news editor that he stuck with it even after it had become extremely difficult for him to fit it into his schedule. He "resigned" strictly because he'd already been terminated.

It is a boldfaced lie for him to say that I never accused him of sloppy fact-gathering or bad reporting.

It is an astounding fabrication for him to claim that I called him a week after receiving his resignation letter, "apparently upset over his resignation, wanting to continue a relationship with Bill" as a contributing writer, and that he "reluctantly agreed" to do so.

His recounting of more recent events involving his termination as a contributing writer is also very misleading....when we discussed his continuing as a contributing writer last September he expressed no reservations about continuing in the position as he claims, but rather he expressed concern that maybe he would not be allowed to continue.

I would remind you that you all have copies of his February 19 letter to me stating that the Winter issue of the *Journal* "looks good," inquiring why his name was not listed as a contributing writer, and stating his desire to stay on, as well as copies of his subsequent April 13 letter to me stating his resignation as a contributing writer and citing reasons having to do with CRI's leadership crisis and my own lack of leadership as editor-in-chief. As one of you observed at the April 15 meeting, "there seems to be a pattern here" of Bill sending out resignation letters after the severance was effected by the other side.

The allegation of "outright lying" about Bill's departure as our news editor is thus pointed right back at Bill. I should hope that you are as disturbed as I am at the thought that EMNR's executive director is capable of such elaborate deception.

Not only was the entire *Journal* editorial board present at the meeting in 1992, one month prior to the date on his resignation letter, where it was unanimously determined that Alnor would be terminated, but the "resignation letter" itself inconsistently acknowledges that the severance was not effected by Alnor. Alnor wrote: "I strongly disagree with your attempt to replace me (apparently at Hank's direction) as news editor...." I also have on file a February 24, 1992 handwritten fax from Russ Chandler in which he states that he has not yet reached a decision about the news editor position and then a February 29, 1992 fax in which he states his decision not to accept our offer. Alnor referenced speaking with Chandler over the prior weekend in his March 2 "resignation letter."

As for Alnor's claim that "Elliot Miller never accused Alnor of sloppy fact-gathering or bad reporting for the last four years of his tenure as news editor," please refer to my previously quoted May 5, 1989 letter to Alnor in which I devoted four full pages to detailing the problems with his fact gathering and reporting that he would need to correct if he wished to retain his job. There was also a letter I wrote to him on February 17, 1989, in which I noted several problems with his reporting and told him his response would determine whether he still had a job. He replied in a March 6, 1989 letter: ""Please don't elect to end my role at the *Journal*. I will try harder to be more clear in my reporting." Given this background, when problems resurfaced with Alnor's reporting in 1991 to the point where we needed to print several retractions there was every reason for him to believe that his position with CRI was once again tenuous.

## **Did Aguilar Bribe CRI? A Case Study in the Dynamics of Rumor**

At the conclusion of the special meeting that I called, the EMNR board decided to allow Alnor to continue as executive director as long as he followed the specific resolutions and guidelines governing his behavior that would be given to him by the board, which included writing a letter of apology to Hank for his previous February 6, 1995 letter. He sent Hank two letters, the first apologizing that other people received the February 6 letter before Hank did, and the second apologizing if the tone was too harsh. Nonetheless, despite Alnor's apparently strong desire to retain his position with EMNR, he could not stay out of the controversy. He disseminated demonstrably false and injurious information about CRI in his EChO newsletter (e.g., Jan./Feb. 1996). He also clearly had some level of involvement (encouragement at the very least) with a rumor that was now raging through the discernment ministry community that Hank had taken a bribe from Phil Aguilar, and that, the rumor suggested, was why CRI refused to go along with Alnor in investigating and exposing Set Free.

I am going to include a lengthy excerpt from my September 5, 1995 memorandum to the EMNR board responding to Alnor's motion to have me removed from the board mainly because it illustrates so well the flaws in Alnor's approach to reporting and discernment ministry. Notice, among other things, his lack of hesitation to express to the press his unproven suspicion of unethical behavior by a Christian leader without regard for the damage that such published allegations would do to that leader's reputation and the work of the ministry he leads. It also illustrates well how Alnor reaches his erroneous conclusions, and, generally, how stories about Hank and CRI continue to be embellished as they pass from one critic to another, until what ends up appearing on the Internet or in the press sounds scandalous indeed, whereas nothing scandalous actually occurred.

You recall that Bill [Alnor] denied at the meeting that he had accused Hank of taking a bribe from Phil Aguilar while admitting that he suspected that Hank had taken a bribe. He said that he had replied to questions from the press on this that all he could say was that it was known that money went into Hank's office from Set Free (which, of course, strongly suggests impropriety). Now, Bill apparently bases this on John Jones's [name changed to protect employee confidentiality] June 1, 1994 letter to the CRI board in which Jones states:

It has also been my experience that CRI leadership has covered up evidence against such groups as Set Free and had “under the table” dealings with the said group. I personally witnessed over 500 pieces of mail by pass Accounts Receivable/Correspondence Processing and go directly to “Hank’s office” via Jane Huckaby. Some of the letters from Set Free slipped through and since I was a reader in Correspondence I read them. They were thanking CRI for backing up Set Free which I knew to be false. When I tried to log the letters in the back of CRI where *all* mail for up to 2 yrs is kept, the letters were nowhere to be found.

Notice that Jones says nothing about donations being received. The letters he opened merely thanked CRI for backing Set Free. The idea that donations were involved would be inferred by his reference to “under the table dealings,” the supposedly sinister fact that the letters were intercepted and not processed as normal mail, and his reference to Accounts Receivable/Correspondence (which are actually two departments that sometimes process the same mail if there is a donation enclosed; however it is misleading to lump them together as Jones did, because most letters that pass through Correspondence do not contain donations).

The unwarranted inference that donations were being brought to Hank’s office as bribes accepted from Set Free next appears in explicit form in the publication *Christian Media*, which interviewed Bill for its August-September 1994 story, and reported:

Another interesting aspect of the emerging scandal is the case of The Set Free Christian Fellowship....In Spring of 1991, the CRI *Journal* published a critical article concerning Set Free's abusive tactics. Written by CRI contributing editor Bill Alnor, the article became the subject of several telephone conversations between Set Free's Aguilar and Hank Hanegraaff. Shortly after these conversations, CRI began receiving “donations” in Set Free envelopes. One employee of CRI, John Jones, claims to have seen hundreds of unopened envelopes marked Set Free. When he inquired as to why CRI would accept funds from a cult group, he was told to turn over the checks he had opened rather than send them to the accounting department. Jones claims none of the Set Free funds were ever processed and the checks were routed

directly to Hank Hanegraaff. Shortly afterwards, when he continued to inquire about the Set Free funds, Jones was fired and threatened with legal action if he discussed the matter.

In fact, Jones was terminated because of matters related to his job performance. The allegation that he was terminated because of inquiring about Set Free donations is not even supported by his own testimony, let alone the facts—it was maliciously fabricated either by *Christian Media* or its source.

The facts concerning the Set Free letters are as follows: knowing Bill Alnor's connection with CRI through the *Journal*, Phil Aguilar called Hank Hanegraaff concerning a November 10, 1991 letter Bill sent out to over 300 pastors to warn them about Set Free. Aguilar claimed that the letter contained falsehoods. At this point CRI had looked into some allegations concerning Set Free but had not reached any conclusions and thus had not taken a position on the group. For this reason Hank had not been pleased with Bill's "critical article concerning Set Free's abusive tactics" because it did not merely report on the controversy surrounding Set Free; it was very one-sided and incriminating without offering any proof. Hank did some preliminary investigation into Aguilar's claims and found that three statements made by Bill—the first two in his letter to the churches and the third in conversations with Hank and his secretary—did indeed appear to be misrepresentations: (1) that Aguilar lives extravagantly; (2) that Set Free bikers came to Oden Fong's Bible studies at Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa in attempts to intimidate Fong; (3) that Aguilar had taped his phone conversation with Hank. In order to be responsible and fair in his dealings with Set Free (as is our general policy with all groups), Hank acknowledged to Aguilar that these statements appeared to be false. This pleased Aguilar. However, correspondence we have on file documents that the nature of their relationship all along was strained and mutually suspicious.

Hank had serious misgivings about Aguilar but he also believed that poor research methodology would only play into Aguilar's hands. Hank wrote a letter to Bill dated December 6, 1991 (encl. 3) in which he responded to concerns that Bill raised to him in a letter of November 30 (which Bill also copied to individuals both inside and outside of CRI). [Here I quoted from Hank's November 25, 1991 letter to Alnor previously quoted in the present book.] ...



Since Hank clearly explained his position to Bill, I cannot understand how Bill could have come to suspect that Hank took a bribe from Aguilar. Was it because Aguilar got up before his congregation on November 10, 1991 and gave Hank some rather dubious praise (see encl. 4)? Bill was well aware that this is a typical Aguilar strategy for dealing with his perceived enemies that he also employed with Chuck Smith and Oden Fong. Was it because in that same message Aguilar quotes Hank as praising Set Free? Aguilar provided no proof that he was accurately representing what Hank said, and Bill was well aware that Aguilar previously took Oden Fong out of context to make it sound as though Fong were praising Set Free (see encl. 5). Was it because CRI received about 500 letters from Set Free members “encouraging” Hank (all basically saying the same thing)? Bill was well aware that Aguilar instructed them to do this in that November 10 message (encl. 3), telling them exactly what to say, making no reference to sending donations, and even having our address passed out to them when they left (see encl. 6). Bill was further well aware that Aguilar had used the same tactic with Chuck Smith, for he pointed this out to Hank in his November 30 letter. Was it because the letters were not processed through the CRI system as other letters are? What ever happened to believing the best about your brother? Could the reason not rather have been because we recognized the tactic that was being employed, did not want these names to be put on our mailing list, did not want our Correspondence Processing department to put time into responding to them, and did not want these letters to become separated so we could better track what Set Free was up to? The letters were all put in a box where they remain to this day down in our storage area.

Even if we accept Bill’s minimizing of his own role in this matter, he had no defensible basis for suspecting that Hank was taking a bribe from Phil Aguilar, nor for telling the press that donations from Set Free went into Hank’s office. I believe he again owes Hank an apology and retraction.

Again, this lengthy quotation was worth including in this book because it provides such a good example of how malicious stories about CRI often get started based on cynical interpretations of innocent activities that are later embellished by critics of CRI who are not concerned about fairness and factual accuracy, and then they begin to take on a life of their own on the Internet. This particular demonstrably false allegation that CRI changed its position on Set Free after receiving donations from them was referenced as recently as August 6, 2008

in a post on the apologetics list AR-Talk by Alnor's close associate in opposition to CRI, Jay Howard.

## **Chapter Five: Alnor as Relentless Opponent of CRI**

By early 1996 Alnor's continued inability to refrain from the very kind of divisiveness EMNR was created to overcome, as well as his abuse of EMNR funds (see chapter seven), pushed the board over the edge and his position as executive director was terminated. No longer constrained by the EMNR board, he was now free to join forces fully with those who were opposing CRI, and he quickly moved to the forefront of such activity. He and others working in concert with him would obtain Hank's speaking engagement itinerary and would send packets of defamatory materials to the churches and other venues to which Hank would be arriving. He worked to develop "moles" within CRI, people who would conceal their alliance with him and keep him aware of CRI's plans, new personnel that were hired, and any information that could be used (invariably out of context) against Hank and CRI. Through this means it was common for new personnel to be contacted by Alnor and asked if they'd heard about the problems at CRI, as though Alnor were trying to give them a friendly heads up. Some CRI employees thought the call was strange and suspicious, but others were confused by it and it left them with a negative filter through which to interpret future events at CRI. As a result, Alnor was able to recruit new moles and perpetuate the very internal problems at CRI about which he contacted the new employees. In other words, Alnor's ongoing reports of trouble at CRI were to a significant extent his own self-fulfilling prophecies as he once again became a part of the story he was covering.

In 2001 Alnor announced on his Christian Sentinel Web site a change of focus to an even greater emphasis on the muckraking style of reporting that already characterized his work:

### ***July 2001 Update: a shift in focus for Eastern Christian Outreach***

**By Bill Alnor**

Posted July 2, 2001, revised Aug. 7, 2002

...If you have been familiar with the work and ministry of Bill and Jackie Alnor and Eastern Christian Outreach, you may have detected a slight change of focus with some of our new articles on line here at [cultlink.com](http://cultlink.com) in July 2001.

...The shift of focus is real and permanent. In fact we have added three major points to our mission statement that indicate we will be more involved than ever with exposing hypocrisy and corruption in religion.

Because there is so much of this going on, part of the direction we are going in is creating a type of informal "Christian Better Business Bureau" in these pages (or call it a "better Ministries Bureau"). We will be tracking and cataloguing the scandals within the church as a part of an important worldwide service....

We know that although some will applaud us for it, others will attack us for it and call us unchristian. Some will say we are gossiping....

We know we'll lose some friends and perhaps some support, but that's O.K. with us; we'd rather obey God than man in fulfilling our mission. (Acts 4:19) We also know this new expanded role is biblical because we are dealing with public sin, not private sin. If these religious leaders we expose were personally sinning against us, then we should go to them privately as it states in Matthew 18. Paul said in Ephesians 5:11 to have nothing to do with the works of unrighteousness, but to expose them. Paul named names publicly when public sin came to his attention.....

Further, this web site and magazine will be rebuking even professing Christians, *not* trying to bring physical harm to them. There is a verse that states that those in sin should be "rebuked before all so that all may fear" (1 Tim. 5:20). We are also committed evangelicals in the mainstream of Protestant Christianity, and we believe that by our taking a stand against excesses in our own camp, it sends a message to an on looking world that there are at least some Christians concerned about sin and integrity. We also want you to know that although we engage in some activities that some might consider to be "muckraking," we don't mean anything personally by it. It is also true that the famous "muckrakers" of the early part of the 20th Century like Ida Tarbell and others did their reforming work because *they believe God wanted them to*. Like those muckrakers, we desire to build up to change things for the better.<sup>1</sup> (emphasis added)

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Alnor, "July 2001 Update: A Shift in Focus for Eastern Christian Outreach," *The Christian Sentinel*, posted July 2, 2001, revised Aug. 7, 2002, <http://www.cultlink.com/ar/july2001.htm>.

**PART THREE:  
ANSWERING ALNOR'S ALLEGATIONS**

## Chapter Six: Mail Fraud?

Over the past twelve years Alnor has remained the most active and key player (recruiting, nurturing, and aiding other players) in keeping the CRI controversy alive, alleging again and again in numerous forums that Hank has abused funds and been guilty of plagiarism and mail fraud.<sup>1</sup> For the remainder of this book I will address and answer all three of these allegations. I will start with the most serious and most recent, that CRI committed mail fraud, which resulted in CRI prosecuting a lawsuit against Alnor.

On January 26, 2005, a news release for Texas A&M University-Kingsville announced that the school's very own

assistant professor of journalism Dr. William Alnor feels he may have uncovered financial misdeeds on the part of evangelist Hank Hanegraaff...Through his personal online magazine *The Christian Sentinel*, Alnor reported that Hanegraaff was soliciting funds for his Orange County, California-based ministry, the Christian Research Institute (CRI), to make up for three months worth of donations Hanegraaff said had been lost because of misrouting by the U.S. Postal Service.

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<sup>1</sup> An additional allegation that has been made against Hank is that he abuses his employees. Alnor discussed this in his February 6, 1995 letter and I was originally going to address it here, but as I sifted through Alnor's materials I noticed that he has not focused on that allegation in a very long time. It was an allegation that was made by Brad Sparks and other members of the Group for CRI Accountability that I considered to be a story they created and enlarged among themselves. Many of these people had difficulty accepting Hank as the new president of CRI and they seemed to be given to believing all kinds of wild stories about him. Suffice it to say that the stories they told of Hank losing his temper and abusing his authority describe a very different person than the Hank I have witnessed or even heard at a distance for two decades, and I was a witness to some of the incidents they cited as proof. If the same stories are told to virtually anyone else who has worked at CRI, the typical response is to look quizzically and reply, "Where did they get that?" I did notice when the Group members were still involved with CRI that many of them were intimidated by Hank and tended to misinterpret his behavior and words. Quite the opposite of having a temper, Hank is very measured in his response to trying situations, and his silence or choice of few words can be misinterpreted. Since I address this allegation in *Setting the Record Straight* (appendix D), and since the allegation has not notably surfaced again among employees hired after the Sparks/Group controversy, it really is unnecessary to address it here. Nonetheless, this defamatory allegation too is still out there for anyone Googling Hank to encounter easily. See, e.g., Jill Martin Rische, "The CRI Connection," Walter Martin's Religious InfoNet, <http://www.waltermartin.com/cri.html>.

CRI claims that their mail was being wrongly delivered to a business named On-Target Marketing from October 2004 through December 2004, when an On-Target employee contacted the ministry to tell them of the mistake. According to CRI, they were able to recover only a bag's worth of their mail from On-Target, with the rest having been thrown away. The ministry said they then contacted the responsible post office of Ranch [sic] Santa Margarita to report the error.

Alnor said he spoke with employees of the post office in question and found that none of them knew of any delivery problems with CRI. That led to Alnor filing a complaint against Hanegraaff and CRI with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Following the posting of Alnor's online story, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote up the events in an article published January 23. In their story, they reported that On-Target Marketing only knew of one tray of misrouted CRI mail, which was reported to the ministry the same day, and that no CRI mail had ever been thrown away.<sup>2</sup>

Alnor's *Christian Sentinel* article was titled, "CRI—Hanegraaff under Mail Fraud Investigation?" With Alnor's allegations being given wide media coverage and Internet dissemination, CRI began receiving communications from disturbed donors who were worried that they may have been scammed by CRI. Up to this point in time, CRI had largely ignored Alnor's persistent attempts to destroy both Hank's reputation and CRI's financial base, but this time, by accusing CRI of criminal activity, he had gone over the line. He was seriously impairing the work we believe from the depths of our beings that we were called by God to perform. By his continual assault on a work of God, his utter disregard for truth (from his unrepentantly bearing false witness against me for ten years to his practiced ability to twist every new development at CRI to put Hank and the ministry in the worst possible light), and his consuming hatred of Hank, he was, quite frankly, behaving as a servant of Satan and not of God and removing any basis for us to accept his Christian profession (James 2:14–18; John 8:44–45; 1 John 3:14–15). For the sake of the ministry, the board of directors of CRI determined it was necessary to have the falsity of Alnor's charges against CRI established in a court of law.

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<sup>2</sup> "Assistant Professor of Journalism William Alnor Uncovers Financial Controversy Surrounding Evangelist," Campus News and Events, January 26, 2005, <http://www.tamuk.edu/news/2005/january/alnor/>.

To quickly identify the many problems with Alnor's reports on both CRI's appeal letter and the lawsuit, I will quote from, and then respond to, the series of articles he wrote, beginning with his original article, posted on his Web site on January 19, 2005.<sup>3</sup>

### **Alnor's Actionable Allegation**

**Bill Alnor alleges:** "Christian Research Institute (CRI) President Hank Hanegraaff has become the focus of a federal criminal mail fraud investigation sparked last week by an unusual 'urgent memo' fundraising appeal letter he released on Friday on CRI's website."

**CRI responds:** While Alnor at least exercised the discretion of ending the title of his article with a question mark, in this opening sentence to his article he comes out and flatly declares that CRI is under a federal criminal investigation. As we shall shortly see, there was no basis for making this damaging allegation and therefore this allegation was the basis for CRI's lawsuit.

**Bill Alnor alleges:** "The officer in charge at the post office where CRI receives its mail by maintaining PO Box 7000, disputes Hanegraaff's allegation. The officer in charge, who identified himself as 'Gus,' claims it *never happened*, and referred the incident to the United States Postal Service's Inspector General's Office, which has begun looking into the case."

**CRI responds:** After reviewing all the documents submitted by both CRI and Alnor, the Court of Appeal of the State of California concluded that the evidence confirmed that CRI was not targeted by a post office mail fraud investigation;<sup>4</sup> thus Alnor's allegation is certifiably false.

**Bill Alnor alleges:** "A mail fraud report was filed in connection with the case."

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<sup>3</sup> William M. Alnor, Ph.D., "CRI—Hanegraaff under Federal Mail Fraud Investigation? *The Christian Sentinel*, January 19, 2005, <http://www.cultlink.com/news/CRIfraud.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> In its opinion on the case, the Court of Appeal of the State of California wrote, "Hanegraaff stated he was aware of only one postal service investigation relating to the CRI memo, which was commenced over a month after Alnor's article. The investigation did not concern any wrongdoing on the part of CRI or Hanegraaff, but focused only on the post office's alleged mishandling of CRI's mail. Plaintiffs included a copy of the post office's investigative report, which confirmed plaintiffs were not targeted." (Certified for Publication in the Court of Appeal of the State of California Fourth Appellate District Division Three, CHRISTIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE et al., v. WILLIAM ALNOR, Defendant and Appellant (Super. Ct. No. 05CC04546), filed 2/28/07, p. 6).



**CRI responds:** Alnor neglects to mention here that *he was the one who filed this report*, thus making it seem as though a government employee or official, or someone else independent of Alnor, believed CRI's appeal letter appeared to be mail fraud. Once again, Alnor inserts himself as a major and necessary player in the news he himself is reporting.

**Bill Alnor alleges:** "'This looks like mail fraud to me,' said an investigator familiar with nonprofit prosecutions. 'Hank could go to jail for this.'"

**CRI responds:** Notice that Alnor does not name his source, one of the many yellow journalistic practices I tried in vain to correct him of when he was writing for the *Journal*. He seeks to heighten the seriousness of Hank's alleged misdeed by citing an authority without identifying the person or even the kind of "investigator" he is, thus making it impossible for his source to be evaluated or contested. This is pure sensationalism.

### Who Was Looking into What?

**Bill Alnor alleges:** "At press time the case was also being referred to other government agencies for analysis and possible prosecution, including the Federal Trade Commission, the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section (CCIPS)."

**CRI responds:** This is another glaring example of how Alnor manufactures a story and seemingly has little trouble making a false statement of fact to embellish or sensationalize his manufactured story. The only investigation that was ever conducted related to the post office's alleged mishandling of CRI's mail. Despite Alnor's attempt to trigger an investigation of CRI and Hank, no such investigation was ever initiated. Moreover, at the time Alnor made the foregoing allegation, even the post office investigation had not begun. That investigation, according to the investigator's own written report, was initiated by the postal service on its own after reading a newspaper article regarding the controversy that Alnor had created. It concerned the post office's own conduct and not that of CRI or Hank. There simply was nothing to "refer" to other agencies for criminal prosecution.

In order to demonstrate conclusively to the court the falsity of Alnor's allegation, CRI's counsel made a request under the Freedom of Information Act to the USPS Inspector General, the Federal Trade Commission, and the FBI for any record of any investigation concerning CRI or Hank. Each agency provided a written

response stating that there was no such record, and each of these documents was admitted into evidence in court.

**Bill Alnor alleges:** “On occasion a machine may address some envelopes incorrectly, not just to CRI but other companies as well, and that’s why the Post Office tries to visually verify envelopes,’ the unnamed Rancho postal clerk noted. There may have been some inadvertent mistakes, she insisted, but ‘not into the hundreds of thousands of dollars as [Hanegraaff’s] letter claimed unless one envelope became lost that contained a check for several hundred thousand dollars,’ she said, laughing.”

**CRI responds:** Alnor quotes an unnamed clerk as if her comments are authoritative or official and as if an employee’s denying serious failure on the part of her own office settles the matter. In an article on CRI’s suit of Alnor, *Christianity Today* noted,

*The Los Angeles Times and ChristianityToday.com’s Weblog reported allegations from Alnor that Hanegraaff and CRI may have engaged in fundraising exaggeration. However, new information provided to CT, MinistryWatch.com, and the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) corroborates the [CRI appeal] letter’s claims.*

According to a January 23 story in the *Los Angeles Times*, Alan Baron, chief operating officer for On-Target Direct Marketing in Foothill Ranch, California, said the company received just one tray of misdirected CRI mail and informed the ministry that day.

On-Target told CT that employees discovered discarded mail in a dumpster and returned to CRI what it believes is all of the mail it received by mistake. However, *Baron did not rule out that employees might have inadvertently thrown some mail away.*

Hanegraaff told CT that its marketing partner, KMA Media, has documented that the pieces of mail CRI received in response to its direct-mail efforts last October and November were down more than 36 percent compared to the same period in 2003. CRI says *the 36 percent decline is equivalent to nearly 2,500 pieces of mail.*

The apologetics ministry reported revenues of \$7.6 million in the fiscal year ending in 2003, so *CRI’s claim of a loss in the hundreds of thousands of*

dollars is credible. CRI says the tray of mail retrieved from On-Target contained more than \$30,000 in donations.

CRI officials say they believe the problem of misdirected mail at the local Rancho Santa Margarita Post Office continues. CRI chief financial officer Bob Eaton told CT that the ministry continues to monitor problems with mail delivery. Eaton says *CRI receives several pieces of mail per week intended for other organizations, even though local postal officials say they have corrected the problem.*

CRI provided CT with the contact information of two Rancho Santa Margarita businessmen who said *they, too, had experienced problems receiving their mail.* One told CT, on condition of anonymity, that *the local post office has had "great problems."* He said that, after reading a press account about the CRI postal dispute, *"We all passed the same article around and said, 'See, we aren't the only ones.'"* A local sales representative for a steel company said, *"We really noticed [a problem] when the mail just basically stopped."*<sup>5</sup> (emphases added)

In his April 1, 2005 update to this story,<sup>6</sup> **Bill Alnor alleges:**

Alnor filed a mail fraud complaint with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and with the Rancho Santa Margarita Post Office. Alnor then received a January 19, 2005 letter from Patricia S. Sweeney, manager of the Criminal Investigations Service Center of the United States Postal Inspection Service, that assigned it a number C/MJC/006/S1137458/C1289672 that states in part, "the information you provided will be reviewed to determine if this matter constitutes any violation of the Mail Fraud or False Representation Statutes. If additional information is needed, you will be contacted directly. Again, thank you for assisting us in identifying suspected incidents of mail fraud."

Last week, however, Yvonne Guerrero from the public affairs office of the postal inspector said the CRI mail fraud case is now "under review" by

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<sup>5</sup> "Christian Research Institute Sues Longtime Critic," *Christianity Today*, April (Web-only) 2005, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/aprilweb-only/22.0a.html?start=1>.

<sup>6</sup> William M. Alnor, Ph.D., "CRI-Hanegraaff under Federal Mail Fraud Investigation?" *The Christian Sentinel*, January 19, 2005, <http://www.cultlink.com/news/CRIfraud.htm>.

the postal inspector's office but it was deemed not significant enough "at this time" to forward it to field investigators.

"It has not yet reached a threshold to forward it to the field," Guerrero said. "It would depend on how many people lost money to this particular appeal. This could change."

However, if more people contact the post office with mail fraud complaints about CRI that might do the trick, Guerrero said. She was also aware that Hanegraaff's unusual appeal was also delivered through the mail. "When the case was brought before the U.S. Attorney's office they thought the dollar amount lost by customers was not evident enough in this case at this time to throw it into the field unless more people come forward" who sent money to CRI, Guerrero said. "We have hundreds of cases similar to this, and we don't have the resources to investigate them all," she said.

"It gets tricky when one deals with religious organizations or churches," Guerrero said. "People often don't want to complain about them to the government." If one wants to file a mail fraud complaint against an organization, a secure form is online with full instructions, she said. To access it go to:

<https://www.usps.com/postalinspectors/fraud/MailFraudComplaint.htm>

**CRI responds:** Alnor would like the readers of his online tabloid to think that the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) viewed CRI's appeal letter in the same cynical manner he did, but it seems safe to predict that most people who file mail fraud complaints with the USPIS receive comparably polite but noncommittal replies such as Alnor received from Sweeney and Guerrero. It would be both reasonable and charitable to infer that a professional such as Guerrero would not presume that an organization is guilty simply on the basis of a complaint, before an investigation might be launched.

Furthermore, Geurrero is on record disagreeing with Alnor about the very claim he quotes her to support. She told MinistryWatch.com that "if there is an investigation, the person who filed it would have been notified." MinistryWatch further noted that

there is a disparity between Alnor's report and what postal officials say. Alnor said, "The southern California Postal Inspector's office told me

there was now a criminal investigation under way by their office.” However, Guerrero countered, “There is a complaint. But I did not say there was a criminal investigation.” The number that Alnor and an associate pointed to – C/MJC/006/s1137458/C1289672 – as proof of an investigation, is actually the case number assigned to the Mail Fraud report, according to Patricia S. Sweeney, the manager for the Criminal Investigation Service Center of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service office in Chicago.<sup>7</sup>

Please note that Alnor, who brought this appeal letter to the USPIS’s attention, effectively proceeds to encourage readers of his tabloid to file complaints so that the USPIS *will* look into it! In terms of a fraud inspection, he is reporting on his *own* activity from start to finish. To point out the obvious: everything he writes reeks of his agenda to make CRI look guilty and to discourage people from financially supporting it.

**Bill Alnor alleges:** “Meanwhile, CRI is hopping mad at Alnor, and allegedly on April 1 CRI filed a lawsuit against Alnor alleging defamation because of the old claim published below in the Jan. 19 *Christian Sentinel* that the USPS was investigating them when clearly the USPS was looking into the situation—and still has it under review.”

**CRI replies:** Notice the equivocation in Alnor’s choice of terms. CRI sued him for originally accusing the ministry of being under “federal criminal mail fraud investigation.” After CRI’s suit was filed, he only admits to alleging that “the USPS was investigating them” and then attempts to justify this weakened allegation by affirming that “clearly the USPS was *looking into* the situation—and still has it *under review*” —as if “looking into” and “under review” in any way approach the same meaning as conducting a “federal criminal mail fraud investigation.” As the California Court of Appeal observed,

Plaintiffs’ sole cause of action against Alnor is libel. Civil Code section 45 provides: “Libel is a false and unprivileged publication by writing, printing, picture, effigy, or other fixed representation to the eye, which exposes any person to hatred, contempt, ridicule, or obloquy, or which causes him to be shunned or avoided, or which has a tendency to injure

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Barrick, “CRI Provides Evidence to Dispute Claims of Mail Fraud Launched by Critic,” MinistryWatch.com, March 15, 2005, [http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/pdf/Article\\_031505\\_CRI.pdf](http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/pdf/Article_031505_CRI.pdf).

him in his occupation.” There is no question the phrase “Federal Criminal Mail Fraud Investigation Launched Against CRI and Leader Hank Hanegraaff” exposes plaintiffs to “hatred, contempt, ridicule, or obloquy,” would cause them to be “shunned or avoided,” and has a tendency to injure Hanegraaff in his occupation.<sup>8</sup>

At the *most* (and this is far from clear, as the Court noted<sup>9</sup>), the USPS had “looked into” whether a criminal mail fraud investigation should be initiated concerning CRI and, although deciding not to do so at that time, it was keeping the matter “under review.” It clearly had not initiated such an investigation (and four years later it still has not done so). In his April 1, 2005 update, therefore, Alnor backs down from his original discredited and damaging allegation about CRI while attempting through equivocation to fool the reader into believing that he is standing behind what he said.

Nonetheless, emboldened by the Court of Appeal’s two-to-one decision to overrule the lower court and strike CRI’s complaint, Alnor stated in a June 20, 2007 article,<sup>10</sup> “It also turned out that my initial article about a criminal probe against Hanegraaff and CRI was entirely accurate at the time it was written.” That is an amazing statement, since the same Court opinion that Alnor bases this claim on concludes, after evaluating all evidence submitted to the Court, that “plaintiffs [CRI] have met their burden to prove falsity because the FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] letters provide sufficient evidence the USPS did not investigate the plaintiffs, contrary to Alnor’s claim.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, the Court concluded that there was no evidence of a federal criminal mail fraud investigation and thus CRI had met its burden to prove that Alnor was flat wrong and had defamed Hank and CRI. If this is so, why did the Court of Appeals grant Alnor’s motion to have the case stricken? As we shall see below,

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<sup>8</sup> CHRISTIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE et al., v. WILLIAM ALNOR, 8.

<sup>9</sup> The majority opinion states, “The USPS FOIA response also does not negate the possibility that Alnor simply misunderstood Debra [a postal service employee Alnor claims he spoke with whose statement to Alnor—indeed, even her existence—has never been verified]. Specifically, Debra’s statement that ‘she was aware of the claims in Hanegraaff’s fundraising letter and that her office was ‘investigating’ it on the basis of ‘mail fraud,’” was ambiguous. One could reasonably interpret the statement to mean either that her office was investigating whether the purported misdirection of mail described in the CRI fundraising letter constituted mail fraud, or was investigating whether the letter itself constituted mail fraud.” (Ibid., 17–18.

<sup>10</sup> Bill Alnor, “Final Dissolution of CRI/Hanegraaff vs. Alnor,” Moriel Ministries, June 20, 2007, <http://moriel.org/MorielArchive/index.php/discernment/church-issues/aberrational-theology/final-dissolution-of-crihanegraaff-vs-alnor>.

<sup>11</sup> CHRISTIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE et al., v. WILLIAM ALNOR, 12.

this was solely because of the higher (many would argue unreasonably high) bar that a public figure such as Hank must cross to successfully prosecute a defamation case.

**Bill Alnor alleges:** “It is also true that no one at CRI bothered to contact Bill Alnor to correct any part of the story they thought was wrong, despite a public appeal to do so. CRI never returned phone calls to Alnor inquiring about the case.”

**CRI responds:** This is true, but why was it the case? For CRI to take Alnor up on his offer there would need to be some good faith; but Alnor has long ago destroyed any remaining shred of that, so this appeal can only be viewed as disingenuous. Why would we supply him with any information when he has a fourteen-year track record of trying to discredit CRI at every turn, and to spin whatever information he is given so it reflects negatively on CRI?

### **Insignificant Victory—Significant Vindication**

**Bill Alnor alleges** in the June 20, 2007 article previously cited: “In filing the 2005 law suit against me the court ruled that CRI’s arguments could not be sustained, and the suit was apparently meant to silence a critic. Thus in filing the suit, Hanegraaff/CRI violated California’s anti-SLAPP legislation.” In his August 7, 2007 update on his Web site, Alnor reiterates the same claim: “Victory! CRI/Hank Hanegraaff loses merit less [sic] defamation law suit against Bill Alnor! CRI to pay up to a quarter million dollars to Alnor’s legal team. As was expected, the Hank Hanegraaff and The Christian Research Institute vs. William Alnor Case was thrown out of court. Moreover, a California appeals court ruled that CRI/Hanegraaff violated California anti-SLAPP legislation by filing frivolous law suit against Alnor.”

**CRI responds:** The success of Alnor’s high-powered legal team, the ACLU and the law firm of Ross, Dixon, & Bell (six lawyers working against CRI’s one lawyer, Tom Chun), at getting CRI’s complaint stricken by the court may allow Alnor to claim victory as far it goes, but it does not go very far. CRI could have appealed the appellate court’s decision to the full panel of the court of appeal and beyond, if necessary, and there is a reason why we did not: *the official document published by the court satisfactorily accomplished both of the purposes CRI had in bringing this complaint against Alnor:* (1) it vindicated CRI from Alnor’s charge of mail fraud and (2) it exposed Alnor’s unprofessional and harmful journalistic practices. It was never CRI’s primary concern to punish Alnor monetarily, and

that would have been the only reason to carry the costly legal proceedings any further.

We have already seen that the court ruling vindicated CRI of Alnor's charge that we were being investigated for mail fraud. As to his journalistic practices, the court opinions (including that written by the two judges who decided in favor of Alnor's motion to strike) are so damaging to Alnor's journalistic credibility that it was amazing that he put a link to the document up on his Web site.<sup>12</sup>

A reading of the same document also shows that Alnor's claim that the court found CRI's lawsuit "meritless" and that we are somehow lawbreakers because we "violated California anti-SLAPP legislation by filing frivolous law suit" is preposterous. On the contrary, the court clearly found merit in CRI's lawsuit, holding that we had met our burden to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that Alnor's allegation that CRI was under a mail fraud investigation was false. The only reason the court granted Alnor's petition to have the complaint stricken from the court was because two out of three judges in the appellate court assigned to the case did not believe that CRI met its burden to prove actual malice on Alnor's part by clear and convincing evidence. The original trial judge did believe CRI had met this burden to show actual malice, which is why Alnor and his ACLU/ Ross, Dixon, & Bell legal team had to appeal the lower court's ruling. It was our judgment that with the lower court judge and the presiding judge of the appellate court both finding that we had demonstrated actual malice on Alnor's part (meaning two out of four judges believed we had proven actual malice and all four agreed we had proven falsity), the merits of CRI's case had been vindicated and it was unnecessary to appeal the case to a higher court.

The anti-SLAPP legislation is a legal provision meant to protect critics of public figures from having their free speech rights chilled through litigation. If they are sued, they may present the court with a motion to strike the complaint from its dockets on the basis of the anti-SLAPP provision. The plaintiff must then demonstrate "a probability of prevailing on the claim," which includes not only proving "by a preponderance of the evidence" that they have been defamed but also proving "by clear and convincing evidence" that the defamation occurred with "actual malice." Clear and convincing evidence, the court explains,

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<sup>12</sup> CRI also had a link to the document up on our Web site; however, the Court has taken the document down from its site. If you would like to read it, write me at CRI and I will have one sent to you. Please write "re: court document" on the envelope.



“requires a finding of high probability. The evidence must be so clear as to leave no substantial doubt. It must be sufficiently strong to command the unhesitating assent of every reasonable mind.”<sup>13</sup> The court defines “actual malice” as “publishing a knowingly false statement or where he ‘entertained serious doubts as to [its] truth.’”<sup>14</sup> We see then that a tremendous burden is placed on public figure plaintiffs such as Hank in defamation cases that is not placed on other citizens. The court describes it as “a heavy burden, far in excess of the preponderance sufficient for most civil litigation.”<sup>15</sup>

In their published opinion on the case, the two judges who found that CRI had not proven that Alnor was guilty of “actual malice” went to great lengths to describe how far Alnor could go without crossing the line. They explained, for example, that “the failure to conduct a thorough and objective investigation, standing alone, does not prove actual malice, nor even necessarily raise a triable issue of fact on that controversy. Similarly, mere proof of ill will on the part of the publisher may likewise be insufficient.”<sup>16</sup> They stressed that “actual malice “is not measured by whether a reasonably prudent man would have published, or would have investigated before publishing. There must be sufficient evidence to permit the conclusion that the defendant in fact entertained serious doubts as to the truth of his publication.” ...Lack of due care is not the measure of liability, nor is gross or even extreme negligence.’ ...Thus ‘mere failure to investigate the truthfulness of a statement, even when a reasonably prudent person would have done so, is insufficient’ to demonstrate actual malice....”<sup>17</sup>

The majority opinion finally states:

We conclude that plaintiffs have not demonstrated Alnor acted with actual malice by clear and convincing evidence. We recognize the actual malice requirement places a substantial barrier to defamation claims brought by a public figure, particularly at this early stage of the proceeding....Our nation’s highest court has recognized: “This standard administers an extremely powerful antidote to the inducement to media self-censorship of the common-law rule of strict liability for libel and slander. And it exacts a correspondingly high price from the victims of defamatory falsehood. Plainly many deserving plaintiffs, including some

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<sup>13</sup> CHRISTIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE et al., v. WILLIAM ALNOR, 12–13.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 13–14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 20.

intentionally subjected to injury, will be unable to surmount the barrier....<sup>18</sup>

The above excerpts from the court document make it quite clear that as a public figure, Hank was faced with a daunting challenge in proving that Alnor was guilty of actual malice, and, conversely, Alnor could get away with a lot of reckless, untruthful, and malicious reporting without being called to account for it, as long as he did not so clearly demonstrate knowledge that what he was alleging was false that no reasonable person could fail to see it. Alnor was well aware of this fact. Back when he was pursuing Phil Aguilar in a manner very similar to how he has pursued Hank, he candidly wrote me in a December 16, 1991 letter:

I am also appreciative of your being afraid of my getting embroiled in a lawsuit. I was aware of that when I sent out the Set Free mailing on my own stationery without involving CRI. The truth is that I was the only one with guts enough to mail it. I knew he [Aguilar] would flip out when I sent it. But please also realize that I am extremely well-versed in libel; in fact, I teach libel law at Temple University in Philadelphia. I have had extensive experience with it from my days at Religion Report and at the newspaper. Aguilar has gone to three attorneys about my mailing. Each of them told him to forget it. How can he prove malice? How can he prove my mailing wasn't true and was the result of reckless disregard for truth? (For example, I still think it is substantially true but I will 'fix' any perceived inaccuracies.) To complicate matters further Aguilar would be considered a public figure. The mailing was a success. Prior to it going out Aguilar and the posse were performing at a dozen churches per month. After the mailing the posse was only invited to one church—a Vineyard in Palm Desert. These are figures from Aguilar's own newsletter.

This quote from 1991 provides a stunning window into Bill Alnor's end-justifies-the-means rationale for crusader journalism. This is how he has operated all along. He takes calculated risks with the very real possibility of lawsuit confident he can survive in the end without financial penalty, and in the case of CRI he succeeded by the narrowest of margins. But he has not escaped the verdict of the court regarding his truthfulness, ethics, and journalistic practices. Two out of four judges believed there was a probability we could provide clear and

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 23–34.

convincing evidence of actual malice, and all four concluded that “plaintiffs [CRI] have shown by a preponderance of the evidence that Alnor’s statements were false.”

Alnor’s proclamation of victory thus rings hollow. How much satisfaction can he reasonably take in the fact that, while all four judges concurred that he defamed Hank and two concluded that he did so deliberately, the other two (who happened to constitute a majority on the appellate court) were not absolutely convinced that he defamed Hank deliberately but allowed for the possibility that he rather did so out of sheer journalistic unprofessionalism? Again, even the two judges who handed Alnor his insignificant victory provided significant vindication to CRI, thus making it unnecessary for CRI to take its case against Alnor to the next level.

Alnor’s claim that “CRI to pay up to a quarter million dollars to Alnor’s legal team” is posted to this day on apologetics/discernment ministry Web sites that share his animus toward CRI,<sup>19</sup> but it is totally false. To be fair, Alnor thought at one point that it would be true. In fact, he seemed to take particular delight in the prospect of CRI paying such a large sum to the ACLU. He trumpeted that this payment would come “out of CRI’s contributors’ donations, money that donors thought they were giving to God.”<sup>20</sup> He elaborated further on this in a February 5, 2008 post to the apologetics e-mail list, AR-Talk: “We went to court to force CRI to pay more than \$250,000 in legal fees. The court already ruled that CRI must pick up my legal fees. We expect a ruling on the amount soon, then we are going to aggressively go after Mr. Hanegraaff and CRI, both personally and corporately.”

Alnor’s attempt to extort funds from CRI was denied by the trial court and denied again on appeal. In fact, the same appellate court that granted his anti-SLAPP motion had some unusually harsh words for Alnor’s exorbitant request and his “padded” legal fees.<sup>21</sup> In the final settlement CRI was not required to pay any money in any capacity to Alnor or any of his lawyers, including the ACLU.

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<sup>19</sup> See Alnor, “Final Dissolution” on the Moriel Ministries Web site and also see the Rische Web site page previously cited.

<sup>20</sup> Alnor, “Final Dissolution.”

<sup>21</sup> See Certified for Publication in the Court of Appeal of the State of California Fourth Appellate District Division Three, CHRISTIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE et al., v. WILLIAM ALNOR, Defendant and Appellant (Super. Ct. No. 05CC04546), filed 8/13/08, p. 6.16. I will also include a copy of this document in my package containing the original document for those readers who specifically request it (see footnote 27). See also Mike McKee, “Appeals Panel Blasts OC Lawyers’

Now that the question of legal fees has been settled (albeit not to his liking), we await Alnor's promised next round of personal and corporate attacks against Hank and CRI.

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Padded Bills," *Legal Pad*, Cal Law, [http://legalpad.typepad.com/my\\_weblog/2008/08/appeals-panel-b.html](http://legalpad.typepad.com/my_weblog/2008/08/appeals-panel-b.html), and "California Court of Appeal Reduces an Attorney Fee Award in a Strategic Lawsuit against Public Participation Case," <http://www.jdsupra.com/post/documentViewerExternal.aspx?fid=17d7ab4e-4af5-48f1-9baa-bbc5f1f5a8cf&channel=n1>.

## Chapter Seven: Abuse of Funds?

In his "Statement on CRI" on his Christian Sentinel Web site, Bill Alnor writes, "Despite much good work done by the Christian Research Institute over the years, and the fact that CRI's *Bible Answer Man* broadcast and the *CRI Journal* (and related publications) have helped many people, we are sad to report that this ministry can no longer support or endorse in any way the ministry of Hank Hanegraaff and the Christian Research Institute. **We are also advising churches, individuals and Christian organizations NOT to contribute financially to CRI**" (emphases in original). Alnor has gone so far as to say, "I really hope that Mr. Hanegraaff steps down from the presidency of that once vital ministry. He has pretty much ruined it by making it a money machine."<sup>1</sup> Although he has also stressed the charge of plagiarism (see chapter eight), Alnor has probably put greater emphasis on the charge that Hank is abusing CRI donors' money than on any other charge, and, of course, such a charge cuts right to the heart of a nonprofit organization that is supported by donations.

The allegation that Hank abuses CRI funds first was voiced within a year of his assuming the presidency of CRI. It was based on a completely mistaken understanding of where the profits from the sales of Hank's Personal Witness Training and Memory Dynamics materials sold through CRI were going. (This is explained in full detail in appendix D.) That allegation was picked up again by Brad Sparks, who embellished it by adding Hank's book *Christianity in Crisis* to the list of materials Hank was supposedly unethically and even illegally profiting from. (This too is fully answered in appendix D.) Members of the Group for CRI Accountability were only too happy to add this charge to their list of Hank's alleged abuses. Both they and Sparks disseminated their anti-Hank materials broadly throughout the countercult community and the body of Christ at large. This smear on Hank's integrity took on a life of its own so that in the minds of some people his character is forever tarnished as a moneygrubber. Everything about Hank's personal life, and all of CRI's decisions, came under close scrutiny, and every detail was interpreted in a most cynical, uncharitable manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in "Assistant Professor of Journalism William Alnor Uncovers Financial Controversy Surrounding Evangelist," Campus News and Events, January 26, 2005, <http://www.tamuk.edu/news/2005/january/alnor/>.

Once Alnor fully entered the fray, he became the chief spokesperson for this particular perspective. When CRI was temporarily not a part of ECFA, for the reasons explained in chapter four (and also in appendix D), Alnor was sure it was because of CRI's financial misdeeds and it seemed as far as he was concerned, there was no better way for a Christian ministry to make itself accountable than to join ECFA. However, when the *Los Angeles Times* reported that ECFA president Paul Nelson "investigated the mail-fraud issue, but was satisfied that the Christian Research Institute did not violate laws or dishonestly solicit money," Alnor then told the *Times* that "the Evangelical Council never called him as part of its investigation, and he questions its impartiality."<sup>2</sup> One thing is for certain: CRI can never do right in Alnor's estimation, and neither can any organization or person that speaks well of CRI.<sup>3</sup>

### ECFA's 2003 Compliance Review of CRI

Alnor's love-hate attitude toward ECFA (praising it when CRI is not a member or when ECFA is probing CRI; disparaging it when CRI is in good standing with ECFA or ECFA clears CRI of improprieties<sup>4</sup>) is perfectly illustrated by his public response to an ECFA review of CRI that occurred in 2003. The July 2003 issue of *The Christian Sentinel E-Update* had the headline, "ECFA Investigates CRI; Finds Irregularities."<sup>5</sup> The article, written by Alnor, begins:

Make-up of CRI board criticized...Existing CRI board unable to spot problems...Expenditures not properly documented...Potential conflicts of interest cited...CRI made "serious reimbursement" for monies spent that may not have had a "ministry-related purpose."

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<sup>2</sup> Kimi Yoshino, "Evangelist Sues Critic over Charge," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 2005, <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/apr/02/local/me-bibleman2>.

<sup>3</sup> This has been a pattern all along. He has devoted much energy and time to debunking, and at times personally going after, such Christian apologists as Bob and Gretchen Passantino, Dr. Norman Geisler, and Richard Abanes for the transparent reason that all of them had spoken publicly in defense of CRI. However, when Geisler was publicly critical of Hank's positions on eschatology and the Local Church movement, then suddenly his opinions were important enough for Alnor to quote them, distribute them, and post links to them on AR-Talk (October 10, 2006 and February 7, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> For example, see his editorial, "Does Adherence to ECFA's Standards 'Clear' a Ministry of Wrongdoing? NO!" *The Christian Sentinel*, August 2003, <http://www.cultlink.com/news/HankEditorialAug.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.cultlink.com/news/july\\_2003\\_sentinel\\_eupdate.htm](http://www.cultlink.com/news/july_2003_sentinel_eupdate.htm).

The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) is continuing a review of the scandal-ridden Christian Research Institute (CRI) that found all the above and more, according to two public statements issued by the watchdog group in recent months.

CRI...is cooperating with the ECFA compliance review and is attempting to comply with breaches with ECFA standards [*sic*], according to a June 17 statement. But the investigation is ongoing and it will include "another on-site visit to CRI headquarters."

In light of the clear breaches of ECFA Standards, as outlined in the group's March 20 public statement, *The Christian Sentinel* is continuing to call for Christians NOT to contribute any money to CRI, and we are continuing a call for Hanegraaff to resign, along with his wife, Kathy, and others associated with that ministry, including Paul Young, Elliot Miller and Bob and Gretchen Passantino.

Further, we believe readers should contact their pastors and all Christian leaders worldwide to ask them not to give money to CRI.

Before proceeding, let me point out that this is an incredible thing that illustrates what I stated previously. CRI rejoined ECFA as Alnor exhorted Hank to do in his February 1995 letter. Furthermore, Alnor acknowledges that "CRI is cooperating with the ECFA compliance review and is attempting to comply with...ECFA standards." (It should also be noted, as will be documented below, that ECFA ultimately concluded that none of CRI's breaches were intentional, nor did they compromise CRI's ability to fulfill its ministry commitments.) Nonetheless, despite CRI's show of good faith and willingness to correct anything in its practice that falls short of ECFA's standards, Alnor calls on all Christians *not* to "contribute any money" to CRI, asks them to contact their pastors and all Christian leaders worldwide and ask them not to "give money" to CRI, and calls for the resignation of Hank and other people associated with CRI. This inconsistent and uncharitable public appeal simply makes no sense unless the person making it has an unrelenting agenda to see a ministry destroyed.

As if all this were not bad enough, Alnor neglects to mention (and one would certainly assume the opposite by the way he fulminates so self-righteously against CRI on the topic) that EChO/Christian Sentinel was not then and never has been a member of ECFA, even though they do sell their products online on

their “Christian Sentinel Store” page. Furthermore, they make no public commitment to follow ECFA (or any other) financial ethics standards, as CRI did when it was temporarily not a member of ECFA (because of the previously mentioned concern about violations of their own policies that ECFA has since corrected).

The story of CRI’s compliance review by ECFA in 2003, which was also covered by *Christianity Today* (by a writer who credited Alnor’s Web site for much of the information he used in his story), was not the scandal Alnor tried to portray it as. There were a few people on staff who apparently had been influenced by Alnor and/or other people working in concert with him. One of them entered the CRI finance office on a Saturday without permission and pulled several invoices and receipts out of files that were off limits to her, looking for evidence of financial improprieties. Believing she found some, she stole the receipts from CRI and passed them on to ECFA. ECFA then launched a complete audit of CRI, which CRI willingly complied with at great loss of man-hours from key personnel.

ECFA prematurely and inappropriately made a public statement about what they thought they were finding, and this became fodder for Alnor and the press. ECFA stated that CRI had a conflict of interest in having a Board member who was also the employee of one of its vendors. Only later did ECFA discover that the vendor employee did not join the CRI Board until *after* he had terminated his employment with the vendor.

The audit CRI submitted to was far more comprehensive and demanding than anyone could expect to receive from the IRS. Nonetheless, CRI strongly believes in accountability and fully cooperated with ECFA, willingly incorporating all of their suggestions. In the end, ECFA issued a public statement that should be reassuring to CRI’s donors. The June 17, 2003 statement, “ECFA Confirms CRI’s Current Compliance with ECFA Standards,” states that ECFA had closely monitored CRI’s response to their requirements and they were satisfied CRI was now in full compliance. They also clarified that “the deficiencies in compliance with ECFA Standards found at CRI were not willful on the part of the ministry, nor was the ministry’s accomplishment of mission objectives, consistent with donor expectations, negatively impacted.” The deficiencies largely consisted of what ECFA called “naive bookkeeping” — a failure to match up receipts for every expenditure—but CRI eventually did locate and provide ECFA with the missing receipts and now makes a practice of documenting all ministry expenses.



**Alnor vs. ECFA:  
Who Is More Qualified to Identify Financial Abuse?**

There are two major reasons why many Christian organizations decide not to apply for membership in ECFA. First, ECFA sets limits to the salaries that can be paid to members of an organization so that they are reasonably proportionate to the income generated by that organization. This prevents the executives of an organization with a relatively small income from receiving a disproportionately large salary. It also allows executives that are responsible for generating a relatively large income for an organization to be reasonably compensated while at the same time ensuring that they are not so excessively compensated that the organization's ability to fulfill its mission is compromised.

Second, ECFA prohibits principals of its member organizations from receiving royalties from books or other materials that are sold by the organization for promotional purposes (i.e., as fundraising devices). This prevents authors from using their organization both to promote and sell any of their own products unless the organization, and not the author, is the full beneficiary of such sales.

There really is a problem in the Christian church today with people using their tax-exempt nonprofit organizations merely as fronts for their own personal profit. Still others may be doing a legitimate work but are dipping too deeply in the till. ECFA was established to address abuses in these areas, and supporters of a ministry can be reasonably assured that if that ministry is a member in good standing with ECFA its salaries and fund-raising practices are consistent with its nonprofit purposes. ECFA personnel are knowledgeable of what is practiced in the nonprofit world across the spectrum and are well qualified to judge whether an organization's salaries and practices are consistent with its nonprofit status. People who do not have this background may hear that an executive receives a six-figure salary and think that is scandalous, but in many cases it is perfectly acceptable.

Hank is not excessively compensated. His salary is well-within ECFA standards and well within the range of what CEOs of nonprofit organizations that have comparable budgets make. Hank also carries the burden that such an executive carries (and frankly, much more than most executives because of his consuming passion for, and commitment to, the ministry), and he carries it well.

Hank more than earns his salary. His normal work week is about sixty hours and when he's pushing to get something done it too often keeps him busy almost

around the clock. Just last month, as he was personally shouldering the burden of looking into every nook and cranny of ministry expenses in order to pull us out of a financial crisis, I heard Hank rejoicing that he got five hours sleep the night before after several nights of no sleep. I can't even imagine that—if I get less than six hours sleep it takes me days to recover!

Many people do not realize that Hank and Kathy Hanegraaff have a total of eleven living children. Eight of these children are currently living at home, seven are attending Christian school, one is away at a Christian college, and two others have graduated from a Christian college, all at Hank and Kathy's expense. Can you imagine what all that costs? Hank recently commented to me that with all the expenses of providing for so many children, he and Kathy do not have any funds set aside for retirement.

The costly sacrifices Hank makes for the ministry of CRI cause me to sit back in awe. The fierce and unrelenting personal attacks under the spotlight of the media that he has sustained for almost two decades would be enough to drive almost anyone else to seek a more rewarding, less punishing profession. He is an extremely talented guy. He could no doubt be very successful in many other fields, Christian or secular, that would not be nearly so populated by the likes of Bill Alnor as the Christian countercult/discernment field seems to be. Nothing earth could give Hank could truly compensate him for what he has had to suffer, but his eyes are fixed on a different kind of reward.

As mentioned previously, CRI authors not only fulfill the ECFA requirement of turning over to the ministry all the royalties from their materials that are used by the ministry for promotional purposes, but we turn over to the ministry *all* of our royalties for products sold by the ministry whether or not the ministry uses them for promotional purposes. This extra step beyond what ECFA requires was initiated by Hank and he follows it to the letter. When he goes out on the road to speak, he always offers his materials for sale. This is a key way for many authors to increase their personal income, but Hank turns all of these proceeds over to CRI at great benefit to the ministry. Hank is clearly devoted to furthering the ministry of CRI. He is not using it as a "money machine," as Alnor harshly alleges.

I do not have any problem supporting CRI or working for it, because I know what the ministry is doing to further God's kingdom with the donations it receives. But certainly, every Christian has a responsibility before God to research a Christian work he or she is supporting to make sure it is the best

investment of his or her money, and CRI makes its 990s available to the public on request out of respect for this fact. If someone feels he or she cannot support CRI, that is between that person and God. We are called to make such judgments, but we should also be careful how we judge (John 7:24). I am appalled by Alnor's self-righteousness, presumptuousness, and intrusiveness. Any Christian who finds himself or herself being caught up in the same harsh judgmentalism should back away in horror at the realization of it. Does he or she really want to be judged by that same standard (Matt. 7:1-5)?

One would think Alnor must be the standard-bearer of financial integrity in light of the way he so self-righteously goes after other Christians. That is certainly implied and he sometimes even speaks of his personal integrity. I have sat on some information that bears on such a notion for thirteen years because I don't have an interest in sifting through anyone's muck, including Alnor's, even though the ministry I have been pouring my life into for thirty-two years has been the biggest target of his muckraking "ministry." But with Alnor showing no signs of letting up after thirteen years, it's time for me to point a few things out.

Alnor accepted the allegations against Hank of certain former CRI staff people as evidence of Hank's guilt without first seriously attempting to understand the other side of the story. So, if mere hearsay offered by former staff people is to be given credence in that way, then Alnor is in no position to point the finger at anyone. In early 1996 EMNR and CRI were contacted by former staff people of Alnor's EChO, alleging that they had witnessed Alnor abuse EChO funds and lie to staff, supporters, and leaders of his church (at that time Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia) on several occasions. I interviewed a couple of these people and reported on the conversations to fellow EMNR board member Wayne House in the following memo. Only the telephone numbers of the two people interviewed have been deleted from the text.

#### MEMORANDUM

To: H. Wayne House  
From: Elliot Miller  
Date: March 21, 1996  
Re: Bill Alnor

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## Conversation with Paul Architetto, formerly of EChO

- Claims he and several other former members have caught Bill Alnor in several boldfaced lies. For example: he claims to be an elder at Calvary; he boldly revises history with regard to how these people left [EChO].
- Many have left EChO for conscience' sake. He claims Bill intimidates and lies about these people in order to preserve his image with the Calvary pastors. (Virtually all of his staff were or are members of the church and the church supports and facilitates his ministry.)
- Last January through April Bill devoted all of his EMNR and EChO time to hunting down CRI. The phone bill and fax bill were in the hundreds. A stack of letters from people seeking spiritual help was ignored.
- In the view of EChO staff he was draining EChO's funds and manpower for EMNR. Paul saw money coming in for EChO being used to pay EMNR bills. Then Bill would claim no money was coming in for EChO. Last August Paul roughly added up how much money was coming in. A lot of money was coming in for EChO and yet they were constantly broke. Unwillingness to be involved in funneling EChO money over to EMNR is what caused him, Ruth Rosenberg, and Mary Delahanty (all involved with the finances) to leave. In their view, EChO was a ministry for the people while EMNR was a personal vehicle for Bill.
- They suspect Bill has "cooked" the books because he's brought people in from time to time and they think it was to make the books look right.
- Bill is telling EChO staff and Calvary pastors that resigning from EMNR was *his* idea so that he could get back to the duties of EChO. [Note: according to Architetto, when Alnor was fired from EMNR he told people it was he who resigned in order to concentrate on EChO; this is *exactly* what he told people when he was fired from the *Christian Research Journal*.]
- Comingling of funds: he says Bill's scatter-brained quality is at its worst with money. He would borrow from one ministry to pay the other. If he had a personal need he would use ministry funds if they were all that was available. No record of these expenditures was kept.

### **Conversation with Ruth Rosenberg, formerly of EChO (3-15-96)**

My computer spontaneously restarted in the middle of my conversation with Ruth and so I lost the file and only have my own memory to draw on. The only information she added to what Paul A. said is perhaps the most important information of all. She says that she saw thousands of dollars of EMNR money go into EChO. She also saw EMNR money go into Bill's own pocket. She is willing to talk with Jim Bjornstad about this but wants to talk with him in person. I told her he had moved to Ohio but she still seemed interested in possibly traveling there. However, she did agree to Jim's calling her and perhaps it could all be handled over the phone. She says she did not keep any copies to prove Bill's improprieties, but once Jim received the books she could tell him where to look.

After the above information was communicated to EMNR, its president Jim Bjornstad did communicate with Ruth Rosenberg and he told me in a personal conversation at the 1996 EMNR conference in Atlanta that he did see confirmation of Alnor's improprieties. Nonetheless, I cannot vouch for all of Paul Architetto's allegations against Alnor because I never sought Alnor's side of the story. I would never have made these allegations public except to drive home a point: *this is exactly what Alnor has been doing to Hank and CRI for thirteen years*. By his *own* standard of evaluation, Alnor would be disqualified from *any* ministry—how much more a ministry whose purpose is to investigate and expose this very same kind of financial impropriety?

### **Alnor vs. Hank: Who Is Really Unaccountable?**

Alnor constantly carps publicly about Hank's salary and lack of accountability, yet Hank is accountable to a very independent board (he does not have control over it—he could be fired if the board judged his performance or ethics wanting). Hank further submits his salary and all CRI financial information to the scrutiny of ECFA. In fact, CRI pays for, and submits itself to, a comprehensive annual audit by an independent organization, and these statements are examined by ECFA. If there is anything questionable about CRI's financial records or activity, ECFA will deal with CRI about it.

Alnor, on the other hand, is a member of no financial accountability entity; rather, he wants to be that entity for everyone else while doing as he pleases with his own ministry finances. As noted before, Alnor sells plenty of materials on his

Web site. It even came to our attention that he was selling CRI material without permission that we were offering to the public for free!<sup>6</sup> Again, he has given no indication whatsoever that he operates by ECFA standards, such as putting the profits of his materials sold through his organization back into the organization rather than pocketing them himself. Furthermore, he seems to be accountable to no one for his decisions to pursue and bring down Christian leaders and ministries, despite the great risk of damaging a valid work of God inherent in such crusades.

The clear conclusion is that what Alnor is calling his “ministry” is an unholy business. It reeks of self-righteousness, judgmentalism, and hypocrisy. It is outright evil, and it should be rejected by the body of Christ as such.

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<sup>6</sup> Former CRI researcher Steve Parks wrote in a May 7, 1996 e-mail, “I just wanted to notify you that about a year ago I wrote in to ECHO (Eastern Christian Outreach—Alnor’s ministry) to purchase their ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses’ packet, and it included materials copied from other ministries magazines and newsletters, including the ‘Whither the Watchtower’ article from the Summer 1993 issue of the JOURNAL....I just thought you all might want to know that photocopies of the JOURNAL are being SOLD by another ministry.”

## Chapter Eight: Plagiarism?

In an August 2004 editorial in the *Christian Sentinel*, Bill Alnor wrote:

The evidence is overwhelming: Christian Research Institute (CRI) President Hank Hanegraaff has engaged in serious instances of repeat plagiarism.

In examining these allegations of plagiarism in connection with my doctoral dissertation project, I have prepared this brief summary of these instances in an effort to shed more light on the issue. My investigation has revealed that although some of Hanegraaff's supporters have claimed the CRI president was "cleared" or "exonerated" of these charges, that is simply not true. Although some of Hanegraaff's victims have cried foul, they have simply chosen not to seek legal remedies to punish Hanegraaff.

My investigation that was part of my study of plagiarism in the religious media also underscores what action Christians should take concerning Hanegraaff and CRI: A complete boycott. Don't listen to his radio program, don't buy his books, don't contribute any money to CRI, don't invite Hanegraaff to your conference or church, and tell your pastor and every Christian leader you know to do likewise. Further, I repeat my call for Hanegraaff to leave the ministry of CRI.<sup>1</sup>

In his editorial Alnor provided a link to the section in his doctoral dissertation on plagiarism that deals with Hank. (I think it is safe to assume that Alnor chose that topic for his dissertation at least partly because of his desire to nail Hank as a plagiarist.) Here are some important excerpts from that section:

Without a doubt one of the most extensive and controversial cases of plagiarism at the end of the twentieth century involves Christian Research Institute (CRI) president Hank Hanegraaff....

[After devoting one and one-half pages to reviewing the "scandals" unrelated to plagiarism that Alnor believes CRI has faced under Hanegraaff, Alnor notes:] It is not the purpose of this dissertation to

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<sup>1</sup> William Alnor, Ph.D, "With a Little Help from His (Paid) Friends" (editorial), *The Christian Sentinel*, August 2004, <http://www.cultlink.com/plagiarism/plaglies.htm>.

rehash the scandals CRI has faced under Hanegraaff. A search of periodicals and anti-CRI web sites provides a rich history. Instead this dissertation will document that Hanegraaff used plagiarism extensively from at least three books during his rise to become one of the nation's best-known Christian talk show hosts....

Most of the plagiarism allegations lodged against Hanegraaff stem from three of his books that he wrote prior to his takeover of CRI. They were *Memory Dynamics*, *Memory: Your Key to a Rewarding Education* and *Personal Witness Training*, published by Hanegraaff's own organization, Memory Dynamics, Inc. They have since been reissued and have been for sale, both by CRI and by Hanegraaff personally.

In the preface to Hanegraaff's *Memory Dynamics*, he wrote: "I trust that you will have as much fun mastering the concepts in this workbook as I have had developing it." However, an anonymous Internet publication titled "On the Edge" in 1996, demonstrated that Hanegraaff's memorization concepts in the book were largely taken from two classic books on memorization techniques, *The Roth Memory Course* by David M. Roth, which was originally issued in 1918, and *The Memory Book* by Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas (1974)....<sup>2</sup>

**Alnor's Chart:  
Hank's Alleged Plagiarism of Lorayne and Lucas**

Alnor provides a table detailing Hank's alleged plagiarism of Lorayne and Lucas:<sup>3</sup>

<i>The Memory Book</i> by Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas (1974, Ballentine)	<i>Personal Witness Training</i> by Hank Hanegraaff (1986, Memory Dynamics, Inc.)
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<sup>2</sup> William M. Alnor, "More Details on the Plagiarism of Christian Research Institute President Hank Hanegraaff," 2004, 1-4, <http://www.cultlink.com/plagiarism/Hankplag.doc>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.



<p>The authors describe the art of associations in memory techniques, using the country of Italy being shaped like a boot, and the acronym HOMES to remember the five Great Lakes, Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior. Lorayne and Lucas note: "Do you remember the lines on the music staff, the treble clef, E, G, B, D, and F? If your teacher ever told you to think of the sentence Every Good Boy Does fine, then you do remember them."</p>	<p>"Here are some examples of association. Italy – the shape of a boot... The acronym HOMES and the names of the Great Lakes, Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior ... the acrostic Every Good Boy Does Fine with the lines of the treble staff EGBDF." (p. 107)</p>
<p>"The sound that will represent number 1 will always be the sound made by the letters t or d, and vice versa. The memory aid, which you'll need for only a short while is this: A typewritten t has one downstroke." (p. 107)</p>	<p>"To remember that 1 = T,D, picture a 1 that looks like a rocket making a lunar TouchDown. In addition, you may note that a cursive t and d both have just 1 downstroke." (p. 42)</p>

<p>"The number 2 will always be represented by the sound made by the letter n."</p>	<p>"...remember that 2 = N."</p>
<p>"Number 3 will always be represented by the sound made by the letter M. 3 = M&amp;M., or you might think of the #M Corporation." (p. 107)</p>	<p>"Remember that 3=M. Another way of associating 3 and M is to think of the 3M Corporation." (p. 43)</p>
<p>"Number 5 will always be represented by the sound of L. The memory Aid: Spread the five fingers of one hand, thumb straight out, and the thumb and forefinger form the letter L." (p. 107)</p>	<p>"Remember that 5 = L. Look at the back of your left hand with your 5 fingers extended. Now pull your fingers together and leave your thumb extended. Your thumb and index finger will form the shape of the letter L." (p. 44)</p>
<p>"Number 6 will always be represented by the sounds j, sh, ch, and soft g as in GENTLE."</p>	<p>"Remember that 6 = j, soft g, sh, and ch. Just visualize the following scene: a staff in the shape of a 6 is being held by Jesus the GENTLE shepherd."</p>

<p>"Number 7 will always be represented by the sounds k, hard c, hard g. As the memory aid, you can form a capital k with two 7's, one right side up and the other upside down..."</p>	<p>"Remember that 7 = k, c, and g, visualize the following scenario...see a capital letter k falling over forwards so that it looks like the end of a picnic table. Look again and you will see that the picnic table also looks just like two 7's back to back."</p>
<p>"...there's a much easier way, using the Peg Words that are based on the phonetic alphabet... The word for 1 will always be tie...so a mental picture of a man's necktie will always represent 1." (p. 118)</p>	<p>"In much the same way, to form peg words, you need to use the phonetic alphabet.... The peg word for number 1 is tie. We use a tie because a tie can be easily visualized and because it equates to the numerical value of 1." (p. 63)</p>
<p>"The word (name) that will always represent 2 is Noah. Picture whatever you like, probably a man with a long gray beard... The Peg Word for 3 will always be Ma; picture your mother, or a little old lady. 4: rye. Picture a loaf of rye bread. 5: law. Picture whatever law represents to you; we always picture a policeman. 6: shoe. Picture s [<i>sic</i> in Alnor but not Lorayne and Lucas, who have it as "a"] shoe. 7: Picture a cow. 8: ivy. Picture ivy climbing on the wall. 9: bee. Picture the stinging insect. 10: contains two digits...the word is toes. Picture your toes." (p. 118)</p>	<p>"The peg word for number 2 is Noah...visualize Noah's Ark or perhaps Noah's beard... The peg word for 3 is Ma...you can visualize your ma of [<i>sic</i> in Alnor but not Hank, who has it as "or"] a particular apron you would associate with your Ma. The peg word for 4 is rye...see a distinctive piece of rye bread. The peg word for 5 is law...see an unusual law man's badge or cap or a law man. The peg word for 6 is shoe...picture a particularly unusual shoe. The peg word for 7 is cow...visualized a particular cow. The peg word for 8 is ivy...see ivy growing up along the walls of Yale or Oxford. The peg word for 9 is bee...picture a huge bumble bee. The peg word for 10 is toes...picture your toes.</p>

Alnor continues:

As the "On The Edge" article demonstrates, "of the primary 100 Peg Words supposedly invented by Lorayne and Lucas, and listed on page 124 of their book, Hanegraaff lists a full 65 of them." (However, the article also

demonstrates that Lorayne and Lucas may have taken 47 of them from David Roth and his *Roth Memory Course*.) Concerning Hanegraaff's borrowings from Roth, the article notes:

As a matter of fact, of the first fifty code words Roth uses in the foundation of his system (pages 40, 41), developed before Hanegraaff was even born, Hanegraaff reportedly copies virtually half of them on paged [sic in Alnor but not *On the Edge*] 18 and 19 of his 1986 book.<sup>4</sup>

### **Alnor's Ironic Act of Plagiarism**

I will fully address Alnor's allegations that Hank committed plagiarism and I believe I will satisfactorily prove that they are false. Before I do, I think it is completely appropriate to turn the spotlight back on Alnor for a moment. What I am about to argue might seem nit-picking if we forget that Alnor has set himself up as an authority on plagiarism. His doctoral dissertation was on plagiarism and on that basis he has inaugurated what he calls the "plagiarism project" to expose plagiarism, particularly among evangelicals.<sup>5</sup> He has also devoted several pages on his Web site to exactly that purpose of going after various evangelicals on the charge of plagiarism.<sup>6</sup> One could reasonably infer from his materials that—along with exposing financial improprieties—he considers this the foremost service he is providing the body of Christ. Alnor apparently has been the recipient of an extensive education on plagiarism and Scripture tells us that "from everyone who has been given much, much will be required" (Luke 12:48) and "'in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you'" (Matt. 7:1).

Alnor's claims about his qualifications in this area notwithstanding, it is amazing that he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation. His readers were clearly not doing their homework. In keeping with his longtime penchant for factual inaccuracy, Alnor identifies the excerpts from Hank in the right-hand column of his table as being from *Personal Witness Training* when in fact they are from Hank's *Memory: Your Key to a Rewarding Education*. Much worse, he plagiarizes Perucci Ferraiuolo (who wrote under the pseudonym Gunther Sardasian for his *On the Edge* tabloid) in the creation of the plagiarism table above! Although

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.cultlink.com/plagiarism/plgpjt.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., [http://www.cultlink.com/news/apr\\_2003\\_sentinel\\_eupdate.htm](http://www.cultlink.com/news/apr_2003_sentinel_eupdate.htm).

Alnor states immediately above the table, “Some of this original chart created by the author is based upon examples originally given in an article that first appeared in the Internet in 1995,” careful analysis reveals that *all* of the examples first appeared in Ferraiuolo’s *On the Edge* article. Contrary to the clear implication of the word “some,” Alnor contributed no new examples—only the chart format is new.

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, plagiarism is defined as

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.<sup>7</sup>

Crediting Ferraiuolo for “some” of the material in the chart does not exempt Alnor from the charge of plagiarism based on the definitions provided above. Plagiarism.org adds to the above definitions “copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not.”<sup>8</sup> As a self-described authority on plagiarism, Alnor should be well aware of this.

Alnor could reply that in addition to drawing “some” of his examples from Ferraiuolo he also drew some of them from the primary sources and it’s merely a coincidence that they are verbatim identical to the examples Ferraiuolo used. Such an explanation by itself would strain credulity but, unfortunately for Alnor, he left tell-tale clues that prove he only drew his quotes from Ferraiuolo and that strongly suggest that he never interacted with the primary sources at all. Consider the following table, which puts side by side L&L’s original treatment of the relationship between three and M in the phonetic alphabet, Ferraiuolo’s quotation from this very paragraph in L&L, and Alnor’s quotation from the same paragraph in L&L.

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<sup>7</sup> As cited in “What Is Plagiarism?” Plagiarism.org, [http://www.plagiarism.org/learning\\_center/what\\_is\\_plagiarism.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_plagiarism.html).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. It is admittedly debatable whether this fifth definition can be applied to Alnor’s use of Ferraiuolo’s research here. On the one hand, Alnor’s larger “work” is his dissertation, in which his section on Hank is only one of several chapters. On the other hand, he has made that section available as a stand-alone document, that section comprises the entirety of his “work” on Hank’s alleged plagiarism, and the chart itself could be considered a separate piece of work.

<p><b>Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas</b>  “Number 3 will always be represented by the sound made by the letter <i>m</i>; 3 = <i>m</i> and <i>m</i> = 3. The small typewritten letter <i>m</i> has <i>three</i> downstrokes, or you might think of the 3M Corporation.”<sup>9</sup></p>	<p><b>“Gunther Sardasian” (Perucci Ferraiuolo)</b>  “Lorayne and Lucas on page 107: ‘Number 3 will always be represented by the sound made by the letter M. 3 = M&amp;M., or you might think of the 3M Corporation.’”<sup>10</sup></p>	<p><b>William M. Alnor</b>  “‘Number 3 will always be represented by the sound made by the letter M. 3 = M&amp;M., or you might think of the #M Corporation.’ (p. 107)”<sup>11</sup></p>
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Note that Ferraiuolo misquotes L&L both in words and in punctuation at several points and Alnor repeats all of Ferraiuolo’s errors, while adding one of his own. Ferraiuolo capitalizes the first reference to the letter m and Alnor follows him in this, despite the fact that L&L italicize rather than capitalize it. L&L follow that letter with a semicolon while both Ferraiuolo and Alnor follow it with a period. L&L write, “3 = *m* and *m* = 3,” while both Ferraiuolo and Alnor represent them as having it “3 = M&M.” L&L finish that sentence with a period while both Ferraiuolo and Alnor finish it with a period and comma (very unusual punctuation for anyone to use, let alone two people who are supposedly writing independently). Finally, both Ferraiuolo and Alnor omit the clause “the small typewritten letter *m* has *three* downstrokes” from the next sentence, even though this would have been a natural clause to include, since they included a similar “downstroke” memory cue in another example.

The same pattern of Alnor following Ferraiuolo in all of Ferraiuolo’s deviations from the original L&L text occurs in each column of Alnor’s table. The point is not that Alnor misquoted his source, since these particular errors only reflect carelessness (typos) and not deliberate misrepresentation. Rather, the noteworthy point is that he misquoted his source in *exactly the same way Ferraiuolo did*, which proves he was quoting from Ferraiuolo and not L&L, and which strongly suggests he only interacted with secondary sources and not primary sources in this critical portion of the research that earned him his doctorate.

<sup>9</sup> Lorayne and Lucas, 107.

<sup>10</sup>Gunther Sardasian, “CRI Prez Fingering in Alleged Memory Course Plagiarism,” *On the Edge*, Nov. 1995, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Alnor, “More Details,” 5.

## Misunderstanding Mnemonics

By charging Alnor with plagiarism based on the Merriam-Webster definitions am I using a double-edged sword that will also slice into Hank's work? I firmly do not believe so. Alnor's table and Ferraiuolo's article conveniently place similarities in material between Hank and Lorayne and Lucas (hereafter L&L) side by side in such a way as to create a false impression. Their treatment of the issue does not reveal the public domain that not only Hank but also L&L and Roth are drawing on, the nature of the field of mnemonics in which all three parties are writing, the vast differences that actually exist between their respective contributions to that field, the distinctly and abundantly original contributions that Hank makes to that field, and several other factors that I will detail below that should pass muster with any court of law.

As we will see, in every case allegations of plagiarism against Hank are based on faulty assumptions. In this case, one such assumption is that in the field of *mnemonics* (memory assistance) the use of various memory-triggering devices (whether code words, acronyms, acrostics, or key words) are proprietary to whoever created them and off limits to those who contribute to the field at a later time. In significant respects, mnemonics is a science. It is something that is developed collectively and progressively by innovators in the field. In science (whether hard or soft), if someone publishes they do so because they believe they have a valuable contribution to make to the existing body of knowledge. This may be a new component to add to that knowledge, or it may be a more user-friendly way of utilizing existing knowledge. Each new author in the field is not expected to start from scratch and reinvent the basic constituents, symbols, or language of the field (e.g., peg words or associations) simply for the purpose of not repeating what has already been developed before. Indeed, redeveloping everything from scratch would be burdensome not only for the author but for those who are familiar with the system but want to benefit from whatever about the author's contribution truly is new.

To offer an example from another discipline that has significant parallels to mnemonics (in that both discover rather than create the mental principles that organize their systems), can you imagine the burden it would place on authors of logic textbooks if they were expected to credit the source of each logical term or example of a fallacy they use? Conversely, can you imagine how confusing it would be for students if each new logic textbook used different terminology for the same logical laws and fallacies?

Hank did not plagiarize L&L any more than they plagiarized David Roth, or Roth plagiarized Felix Berol (the rising star in the mnemonics field in 1913, whose untimely death in 1914 created a void that Roth would fill four years later). They were all attempting to improve on, but not entirely reinvent, systems of memorization that preceded them. None of these authors claimed that all of the ideas that they were presenting were their own.<sup>12</sup> Each of them had original contributions that justified their publishing in the field.

Interestingly, *none* of them acknowledged their indebtedness to those who immediately preceded them—at least not by name. (As we shall see below in the section on Evangelism Explosion, Hank is the only one of these authors to acknowledge his indebtedness to “current” sources.) Not only do Lorayne and Lucas make no mention of Roth or any predecessors after ancient and medieval philosophers (“Unfortunately, the technique fell into disuse for centuries”<sup>13</sup>) other than William Stokes in the 1800s (“Nearly a century later, it is our pleasure to bring the art of trained memory back into the foreground”<sup>14</sup>), but Roth makes no mention of Berol (who, like Roth, taught mnemonics in New York City and whose book preceded Roth’s by only five years). As mnemonics historian Allan Krill commented, “These mnemonists were all a bit ‘forgetful’ when it came to mentioning sources of the code. I think they mostly made up their own key words.”<sup>15</sup> Should they have acknowledged their sources? I believe so.<sup>16</sup> Does this

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<sup>12</sup> Hank’s words that Alnor cites, “I trust that you will have as much fun mastering the concepts in this workbook as I have had developing it,” need to be looked at more carefully. Hank did not say he developed “them” (the concepts) but “it” (the workbook). Nonetheless, while there are many concepts in the workbook that he did not originally conceive, there are many others that he did.

<sup>13</sup> Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas, *The Memory Book* (New York: Stein and Day, 1974), 19. Lorayne does mention Roth once in the book as a famous memory expert that he knew personally, but he does not acknowledge his indebtedness to him. In fact, in the Genii Forum (at a Web site for illusionists), in response to a post that claimed “Harry Lorayne’s system is based on the system Roth used,” Harry Lorayne himself posted in reply, “Boy! Such knowledge, such research! I never, in any of my 12 books on the subject, taught hat, hen, ham [the first three code words that Roth used for the phonetic alphabet]... Sure, send them to David Roth, who was a friend, we corresponded often, and in his later years (he died at 96) he STARTED TO USE MY IDEAS” (emphasis in original). (Genii, the Conjuror’s Magazine, Forum, <http://www.geniimagazine.com/forums/ubbthreads.php?ubb=showflat&Number=33238>.)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>15</sup> From a July 25, 2008 e-mail to me.

<sup>16</sup> Bear in mind that Hank was completely inexperienced in publishing and his mnemonics books were self-published, which means he had no professional editors to advise him. More on this a little later.

omission make them plagiarists? For all of the reasons stated above and below, I am convinced that it does not.

Of course there is much overlap when different authors are teaching the same basic discipline, which, after all, can only have so many proven principles and methods. Roth began his memory lessons in 1918 by laying out the principles of association, visualization or imagination, exaggeration, motion, and unusual associations.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, L&L begin their exposition on memory training by stressing the importance of association,<sup>18</sup> substitution, “out of proportion” (seeing the subjects as larger than life), and exaggeration. Although the terms are not always the same, on close analysis L&L’s principles are almost identical to Roth’s, and so are Hank’s to the former two. By Alnor’s criteria, Roth should have sued L&L for plagiarism, but Roth no doubt was well aware that he picked the same principles up from other writers. Indeed, Berol presents the same principles, and he attributed his knowledge of such principles to books he had read.<sup>19</sup>

None of these authors, however, was merely repeating what the previous authors had written. L&L, for example, devote fifteen pages to explaining association and the link system of memory compared to Roth’s less than eight pages, and so L&L are able to develop the concepts and methodology much more fully. Theirs is the definitive text when it comes to an explanation of the theory and practice.

Hank’s approach, by contrast, is much more visual, hands on, and user friendly (which means he got an early start with the teaching style by which we’ve come to know and love him!). Aside from some peg words that will be noted below,<sup>20</sup> elements in the L&L book that are clearly their own creation are not used by Hank;<sup>21</sup> instead, he offers his own distinctive and very creative elements.<sup>22</sup> He

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<sup>17</sup> David M. Roth, *Roth Memory Course*, Lesson One (New York: Independent Corporation, 1918), 5–10.

<sup>18</sup> Lorayne and Lucas, chap. 2.

<sup>19</sup> See “Fix Facts in Mind by Hooks and Slips—Berol, Memory Man, Tells the Public How Not to Forget Names,” *New York Times*, October 19, 1913, [http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?\\_r=2&res=9407E6DB133FE633A2575AC1A9669D946296D6CF&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?_r=2&res=9407E6DB133FE633A2575AC1A9669D946296D6CF&oref=slogin&oref=slogin).

<sup>20</sup> Hank, like mnemonic writers before him, drew assorted peg words from various sources as he saw fit and then combined them with some of his own device to create a unique mix that he thought would best serve his students.

<sup>21</sup> For example, in their chapter on association, L&L introduce a concept called “Original Awareness,” which states that “anything of which you are originally aware cannot be forgotten.” This is clearly their own idea and if Hank had used that term or idea without attribution it might



uses original illustrations as didactic devices, leading the reader through exercises where he or she learns the principles through practice. This makes mnemonics accessible for readers who might get bogged down in L&L's more traditionally verbal explanatory approach.

### Misidentifying the Major System

Alnor betrays his ignorance of mnemonics with the first seven of the nine rows in his table. The examples he cites to prove Hank plagiarized L&L were not created by L&L but are part of the public domain and are commonly used by teachers of mnemonics. Some of the examples Alnor cites are *so* commonly offered by writers in the field as examples of memory devices that it is difficult to believe Alnor actually considered them examples of plagiarism. These include the use of the acronym HOMES for the Great Lakes,<sup>23</sup> the association of Italy with the shape of a boot,<sup>24</sup> and the acrostic "Every Good Boy Does Fine."<sup>25</sup> While Ferraiuolo too displays ignorance of mnemonics, at least it's evident he interacted with the primary sources (i.e., L&L and Roth); as we've seen, Alnor shows no evidence of interacting with anyone but Ferraiuolo.

The phonetic alphabet Alnor cites in his table is based on a mnemonic approach known as the Major System. This system contains all of the correspondences between letters and numbers seen in both columns of these rows.<sup>26</sup> Early prototypes of this system go back to Stanislaus Mink von Wennsheim (or Winkelmann) in a paper he published in 1648.<sup>27</sup> Continued refinements were

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have been considered plagiarism, but it is not to be found in Hank's work. (Lorayne and Lucas, 22.)

<sup>22</sup> For example, in his section on association Hank stresses, "The visual associations in this book are purposely unusual so that they will make an impression on your mind. The more unusual or out of the ordinary something is, the easier it is for us to remember it for long periods of time. Remember, the pictures in this book are merely tools designed to help us make conscious associations. Once this information is firmly rooted in our minds, the visual associations will no longer be necessary."

(Hendrik Hanegraaff, *Memory: Your Key to a Rewarding Education* [self-published, 1986], 7.)

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., "Mnemonics," WikiEd, <http://wik.ed.uiuc.edu/index.php/Mnemonics>.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., "Use Memory Devices" in "Test Taking Hints," Student Academic Resource Center, University of Central Florida, [http://sarc.sdes.ucf.edu/documents/learning\\_skills/test\\_taking/TTHINTS.pdf](http://sarc.sdes.ucf.edu/documents/learning_skills/test_taking/TTHINTS.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., "English Mnemonics," Wikiquote, [http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/English\\_mnemonics](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/English_mnemonics).

<sup>26</sup> See "Mnemonic major system," Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mnemonic\\_major\\_system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mnemonic_major_system).

<sup>27</sup> Alan Krill, "About the 'Feinaiglers' Who Developed the Number Alphabet," Psuedonumerology, <http://folk.ntnu.no/krill/home.htm>.

made on the system until, as Krill writes in his history of the major system, “the code was more or less perfected in about 1820 by Aimé Paris, a memory specialist in France: 0=se,ce,ze; 1=te,the,de; 2=ne,gne; 3=me; 4=re; 5=le,ille; 6=je,che,ge; 7=ke,gue;que, 8=fe,phe,ve; 9=pe,be. Other variations of the code have been tried, but are not as convenient or useful.”<sup>28</sup>

Many, many authors have published the major system for contemporary readerships since 1820, never pretending to have invented it but always presenting it in a form they believe makes it more user friendly, Hank included. As David Roth states, “For centuries attempts have been made to find means to fix numbers in mind. The code [i.e., phonetic alphabet] method is the perfected result of many minds that have worked on this problem. It is a practical method for you—for every one—who wishes to develop a sure memory for figures.”<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, while L&L make no similar acknowledgment that the phonetic code existed prior to their own work, Hank does—a fact that Ferraiuolo and Alnor conveniently fail to note. Hank writes at the beginning of his chapter on the subject: “The phonetic alphabet is an extremely valuable memory tool. It has been used with great success for centuries but has unfortunately fallen into virtual disuse in our culture. Because of its many benefits, I encourage you to learn this system very well.”<sup>30</sup> Rows two through seven of Alnor’s table, the vast majority of his examples of Hank’s alleged plagiarism, contain nothing more than the phonetic code and the common memory cues (e.g., t and d both having one downstroke) that were part of the public domain long before L&L used them.

Alnor also fails to note Hank’s many innovations in developing memory cues to remember the phonetic alphabet that go far beyond what L&L provide. For example, Alnor merely cites Hank as saying, “...remember that 2 = N,” which sounds substantially identical to what L&L wrote. However, if we view their full treatments of the number in context we see that Hank does make original contributions to this memory device that predates both him and L&L and he is not plagiarizing L&L at all:

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> David M. Roth, *Roth Memory Course*, Lesson Five (New York: Independent Corporation, 1918), 7.

<sup>30</sup> Hanegraaff, 41.

<p><b>Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas</b>          “The number 2 will always be represented by the sound made by the letter <i>n</i>. The memory aid is: A typewritten small letter <i>n</i> has two downstrokes. Think of that for a moment.”<sup>31</sup></p>	<p><b>Hank Hanegraaff</b>          “To remember that <u>2 = N</u> visualize a number 2 falling over backwards and turning into an N. You might also note that a cursive n has 2 downstrokes.”<sup>32</sup></p>
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Hank proceeds to provide an illustration of a two falling over and looking like an N, an approach (cartoons as memory aids) that he uses for each of the numbers but that L&L do not use at all. Similar examples could be provided for each of the ten phonetic numbers that demonstrate significant differences between Hank’s and L&L’s approaches and also Hank’s valuable contributions to the discipline.

### Misconceptions about Peg Words

As for the remaining two rows of Alnor’s table, Alnor himself notes that many of the peg words used by Lorayne and Lucas to help remember the phonetic alphabet were not invented by them but go back to David Roth. What Alnor apparently doesn’t realize is that many of these words were not created by Roth either.

The term *peg word* was apparently originated by Lorayne, but, as we’ve seen, the concept was not. “Peg” is simply a synonym for “hook,” a term Berol used for the same type of code word used in conjunction with the phonetic alphabet,<sup>33</sup> and Roth followed him in this usage.<sup>34</sup> Of the first ten peg words that Lorayne uses, the only ones I have not been able to find in use prior to Lorayne are ma for three (Bruno Furst had it as “May” in 1944<sup>35</sup>), rye for four (Furst had it as “ray”), and bee for nine (Berol had it as “boy” in 1913<sup>36</sup>).<sup>37</sup> The three that Harry Lorayne did create have since been used not just by Hank but throughout the literature.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Lorayne and Lucas, 107.

<sup>32</sup> Hanegraaff, 43.

<sup>33</sup> See “Fix Facts in Mind by Hooks and Slips.”

<sup>34</sup> See, e.g., David Roth, *Roth Memory Course*, Lesson Two ((New York: Independent Corporation, 1918), 9.

<sup>35</sup> Cited by Allan Krill in an e-mail to me, July 30, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Felix Berol, *One Hundred Good Stories and How to Remember Them* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1914), 15. I was unable to locate a copy of Berol’s primary work, *The Berol*

Due to the rules of mnemonics that they were all following, only so many possible peg words could be selected for each number, which explains the phonetic similarity of so many of them. It also explains why later authors contributed less original peg words than earlier authors. Roth only used seventeen out of one hundred peg words for the phonetic alphabet that were first used by Berol.<sup>39</sup> Of L&L's one hundred peg words, I counted forty-four that were identical to the ones that Roth used.<sup>40</sup> Of Hank's one hundred, seventy-eight were used by either L&L or Roth.<sup>41</sup>

If Hank had used all one hundred of L&L's peg words it would not have been plagiarism for all the reasons I am explaining here, but in light of Alnor's logic, with Hank's twenty-two apparently original words, how does Alnor justify accusing Hank of plagiarism but not L&L or Roth, who also mixed their own words with words previously used? How many previously used peg words out of one hundred can an author use before it becomes plagiarism according to Alnor's take on the law? How many courts would agree with his magic number? I cannot imagine that any would.

### **Missing Hank's Original Contributions**

Even the table Alnor provides and other materials that he cites, which are carefully selected to highlight similarities between Hank and L&L while ignoring significant differences, nonetheless show quite a bit of originality on Hank's part. He uses his own wording and, while the number-letter associations of the major system and the peg words are the same, the key words Hank uses to hang on the peg words are usually different, and, I would argue, usually an improvement (e.g., his use of "a 1 that looks like a rocket making a lunar TouchDown" to help remember that "1 = T, D").

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*System of Memory Training* (1913), but in this follow-up book Berol used his one hundred code words as the basis for remembering his one hundred stories.

<sup>37</sup> Five of Lorayne's first ten peg words were used in 1918 by Roth: tie, shoe, cow, ivy, and toes. (See Roth, *Lesson One*, 15, and David M. Roth, *Roth Memory Course*, Lesson Seven [New York: Independent Corporation, 1918], 48. Noah and law were used by Furst in 1944. (Cited by Krill in his July 30, 2008 e-mail to me.)

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., "Peg System of Memory" in "The Art of Storytelling Part 1," <http://seductionlifestyle.wordpress.com/2008/07/07/the-art-of-storytelling-part-i/>.

<sup>39</sup> Berol.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Roth, *Lesson Two*, with Lorayne and Lucas, 124.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *ibid.* with Hanegraaff, 66–75.

Hank's major contribution was not in creating the basic memorization systems he uses, although often he does offer his own innovations even in those areas. Rather, his major contribution, which went far beyond anything Lorayne or Roth ever did,<sup>42</sup> is in the way he applied these systems to helping people memorize Scripture, a specific evangelistic approach, or other biblical/theological/apologetic information. For these purposes he also contributed his own original memory devices, such as the "Good News Bear" and the use of a person's face to remember all of the parts of the gospel message.

These immensely practical innovations certainly justified publication, especially from a Christian perspective, since they equipped lay Christians more effectively to win souls to Christ. In their haste to brand him as a plagiarist, critics such as Alnor have disregarded both the originality of Hank's contributions and the fruit they were bearing for the Kingdom of God.

In truth, no one should have taken the similarities between Hank's work and that of other mnemonic writers as plagiarism,<sup>43</sup> and no one would have if certain

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<sup>42</sup> Jerry Lucas, famous as one of the greatest college and professional basketball players of all time, is also a Christian and has used mnemonics to help Christians memorize the Bible. He and Hank were friends in the 1980s (with Lucas even living with the Hanegraaffs for a while) and the two memorized Scripture and conducted memory seminars together.

<sup>43</sup> August 2010 update: This also applies to evidence Alnor recently (August 4, 2010) presented in a paper at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) titled, "An Inquiry into the Alleged Plagiarism of a Former NBA All-Star." In the paper Alnor presents eleven examples each from Jerry Lucas's 1978 book, *Ready, Set, Remember* and Hank's 1987 book, *States and Capitals* that he clearly thought would establish a charge of plagiarism against Hank. (Ironically, Alnor lifted these examples entirely from examples provided on YouTube [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yC2f2zkNZpY>] by former *Bible Answer Man* engineer turned agnostic and CRI adversary, Rolly DeVore. Once again, Alnor publicly accuses Hank of plagiarism without showing any evidence of interacting with the primary sources.) Interestingly, a panel of plagiarism experts that Alnor assembled did not confirm his opinion that Hank committed plagiarism. In the abstract of his paper, Alnor states, "The results were inconclusive as four respondents said no, three said yes, and three were not sure. This case shows the difficulties with detecting plagiarism using limited text and images." Indeed! Nonetheless, when Alnor announced his presentation of the paper to apologists and countercult workers (the group of people he most wants to turn against Hank) he misrepresented the respondents who believed plagiarism was committed (the three out of ten previously mentioned) as "most" of the experts: "Most believe some plagiarism was committed, but there were special difficulties in this case that have to be considered." (July 30, 2010 e-mail from William Alnor to AR-Talk titled "AEJMC paper on Jerry Lucas/Hanegraaff plagiarism." To be fair, Alnor does provide a link to DeVore's YouTube page here, but he does not indicate that this was the sole source of the research he provided the experts). As for the three experts who thought plagiarism occurred, I suspect if they were presented a copy of this chapter they would come to a

people didn't have a preexisting interest in casting Hank as a plagiarist. What people who have this agenda don't seem to realize is how transparent it is that they *do* have such an agenda to people who *do not* have one.<sup>44</sup> This is equally true with the additional charge of plagiarism that has been leveled against Hank concerning the late pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and the author of *Evangelism Explosion*, Dr. D. James Kennedy.

**Bowman's Chart:  
Hank's Alleged Plagiarism of D. James Kennedy**

Alnor proceeds to write:

Some scholars have also looked at Hanegraaff's borrowings from Kennedy. This, too, was exposed first in 1995 by the independent *On the Edge* publication....*On The Edge's* initial expose led with:

Startling allegations charge Christian Research Institute President, Hank Hanegraaff, with using another writer's copyrighted material in connection with several of his own writings, including his 1987 book, *Personal Witness Training*. High-level sources close to Hanegraaff, who did not want to be identified, say that he gleaned most of the material for his book from well known Florida-based pastor and teacher, D. James Kennedy's 1970 best-selling book, *Evangelism Explosion*. And the similarities are glaring and substantial.

The article then went on to document some of the similarities, as it also looked at another article he wrote for *The Christian Research Journal* that also lifted some materials from Kennedy. "Hanegraaff is merely copying material written by others and passing it off as his own," the article claimed. Although the exposé was at first faxed to many Christian leaders nationwide, it had an immediate impact as scholars began looking into it.

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different conclusion. DeVore's examples, like those of Ferraiuolo before him, do not convey all the differences that actually are found in the two men's work, and even the supposed examples of plagiarism show much originality on Hank's part, with that which is similar being entirely explainable by the nature and limitations of the discipline the two men were working in.

<sup>44</sup> I realize the people who I say have an agenda can and will try to turn the tables on me and say it is transparent that the ones with an agenda are those who do not see evidence of plagiarism; however, I believe I've provided a good basis for my claim. I will let the objective and fair-minded reader be the judge of which party in this debate has the evidence on its side.

So far the most thorough study of the alleged plagiarism was written by Robert M. Bowman, Jr., who produced a 26-page scathing report on the plagiarism titled "Is the Good News Bear a Copycat? Hank Hanegraaff and Plagiarism." The scholarly study includes 15 pages of tables showing similarities between Hanegraaff's work and Kennedy's that highlights 89 sections (many entire paragraphs) of his book in which Hanegraaff lifts from Kennedy. Bowman's work was subsequently placed on line with the Atlanta Christian Apologetics Project web site.<sup>45</sup>

Bowman's report apparently is no longer available online, but an excerpt of it can be found on the "Walter Martin's Religious InfoNet,"<sup>46</sup> a Web site unaffiliated with CRI but rather established by Walter Martin's daughter Jill and her husband Kevin Rische. (The Risches long ago joined forces with Alnor in promoting anti-Hank material on the Internet.<sup>47</sup>) The excerpt from Bowman reads as follows:

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<sup>45</sup> Alnor, "More Details," 7–8.

<sup>46</sup> See Jill Martin Rische, "The CRI Connection," Walter Martin's Religious InfoNet, <http://www.waltermartin.com/cri.html>.

<sup>47</sup> I would rank the Risches next to Alnor as the most significant current detractors of Hank and CRI, and this fact is tragically ironic. There has always been a fierce opposition to CRI throughout its history. Those of us who believe in the importance of CRI's mission and outreach can easily see the hand of the Enemy in this ongoing and fierce assault. When I first came to CRI I experienced firsthand what it is to be on the front lines of spiritual warfare, and I've been experiencing it ever since. I have never seen the leaders of any other ministry subjected to more brutal and ruthless ad hominem attacks than Walter Martin and Hank Hanegraaff. With the rise of the Internet people who desire more information about these men, whom I've known to be men of God, could easily come away believing them to be proven frauds and smarmy opportunists. The irony is that it is quite common on such Internet pages to find links to the Risches' Hank-maligning material lined up right next to links to Walter-maligning material on pages devoted to maligning CRI in general! (see, e.g., <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/cri.html>; [http://www.ltn.net/T/Idioma/English/Society/Religion\\_and\\_Spirituality/Opposing\\_Views/Christianity/Apologetics/](http://www.ltn.net/T/Idioma/English/Society/Religion_and_Spirituality/Opposing_Views/Christianity/Apologetics/); and <http://www.cooltoad.com/links/show.php?c=815486&PHPSESSID=4f>.) The tragedy is that some of the members of the Martin family have sought to appropriate for themselves Walter's legacy at the expense of the ministry that clearly was the major focus and project of his life. This is what I have found so grievous. I know the stories behind people who have gone public against Hank. It almost invariably involves their own personal reasons unrelated to the Kingdom of God (whether career objectives, monetary considerations, resentment at being fired or laid off, or what have you—interlaced with their own faulty rationales about how publicly smearing Hank serves the Kingdom of God), and they allow these sentiments to dispose them uncritically to accept allegations against Hank without seeking fairly and objectively to understand both sides of the story. They seem to have no problem referring people to sources of allegations, such as the Brad Sparks lawsuit, that clearly are unrighteous and bogus (see appendix D). It seems that if someone makes allegations against Hank that person is fine by them, no questions asked; but anything Hank does or says is always interpreted in the

(Excerpted from Comparison by Robert M. Bowman, Jr., 1998 edition)

We now turn to the sample dialogues found in E.E. and in PWT as models for presenting the gospel. Keep in mind that it has already been established that the framework of both presentations is identical. This means that where the two books use similar or identical wordings, that fact has greater significance than if the basic structure of the presentations were different.

Evangelism Explosion vs. Personal Witness Training

<b>EVANGELISM EXPLOSION by D. James Kennedy</b>	<b>PERSONAL WITNESS TRAINING by Hank Hanegraaff</b>
Kennedy goes on visitation to the home of someone who visited his church; he introduces himself, gives his church name, and introduces his two companions, a woman and a man (EE, 24).	Hank goes on visitation to the home of someone who visited his church; he introduces himself and his two companions (a woman and a man), and gives his church name (PWT, 3).
Kennedy breaks the ice by noticing a painting (24). "We will... search the room for some indication of his interest. A... painting... trophies..." (51).	"As we enter and are seated, we look for items of interest, perhaps a portrait, trophy, or an award." (3)

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most uncharitable and cynical light. As a result of all this, such people, who invariably say they are upholding the memory of Walter Martin, have unwittingly allowed themselves to become tools in a much larger, supernatural effort to destroy the crowning effort of Walter's life and ministry: CRI—a ministry that, as we saw at the beginning of this document, is continuing to do the work and bear the fruit Walter envisioned for it. However, not all of the Martin family is in agreement with that effort. Walter's former brother-in-law and lifelong closest confidante, Everett Jacobson, served on CRI's board from its inception in 1960 until his death in June 2007, and his support for Hank was unwavering. Walter's daughter Cindee and her husband, Rick Morgan, have also taken a strong stand in support of Hank. See appendix B.



"How did you happen to attend our church?" (25).	"Earl, how did you happen to visit our church?" (4)
"How did you like the service?" (25) "How did you enjoy the service?" (52)	"How did you enjoy the service?" (4)
"The people seemed so friendly and made us feel at home. The singing is just wonderful." (25)	"The music was terrific and the people made us feel really welcome." (4)
"You know, many people have mentioned to me that they sense something different about our church..." (26)	"Perhaps the reason you noticed something special about the service and the people at our church..." (4)
"Testimony" C either of the church, or a personal testimony (26).	"Testimony" C a personal testimony (4).
"They have hopes but they don't know for sure that they would go to heaven.... How about you, Mrs. Tucker?" (26)	"...my relationship with God makes me sure that... I will live with Him in heaven forever. How about you Earl..." (4)
"Have you come to a place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven?" (26)	"Does your relationship with God make you sure you will go to heaven when you die?" (5)
"Why, I don't think anyone can really know." (26)	"Not really. I didn't think anyone could be sure of that." (5)
"I even learned that that	"That is precisely why

<p>was the reason the Bible was written... 'that ye may know that ye have eternal life'" (26).</p>	<p>the Bible was written. It was written so we would know how to... be sure that we will live with Him forever when we die" (5).</p>
<p>"Would you like for me to share with you how I made that discovery and how you can know it too?" "Yes, please do." (27)</p>	<p>"May I share with you how I came to have this assurance and how you can have it as well?" "Please do." (5)</p>
<p>"Before I get into it, let me ask you another question...." (27)</p>	<p>"Before I do that, I'd like to get your insight on one more question if I may." (5)</p>
<p>"Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God and he were to say to you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?' What would you say?" (27)</p>	<p>"I would be interested in what you think the entrance requirements for anyone to get into heaven are." (59) "What would you say God's requirements are for you to get into heaven?" (5)</p>
<p>"And I try to be as good as I know how." (27)</p>	<p>"...I've tried to keep the Ten Commandments" (18). "Well, I suppose it takes living a good life, being a good person, helping those in need, keeping the ten commandments..." (5).</p>

Just as the charge that Hank committed plagiarism of L&L and Roth was based on faulty assumptions, so too the charge that he plagiarized Kennedy. One such unwarranted assumption is that Hank is taking Kennedy's material and "passing it off as his own," as Alnor quoted *On the Edge* affirming. This assumption is

false, and it could have been avoided if the right questions were asked: What kind of publication is PWT? Why was it written? Who was it written for?

### **Hank's 2001 Letter to Kennedy**

Hank himself addressed these questions along with other issues relevant to this document in a June 4, 2001 letter he wrote to D. James Kennedy. It is our understanding that over a five-year period Bowman, Ken Smith (an outspoken atheist), Ferraiuolo, and Alnor all approached Kennedy, seeking his support for their charge that Hank had plagiarized him. Kennedy did not always back them in this allegation, but in 2001, when Hank had criticized Kennedy on the *Bible Answer Man* for teaching the doctrine of Christian Astrology also known as the Gospel in the Stars, Kennedy retaliated by writing an open letter that accused Hank of plagiarizing him. I will present here the full part of Hank's letter addressing the plagiarism charge and additional charges relevant to answering Alnor generally, and then I will add my own observations.

Dear Jim:

Just moments ago, Elliot Miller, editor-in-chief of the *Christian Research Journal*, informed me that you recently sent an open letter to one of our long-time donors making very serious and damaging accusations against me. These allegations amount to a serious case of slander.

In the past it has been my policy not to defend myself against such personal attacks. However, in this case I have been counseled by a number of respected Christian leaders who have a full grasp of the circumstances to write you this letter. I pray that it might be a catalyst for personal reconciliation.

....

Regarding your allegation of plagiarism, Jim, *you know better!* First, this is old news. To bring it up again because I rebutted your teaching on "biblical astrology" is beneath your dignity. In my summary memo to you October 31, 1995, I provided you and your publisher details and documentation as follows:

As discussed, I developed Personal Witness Training (PWT) while teaching two classes at Mt. Paran Church of God (around 1983). At

the time, I was teaching a class titled "Your Memory and the Proverbs: Keys for Successful Daily Living" on Wednesday and Evangelism Explosion on Thursday. Many people attended both classes and were excited about how easily they were able to memorize Proverbs. They urged me to apply the same techniques in my teaching of E.E.

As you will recall, I demonstrated the memory techniques I developed for Evangelism Explosion to both you and principals at E.E. while serving as a consultant to your ministries. Although there was initial interest on your part and others to further explore the possibilities of making Evangelism Explosion inherently memorable, in the end it was decided that the broad use in circulation of E.E. materials would make any major modification prohibitive.

As time progressed, I conceived of a method for taking the basic biblical principles encapsulated in the E.E. presentation and associating them with the features of a person's face and parts of their body. In this way, whenever you shared the gospel, you could use the features of the person with whom you're communicating to remind you of all the essential points. To make the teaching process fun and easy, I developed a character named "Evangel, the Good News Bear."

Evangel the Good News Bear is not the only feature of PWT that is markedly different from Evangelism Explosion. For example, the gospel presentation itself (see pages 5-10) is substantially different from the one you developed for Evangelism Explosion.

Although I initially used PWT as an outreach program at Mt. Paran Church of God, by and large I have used PWT and Evangel the Good News Bear during memory training sessions as an illustration of how someone can quickly and easily learn and communicate the good news of the gospel. While many churches and denominations have for years modified E.E. to their own uses (often without any credit or attribution), I have consistently supported and recommended Evangelism Explosion as an ongoing training program for use by local churches. Although I initially

shared with you a prototype of the Personal Witness Training manual, the enclosed manual is substantially the same.

Furthermore, PWT is not some big deal. It has never even been given to a publisher. It has simply been used as my personal method of equipping committed Christians to share the gospel. Additionally, I self-published these training materials for my students at Mt. Paran Church of God in Atlanta. Later, at my own cost, I produced PWT manuals for others who wanted a personal study method for learning to share their faith. And as I have communicated to you personally and in writing (March 11, 1996):

I acknowledge you as the primary source and inspiration for Personal Witness Training; that PWT is a *training manual* and that training manuals by definition take proven concepts and demonstrate how to apply and use them; that I continually point people and churches to Evangelism Explosion, not only during memory training seminars (such as the one I did at CRPC), but also on other appropriate occasions; and that the uniqueness of Personal Witness Training lies not in its being an "original" presentation of the gospel (I don't know of anyone who can improve on Jesus, Paul, or Peter's methods recorded for us in Scripture), but because it takes the time-honored principles of evangelism exemplified in Evangelism Explosion and *in a unique way* shows how to memorize and apply those principles with confidence through an inherently memorable training process.

Finally, let me quote a portion of a letter sent to me on your behalf by your publisher March 1, 1996:

Thank you for your letter of several months ago, in which you explained the background of your relationship with James Kennedy and the reasons for the perceived similarities between his book *Evangelism Explosion* and your *Personal Witness Training* manual. Based on the information now in hand, I am satisfied that no harm has been done to Dr. Kennedy, to *Evangelism Explosion*, or to Tyndale House Publishers.

Ironically, while the letter goes on to state that you told Tyndale House that you were "not interested in pursuing the issue," the most recent letter you are circulating is but one that has been brought to my attention. (For

example, your slanderous correspondence last year with a well-known skeptic is also posted on the Web.) Jim, I have never retaliated. Nor have I attempted to defend myself. In fact, to the present I continue to urge churches to adopt E.E. as their evangelism program. No one knows that better than Walter Martin's brother-in-law, Everett Jacobson, who has continued on CRI's board for almost 40 years and has been an E.E. teacher/trainer for as long as I have known him.

To now suggest that you do not want to sue me because you "did not think that is what a Christian ought to do" and then to proceed to defame me is at best disingenuous. Do you think slander is more noble than suing?

Which leads me to the next piece of misinformation you are presently circulating—namely that I plagiarized Walter Martin's materials. Jim, I would humbly ask you to immediately come up with the goods or send me an unqualified apology. Let me quote Elliot Miller, who was Walter Martin's most senior and trusted editor and researcher during the entire decade of the 1980s:

Regarding Hank plagiarizing Walter Martin, is this another one of those allegations against Hank that Dr. Kennedy in his open letter says that he doesn't have the time to research, but still feels free to make public? I worked directly under Walter for 13 years, nine of which I served as his chief editor. Along with Gretchen Passantino, I personally wrote, edited, or contributed to most of the written material that bore his name during those years. What I didn't personally contribute to I was intimately familiar with. It has never once crossed my mind that Hank has ever plagiarized Walter. What specific documents is Dr. Kennedy referring to? I watch Hank laboring over his numerous books and articles and he writes every single word. He has people helping him with research and editing, but if he is anything—to a fault (since he is such a perfectionist)—he is an original writer.

Furthermore, contrary to the hearsay you are circulating, I became the leader of CRI several months before Walter died. This is a matter of record (board minutes, tapes from Walter Martin's Sunday school classes, memoranda and notes from staff meetings, etc.). In the months before his death he finally "washed his hands" of the day-to-day leadership. While

retaining a titular presidency he handed the direction of the ministry over to me as executive vice-president. That's why when Walter died there was no question as to who was in charge. As our board minutes clearly record, Walter Martin's *full* board (with me abstaining) unanimously voted me in as president.

Finally, what has caused you to suddenly make an issue of this after all these years? And why have you suddenly stepped up your campaign of disseminating misinformation by circulating your most recent letter? Could it have anything to do with my critique of your "biblical astrology" as well as your fundraising efforts on behalf of TBN? On July 27, 1992, you wrote,

I am quite enthusiastic about Hank Hanegraaff and his ministry at the Christian Research Institute. Having known him since his conversion here at Coral Ridge Church, and having watched his remarkable growth in grace and knowledge to his present stature as an international Christian leader, I am tremendously impressed by what the Lord has done in him, and is doing through him. He is a worthy successor to the ministry begun by Dr. Walter Martin and I thank God for him and CRI.

Like you, Walter's widow, Darlene Martin, was once one of my most ardent supporters. She asked me to conduct both the private funeral service as well as the public memorial service for Walter—hardly something you would ask of someone who had obtained his position "by methods that were less than ethical." At the memorial service, Darlene herself made it clear that Walter had chosen me to lead CRI into the future:

Walt and I talked often about who would take over for him at CRI if the Lord ever were to take him home. Since last October, Walter asked Hank Hanegraaff to work with him and to be that man. Little did we know that it would come this soon. But Hank is the man that Walter wanted to lead CRI and I am eternally grateful to this man for the uplifting that he has done for me in these past few days, and he is a godsend and I am so grateful for him, and for his family who are here. And I know that the Lord is going to bless CRI, and in continuing the ministry is going to flourish under his direction. And I just thank the Lord for him.

Our research staff recently apprized me of the fact that some of those who are committed to undermine me and the ministry of CRI have sought to dismiss Darlene's remarks by suggesting that on her way up to the podium Darlene was handed a script of what to say. This conspiratorial notion is soundly refuted by the video of the memorial service and is not particularly flattering to Darlene. It's one thing to suggest that Darlene was deceived at her husband's funeral; it is another to suggest that she would go along with the deception for the next seven years as a member of CRI's board of directors. For example, on June 7, 1994 she wrote,

How very grateful I am to the Lord for you!

It was no coincidence the day you met Walter Martin; the day you took the number two position at CRI; the day you said, "yes" and became a member of the Board of Directors of CRI! All of this was according to God's plan for you and CRI. You were there when Walt went home to be with the Lord. You were there when the board called you to be the president of CRI—again, a part of God's plan.

Darlene (letter enclosed) goes on to rejoice in the fact that "the Bible Answer Man show has reached unprecedented heights and continues to be a beacon for the truth of the Gospel and listeners questions are being answered and people are being brought to the Lord." Obviously Darlene has had a change of heart since she wrote this and numerous other warm and supportive letters. While I cannot and would not disclose privileged board information in this forum, it is a matter of public record that the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) prohibits any officer, director, or principal of a member organization from receiving royalties for materials sold through the organization. Our commitment to follow this standard set into motion Darlene's falling out in her relationship with us.

Let me conclude with a word about your innuendos regarding my qualifications. I may not have written "almost 50 books" as you claim for yourself, but I actually wrote every one of my books. Further, my work in radio should speak for itself. Every day, Monday through Friday, I answer questions live on virtually every possible challenging topic for a weekly audience of over 6.3 million. And the response from listeners whose lives are changed is simply overwhelming. I have watched my life and doctrine closely and am persevering. I am the father of eight children who all love



the Lord. I have never claimed to be anything other than a layman that God has condescended to use. As I encourage my radio listeners over and over, anything I can do you can do and most of you can do better.

In summary, I have bared my soul in this letter to document what I have already told you in person. As I said at the outset it is my sincere desire that God might use this letter as a catalyst for reconciliation. I do want to make it clear, however, that I am no longer going to sit back and allow you to slander me to our donors and the public. Theological differences are one thing. These false accusations are quite another.

Sincerely,

Hank Hanegraaff  
President

1 Timothy 4:11–16

It almost seems superfluous to add further commentary to what Hank said so well in this impassioned letter to Kennedy. Of course, nothing that Hank said or I can add will change the minds of those who are unwilling to have their minds changed. Alnor responded to Hank's letter, which Gretchen Passantino obtained permission from Hank to put up on her Web site<sup>48</sup> along with her own response to Kennedy's letter,<sup>49</sup> by commenting: "Hanegraaff's response did not deal with lifting a single duplicated line or paragraph he appropriated from Kennedy and he never responded at all to lifting his memory materials from others."<sup>50</sup> Did Alnor really read Hank's letter? The whole section addressing PWT was a reply to the charge that he plagiarized Kennedy and explained the reasons for the similarities between E.E. and PWT.

As for Hank's not responding to Kennedy regarding allegations that Hank plagiarized others besides Kennedy, that was because Hank was replying to Kennedy's open letter and Kennedy never made that particular allegation. Considering all the space I devoted above to answering the allegations that Hank plagiarized others besides Kennedy, Alnor should finally be satisfied; except, if

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.answers.org/newsletters/hankresp.html>.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.answers.org/newsletters/respkenn.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Alnor, "More Details," 11.

the past is any indication, he will dismiss my response out of hand because I am on CRI's payroll.<sup>51</sup>

### Hank's Acknowledgment of Kennedy

With Hank's letter to Kennedy fresh in our minds, let's return to the questions that get right to the point of whether Hank plagiarized Kennedy. First of all, did Hank claim, or even imply, that the material he used from Kennedy was his own creation? Such a claim, as we've seen, would constitute plagiarism. In his letter to Kennedy above Hank mentions the acknowledgment he gave to Kennedy in PWT. That acknowledgment, which was published *before* anyone accused Hank of plagiarizing Kennedy, reads in full:

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<sup>51</sup> See Alnor, "With a Little Help from His (Paid) Friends," in which he cites my status as a CRI employee and Gretchen Passantino's past financial relationship with CRI to discredit our past defenses of Hank against the plagiarism charges. This kind of ad hominem argument (attacking the person so you don't need to deal seriously with his or her arguments) has been typical of Alnor's approach, and thus he has entire pages on his Web site attacking Passantino and her late husband Bob, Richard Abanes, and others who have spoken up in Hank's defense. (Please note: this kind of fallacious and malicious approach is not how discernment ministry, apologetics ministry, or any kind of Christian ministry should be conducted!) For the record, *Passantino has never been paid for anything she has said or written in Hank's defense*. She has not been on CRI's payroll since the 1970s and has not performed any contract services for CRI for many years, and yet she remains just as vocal in defense of Hank, simply because of her longstanding commitment to truth and truth-telling in journalism. For my part, Alnor and others who have publicly suggested that I would not still be working for Hank had I not been corrupted have it exactly backwards: I would not still be working for CRI had I found any merit in the allegations that Hank is corrupt. This book-length document as well as the 1995 document *Setting the Record Straight* should be sufficient to show that my continued involvement with CRI stems from conviction based on an intimate grasp of the facts and not corruption resulting in a denial of the facts. I write these things not to vindicate myself, for I live for, serve, and am accountable to the Lord alone (1 Cor. 4:3-5), and the older I become the more I realize that His approval is all that matters. However, attacks against me are really not about me but are about Hank, and the continual onslaught against Hank amounts to nothing more or less than a continual onslaught against CRI, a ministry that I firmly believe God raised up and has continued to sustain for forty-eight years. CRI is making an impact for the Kingdom of God and could accomplish much more than it is, but it is significantly being hindered in accomplishing its purpose by the malicious and slanderous anti-CRI materials that are so readily accessible on the Internet. Tragically, most of this damage is being done not by cultists, occultists, heretics, or atheists but by people who claim to honor Walter Martin and passionately care about apologetics. It reminds me of Jesus' prophecy to His disciples that "an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God" (John 16:2). These people are attempting to destroy a ministry of God in the name of God. To work at undoing the damage that they have proven so dedicated to doing is why I write this document.

## Acknowledgment

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A Special Thanks.... [ellipses in original]

I take this opportunity to express my indebtedness to Dr. D. James Kennedy.

It was a direct result of his ministry that I came to know Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior; it was through the church he founded that I was discipled; and it was from those he prepared that I learned how to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ.

Not only have I grown as a result of his personal example, but also by reading his books and memorizing many of his lectures. Most of all it was from him that I caught the vision for how my life can be used to extend God's kingdom.

Although Dr. Kennedy is well known as a Christian statesman, to me he is best characterized as a man with a heart for God. It is my prayer that this program will be used by God to complement his vision.<sup>52</sup>

Alnor writes that "Bowman found things very wrong with this [acknowledgment]: [quoting Bowman] 'However, nothing is said here or anywhere else in PWT about any dependence of that book on Kennedy's EE. The fact that Kennedy is given such glowing thanks only makes matters worse, because it now makes it impossible to excuse Hank's failure to mention EE as an oversight.'" I have read this statement by Bowman literally dozens of times and I still cannot find the logic in it. How is it better to not mention both Kennedy and E.E. than to acknowledge Kennedy but not E.E.? Not only is Kennedy acknowledged but the manner in which he is acknowledged implicitly but clearly acknowledges E.E., as both the quotation indented immediately above and the next indented quote below make clear. And if it were conceivable that Hank could overlook mentioning both Kennedy and E.E., why should it be inconceivable that he could overlook one but not the other? People overlook things in part as well as in whole all the time. To cite a familiar example (at least

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<sup>52</sup> Hendrik Hanegraaff, *Personal Witness Training: Your Handle on the Great Commission* (self-published, 1987), iii.

to me and perhaps to you as well), sometimes I completely forget to bring a shopping list to the market; other times I remember the list but I overlook a couple items on it (to my wife's dismay when I return home!).

An extremely cynical and reaching interpretation would be that Hank mentioned Kennedy to try to escape the charge of plagiarism but didn't mention E.E. because he was nonetheless trying to pass the material off as his own. A more charitable and reasonable interpretation would be that he acknowledged Kennedy because he was trying to give credit where credit was due, but it did not occur to him that mentioning E.E. by name would be a further way to do that, and it would also preclude some charges of plagiarism.

As an editor, I would have advised Hank to acknowledge E.E. explicitly. The more explicit authors are about their sources, the better. But it needs to be remembered that when he published PWT Hank was inexperienced as an author, had no professional editorial input, and was merely attempting to further the work of evangelism. When I was a young Christian I too put together evangelistic and teaching materials without properly crediting all my sources. Credit and the concerns of professional publishing were the furthest things from my mind—all I was thinking about was reaching the lost and building up the church! Although I now have three decades in professional publishing under my belt and am personally meticulous about crediting sources, I still have a hard time understanding this concern about "plagiarism" and personal ownership of ideas where the preaching of the gospel is concerned.

As much as I respect Kennedy, I believe he erred by allowing Ferraiuolo et al. to provoke in him a sense of personal violation over PWT, and I'm not alone in this.<sup>53</sup> First, PWT was written by one of his own disciples whom he trained in evangelism. Isn't there a joy to be found in seeing one of your own disciples using what you taught him, showing ingenuity in the way he does it, and bearing fruit? Indeed, might he not have been offended if that disciple used some other approach? As someone who "plagiarized" Walter Martin as a twenty-one year-old Christian witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses in homes and Kingdom Halls and teaching other young Christians about the cults, I can assure you that

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<sup>53</sup> Under "Critics Might Say" MinistryWatch.com affirms, "Dr. Kennedy has made critical comments about an author who has drawn from Evangelism Explosion in order to develop other witnessing materials. Although every author has the right to protect his or her publications from (perceived) plagiarism, the context and wording of Kennedy's comments reflect a prideful and vindictive spirit which ill-becomes the Gospel."

[http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/F\\_SumRpt.asp?EIN=237068456](http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/F_SumRpt.asp?EIN=237068456).

when Walter heard about it some years later he couldn't have been more delighted.

Second, Hank did acknowledge his teacher glowingly for being the singular influence in his spiritual life and evangelistic approach.

Third, Hank's incorporation of E.E. material into PWT wasn't news to Kennedy, even if it seemed that way to Ferraiuolo et al. when they brought it to Kennedy's attention. Not only did Kennedy ask Hank to create an inherently memorable version of E.E. before deciding against it because E.E. was too well established in different translations internationally to be changed, but Hank also sent him prototypes of PWT as he was developing it. In the mid '80s Kennedy even had Hank teach an early version of PWT to his congregants at Coral Ridge. Indeed, Kennedy valued Hank's contribution so greatly that at the same time that Hank was considering Walter Martin's offer to become the CEO at CRI he was also considering an offer from Kennedy to become the CEO of the Evangelism Explosion organization.

Finally, all we're talking about here is a training manual to help people win souls (which brings us to the important question mentioned above, "What kind of publication is PWT?"). A training manual is not the place to unfold new ideas but rather to lay out step-by-step proven methods for doing something effectively. That is precisely what Hank created with PWT in a manner that far exceeds anything that can be found in E.E. While E.E. is almost entirely written in standard paragraph form with fully developed prose, PWT is largely written in outline form with blanks for the student to fill in at every point. This, in addition to its frequent mnemonic illustrations and exercises, puts PWT in a different literary category than E.E.: it is properly a workbook. E.E. has the same practical purpose as PWT (preparing Christians to win souls), but it does so in a different way. It is more properly a study book.

Not only does Hank formally acknowledge his indebtedness to Kennedy on p. iii of PWT, explicitly stating that he learned how to evangelize from people trained by Kennedy and that he had read his books (which would, of course, include E.E.) and memorized many of his lectures, but on p. x, under the heading "The Birth of a Vision," Hank further writes:

On a wet, windy, January day in 1979 three people from a church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, knocked on my door. The contact came at a time

when I had very little interest in spiritual matters, yet, this visit marked the beginning of a whole new life for me.

....

After my conversion, I was integrated into vital church membership and began to grow in my faith. It was there that I learned how to become an effective witness for Christ and how to train others to do so as well.

Since that time, sharing my faith and training others to communicate the Gospel and to answer objections to the historic Christian faith has become a lifestyle. As I grew in my faith, I developed a tremendous hunger to know God's Word. I not only wanted to get into the Word but I wanted the blessing of getting the Word into my heart.

Unfortunately, I did not know how to go about memorizing the Bible with retention.

My attempts to memorize the scriptures by rote ended in constant frustration. This frustration led me into a study of mnemonics (the science of memory). I began to assimilate and apply memory systems that have been used with great success throughout the centuries, as well as the most current discoveries in memory training.

As the application of these techniques bore fruit in my life, I was asked to show others how they could learn to use the marvelous abilities that God has blessed us all with to remember His Word. This led to conducting memory seminars for churches, schools, and other organizations in the United States and abroad.<sup>54</sup>

This quotation provides a further answer to the question, "Was Hank attempting to convey that the evangelistic approach in PWT was entirely or even predominantly his own creation?" (And please note that Hank also explicitly acknowledged that he did not create the mnemonic systems he used but drew on sources both old and new. It seems that Ferraiuolo and Alnor missed this reference as well!) With his acknowledgement of Kennedy as his pastor and the one responsible for his conversion, spiritual growth, and training in evangelism just seven pages prior, there could be no doubt what church in Fort Lauderdale sent those three people to Hank's home to share the gospel with him; nor could

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., x-xi.

there be any doubt as to where he was integrated into vital church membership, began to grow in his faith, and learned how to become an effective witness for Christ and how to train others to do so as well. What other church could he be referencing besides Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, and what other evangelistic program do they use besides Evangelism Explosion? Whether he specifically referenced E.E. or not, E.E. clearly was the gospel presentation that he originally embraced, was trained to use, and trained others to use. It does not take an astute literary critic or a trained logician to catch the drift.

### **Conceived in the Womb of E.E.**

Nor was it a great act of investigative journalism or first-rate primary research to establish a connection between E.E. and PWT. When I first heard Hank present PWT I immediately thought, "Oh, he's coming from an E.E. background." But did I think he was plagiarizing E.E.? Of course not! E.E. was the gospel presentation that Hank knew. It provided the context and atmosphere in which he was converted, disciplined, and came to thrive spiritually. Someone spiritually reared in the environment of Coral Ridge or any other of the thousands of churches that use E.E. worldwide could be excused if he barely realized there was any other way to present the gospel. If someone in Campus Crusade were to develop an inherently memorable (mnemonics-based) presentation of the gospel would we expect it to be a different presentation than the Four Spiritual Laws? Would anyone accuse that person of plagiarizing Bill Bright or trying to pass off Bright's ideas as his own? Not likely, unless the name of the person being accused was Hank Hanegraaff.

The point of all this is that PWT was conceived in the womb of E.E. The similarities between E.E. and PWT are not a matter of "lifting lines" as Alnor put it, as though Hank had a copy of E.E. open next to his typewriter and then cleverly altered a word here or a phrase there to make it look different. Rather, as a practitioner and trainer of E.E. he had not only internalized it but, using mnemonics, he had committed it to memory. Because PWT was originally based in E.E., elements of E.E. show up frequently, but Hank also infused it with mnemonics, added numerous original elements, and adapted even those elements inspired by E.E. to his own characteristically innovative approach. Bowman's chart is misleading in the same manner that Alnor's chart comparing Hank and L&L is, in that it puts whatever elements that are similar side by side without showing the vast differences.

The inherently memorable format in which Hank packaged the gospel presentation in PWT was his own creation and provided a strong justification for creating the material. (This answers the question, “Why was PWT created?”) This was the way he did evangelism and it was so effective that it naturally generated an interest and demand for him to teach it to others.

As Hank explained to Kennedy, PWT was created when people to whom he was teaching E.E. one night a week and Bible memorization another night asked him to make E.E. inherently memorable in a manner similar to what he had done with the Bible (which addresses the question, “Who was PWT written for?”). Does Alnor really expect us to believe that these people thought Hank created the E.E. material he was now teaching in a memorable format? Does he expect us to believe that Hank was trying to make them think that? Alnor and the others who take his view need to credit Hank, his students, and, for that matter, you and me, with a little more intelligence!

### **An Agenda-Driven Allegation**

Let’s get one thing straight. It is a verifiable fact that these plagiarism allegations have been made by people who already had an agenda to discredit Hank before they came upon the plagiarism angle, whether Ferraiuolo, Bowman, or Alnor. The allegations need to be put in a lot of context. At the time they were made an opinion held by many of the people who were unhappy with Hank’s placement in the presidency of CRI was that he was unqualified to take the place of Walter Martin (see appendix D). He had assumed that position with no formal theological or apologetics training and no publishing history other than a few self-published books on evangelism and memory training. When Hank began to write material such as *Christianity in Crisis* that would seem to contradict that low opinion of him, it was alleged by some members of the Group for CRI Accountability that Hank’s materials were ghostwritten. The plagiarism charge was another attempt to discredit Hank’s claim to the leadership of CRI. Even when he writes he’s incapable of producing anything original, so the theory went.

Despite his tendency to throw everything at Hank but the kitchen sink, I was amazed to discover that Alnor continues to suggest that Hank’s books are ghostwritten.<sup>55</sup> Back in the early ‘90s such an opinion might have seemed

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<sup>55</sup> See, e.g., Alnor, “More Details,” 3 and n. 8. As proof of this Alnor cites a statement by Gretchen Passantino that she was an editorial consultant to Hank “formally and informally as both editor



credible but by the mid '90s it was already discredited and over a decade later it is nothing short of ludicrous. Anyone who has worked at all closely to Hank over the past fifteen years knows that he has no ghostwriter. Stephen Ross, Hank's primary (and usually only) research assistant for well over a decade, does exactly that: he helps him with research. He also provides a sounding board as Hank thinks through the positions and arguments he develops in his books. He also edits (or tries to edit!) drafts of Hank's chapters. Ultimately, however, Hank is too much of a perfectionist to be pleased with anyone else's prose. As Hank quoted me stating in his letter to Kennedy, he writes virtually every word that bears his name, and that's much more than could have been said for D. James Kennedy or Walter Martin, men he allegedly plagiarized, and many (perhaps most) other leaders of high-profile Christian churches and ministries. They're often too busy to do much of their own writing even if they are capable writers.

The claim that Hank used ghostwriters to write any of his books is wishful thinking on the part of his detractors. I challenge them to name who this ghost writer is. I've never seen any evidence of such a ghostwriter whatsoever throughout the writing of Hank's books, but I have repeatedly seen Hank hunched over his computer as he slaved over each of them, and he shared chapters from each with me as they were written.

It is not necessary, however, to take my word for it—just read the books! Hank is such a compulsive wordsmith that his inimitable, “inherently memorable” style is etched on every page of every one of his books, and that style is so consistent with the personality that emerges nationwide on the radio five hours a week that it would be hard to find an author whose authentic prose would be easier to identify. In the face of such overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the persistence of this ghostwriter allegation is truly a fascinating example of how a stubborn malevolent bias can beget a stupefying mental blindness. The people who cling to this ghostwriter/plagiarist characterization of Hank are chasing after the distant echo of a rumor that was long ago discredited. Whether they like

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and close friend.” Passantino did provide formal editorial assistance to Hank in the '90s and continues to provide informal feedback to some of his manuscripts today. Every writer needs editing and most writers desire feedback from people whose opinions and critique they value. It shouldn't need to be pointed out that editing and ghostwriting are two very different things. Anyone close to the situation knows that Passantino didn't ghostwrite Hank's books but Alnor, from a distance, sees what he wants to see and then publishes his unsubstantiated speculations apparently without a second thought about accuracy or the harm that a false allegation can do. (Please note this also: this is not the way any kind of journalism, let alone Christian journalism, should be done!)

Hank’s literary style or not, his credentials as an original writer have been established for so long as to make their campaign an exercise in absurdity.

Hank does not fit the profile of a plagiarist or someone who needs a ghost writer in any way. The profile he does fit is of someone who is trying to produce the most effective, user-friendly approach to understanding, sharing, and defending biblical truth that he possibly can. Even when he is using proven methods that were developed by others he is not content simply to repeat them. He is always seeking to improve on them. When I go to the primary source materials used in the charts of Hank’s alleged plagiarism of other authors’ materials I am unfailingly struck, not by the duplication of material I was told to expect, but rather by how much of it is different. In the case of E.E. and PWT, while the two programs run parallel tracks at various points their trajectories diverge much more often than they converge. A quick way to demonstrate this is to compare E.E.’s table of contents with PWT’s (see appendix C).

Even when the topical arrangements of the two books run parallel, the manner in which those topics are developed is often quite different. The following example is typical and is selected only because of its brevity:

<i>Evangelism Explosion</i>	<i>Personal Witness Training</i>
<p><b>c. God</b></p> <p><b>1. Is merciful— therefore, He does not want to punish us</b>            The Bible says, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). We know that God is merciful and loving, gracious and kind, but the same Bible says that the same God is also just and holy and righteous.</p> <p><b>2. Is just—therefore, He must punish sin</b>            The Bible says that He “will by no means clear</p>	<p><b>God</b></p> <p>...<b>Perfect Father.</b> We all have earthly fathers, but no matter how good (or bad) none are perfect. God, however is the Perfect Father. He wants to have an intimate, personal relationship with us. He tells us in His Word, <i>I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness</i> (Jeremiah 31:3). God loves us so much that He wants a relationship with us regardless of our sin. However, the same Bible that tells us that God loves us also tells us that God is the... <b>Perfect Judge</b> and as a judge He is absolutely just, righteous and holy. The Bible says of God, <i>Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong</i> (Habakkuk 1:13).</p>

<p>the guilty” (Exodus 34:7). Of course, we know that the Bible teaches that God is loving and merciful and gracious. He doesn’t want to punish us. He must deal with sin, but He doesn’t want to punish us because He loves us. Now what is the answer to this dilemma?</p> <p>God, in His infinite wisdom, devised a solution. God solved the problem in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>56</sup></p>	<p>Herein lies the dilemma. On the one hand, we see that God is the Perfect Father. He loves us and wants to have a personal relationship with us. On the other, we see that He is the Perfect Judge whose very nature is too pure to tolerate our sin.</p> <p>[Hank proceeds to tell the story of how the son of a California judge known to punish offenders to the full extent of the law was brought before him for DUI and other offenses. As a righteous judge, he gave his son the maximum penalty of \$5,000. As a loving father, he took off his robes and paid the penalty himself that his son could not pay.]</p> <p><b>BRIDGE And that’s a glimpse of what God did for us through Jesus Christ.<sup>57</sup></b></p>
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As he does with all such expositions on the gospel, Hank follows this section up later in the manual (pp. 63–66) with a section that has key words and cartoons along with fill-in-the-blank statements to help ensure that the student will be able to remember and confidently present the material in a witnessing situation. Again, what separates PWT from E.E. most significantly is its infusion of mnemonics with training in evangelism and apologetics.

PWT has been shelved since the mid ‘90s. I assume this is because Hank concluded that the controversy generated by the plagiarism and inurement (see appendix D) charges, though unfounded, was deflating to the mission of CRI. This is a tragic outcome because, in my judgment, PWT remains a very valuable tool in equipping Christians to fulfill their highest calling: the Great Commission.

To sum up, Hank’s self-published evangelistic and memory manuals that he wrote in the early and mid ‘80s when he was a zealous young Christian have tremendous value and it is a shame that they are no longer in circulation. If Hank would have specifically referenced his indebtedness to L&L (as they did not do with Roth and Roth did not do with Berol) and E.E. by name (although he did

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>57</sup> Hanegraaff, *Personal Witness Training*, 7–8.

acknowledge Kennedy), he might have satisfied Alnor, Bowman, and Ferraiuolo,<sup>58</sup> but a strong case has been made that these omissions do not constitute plagiarism by the definitions quoted above. Even if you disagree, to hold these youthful omissions forever against him is extremely uncharitable, given the mitigating context that has now been supplied. To accuse him of “extensive, repeat plagiarism,” as Alnor does,<sup>59</sup> is more than uncharitable—it flies in the face of the facts. None of the professionally published books that Hank has produced since he came into his own at CRI remotely approach even the broadest definitions of plagiarism. No matter what context, evidence, and explanation is supplied I sadly expect Alnor and some of the other public detractors of CRI to continue labeling Hank a plagiarist (they’ll reason that they’ve gotten a lot of mileage out of using this epithet against Hank and they’re sticking with it!), but I trust most Christians will be more reasonable and charitable than that.

### Qualified to Lead

As to Hank’s qualifications to lead an apologetics ministry, that may have seemed like a vital question eighteen years ago but the answer has been plain for all to see for quite some time. Hank has for the better part of two decades now been daily taking questions on every conceivable biblical, theological, and apologetics subject and handling challenges from cultists, occultists, and skeptics with a skill, grace, and authority worthy of the president of the Christian Research Institute. I’ve been working at CRI for thirty-two years and I’m no slouch at fielding such questions and challenges myself, but I know of no one besides Walter who could do it as well as Hank, and that includes everyone else who has ever worked at CRI. This is not just my opinion: Hank’s deftness at answering questions and challenges on the spot has become nothing short of legendary among many Christians across the denominational spectrum.

As far as writing is concerned, all of Hank’s books are consistent with the mission of CRI. First, he makes his books eminently accessible to the lay reader without compromising sound scholarship and biblical fidelity on topics such as the resurrection, evolution, and answering difficult Bible questions. (Indeed, Hank has won the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association’s Gold Medallion award for his books *Christianity in Crisis* and *Resurrection* and their

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<sup>58</sup> I say this facetiously, since it’s quite evident that Hank could do nothing to satisfy them short of resigning from CRI, and even then they might not be satisfied until he retired from public life.

<sup>59</sup> See Alnor, “CRI—Hanegraaff under Federal Mail Fraud Investigation?”

Silver Medallion award for his books *Counterfeit Revival* and *The FACE That Demonstrates the Farce of Evolution*.) Second, Hank has demonstrated almost an unerring instinct to find what may be termed the classic CRI position on any given topic that comes along; that is, since its inception CRI has had a reputation for taking positions that are balanced but not compromising, orthodox but not sectarian, biblically faithful but not legalistic, scholarly but not pedantic, and so on, and it's in these middle places that Hank consistently comes down on issues. Finally, time after time Hank has taken by the horns errors and excesses that were spreading like wildfire in the body of Christ and turned them into opportunities to promote paradigm shifts in Christian thinking toward a more biblical world view and spirituality.

For example, Hank's 1993 book *Christianity in Crisis* (C in C) is widely regarded as the definitive book on the word of faith movement. In it he promoted a paradigm shift away from the five flaws of the Word of Faith movement to the five basics of biblical Christianity. C in C's mega-best-seller status and the thousands of testimonies that have come into CRI over the past fifteen years clearly indicate that the book made a significant impact on the body of Christ.

Although controversial in some (mainly charismatic) circles, Hank's *Counterfeit Revival* is regarded by many as the definitive work on the laughing revival/Toronto Blessing. Hank called Christians to turn from a fascination with the works of the flesh involving false teachers, false doctrine, and false signs and wonders so that they could embrace the works of the Spirit involving genuine worship, genuine oneness, and genuine witness.

Hank's 1999 book *The Millennium Bug Debugged* spoke a word of well-founded calm to the body of Christ at a time when many other respected Christian leaders were fueling the fires of unfounded fear and millennial madness. Hank took a bold stand that Y2K would not result in a social meltdown and, when his position was vindicated on January 1, 2000, it drove home the importance of Christians avoiding the snares of sloppy and sensational journalism and adhering to Scripture, the available facts, and sound reason.

His 2001 book *The Prayer of Jesus* turned the disturbing popularity of *The Prayer of Jabez* into an opportunity to promote a solid, biblically based understanding and practice of prayer. As someone who has read and taught about prayer for well over three decades, I consider this one of the best books on the subject.

Hank's 2002 book *The Covering* likewise presented a thoroughly biblical approach to the important topic of spiritual warfare while exposing the unbiblical approaches that were glutting Christian book stores. As someone who has written extensively on spiritual warfare, I consider *The Covering* to be the best book on the subject bar none.

Finally, Hank's 2007 book *The Apocalypse Code* packages a remarkable depth of scholarly research, exegetical skill, and theological insight in an eminently readable format. Hank brought me into his office to discuss these biblical views as he was thinking them through and also had me read the chapters of *The Apocalypse Code* as he completed them, and at first I was disturbed, then merely challenged, and finally won over by the undeniable foundation of his position in the biblical text. This book has thus evoked a paradigm shift for me and opened up a whole new dimension of further biblical inquiry. Only the best scholars have ever been able to affect me in such a way. Whether you agree with Hank's conclusions or not, he has given the church at large much-needed food for thought at a time when questionable eschatological views and hermeneutical methods are not only affecting the church's witness to the world but are also spilling over into American political decisions and foreign policy.

Hank's proclivity to respond to every theological and practical crisis, compromise, and confusion that develops in the body of Christ as an opportunity to promote a biblical worldview and genuine reformation is proof positive of his vision and leadership abilities and strong confirmation of Walter's wisdom in selecting him as his successor. To suggest, as Jill Rische does,<sup>60</sup> that her father was fooled by Hank is no more an insult to Hank than it is to her father's diligence, foresight, wisdom, and leading by the Holy Spirit in selecting

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<sup>60</sup> See Rische. Jill Rische asks: "Was Hank the man of integrity that my father believed him to be, or did he come to CRI under false pretenses? If Walter Martin had been presented with all the evidence, would he have hired Hank?...He was impressed with Hank's memory and what he considered to be the excellent memory course *Memory Dynamics* Hank claimed he developed. He was also interested in Hank's *Personal Witness Training*—again, something he thought Hank developed. He told me he liked Hank and his work, and would be hiring him for fund-raising purposes, i.e., marketing." As we've seen, Walter was not mistaken in believing that Hank developed both those books. Rische's latter statement particularly impresses me with how out of touch she was with CRI at the time of her father's death. She had been living out of state for many years and I never saw her at CRI during the thirteen years I worked for her father there (whereas three of the other Martin children, including Cindee Morgan, were on staff at CRI at various times). Although Hank's fund-raising abilities were no doubt a factor in Walter's hiring him, they were *far* from the only factor (see, e.g., appendix A). Anyone with an inside knowledge of what was going on at CRI during the first half of 1989 would have known this.

a man for such an all-important task. The available record unequivocally confirms that Walter's choice of Hank was prayerful and painstakingly researched (see appendix A), and subsequent history has confirmed Walter's wisdom: Hank *is* a memory expert, a highly effective evangelist, a visionary leader, and a man of God who persists in his calling despite opposition so relentless and vicious that almost anyone else (besides Walter) would have hung it up a long time ago and retreated to a more hospitable environment.

After fifteen years of Hank's daily hosting the *Bible Answer Man* and the creation of such an impressive body of work it is astounding that we still need to have this discussion about his qualifications. Again, it is a testimony to the blindness that can set up in people's minds once they uncritically allow someone else's biases to become their own.

What is tragic is that while some people have had an axe to grind that explains their bias, other people originally had no axe to grind, were supporters of Hank and CRI, but allowed themselves to become unduly influenced by the harsh judgmentalism and agendas of the former people. If that describes you, we are encouraged that you have at least taken the time to investigate CRI's side of the story by reading this book. We only ask that you reflect on and pray about what you have read and then think and do as God would lead you.

**CONCLUSION:**  
**Consider the Source**

These allegations will not end. Bill Alnor behaves as though his reason for living is to bring down Hank Hanegraaff and with him CRI. We have not given up on praying for his repentance and would certainly welcome him into our fellowship if he did repent, but we have long since lost any hope of being able to reason with him. He is extremely practiced and amazingly proficient in the art of twisting truth, and his first victim seems to be himself. We are called to the defense of the gospel, not of ourselves, and we cannot justify diverting any more of our precious time from our ministry objectives than we are using here to answer Alnor's never-ending allegations. We trust that our 1995 document and what we have shared with you here are sufficient to assure you that we do have answers to Alnor's allegations. We request that in the future, when Alnor would have you believe that he is doing God a service by attacking a fruit-bearing ministry, you will consider the source of the attack.

This also applies to the others who have joined Alnor in his crusade. Despite his thirteen-year track record of tabloid tactics, end-justifies-the-means ethics, glaring logical inconsistencies, and obviously animus-driven obsession with destroying a Christian leader, I know of no one in Alnor's anti-CRI camp who has publicly dissociated himself or herself from Alnor and his methods. Instead they tend indiscriminately to put up on their Web sites materials from, and links to, Alnor. This speaks volumes about their supposedly righteous cause. As I noted earlier, any material that bashes Hank seems to be fine by them, no matter how dubious the methods and claims. They will make appeals to righteousness and integrity regarding Hank's alleged improprieties when it serves their agendas against him, but they will not take a stand for righteousness and integrity when it goes against their own anti-CRI cause. This selective approach to righteousness simply belies the unrighteousness of the whole business. Again, consider the source.

All this is not to suggest that we at CRI are above criticism, nor to deny that we have done things worthy of criticism. When unjust criticisms have been so rampant and damaging to a ministry that it needs to publish a book-length defense of its good name, by the end of the book it may seem that the people in the organization think all criticisms lodged against them are unjust. This is not the case. We are aware of our failures, confess them to God and man, and regularly commit ourselves to following Christ more fully.



The point that needs to be stressed here, however, is that the flaws exhibited at CRI over the years are not in a different category than the kinds of failings you will find in any Christian ministry, staffed, as it is, by sinners who not only have been saved by grace but continue to need an abundance of grace extended to them to cover their daily failings. May we all continue to confess and repent of our sins, and thrive in the grace of God that is freshly extended to us every morning (Lam. 3:22–23).

## Appendix A: Is Hank Hanegraaff the Rightful Successor of Walter Martin?

As we saw in chapter 8, Jill Martin Rische makes the following allegation regarding Hank Hanegraaff on her Walter Martin's Religious InfoNet Web site:

Was Hank the man of integrity that my father believed him to be, or did he come to CRI under false pretenses? If Walter Martin had been presented with all the evidence, would he have hired Hank?...He was impressed with Hank's memory and what he considered to be the excellent memory course *Memory Dynamics* Hank claimed he developed. He was also interested in Hank's *Personal Witness Training*—again, something he thought Hank developed. He told me he liked Hank and his work, and would be hiring him for fund-raising purposes, i.e., marketing.<sup>1</sup>

I have never in all of my thirty-two years at Christian Research Institute experienced anything quite like the nearly decade-long debate over whether Hank Hanegraaff legitimately assumed the presidency of CRI. What makes this such an odd debate is that my direct and unambiguous eye-witness account of the events in question is being disputed by people who had no proximity to those events and who must piece together their case by assembling assorted eye-witness testimonies and documents that, in and of themselves, are far from conclusive. They must then make inferential leaps from such data to their own negative conclusions about Hank.

Along with Rische, who was out of state and completely removed from the events in question as they occurred, the main proponent of the illegitimacy of Hank's presidency is Jay Howard, who too was out of state and has never worked at CRI but who has worked closely with both Rische and Bill Alnor in public efforts to discredit Hank. Howard operates a Web site called Focus on the Faulty<sup>2</sup> that features articles by him and other countercult/discernment ministry writers, including his article, "Is Hank Hanegraaff the Rightful President of CRI?" He also makes available his lecture by the same title in a two-CD set.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jill Martin Rische, "The CRI Connection," Walter Martin's Religious InfoNet, <http://www.waltermartin.com/cri.html>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dwaddle.com/focus/Pages/home.shtml>. This is in conjunction with his personal countercult work that he calls Religious Research Project.

<sup>3</sup> Since this appendix was written Howard has also self-published a book, *Hard Questions for the Bible Answer Man: Hank Hanegraaff and His Takeover of the Christian Research Institute* (Logan, OH:

The case that Howard makes against Hank's legitimacy basically consists of the following three points:

1. In the year 2000 Howard asked CRI for a letter or audio tape that would document Walter's desire for Hank to become president of CRI upon his death. He says he received no response. He claims that in an interview with me in that same year I told him that no such documentation existed but that I heard Martin state this to the staff on one or two occasions. He cites interviews he also conducted with two former CRI researchers who were on staff during the period in question and neither of them recalled Walter stating that Hank was to become president of CRI. He concludes that it is my word against everyone else's, and, since I would have much to lose by not supporting Hank, he asks why people should take my word for it.

In chapter eight, footnote fifty-one, I addressed the argument that my ongoing employment at CRI biases my position on Hank and I will not repeat myself here. As to Howard's interview with me in the spring of 2000, I do not recall telling him that no such documentation existed. I do recall my feeling, after reading his published article, that his representation of my comments was not entirely accurate. If I did tell him that no such documentation existed it would have been regarding the narrow question of whether Walter had *explicitly* said that Hank would succeed him as president on the occasion of his death. At the time Howard interviewed me I was well aware of documentation that proved that Walter handed control of the ministry over to Hank *while Walter was still alive*, including my own handwritten notes from the staff meeting in December 1988 in which Walter announced this transition.

Although it was common knowledge to anyone who was employed by CRI at the time, and although one would expect researchers to uncover something like this before making public allegations that could be damaging to a ministry, both Howard and Rische seem to be completely unaware that Hank was indeed elevated to the position of CEO at CRI *prior to Walter's death*. Thus many of Howard's arguments are based on a faulty premise. When CRI board minutes from early 1989 describe Hank's performance of important executive functions that are consistent with the authority and job description of a CEO, Howard completely disregards them, interpreting them merely as board functions that no other board member had the time to do besides Hank!

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Religious Research Project, 2009). The book adds nothing to Howard's previously published materials on Hank's assumption of CRI's presidency substantial enough to warrant a revision of this appendix.

When Howard interviewed me in 2000 I also knew of the following statement Walter issued that was published in the *Christian Research Newsletter*:

Hank Hanegraaff personifies the next phase of development for CRI and is uniquely equipped through his dynamic leadership abilities, knowledge of God's Word, and teaching ability to make sound, biblical apologetics a simple yet effective tool in the hands of the laity. His success as a businessman, strategic planner, author, and speaker have equipped him to lead the ministry of the Christian Research Institute aggressively into the future and to build on the work that I by God's grace began.<sup>4</sup>

The only matter left to be disputed then is whether Walter specifically stated that Hank would succeed him as president after he died. This is merely an academic and not a substantive debate because it should be self-evident that if Hank was already at the helm of CRI while Walter was still alive he would continue to be at CRI's helm in the event of Walter's death. However, for the benefit of any who would stubbornly refuse to concede this point, I am now presenting evidence that has recently surfaced in Walter's own recorded voice. This additional evidence leaves no room for doubt that Hank was appointed to the executive vice-president position with succession to the presidency in view (see below).

2. Howard proceeds, "Since there is no empirical evidence that Hank Hanegraaff was ever asked by Walter Martin to take over the ministry, the question needs to be asked, is it possible that Walter Martin would promote a man like Hanegraaff?"<sup>5</sup> The main reason Howard offers to prove that Walter would never hire a man like Hank is Hank's lack of a bachelor's or graduate degree. Howard points out that Walter was a firm believer in, and a great lover of, education: he often spoke of his own (prep school) education at the Stony Brook School for Boys in Long Island; he surrounded himself with highly educated researchers; he even told his son-in-law Kevin Rische that he could not work in CRI's research department without a bachelor's degree. If this was required even of research consultants, Howard concludes, Walter would never place a man who did not even possess a bachelor's degree at the head of his scholarly research ministry.

Howard's argument might seem plausible if we granted him his premises, but two of his premises are false. First, there *is* empirical evidence that Hank was asked by Walter Martin to take over the ministry (see both above and below).

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<sup>4</sup> *Christian Research Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 5, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Jay Howard, *Is Hank Hanegraaff the Rightful President of CRI?* (Logan, OH: The Religious Research Project, 2008), CD 1 in a two-CD audio recording.

End of story. Whatever one might like to think Walter would or would not have done, if the facts speak otherwise, conjecture must give way to fact.

Second, Walter *did* hire people for important ministry-related positions who lacked formal theological training. What Walter told Kevin Rische was an ideal that we tried to operate by (I was involved with the hiring process in the 1980s, including setting the criteria for researchers), but there were many occasions when it was not followed. Sometimes exceptions were made out of desperation, but more often it was because a particular candidate's skills transcended those of other applicants—even those with greater education.

Having worked full-time in this field since 1976 and involved in the hiring end of it since 1980, I can say that while formal education is a major asset, it is only one factor in assessing a candidate's qualifications, and not necessarily the determinative one. When a person lacks the gifts and skill set necessary to work as a researcher/writer at CRI, no amount of formal education can overcome that deficit. Others who lack the formal education but possess the requisite gifts and skills can become eminently qualified through disciplined self-education and hands-on experience in evangelism and apologetics.

When Walter came across such people he did not let their lack of formal training prevent him from offering them a job. After moving CRI to California in 1974, the first people Walter brought on staff were Jerry and Marian Bodine and Gretchen Passantino. Walter placed the Bodines as high-profile missionaries to the Mormons, despite their lack of formal training, and he made Passantino head of his research department, despite her lack of formal theological training (she only possessed a bachelor's degree in English). He offered Gretchen's late husband Bob a research position at CRI (which Bob declined), despite his lack of a college degree. (Bob did not pursue formal training until late in his life and yet his grasp of the wide-ranging disciplines involved in apologetics was so strong that distinguished scholars with multiple graduate degrees routinely sent him their manuscripts for critique and sought his help in resolving their most difficult intellectual problems.) Walter also hired me and made me head of the research department and editor of CRI's magazine before I had completed work on my B.A. in ministry or obtained my M.A. in apologetics. Other researchers and missionaries to the cults were hired without having obtained undergraduate or graduate degrees, including Kurt Van Gorden, Paul Carden, and several lesser-known individuals. To maintain, therefore, that Walter would never hire someone who lacked formal training in theology to head CRI, even when he was otherwise thoroughly impressed with that person's abilities and

accomplishments, is to argue from personal conjecture (what one thinks Walter would or should do) untempered by historical fact (what Walter actually was known to do).

3. Having affirmed (mistakenly) that there is no evidence that Walter designated Hank as his successor, and that Walter never would have chosen someone without formal theological training as his successor, Howard finally affirms that “it is easily demonstrated that [Hank] was only brought on to the board at CRI to help raise financing for the ministry. When the board minutes of CRI are examined it is clear that he was only presenting financial-related information and he was never called upon to be involved in theological aspects of the ministry but reported almost exclusively on business issues.”<sup>6</sup> Howard then proceeds to quote from board minutes dated from 1987 through 1989 to demonstrate this.

What Howard fails to recognize is that such documentation completely accords with CRI’s narrative of the events and thus does nothing to disprove it. No one is disputing that Hank was originally brought on to the CRI board because of the great contribution he could make to the business and development sides of the ministry. Especially prior to his appointment as executive vice-president in December 1988 there would be no reason for him to be reporting on the theological aspects of the ministry. The question is whether Walter, after being impressed with the magnitude of Hank’s gifts and contributions, began to consider Hank for something more than a mere board or even a mere managerial role.

To put this all in context it needs to be appreciated that beginning in the mid 1980s Walter was indeed engaged in a search for his successor. At various points in the years that followed he considered three men besides Hank that I know of for that position: Ron Carlson, John Stewart, and Robert Morey. All three of these men, like Walter, were trained in theology and apologetics. None of them, however, could contribute more than Walter could to the management and development needs of the ministry, which Walter and the board increasingly saw as critical attributes in the next president. Thus, after considering these men, Walter’s emphasis in his search shifted to finding someone who had the skills to bring CRI to the next level organizationally while also having the attributes necessary to lead it theologically and spiritually.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

In Hank he saw someone who brought unparalleled assets to the table in terms of leadership skills, vision, wisdom, business sense and experience, and fundraising skills. *At the same time*, Hank had the ability to fulfill Walter's vision of transforming "top apologetics" into "pop apologetics" and equipping the Christian laity with it. He was an experienced and accomplished trainer in memory skills (something always of keen interest to Walter), evangelism, and apologetics. While not an expert on the cults at the time, Hank was well-versed as a layman on the subject and was a quick study. Hank therefore was already qualified to assume the CEO position at CRI and had the gifts and potential to grow quickly into the full-orbed leader the ministry needed. This he did after Walter died, to the extent that he assumed the role of the Bible Answer Man convincingly and effectively and the show went on to expand its audience exponentially. Howard is therefore wrong to argue that Hank's lack of early participation in the *Bible Answer Man* program is evidence against Walter's selection of Hank as his successor (although, contrary to Howard, Hank *was* featured on the program prior to Walter's death).

What I have stated in the preceding paragraph provides a framework for understanding the data that Howard and Rische have unearthed from old CRI board minutes and other documentation. It is important to note that Howard himself recognizes that the position that Stewart and Carlson were being considered for was that of Walter's successor. (Howard doesn't mention Morey.) The question then simply becomes whether Hank was being considered for the same position. Note the use of the titles "associate director/assistant director" in Howard's quotations from the CRI board minutes that immediately follow and then note Walter's use of the titles "executive director/executive vice-president" in the extensive quotations from Walter's Sunday School class that will follow the Howard quotation. It is quite clear that while a definite title had not yet been settled on for the position, the same position was being discussed in all these instances.

Howard proceeds in his recorded lecture:

In those early years that Hanegraaff was involved in the board there was actually a couple of men who were discussed as possible associate directors at CRI. The first was Ron Carlson, who is [*sic*] currently has a ministry called the Christian Ministries International. The other was John Stewart. These two were talked about during various board meetings as working directly with Walter Martin. In board meeting minutes dated

October 17, 1985, there is this mention: “Ron Carlson is still interested in the position of associate director of CRI but has not sold his house and if he accepts the position it will not be available until some time in 1986.” In the board minutes dated September 12, 1986, there is this mention of John Stewart as a possible assistant director: “Stan [Tonnesen—a CRI board member at the time] has brought up John Stewart’s proposal and reiterated the board’s discussion earlier in the meeting to John. Walter stated his views on what he expected from an assistant director.” There is nothing in the minutes from those years in which there was ever a discussion about Hanegraaff as a possible associate director for CRI. This associate director position appears to be the position that was offered when Martin had special interest in a man. It will be incumbent for CRI at this date to show actual documents that would show Martin’s interest in Hanegraaff to be the next president.<sup>7</sup>

Howard has thrown down the gauntlet. If CRI can provide documentation that will show Walter’s interest in Hank to be the “associate director”/“next president,” then in good faith we expect that Howard will publicly recant his position, take his article on Hank’s illegitimate presidency off of his Focus on the Faulty Web site, and stop selling his CDs on the same topic. If he refuses to do so once we have met the burden he has laid on us, then we must sadly conclude that Howard has an unremitting agenda to discredit Hank, and his inclusion in an appendix of a book on Bill Alnor is more fitting than we had hoped.

The documentation Howard demands could be provided from many sources. We have already seen the statement Walter issued upon Hank’s acceptance of the position of executive vice-president that was printed in the *Christian Research Newsletter*. For brevity’s sake I will limit myself here to one more source: Walter’s own recorded statements at his Sunday morning Newport-Mesa Christian Center (NMCC) Bible class.<sup>8</sup> (By the sovereignty of God these tapes came into our hands just as this book was being completed. They were sent to Cindee Martin Morgan by someone who actually sides with Alnor against Hank!) The students at this class, which Walter taught since he came to California (originally at Melodyland Christian Center), held a special place in Walter’s heart. In certain respects he considered them his “flock” and he shared with them especially

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> All of Walter’s recorded Bible class statements concerning Hank spanning the years 1986–1988, including several not cited in this appendix, are accessible both in transcript and in audio clip forms by going to [www.WalterMartinJude3.com](http://www.WalterMartinJude3.com).



important or personal information and prayer requests that he did not freely announce to the general public.

On December 7, 1986, Walter stated that he hoped to have Hank teach a memory class at NMCC, noting that he (Walter) had been “promoting this [i.e., Hank’s mnemonics teachings] for *better than five years*” (emphasis added).<sup>9</sup> He endorsed Hank as a “memory expert,” stated that Hank had worked with Jerry Lucas, author of *The Memory Book* (showing that Walter was not ignorant of the book that Hank supposedly plagiarized, as Rische implies), and affirmed that Hank would teach them “the tricks of the trade in remembering” because he was “very well up on the subject” (demonstrating that Walter himself was “up” enough on the subject of mnemonics to understand that Hank did not personally create the memory principles that he taught, nor was he claiming to have done so. Indeed, it was not Walter but Ferraiuolo and Alnor who demonstrated ignorance on the subject, and, if anyone was fooled, it was not Walter by Hank but Rische by them).

During his October 23, 1988 Bible class Walter presented for the second time in one month a specific prayer request for CRI to his students:

We need a man at CRI to come in and to actually be the general manager and to take over the general operation because I can’t be inside and outside at the same time. It cannot be done. Impossible. And the burden is too great for Leona, who is our office manager and actually business administrator. And so we’ve been praying for somebody—I’ve been praying for one man for two years, that God will put it on his heart. And God did put it on his heart, and he said, “I think I’ll be able to come.” And if he is able to come, I can’t afford him. I want you to know that going in: we can’t afford him even at a greatly reduced salary. But he can run the entire operation and is very, very good in the world of the cults and an excellent, very successful man in his own right. So I ask you to pray for this person, who would be the number two person in our structure at CRI. And he’s a godly man; the Lord has used him in a mighty way down south and in other parts of the country. And we’ve asked him to join us and he has said that he’s willing to, so now we’re in the praying stages and asking God to work out all the details of it. But that’s something to put in your prayer list; he’ll probably be a vice-president or executive

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<sup>9</sup> Walter’s entire December 7, 1986 discussion of Hank’s memory class and expertise in mnemonics can be heard by going to <http://www.waltermartinjude3.com/nmccbc19861207.html>.

director at CRI. And I *badly* need somebody like that, because I just can't run the office and make decisions all the time. There's got to be somebody there to help. We've got to have somebody that really knows what they're doing. And we want the best we can get, and this gentleman we believe is the best on the horizon, so please be in prayer about that.<sup>10</sup>

The claim that Hank was hired merely for his business acumen or marketing skills is refuted by Walter's overall description of the need, the role that Hank would play, and his qualifications for the job. He already had an office manager/business administrator in Leona Ross and it was entirely clear that Hank's position would be greater than that; Hank would "run the entire operation." He also notes qualifications that go beyond what CRI has ever looked for in mere management and marketing personnel, such as Hank's being "very, very good in the world of the cults."

Of course Walter emphasizes his own continuing involvement with CRI, as the intention was for him to remain its public face; but a little inside history should prove insightful here. Every general or office manager that CRI had hired prior to Hank had complained that while Walter was not in the office enough to direct the ministry effectively, he always kept one hand on the reins and did not give free rein to the managers who were there on a daily basis. By the mid 1980s Walter came to terms with the fact that this pattern of leadership was hindering CRI's effectiveness. It thus became extremely important to him to find a person trustworthy enough to be handed the reins to the ministry. When Walter presented Hank as executive vice-president to the CRI staff in December 1988, he specifically stressed that while he would continue to be CRI's president, he was taking his hands off of the day-to-day direction of the ministry and handing it over to Hank. Thus the word "executive" was crucial in Hank's title of "executive vice-president"; Hank was now the CEO and Walter's *official* authority would only be exercised in his capacity as the president of the board, along with the other board members. (His *spiritual* authority, of course, would be retained and exercised mainly in his providing theological guidance to the staff.)

Finally, Walter made his intentions for Hank unmistakable when he presented Hank to his Bible class on December 4, 1988:

I have the joy to introduce to you a person that's a joy to me. He's going to have a unique role at Christian Research Institute....I've needed for many

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.waltermartinjude3.com/nmccbc19881023bts.html>.

years someone who could fill the role of a special assistant or of an executive vice-president to help at CRI; someone with the credentials and the ability; somebody that could teach, somebody that could preach, somebody that had the capacities to manage and has been very successful in his own operation for some time.... This is someone in whom I have implicit confidence. He's young. I've surrounded myself with young people because I do not believe the myth of invulnerability or of immortality. I've seen too many Christian leaders think that they were never gonna die and wait 'til the last minute before they got anybody to help them, and then they had chaos. I have not made that mistake.<sup>11</sup>

Walter's comments prove both that he had been looking for more than a manager or marketing person (why else would it be important that he could preach and teach?) and that he did have a successor in mind: someone to whom he could not only hand over the direction of CRI while he was still alive, but in whose hands he could leave it if the Lord should take him home. Clearly, Hank Hanegraaff was prayerfully and carefully selected for both purposes. Contrary to what Rische would have the public believe, her father was extremely conscientious in selecting not only a special assistant but also a successor, and thus the ministry did not descend into chaos when its founder died but instead moved rapidly forward—a fact that was well noted at the time (see appendix D), with immense gratitude expressed for Walter and the board's foresight.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.waltermartinjude3.com/nmccbc19881204bts.html>. To hear Walter's entire introduction of Hank to the class, including portions not included in this quotation, go to <http://www.waltermartinjude3.com/nmccbc19881204p2.html>.

**Appendix B:**  
**The Martin Family's Controversy with CRI: An Inside Perspective**  
by Cindee Martin Morgan and Rick Morgan

"He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun." Psalm 37:6

My husband, Rick, and I do not believe public attacks on professing Christians are biblical. We believe the Lord ordained the local churches to settle conflicts within the body of Christ, as Matthew 18 teaches. The Christian Research Institute has been dragged into a perilous "courtroom" not governed by the protections the Lord has set in place for those who love Him. For the sake of truth, and most importantly our love for Christ, we are compelled to give our "testimony" in this unjust "trial." As my father, Dr. Walter Martin, often said, "Controversy for the sake of controversy is sin. Controversy for the sake of the truth is a divine command." We stand with CRI as one by one we take the "witness stand" to "defend" the truth, trusting God is with us. It is our prayer the Lord will use the "evidence" He has provided to cause the light of truth to shine brightly.

**An Unjust Charge: Stealing a Ministry**

Hank Hanegraaff is not guilty of stealing CRI from a grieving widow, as some claim. This false conspiracy theory reminds me of the childhood story game "Telephone." For those unfamiliar with this game, a group of children are told to sit in a circle. One of them begins the story by whispering something in the ear of the person next to them who in turn repeats what they heard to the person next to them and so on until the last person to hear what was said repeats the garbled tale. In a real sense, *tales* against our brother in Christ are being whispered in the courtroom of the world. In this treacherous place, lies and distortions have replaced truth. Unlike the game referred to above, the end result is anything but funny; it is an effort to destroy a godly man's reputation and ministry. Some assume that if Hank could deceive Walter Martin's widow, in her time of need, he could be guilty of anything and everything he is accused of.

It has been alleged that my stepmother, Darlene Martin, was blindsided at my father's public memorial service by an on-the-spot demand to support Hank as the new President of CRI. We respectfully disagree with her recollection of what took place. In the days *prior* to the memorial service, Darlene mentioned to us that CRI had asked her to say a few words to support publicly my father's choice

of Hank. She explained that they had made this request because of how ministries often suffer following their founder's death. Darlene stated she did not know who my father wanted to lead CRI, and was unsure of what to do. It was not surprising for her to be uncertain of what my father's leadership plans were, having never been involved in the ministry aspect of his life (nor were any of my father's children at the time of his death). Darlene willingly agreed to support Hank; this was discussed at home and at the church. We witnessed Darlene's strong desire to stand by the men my father had positioned at CRI. The idea she was taken advantage of is so far from the truth it is shocking. Everyone around us, during that sad time, was gracious to our family. Darlene was understandably nervous to speak about the leadership issue publicly, as is evidenced by the strain in her voice as she delivers that part of her speech during the service. She sought, however, to honor Walter Martin's wishes.

Dr. John Ankerberg, a trusted friend of my father's, announced that Walter Martin had chosen Hank Hanegraaff to lead CRI into the future. As the memorial video proves, Dr. Ankerberg openly recalled having prayed with Hank, in October of 1988, about Hank's decision to accept the position of executive vice-president of CRI. It is compelling to listen to the audio of Walter Martin in October of '88, at his Newport-Mesa Christian Center Bible Class—in his own words—ask his class to pray about the same position Dr. Ankerberg prayed with Hank about during that same month and year. It is critical to note that Dr. Ankerberg was "in the loop" in terms of what my father had planned for CRI. He would hardly participate in, or overlook, a conspiracy to steal a ministry.

As the video of Dr. Martin's memorial service proves, everyone my father positioned in leadership at CRI was present during his service and supported his leadership decisions. Longtime CRI board member Everett Jacobson, my father's former brother-in-law (and my uncle), who remained his best friend throughout his life, was the only person involved with CRI that my father considered family. My father loved him like a brother. When my uncle spoke at Walter Martin's service, he was so grieved he almost broke down during his tribute. To this day, anyone can tune in and hear about the love he had for his "brother" and his devotion to Jesus Christ. Everett Jacobson also loved Darlene; they were good friends. It is shameful he has been publicly accused of helping Hank steal CRI. To suggest Everett Jacobson would betray the Lord, Walter Martin, and his widow is nothing short of slander.

At Darlene's request, Hank planned a beautiful memorial service for her husband. Immediately following my father's death, Darlene—for the first time—

—became involved in CRI. She was welcomed to the board of directors with open arms, serving side by side with Hank and Everett Jacobson for about six years. During Darlene’s time on the board she spoke of how the Lord was using CRI and how pleased she was with the ministry’s direction.

### **A Private Reproof**

During the final year Darlene served on the board, she had a falling out with Hank. It was later misreported that they had a *public* rift. The incident between them occurred at a board meeting. I was at the house the day Darlene returned from that meeting, the very meeting that would set the stage for division between them. Darlene explained to me that Hank had confronted her, in front of the board, about privately speaking with disgruntled former employees who were currently attacking CRI. Although I was sad to see her so distraught, I came to realize that Darlene’s decision to do this was ill-advised. This was Darlene’s first experience on a board overseeing a vast ministry. In retrospect, I don’t think she was prepared for the level of spiritual warfare Walter Martin dealt with on a daily basis. Having attended that same board meeting, my uncle assured me that Hank had handled things wisely. As I would later learn, some of the former employees Darlene was privately speaking with had previously implicated her as well as the other board members. Hank sought to protect CRI from people who were so determined to effect a leadership change that they were prepared to use whatever damaging allegations would serve their purpose—no matter how false, unverified, or unfair—and had no qualms about the damage they would do to CRI in the process.

### **A Rush to Judgment**

Walter Martin died in 1989. It is critical to note the accusation Hank stole CRI did not emerge until 1999, *a decade after my father’s death*. At Darlene’s request, my sister Jill conducted an investigation of the accusations against Hank Hanegraaff. This investigation also led Jill to question the integrity of Everett Jacobson and Elliot Miller. Jill did not know any of these men personally with the exception of having known our uncle when she was a child and a teen. She lived two thousand miles away, in Minnesota, without having ever been involved with CRI. For two years she proceeded to collect alleged evidence against Hank, compliments of disgruntled former CRI employees. In a cyber “ruling” heard around the world, she declared Hank “guilty” of conspiring to steal CRI, guilty of sins against past employees, and guilty of virtually every online accusation

Hank faced. Most of the people Jill joined forces with had no first-hand knowledge of these issues.

For reasons perhaps known only to the Lord, Jill's "findings" are painfully inaccurate. After a three hour conversation with Elliot Miller, Jill dismissed his recollection of events and the first-hand "testimony" he freely offered. She essentially threw this "evidence" and his testimony out of "court." She ruled that Elliot Miller, who had worked closely with Walter Martin for close to thirteen years, was guilty of overlooking evil and was not to be trusted. Elliot, and his wife Corinne, are two of our dearest friends. They are committed to serving Jesus Christ. Rick and I understand why my father had high regard and confidence in Elliot both personally and professionally. I observed their relationship firsthand when I worked at CRI, back in 1981. Jill is publicly on record stating Everett Jacobson, another one of CRI's witnesses, never tried to speak with her about the accusations against Hank. With great sadness my uncle confided in us that Jill had never asked his side of the story as to what had taken place at CRI, following my father's death. After Uncle Everett's son died unexpectedly, he mentioned he'd received a sympathy card from Jill that included words taking him to task for helping Hank steal CRI. My uncle, a great man of God, went to his grave falsely accused of betraying the Martin family. We believe it earned him another jewel in his crown. We are certain Everett Jacobson heard the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant....enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt: 25:23 KJV).

This tragic story begs the question: how could Darlene Martin, more than a decade after her husband's death, conclude Hank stole CRI? After Darlene's falling out with Hank at the board meeting, we witnessed her struggle with the public accusations against him. The fact she didn't *personally* know who my father chose to lead CRI compounded the problem. In our opinion, instead of believing the firsthand testimony of the men Walter Martin trusted, Darlene was deceived by false accusations. In light of the evidence Jill presented, she became convinced her husband could not have chosen Hank. She, along with Jill, assumed that the request to support Hank publicly must have been part of a plan to steal the ministry. In our opinion, they made a rush to judgment.

### **A Personal Agenda?**

During the time Jill was conducting her investigation, she and her husband, Kevin, began a ministry they named "Walter Martin's Religious Infonet." They requested of CRI, and received, a large amount of Walter Martin materials. CRI

gave the Martin family permission to use them for God's glory. The idea of publicly sharing more of my father's messages has always appealed us, as do all good ministry endeavors, but not what appeared to be an effort to build a platform to destroy CRI. In our opinion, Jill is seeking to transfer the legacy of Walter Martin to her ministry based on false information. We believe CRI is Walter Martin's legacy and represents everything he labored to accomplish for God's Kingdom the thirty-plus years God used him there. For these reasons, we asked Jill not to claim publicly that the entire Martin family stood against CRI. Sadly, Jill was determined to show a united front. The public perception became that the entire Martin family was calling for Hank's resignation. Disturbed by this, Rick and I privately let Hank know we were not involved. We did not have a public platform back in 2000 but wanted CRI, and those close to us, to know we loved this ministry.

Jill did not learn that *someone* in the Martin family had spoken with Hank until months later. Outraged by this perceived high-level security breach, she confronted me. Weary of this issue and fearful of family division, I flatly refused to discuss the matter. Convinced we had spoken with Hank, Jill insisted we were traitors, stated she no longer wanted a relationship with our family, and later convinced others in our extended family to break fellowship with us as well.

### **Seeking Reconciliation**

Rick and I eventually decided to contact Darlene's pastor in an effort to seek biblical reconciliation with her. We arranged a meeting and flew to California. At Darlene's request, she brought along some extended family members—Jill being one of them. We were thankful to the Lord for this opportunity to discuss our contact with CRI and to, before witnesses, explain our actions. We openly admitted to speaking with Hank and sought forgiveness for not answering this question long before. We stressed to everyone why it is wrong to demand Hank be accountable to Dr. Martin's relatives. After hours of discussion, Darlene's pastor asked her if she understood we were not traitors, having obeyed our conscience before the Lord. Despite his counsel, Darlene insisted we had betrayed the family. It appeared our crimes were (1) we did not believe Jill's investigation was accurate and (2) we had privately let Hank know we were not involved in the Martin family's public activities against him. I left the meeting with a grief I have carried with me until this day. I have loved Darlene since I was twelve years old and was grieved she believed this is a matter of family loyalty instead of obedience to the Lord. Our relationship with these family members remained broken.



Several months later I became ill and was hospitalized. Although the pain medicine prescribed at the time made it a challenge to hold onto conversations, I do recall my hospital phone ringing off the hook as most of our estranged family reassured me of their love. After this medical trial, they agreed to disagree on the issue of CRI—for nearly seven years—although things were never the same between us. Jill and Kevin continued to promote accusations against Hank on their Website and although it was not discussed, they knew we opposed their actions. This was the dead calm before the darkest storm we have faced so far.

In February of 2009, a phone call between Jill and I erased most of the progress everyone had made. Jill expressed concern there were numerous clips of our father, on YouTube, posted by people who were ignoring their requests to post a link to their Walter Martin Website. I tried to help her understand that many Christians do not believe publicly going after a brother in Christ is biblical, and may not want to post their link for that reason. I mentioned this is why, when Kevin asked us, we would not post it next to the Walter Martin clips we were sharing on our YouTube channels. It was as if we entered a time warp and were transported back seven years faster than the speed of light; it was all downhill from there. Jill was indignant that I maintained her crusade against Hank was not a righteous one. Before the call ended, she once again broke fellowship with us. Although no one else in our extended family noticeably left us at the time, the winds of division were blowing stronger than ever before.

### **End-Time Views: His or Hers?**

As the months passed, an important issue came to our attention. People were publicly expressing concern that Walter Martin's eschatological views were being redefined by Jill in her recent book. It is Jill's assertion that Dr. Martin condemned certain end-times interpretations held by many evangelical Christians as "aberrant theology" and evidence of satanic influence in the church. Her words alarmed us because this was not what my father believed and she was causing division in the body of Christ. These views, while not currently as popular as dispensational theology, are nonetheless held by many in the Reformed branch of Christianity and are deeply rooted in orthodox theology. Dr. Martin referred to the various end-times views as "peripheral theology." He implored believers to love one another and to not divide over these types of disputes. The following is from Walter Martin's tape, *The Tribulation and the Church*:

There have developed tremendous conflicts in the Body of Christ about the subject of the Second Coming of our Lord. And I think that what we ought to do is to have freedom to express ourselves without being penalized for our positions. And unfortunately, that's what's going on today....

Now I don't know what frightens people so much about different points of view. The Apostle Paul says that, 'There must need be differences of opinions in your midst, so that the truth may be made known.' There is nothing wrong with having different opinions. And ministers, not only myself, but others, should not be penalized for taking, what is in the minds of some, an unpopular position.... Love, according to 1 Corinthians 13, is supposed to govern the activities and the function of the members of the body of Christ. And when I see Christians fighting among themselves, about whether Jesus is coming before the tribulation, the middle of the tribulation, or after the tribulation; when I see books being published where statements are made, "We *are* the generation that will see the Second Coming of Jesus Christ"; when I see this type of thing going on, and bitterness developing, a root of bitterness developing among Christians, then I think it's time for us to air our differences of opinions. I think it's time for us to give the other guy a break. If you don't agree with him, love him, or her, for Christ's sake. But don't make that a point of division in the Body of Christ.

We must not be divided about whether we sprinkle, pour or immerse, or whether we have wine, grape juice, or Coca Cola at the Communion service—which is what they do in Latin America anyhow. We shouldn't be arguing about pretribulation, midtribulation, and posttribulation, and premillennial, amillennial, and postmillennial. The principle task of the Church is to evangelize the lost world, and they couldn't care less.

Even more problematic with Jill's book is the fact that Walter Martin's name graces almost half of its front cover. Although her book may contain helpful information, we do not believe my father would want a work done in his name that he was unable to sign off on. He never permitted this during his lifetime. We immediately recognized our efforts to resolve this situation would undoubtedly be hindered because of our support of Hank and CRI. Experiencing division with Jill for the second time in nine years, Rick decided to participate anonymously in a public discussion on this subject that was *already in progress* on her ministry's Website. Everyone in the discussion remained anonymous, with the exception of

Jill. Although it troubled us to have to deal with things this way, it gave Rick the opportunity to discuss our concerns in a controlled environment. Over a period of several weeks, he respectfully urged Jill to cite evidence to support her public assertions that Walter Martin believed what she was claiming. Jill was unable to do this and the discussion eventually ended with her claiming Dr. Martin's children knew best what he believed.

### **A Meeting with Jill and Kevin**

Completely discouraged by my sister's responses yet relieved to have this discussion as evidence, we approached Darlene and sought her help. She asked us to send her the exchange between them, and we complied. Darlene appeared to share our concerns and even convinced Kevin and Jill to meet with us. We briefly discussed our feelings with them about CRI and the longstanding division between us. Jill's response to us was simply that Hank is a "tare." (The use of this biblical metaphor is significant beyond Jill's understanding, for she has been devoting her energy for over a decade to removing this "tare," yet Jesus instructed us *not* to remove tares, since we do not know for certain who is a tare and we might actually remove some "wheat." We are therefore instructed to leave it to God to remove the tares on Judgment Day [Matt. 13:24-30; 36-41].) Rick addressed our concern that Jill has publicly misrepresented Walter Martin's theology. As they talked, she began to realize the two of them may have already discussed this, at length, on her ministry board. Rick openly admitted he had spoken anonymously with her. Although we sought to help Jill understand why he felt compelled to do this, she was offended. Rick sought her forgiveness, stressing we believed this was the only way a civil discussion on this matter could take place. When the meeting ended, we immediately phoned Darlene to let her know how it had gone. She shared our disappointment and sadness that nothing had been resolved.

In October of 2009, Hank invited Rick and me on the *Bible Answer Man* program and featured our newest pro-life song, "Who Will Save the Little Ones?" He discussed the pro-life issue with us from a biblical perspective. Hank did an outstanding job and the program was powerful. We were thrilled to have this opportunity to speak out for those who have no voice. It was especially memorable for us once again to have the privilege of being interviewed on the program the Lord raised up through my father. (We shared a pro-life song on the program once before in the early '90s, at Darlene's request.) It was bittersweet, however, because we knew this would anger some relatives. Darlene soon e-

mailed to let us know that Kevin had phoned to inform her of the disgrace we had been to the Martin family.

### **Our Meeting with Darlene: Sharing the Miracle**

At this point in time, the Lord moved our hearts to share with Darlene something extraordinary the Lord had done for CRI. We prayed it would help bring peace between everyone. We asked Darlene if we could come and share it with her face to face. Distressed by Kevin's phone call, she was hesitant to let us visit. I convinced her to allow us to come; a month later we were at her door. We visited for three days and shared the miracle the Lord had done through a disgruntled former CRI employee. We explained how he now openly denies Christ. We pointed out how amazing it was he'd discovered me online, and sent me a massive amount of stolen materials. I had only been visible for a brief time whereas Jill had been promoting accusations against Hank for more than a decade. It appeared God used for the good the intentionally cultivated public perception that the entire Martin family stood against CRI to blind this man's eyes. He had no idea we supported Hank and was furious when he later realized the material he sent us had been a help to a man he hated.

Darlene seemed moved to hear how the Lord had delivered Dr. Martin's "testimony" to our doorstep. After more than twenty years, Walter Martin was able to take the "witness stand" and defend the ministry the Lord had raised up through him. He was once again able to discuss publicly whom he chose to lead CRI and why. We played for Darlene the audios of my father at his Newport-Mesa Christian Center Bible Class where he defined his leadership plans for CRI. We pointed out how the audios support *all first-hand witness* accounts and clearly expose several false accusations. These audios prove:

1. Dr. Martin considered Hank Hanegraaff a "friend" and a "joy." He stated he is a "godly" man and has known Hank for more than five years. This refutes the public accusation they were never friends and barely knew each other. It also highlights Dr. Martin's personal knowledge of Hank's integrity.
2. Dr. Martin researched Hank's work. It is alleged that Hank had plagiarized Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas's work and Dr. Martin was unaware of this, but Dr. Martin not only was acquainted with Lorayne and Lucas's work, he could recite it! To assert Hank fooled him is ridiculous, especially in light of Dr. Martin's legendary photographic

memory. These facts complement the overwhelming evidence Elliot Miller presents that Hank is *not* guilty of plagiarism.

3. Six months prior to Dr. Martin's death, at his Newport-Mesa Christian Center class, he publicly presented Hank as CRI's new executive vice president, a position he clearly described as the CEO position that he was yielding to Hank, while remaining president of the board and continuing to function as the public face of the ministry. This discredits the claim that Hank was hired merely for "fundraising" and was never positioned, by Dr. Martin, for the leadership of CRI. Walter Martin defined the role he chose for Hank to have when he stated, "*He can run the entire operation and is very, very good in the world of the cults and an excellent and very successful man in his own right...*"
4. Walter Martin applauds Hank's credentials to assume leadership of CRI, stating that he is "the best on the horizon." He is impressed with what Hank can bring to CRI even though Hank comes without a formal degree. This puts to shame those would-be defenders of Walter Martin's legacy who insist that he, like them, would never recognize the calling of God on a man who lacks the standard academic degrees.

It is clear Walter Martin made responsible preparations for the ministry the Lord entrusted him with. Only a month prior to his death, he told me one of his greatest sources of grief was that he would not know his grandchildren in this life; they were all quite young at that time. Contrary to what some have publicly claimed, Dr. Martin had a strong sense the Lord may soon call him home.

We gently pointed out to Darlene that my father's words should be respected. She was visibly shaken but excited to hear my father explaining what Hank's role would be. She was stunned to hear him describe Hank as the "number two" man in the structure of CRI; the new "*executive vice-president*" of the Christian Research Institute. She appeared to embrace wholeheartedly my father's plans and with conviction stated, "We need to support him! He chose Hank! It's a relief to know what he wanted; we don't have to worry about it anymore."

Darlene was so moved to hear my father's words that she contacted my youngest sister and told her, "Dad chose Hank! Don't talk to Jill yet!" She nervously revealed that Jill had been repeatedly calling that weekend but stated she was avoiding her. Darlene confessed that Jill had expressed concern Rick and I would "brainwash" her. She insisted that Jill would never accept that "Dad" chose

Hank. Darlene instructed Rick and I to go back to Minnesota and tell Jill we must support what Dad wanted and to “deal with it!” She even offered to fly out to Minnesota with us to help us share this miracle.

We had a wonderful time of fellowship with Darlene that weekend. We laughed and we cried. On Saturday evening, we attended church with her. Ironically, her pastor began his sermon saying something like, “Has anyone ever been the victim of a rumor?” At this point, Darlene laughed quietly and leaned into Rick whispering, “We don’t know what that’s like do we?” Soon after, her pastor instructed everyone to turn their Bibles to Jude 3. Darlene smiled broadly at us, the three of us aware this was Walter Martin’s life verse.

We left Darlene’s house the following Sunday evening with hope in our hearts and in earnest prayer the Lord would use this miracle to put to rest the dispute over what Walter Martin wanted in terms of CRI’s leadership. We were cautiously optimistic. We immediately shared the details of our visit with close friends and our pastor, and requested prayer for everyone involved.

It is our prayer the Lord will use this behind-the-scenes account to shed more light on what is true for the sake of those harmed by false accusations, “*because truth matters.*” We believe this is a spiritual battle. CRI is the largest countercult apologetics ministry in the world. It is our firmly held conviction that the enemy is seeking to extinguish a threatening opponent in the battle for the lost. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12 NIV).

My father once told me the Christian Research Institute was his life’s “dream.” It was a joy to witness his passion and commitment to the ministry the Lord had called him to. Hank Hanegraaff is equally devoted to CRI and is the man the Lord raised up when He called my father home. CRI has flourished under his leadership.

I will now step down from the “witness stand”. It is my husband Rick’s turn to take my place, as he finishes presenting the truth as we have lived it.

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## **Walter Martin's Leadership Plans**

“Did your dad pick Hank Hanegraaff to lead CRI as his successor?” is a question Cindee and I have heard often since Dr. Martin went home to be with the Lord in 1989. This was a question that we were unable to answer from any firsthand knowledge. Dad had never spoken with us about this issue. He often spoke about his vision for CRI and developments that were exciting to him, but the issue of his eventual “home going” and who would take over for him were left unspoken.

Walter Martin lived and breathed CRI. We know that Dad made provisions for his loved ones: family and CRI. As a loving husband and father, he made certain to address the needs of his family. As the founder and president of CRI, he made certain to address the needs of this ministry he loved with a passion. He was confident that CRI would “outlive” him, and he wanted to make sure that it was well equipped to thrive in its future. He was very aware how easy it was for a ministry to “die” with its founder's passing. He made mention of this to his Newport-Mesa Christian Center Bible class in December of 1988, just a little over 6 months before his death. To his class, he boldly exclaimed, "I have not made that mistake!" And indeed he did not.

Here we are, twenty-one years into the future, and CRI is still the largest and most prestigious countercult apologetics ministry in the world. That is good news! We are proud of the contributions Hank and the staff of CRI have made, and continue to make, to the Christian community at large. You would think that this news would be exciting to everyone who hears it, yet, that is not the case. There are those who have sought for years to undo Walter Martin's choices, not realizing, or not caring, that their actions were a threat to CRI itself.

### **Walter Martin on Hank Hanegraaff: His Own Words**

Cindee has already told you of the events that led up to our visit with Darlene. I will now relate what has transpired subsequent to that time of fellowship. Before I proceed, I need to make an important point. Cindee and I had been prepared to make Walter Martin's comments about Hank Hanegraaff public for quite some time, but believed that out of respect for Darlene, we should make her aware of them first. Thinking it improper to do this over the phone, we believed God would make a way for us to meet with her face-to-face, and indeed He did this in November 2009. We have been convinced all along that God was directing us to make these comments public, so our reason for planning time with Darlene was

never about permission. We were convinced that God was offering her an opportunity to consider her part in all of this, and to decide how to respond to this miracle. We openly shared with Darlene that we were bound by our conscience before the Lord to make Dad's words available to the public. Once she heard his comments, she was convinced that Dad had indeed chosen Hank. I asked Darlene what she would have done, had these tapes come to her instead of to us. She replied, "I would have made them public." Darlene's only request of us was that we *delay* making them public until Jill and her husband Kevin had an opportunity to hear them. Out of respect for her, we agreed to wait until we met with them to release Dad's comments publicly.

### **An About-Face**

After leaving Darlene's home on Sunday, November 15, we drove to Arizona to continue our trip. I had lost my father less than two months before, and we were looking forward to returning there to spend more time with my family. We arrived back in Minnesota on Monday, November 23. Once our plane had landed and the passengers were allowed to turn on their electronic devices, I turned on my Blackberry to touch base with our kids to let them know where to meet us. My heart sank when I saw an urgent "must read" e-mail from Darlene. When we left Darlene's home, we were encouraged that she, with God's help, could stand strong against the opposition she was certain to face from Jill. Sadly, that was not to be the case. The person who had told us that "Dad chose Hank," we need to support him and go back to Minnesota and tell Jill to "deal with it!" had now turned a complete 180. Darlene now insisted she is the "Matriarch" of the Martin family and is "the copyright holder of *all* Walter Martin materials"(emphasis added) and was "not granting [us] permission" to use the material we had shared with her: *Walter Martin's own words concerning Hank Hanegraaff.*

Although we were grieved by this "about-face" on Darlene's part, we were not surprised. Her words to us, long before this situation arose, were to the effect that she could be easily convinced by whoever was speaking at the moment. By her own admission, she is a person easily swayed. We were now witnesses to that harsh reality. It's important to remember that *CRI is not, and has never been, a family-owned business or ministry.* Walter Martin always insisted that the Christian Research Institute belonged to the Lord and was maintained by the donations and support of His people.



## Accusations of Copyright Infringement

Having anticipated a challenge of this very nature, we had long before sought the permission of CRI, the stated copyright owner on the materials that were sent to us. In the same way that CRI had previously granted other members of the Martin family permission to use CRI's Walter Martin material, they now extended that same permission to us and to this material as well. Having their permission to use this material added to the rights that we already possessed as American citizens: the right of "Fair Use" of copyrighted works. This right to "Fair Use" is contained in Title 17, Section 107 of U.S. Copyright Codes. These U.S. Copyright Codes can be found at <http://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.pdf>. We have used this material completely lawfully on several levels. In addition to this fact, Cindee is Walter Martin's daughter. Imagine being told you are forbidden to use your own father's words publicly. I would imagine that those words would be as warmly received by you as Darlene's words were by us.

Due to this turn of events, I immediately 'flipped the switch' and made Walter Martin's comments about Hank Hanegraaff available to the public at [www.WalterMartinJude3.com](http://www.WalterMartinJude3.com) and on our YouTube channel, [www.YouTube.com/WalterMartinJude3](http://www.YouTube.com/WalterMartinJude3). Once Darlene's letter came expressing her change of mind, we were no longer bound by our agreement to wait until Jill and Kevin had heard the comments. She changed the agreement when she changed her mind. In Darlene's letter, she wrote, "If this situation is not resolved to my satisfaction, there will be consequences which I pray I will never have to implement." In answer to this, all we can say is that we agree with Peter and John when they said, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God" (Acts 4:19 NIV). In short order, Darlene began to make good on those words and through her "agents" Kevin and Jill Rische, began filing Copyright Infringement claims against us at YouTube and at our web hosting service for WalterMartinJude3. Every clip that we have posted that has *anyone saying anything good about Hank Hanegraaff*, has been attacked. If that isn't egregious enough, they even had the temerity to file a copyright infringement claim against a video clip of *me eulogizing my father-in-law, Walter Martin, at his memorial service!* Beginning on November 27, 2009, we filed counter-claims to these infringement claims and each time the videos and audio clips were restored. This changed in part on April 1, 2010. More on that below.

It should be obvious to all that this is not, and has never been, about copyright infringement. This has been, and continues to be, an attempt to silence any

support of Hank Hanegraaff that comes from the lips of Walter Martin. Just to be specific, we are talking about eight audio clips that total twelve minutes and two seconds. The longest audio clip is two minutes and fifty-seven seconds. The video clips from Walter Martin's Memorial Service which lasted about two hours, total twelve minutes and sixteen seconds, and another ten minutes if you include John Ankerberg's closing comments and prayer, and finally, another seven minutes and twenty-one second if you include *my own comments*. So, we are talking about thirty or so minutes of material that contains kind and supportive words about Hank Hanegraaff. This is out of the *thousands and thousands of hours* of Walter Martin material in existence: material by Cindee's own father. Instead of having the opportunity to grieve my own father's recent death, we were grieved to be fighting for Walter Martin's right to be heard.

### **A Flawed Investigation**

We are so thankful that these audios and videos have become available to the public, and believe those who love truth will be thankful as well. The only ones who oppose us are those who stand to be corrected by their release. For example, on Jill's "ministry" Website, the following statement by Jill can currently be found:

What we did not find out until years later was that Hank Hanegraaff had a "closed door" meeting with a CRI Board Member within days of my father's death—and without the presence or knowledge of the entire board. The result of that meeting (according to a CRI Board member at the time) was the naming of Hank Hanegraaff as CEO of Christian Research Institute.

That is an interesting statement to make, especially "*after an intensive two year investigation into the situation at CRI.*" Why is this so interesting? A simple review of the "Walter Martin Memorial Service" video tape from June 29, 1989 will show John Ankerberg and Everett Jacobson speaking openly about the board meeting held that very morning, in which Hank was elected president of CRI by a *unanimous* vote of the Board of Directors. During those portions of the video, Stanley Tonnesen, a CRI Board Member, can be seen sitting on the elevated platform smiling. All the board members were present that morning at the board meeting, and all the board members were present that evening at the memorial service when thanks was being given to God for the wonderful events of that day. These videos clips have been the repeated subject of "copyright infringement" claims by the "Martin Estate".

CRI Board Member, Everett Jacobson's remarks included the following words:

I want to close by saying that when we had the board meeting, that everything went just wonderful today, because the Lord was there and Walter was there. More than that, God has orchestrated all of the events of this week. Walter was home, with his wife Darlene, when he went to be with the Lord. Hank was here in California. Hank's been traveling back and forth between here and Atlanta, for off and on, for a couple of weeks. Hank was here. Everything worked out. Bill Seaver was here. I mean, everything just worked out. We were able to get plane reservations, from Florida [for himself], from New Jersey [looking over his shoulder at board member Stan Tonnesen], from everywhere, because God's hand is in it.

John Ankerberg included these comments in his remarks:

People all across this country of ours, and around the world, after they hear about Walter's "home-going," are saying, "What's going to happen to CRI? Who's going to take over? Who could ever step into the shoes of Walter Martin?" And tonight I'd like to introduce to you, the man that Walter believed that God had picked out, and that Walter wanted to succeed him.

I can remember coming and speaking at the banquet last October, and I met Hank, who was a Board member before that. And Walter had talked with Hank, and Hank asked me to pray with him about that decision. And I said, "Just be frank with Walter and tell him what you are thinking," and they did. They had great discussions. And tonight, we never thought that it would come this soon, but I know this is the way that Walter wanted it. And the board has unanimously voted that Mr. Hank Hanegraaff would be the new president of CRI, and also the chairman of the board."

Interestingly, these words by Jacobson and Ankerberg are missing on Jill's Website.

Another statement that is currently available on Jill's Website:

The following is Darlene's full statement [partially quoted here] taken from the Los Angeles Times, April 30, 2000:

After reading your article "Casting Stones" (April 15), I am writing to clarify several issues.

First, my husband, Walter Martin, never "handpicked" anyone to succeed him at Christian Research Institute and "The Bible Answer Man" radio program.

This claim was handed to me by someone I thought I could trust as I approached the lectern at my husband's memorial service..."  
[Darlene's statement continues]

Again, a brief review of the memorial service tape will reveal that Darlene Martin was not handed *anything* by *anyone* as she "approached the lectern" that evening. This comment was revised by Jill on her Website *after* it was pointed out that these comments were not supported by the Memorial Service video. Once again, we are thankful for the video clips that provide irrefutable evidence.

From Jill's Website:

\*(ed. note - Darlene Martin's speech was "edited" while she was in the library of the church—before she left to take part in the Memorial Service. It was done out of range of the video camera taping the service.)

The following statements were added to the end of Darlene's address:

"Walt and I talked often about who would take over for him at CRI if the Lord were to ever take him home. Since last October, Walter asked Hank Hanegraaff to work with him and to be that man. Little did we know that it would come this soon. But Hank is the man that Walter wanted to lead CRI, and I am eternally grateful for this man, for the uplifting that he has done for me in these past few days. He is a godsend, and I am grateful for him and his family.

I know that the Lord is going to bless CRI and that the ministry is going to flourish under Hank's direction. I thank the Lord for him and for CRI and for all the staff who are going to carry on, even in the midst of Walt's absence. And I just praise the Lord for it. Thank you again."

Unfortunately, I do not have a video clip to point you to for this claim. As Jill's revised comments above indicate, there was no video camera present when this

event occurred. But, as it turns out, Darlene's speech itself has been made available. A photocopy of Darlene's speech from that night shows the following words hand printed at the bottom of the page

Walter and I talked about who would take over for him at CRI if the Lord ever took him home. Since last October, Walter asked Hank Hanegraaff to work with him and be that man. Little did we know it would come this soon—but Hank is the man Walter wanted to lead CRI.

The "Martin Estate" had this evidence in hand since the night of the memorial service, but they still did not get it right. To emphasize the point, I will include Jill's Website version below with the photocopy words in *bold italics*. Only the words in *bold italics* are handwritten at the bottom of Darlene's speech:

*"Walt and I talked often about who would take over for him at CRI if the Lord were to ever take [took] him home. Since last October, Walter asked Hank Hanegraaff to work with him and to be that man. Little did we know that it would come this soon. [—] But Hank is the man that Walter wanted to lead CRI, and I am eternally grateful for this man, for the uplifting that he has done for me in these past few days. He is a godsend, and I am grateful for him and his family.*

I know that the Lord is going to bless CRI and that the ministry is going to flourish under Hank's direction. I thank the Lord for him and for CRI and for all the staff who are going to carry on, even in the midst of Walt's absence. And I just praise the Lord for it. Thank you again.

Assuming that the photocopy of Darlene's speech is genuine, what can we conclude about the words that were actually hand printed at the bottom? For one, they concur with statements made by both John Ankerberg and Walter Martin; Ankerberg on the memorial service video quoted above, and Martin to his Newport-Mesa Christian Center Bible Class:

**Martin, October 2, 1988:** "I've asked the Lord for a new member of our staff. I need a Vice-President to be 'Mr. Inside' while I'm 'Mr. Outside' 'cause I can't be both places at the same time! And, there's a man right now who is considering this and we're praying about that. We don't have the money to pay him a salary, but I'm praying about that."

**Martin, October 23, 1988:** "I've been praying for one man for two years, that God would put it on his heart, and God did put it on his heart, and he said, 'I think I'll be able to come.' And if he is able to come, I can't afford him. I want you to know that going in. We can't afford him, even at a greatly reduced salary, but, he can run the entire operation and is very, very good in the world of the cults and is an excellent and very successful man in his own right. So, I'd ask you to pray, for this person who'd be the number two person in our structure at CRI"

**Ankerberg, June 28, 1989:** "I can remember coming and speaking at the banquet *last October* [emphasis added], and I met Hank who was a board member before that. And Walter had talked with Hank, and Hank asked me to pray with him about that decision. And I said, 'Just be frank with Walter, and tell him what you are thinking,' and they did. They had great discussions."

**Martin, Dec 4, 1988:** "So I want to praise and thank God for that, and for the man who is helping us at CRI get something that's very important done. I've needed for many years, someone who could fill the role of a special assistant, or of an executive vice-president, to help at CRI, someone with the credentials and the abilities, somebody that could teach, somebody that could preach, somebody that had the capacities to manage and has been very successful in his own operations for some time. He's going to tell you about what the Lord has done for him. He's going to be working very closely with me, particularly when he moves to California in the middle of next year, the Lord willing, and, so, this is someone in whom I have implicit confidence. He's young—I've surrounded myself with young people because I do not believe the myth of invulnerability or of immortality. I've seen too many Christian leaders think that they were never going to die and wait 'til the last minute before they got anybody to help them, and then they had chaos. I have not made that mistake."

Given the fact that the handwritten words comport so well with Martin's and Ankerberg's words, there is really nothing to be contested. Cindee has already mentioned that prior to the memorial service, Darlene was concerned because she did not know what to say, but wanted to support CRI. It is completely reasonable therefore to consider the possibility that she simply asked someone to help her with "what to say" in support of CRI. What has been spun, by some, as a sinister 'arm twisting" of a grieving widow was most likely a helpful suggestion of words that were true. We have no idea who added these words.

What we do know is that Darlene of her own accord spoke them in front of the people gathered to honor Dad, and that they closely echo what Walter Martin himself has been shown to have said.

### Silencing the Defense

This book is about answering the “charges” leveled against Hank through the years by those seeking to remove him from CRI: the “Martin Estate” and others. Tragically, even after an intensive two-year investigation, Jill made significant errors in the case she presented against Hank. Having a flawed prosecution, the “Martin Estate” now has chosen to attempt to silence the defense.

The attacks and attempts to silence us have not been limited to YouTube and our WalterMartinJude3 Website. In addition to these venues, I added a few brief comments to an existing section of a Wikipedia article on Walter Martin, in the “Controversies” section. I added the following *bolded italicized words* to a sentence: "This controversy is between *certain members of* Martin's family on one side, and Dutch-born fund-raiser turned apologist Hank Hanegraaff, *along with other members of Martin's family* on the other." Please note that I did not delete a single word of the existing text. By merely adding ten words, I corrected the longstanding public error that the *entire* Martin family stood against Hank Hanegraaff. I also added the following new text to make the public aware of Walter Martin's comments, available on our Website:

In November 2009, new evidence became available that sheds light on this controversy. Audio tapes from Walter Martin's bible class at Newport-Mesa Christian Center reveal that Martin had spent considerable time investigating Hanegraaff's background and was very familiar with his work. On a tape dated December 7, 1986, Martin tells his class that he has been promoting Hanegraaff's Memory Dynamics for more than 5 years. On October 23, 1988, Martin tells his class that he has been praying for one man, for two years, to come to CRI as an executive vice-president. On December 4, 1988, Martin introduces Hanegraaff to his bible class, as CRI's executive vice-president. These audio clips can be heard along with additional material at Walter Martin Jude 3 ([waltermartinjude3.com](http://waltermartinjude3.com)), the website established by Cindee Martin Morgan, Walter Martin's daughter, and her husband Rick Morgan.

Rick Morgan and Cindee Martin Morgan created Walter Martin Jude 3 to help shed light on the ongoing controversy surrounding Hank Hanegraaff

and his position at CRI. Hearing Dr. Martin in his own words allows interested persons to consider critical additional information, while developing an informed opinion in these matters.

I posted these comments on November 27, 2009. On November 29, the "Martin Estate" began a Wiki-War by repeatedly changing or deleting my comments. Between November 29 and December 4, my text was either completely deleted or revised by the "Martin Estate" fourteen times. Fourteen times in six days! This continued until I reported their activity as vandalism to the Wikipedia staff. During this time, the "Martin Estate" composed, posted, and continuously revised text that is critical of Cindee and me, and our WalterMartinJude3 Website. At no time did we attempt to remove or revise their critical statements.

For twelve years, Hank Hanegraaff has been condemned by members of Walter Martin's family. For twelve years, they have been calling for his resignation. For twelve years, they have been falsely accusing Hank of conspiring with Everett Jacobson to take advantage of a grieving widow and "steal" CRI in the days following Walter Martin's death. When evidence arises that controverts their historical record of accusations against Hank, they immediately and persistently try to silence it. When the evidence that arises out of Walter Martin's own lips corroborates the testimony of Dr. John Ankerberg, Everett Jacobson, and Lowell Jones at Walter Martin's memorial service, they try to remove it from public view. On Wikipedia, Jill claims that "the audios the Morgans (graftedin73) claim are 'new' have long been a part of the Walter Martin Resource Library." If this is in fact true, and if they knew of the contents of these tapes, it would seem that they are guilty of suppressing this evidence, not just in the past few months, but for the past decade or two.

### **Bringing Hidden Things to Light--Job 28:11**

Cindee and I recently went to see the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Science Museum in St. Paul, Minnesota. What a blessing it was to see the amazing miracle done by the Lord! There are scoffers who say there is no God, and that these hidden scrolls just "happened" to be discovered, completely by chance. We who know the Lord can only feel sorrow for those who think this way. We can see God's hand where others see chance. We see His finger prints where others see random changes. We hear His voice and see His words where others only see fables. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 14:1 and 53:1. Those who deny God are fools. Those who deny God's miracles are foolish.



Just as the Dead Sea Scrolls lay buried in a desert cave for over twenty centuries, these audio tapes with Walter Martin's words were buried, by accident or design, for over twenty years. Those who miss the miracle of this are to be pitied.

Regardless of what a person may think of Walter Martin's comments, they deserve to be heard publicly and considered. This is all we have tried to do. This is not about Cindee and me. This is not about copyright issues. This is about bringing into the light information that speaks to the issue of Hank's credibility. To throw these comments by Walter Martin back into the darkness of oblivion would be like trying to rebury the Dead Sea Scrolls. Truth is truth; words are words; regardless of the relative importance of the issue.

I guarantee you, Hank's credibility and reputation are far more important to Hank's kids, than the Dead Sea Scrolls. They have a right to see evidence that supports their father accessible on the Internet, just as the accusations have been so accessible.

### **A Lawsuit Filed**

While we were at the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit, Hank and CRI were given a copy of the lawsuit that has been filed against them, and against us, by Darlene Martin and the "Martin Family Trust." While we were at the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit, our videos at YouTube were once again attacked. I waited until we got home to tell my wife. It was our daughter's birthday and we were there celebrating at her request. I did not want this attack to mar that wonderful time we were having. The next day, we were sent our "courtesy copy" of the lawsuit by Darlene's attorney. Ten years ago, extended family members accused us of being traitors to the Martin family for daring to speak *privately* to Hank Hanegraaff. Their mindset has now come full circle. We see this lawsuit as an attempt to punish us for supreme disloyalty to the family by going public with our support of Hank Hanegraaff. The saddest part of this is that our support has primarily been in our airing Walter Martin's own words about Hank. Walter Martin would be the last person to condone or promote family loyalty over truth and conscience before the Lord.

Due to the pending lawsuit, several clips of Walter Martin speaking about his plans for Hank are currently unavailable on our YouTube channel. These clips remain available on our [www.WalterMartinJude3.com](http://www.WalterMartinJude3.com) Website.

Ironically, within days of the lawsuit being served on us, the words that have been suppressed on our YouTube channel suddenly appeared on the Risches' YouTube channel, buried within larger clips of Walter Martin addressing his Bible class.

Please be in prayer for Hank, for CRI, and for us. This is not a carnal battle about copyrights: this is a spiritual battle against a man and an institution that have been used mightily by God for His purposes. Please pray that our extended family will be reconciled with us, and with Hank. "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27 NIV).

**Appendix C:  
E.E. and PWT Tables of Contents**

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*Personal Witness Training*

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PWT Good News Presentation

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<sup>1</sup> D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996], vii.

## **Lesson 1. The Seven Pillars of PWT**

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**PWT Feedback Form**

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<sup>2</sup> Hendrik Hanegraaff, *Personal Witness Training: Your Handle on the Great Commission* (self-published, 1987), v.

**Appendix D:**  
**Setting the Record Straight:**  
**A Response to Recent<sup>1</sup> Attacks against the**  
**Christian Research Institute**

by Elliot Miller, CRI Editor-in-Chief

In its 35-year history the Christian Research Institute (CRI) has never been sued by any of the groups we have researched and exposed. However, the spiritual warfare (Satan-directed attacks) that we have faced over the years—including defamatory attacks on our integrity<sup>2</sup>—has often been brutal.

When CRI president Hank Hanegraaff's *Christianity in Crisis* was published in April 1993 we braced ourselves for perhaps the strongest satanic onslaught in our history, as we were taking on some of the most powerful televangelists in the country. Well, that satanic onslaught has indeed come—but not through the means we expected.<sup>3</sup>

In March 1994 former CRI employee Brad Sparks brought a frivolous and malicious lawsuit against us and—with the aid of a few other disgruntled former employees—has broadly disseminated his false and defamatory allegations against CRI to the public. His goal has clearly been to smear the good name of CRI and its president.

Perhaps you have heard some of the allegations made by Sparks and his so-called "Group for CRI Accountability." For a long time we were restricted by our corporate attorney, Sealy Yates, from issuing a public response to these allegations, while he looked into them for himself. But after a thorough examination by legal counsel as well as outside agencies, these accusations have not only been proven to be false but, as Yates put it, he would stake his personal reputation on the integrity of Hank Hanegraaff and the Christian Research Institute. Yates commented that the deeper he probed, the better the organization looked, and that the organization is as clean as any of the many well-known and reputable Christian ministries that he represents. We have therefore now been

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<sup>1</sup> This document was written in 1995 but never published until its appearance here.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Robert L. and Rosemary Brown, *They Lie in Wait to Deceive: "A Study of Anti-Mormon Deception,"* vol. 3 (Mesa, AZ: Brownsworth Publishing, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> However, we have reason to believe that certain televangelists have been aiding and abetting this assault.

released to answer Sparks and the “Group,” and that is the purpose of this document.

I realize that the claim, “This is an attack by the Devil” has often been made by ministers who truly were guilty of the misdeeds charged. But the Christian must recognize that Satan can attack a work of God in this way. Thus I would ask you to reserve judgment as to whether this *is* a satanic attack until after you finish reading this document. But to best put the current attack on CRI in perspective, it will help to first understand the historical context of how this situation came about.

### **How Could This Happen?**

How could a ministry such as CRI, which has always been so careful in its research as to avoid lawsuits by even the most litigious of groups, end up being sued by *a former employee*? Were compromise and corruption lurking underneath the surface of CRI all along, just waiting for a conscientious employee to expose them? Although CRI’s many theological detractors would love for you to think this were the case, the answer to this question is an unqualified *no*. As will be demonstrated below, the allegations against CRI now being gleefully circulated by our critics are *entirely groundless and false*.

The opposition CRI has been experiencing from certain former employees can largely be explained by the fact that less than six years ago the ministry went through a major, critical transition with the sudden and unexpected death of its founder, Dr. Walter Martin. Walter was a uniquely gifted man, a legend in his own time, who was widely regarded as the father of the Christian countercult movement. He was a man of extraordinary vision, and CRI was the major result of that vision. His gifts and personal charisma were the centrifugal force that held the ministry together for more than 29 years. Although some on the research staff seemed to believe that they were more informed and more scholarly than Walter himself,<sup>4</sup> they hesitated to stand up against the founder of the ministry.

Realizing that his health was precarious and that he lacked the organizational skills to bring his vision fully into reality, in 1988 Walter persuaded CRI board member and personal friend, Hank Hanegraaff, to accept hands-on leadership of

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<sup>4</sup> I say this based on my experience as an insider in close contact with all the researchers throughout the period.



the ministry as its chief executive officer. Having sought his counsel many times in the past, Walter recognized that Hank possessed exceptional wisdom in the areas of corporate and ministry leadership.

Furthermore, Hank had proven himself to be an able communicator of Christian apologetics to the lay person, a task that Walter saw as central to the mission of CRI. In fact, Walter frequently stated that the incorporation of Hank's Memory Dynamics training program into CRI would greatly enhance its ministry.

Walter thus believed that Hank possessed the ministry, business, and personal/spiritual strengths necessary to carry CRI into the 21st century.<sup>5</sup> During the several months between Hank's assumption of this responsibility and Walter's death, Walter frequently expressed enthusiastic and unconditional support for Hank and the job that he was doing.

It needs to be appreciated that it was an incredible work of God's sovereign grace that Hank Hanegraaff was in place as CRI's chief executive officer when Walter Martin unexpectedly died. Organizations often do not survive the deaths of their founders, especially when the organization's success had largely been based on the strength of the founder's personality. Because of Hank's vision, character, skill, and dynamic personality, CRI has not only survived Walter's death but has extended its outreach and financial base to four to five times what it was when he died.

It is not surprising that Hank has experienced fierce internal opposition over the past several years. Organizations that *do* survive the death of their founders typically go through major crises. Once the founder is gone people who think they know best how the organization should be run (or that they would be the best person running it!) are emboldened to assert themselves against the surviving or succeeding leadership. This has especially been the case at CRI, where, due to the nature of the ministry (which demands immense knowledge and critical thinking), a "know it all" attitude is an occupational hazard (although many individuals on staff have avoided this snare). Although Hank

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<sup>5</sup> For example, in 1988 Dr. Martin issued the following statement: "Hank Hanegraaff personifies the next phase of development for CRI and is uniquely equipped through his dynamic leadership abilities, knowledge of God's Word, and teaching ability to make sound, biblical apologetics a simple yet effective tool in the hands of the laity. His success as a businessman, strategic planner, author, and speaker have equipped him to lead the ministry of the Christian Research Institute aggressively into the future and to build on the work that I by God's grace began." (*Christian Research Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 5, 6.)

would be the first to say that he is not perfect, I have found his diplomacy, humility, and grace under fire to be a model of Christian leadership.

### **The Uprising of 1990**

In June of 1990, a year after Walter's passing, a surprise, concerted effort was made to turn CRI's board of directors against Hank. It became apparent that a key source of this uprising was CRI researcher Craig Hawkins, who had just resigned and, in a meeting with the board, impugned both Hank's character and competence to lead CRI, stating that he would not return to CRI unless Hank was removed. Hawkins emphatically denies that these actions were part of an organized coup attempt. Whether it started out that way in his mind or not, a deliberate effort quickly followed on the part of a faction of employees and others involved with CRI to convince the board that Hank should be ousted and that his replacement should be Hawkins, who had been hosting the *Bible Answer Man* since Walter's death and had participated regularly with Walter in the program in the months before Walter died. (However, Hawkins had no executive or leadership experience that would commend him for the CEO position.)

Although one board member, Stan Tonnesen, was swayed by these arguments, the board as a whole, including senior board member and close friend of Walter Martin, Everett Jacobson, rejected as false the claims of Hawkins and his faction, and expressed their unqualified support of Hank. So also did Walter's widow, Darlene, who has since become a member of the board. Furthermore, the research staff, including current Sparks ally, Robert M. ("Rob") Bowman, Jr., signed the following appeal to the CRI board:

The entire research department has been deeply concerned and disturbed by what appears to be a systematic, underhanded campaign on the part of Craig Hawkins and others to oust Hank Hanegraaff from his position as President of CRI. Evidence for this can be found (among other sources) in the firsthand testimony of Ken Samples, who was told blatant falsehoods about Hank, and who was falsely represented as being able to substantiate all of Craig's charges. The result of Craig's efforts has been the planting of many seeds of distrust and disinformation within the organization.

We also wish to go on record as stating that we would *all* submit our resignations to the Board if Craig Hawkins were restored to CRI, unless he thoroughly repents and gives a public confession to CRI personnel of his wrongdoing. Throughout this affair he has confused his own personal

agenda with the good of the ministry, and has done much harm to the ministry in the process.

This statement is significant because Sparks and Bowman are now attempting to portray the 1990 uprising as a *legitimate* protest of abuses that have continued to the present time. In fact, about one-third of the individuals identified by Bowman as members of the current “Group” participated in the 1990 revolt and/or left CRI around that time. This includes former *Bible Answer Man* radio producer Craig Nelson, whom Bowman alleges is the founder of the Group.<sup>6</sup>

Sadly, the “seeds of distrust and disinformation” planted within the organization in 1990 would sprout again and again over the years that followed. They have reached full maturity in the present attack on Hank and CRI.

### **Memory Dynamics**

One of these “seeds” pertained to Hank’s making his educational “Memory Dynamics” and “Personal Witness Training (PWT)” materials available to the Christian public through CRI (something that—as I’ve noted—Walter Martin *wanted* him to do). Memory Dynamics, Inc. is a for-profit business that Hank created years before coming to CRI. Memory Dynamics and Personal Witness Training are designed to equip committed Christians to internalize scripture and to communicate effectively what they believe, why they believe it, and where the cults deviate from the historic Christian faith in an “inherently memorable” fashion.

Participants in the 1990 revolt alleged that Hank was unethically co-mingling his own private business with CRI business and illegally using CRI’s nonprofit tax status as a cover for his own for-profit activities. On different occasions since 1990, employees would raise concerns about CRI’s involvement with Memory Dynamics/PWT afresh, and now Sparks has made it a major issue in his lawsuit. He claims that he was unlawfully fired because he told CRI management that Hanegraaff’s financial relationships with CRI amounted to “violations of state and federal tax laws” to the extent that it was a “violation of public policy” and jeopardized CRI’s tax-exempt status (see below).

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<sup>6</sup> Although Nelson has definitely played a significant role in the Group, all evidence indicates that Bowman and Sparks are the driving forces behind it.

The protests that Hank and his wife Kathy have been illegally or unethically using CRI for personal profit resulted from a *misunderstanding of the facts and the law*. The only “tax law” that Hank could have possibly violated is that portion of Internal Revenue Code Section 501 (c)(3) that prohibits “private inurement”; that is, when the net earnings of a nonprofit organization “inure” to the benefit of a private party. According to Yates, who after 24 years of practice in the field is an expert on charitable organization tax law, the “inurement” prohibition of Section 501 (c)(3)

is not absolute, but...that qualifying clause has been interpreted consistently over the years to require *unreasonable* or *substantial* inurement before it is wrong and will adversely affect an organization’s tax exempt status. The courts have consistently held that transactions between a tax-exempt organization and persons who control it are permissible, and will not jeopardize its tax exempt status, so long as the related persons deal with the organization at arm’s length and the organization’s interests are protected....

Although a tax-exempt organization must serve public rather than private interests, this does not mean that individuals involved in the organization cannot receive any funds from it, but rather that they may not receive *inurement* in excess of the fair market value of goods or services that they have furnished to the organization....

The private inurement test is in essence, a “big picture” test. Specific or individual financial transactions of the organization must be analyzed in terms of the overall activities of the organization and the *intent* of those in control of the organization (*i.e.*, is the intent of the organization [those in control] to serve the specified tax exempt purposes of the organization, or is it the intent to serve the interests of an individual or individuals?), based on the *reasonableness*, and the *substantiality* of the transactions. Private inurement is virtually never found in cases involving isolated financial transactions (or even a series of such transactions) that may benefit an individual, but which do not involve a substantial portion of the net earnings and overall activities of the tax exempt organization....

...In sum, it is evident that the private inurement prohibition of Section 501(c)(3) is directed at payments that are consistently made to individuals having a personal and private interest in the activities of the organization for purposes other than as reasonable compensation for goods or services

and at situations where the inurement has little or no connection with any benefit for the organization's stated tax exempt purposes.<sup>7</sup>

How do Hank's business interactions with CRI stand up in light of this clarification of the law? It first of all needs to be recognized that there was nothing incompatible about Hank's adding materials that help Christians to better present and defend their faith to the overall product line of CRI. It was a unique contribution that the new president could bring to the ministry's lay-equipping arsenal, and was certainly consistent with "the organization's stated tax-exempt purposes."

Second, in the "big picture," these transactions represent but a minuscule part of the overall organizational activities and net earnings of CRI. The ministry as a whole clearly was fulfilling its stated non-profit purposes and was not a tax-exempt cover for a private party's profit-making schemes (which has always been the case when organizations *have* lost their tax-exempt status, as with, e.g., cult leader Tony Alamo). In fact, the kind of business dealings that took place between Hank and CRI go on all the time in religious and educational organizations and are considered perfectly acceptable.

Third, Hank's business interactions with CRI were definitely conducted "at arm's length." Here's what really happened: in 1990 the board of directors requested that Hank make the Memory Dynamics materials available to CRI because these materials could be used strategically to further CRI's purpose and benefit its ministry (it was not Hank who first suggested that the organization carry his materials). The minutes of the June 1990 meeting of the board record that Hank agreed to sell the materials to CRI, but at Memory Dynamics' "cost to produce them, which would allow CRI to make 100% of the profit from the same materials." At that time, however, the board (with Hank abstaining) determined that CRI would purchase these materials "at cost plus an overhead factor." But even with this "overhead factor" added, the materials were still sold to CRI at a wholesale discount (much *less* than fair market value) and CRI then sold them at retail prices; thus the ministry received a substantial financial benefit from them. Any profit Hank and Kathy made was clearly a *reasonable* compensation for goods provided to the organization.

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<sup>7</sup> Attorney Sealy Yates and associate, Lawrence D. Frenzel, in a September 12, 1994 letter to Sparks's attorney, William Crosby.

Every sale thereafter of Memory Dynamics materials to CRI was individually and specifically approved by the board (with Hank abstaining). However, beginning in January 1992 (months before Sparks was even employed at CRI), Hank and Kathy determined that they would *no longer allow CRI to purchase any Memory Dynamics materials from them*. Instead, since that date, the Hanegraaffs have been giving these materials to CRI at *no charge*. This means that since January 1992 CRI has been receiving 100% of the revenues from the Memory Dynamics materials it has sold while the Hanegraaffs have been paying 100% of the cost of creating and manufacturing those materials. In just the past year this has amounted to a contribution from the Hanegraaffs to CRI of *over \$40,000*.

Not wanting to trumpet his giving before others (Matt. 6:1–4), Hank did not announce to the staff that he had been making this contribution. But even when he did explain this to certain staff members who raised questions, they seemed unwilling to believe that Hank was really not profiting from CRI’s distribution of Memory Dynamics materials.

### **The Truth about Brad Sparks**

In addition to the questions that some raised about Memory Dynamics, from time to time over the years complaints would be voiced—by a distinct minority of employees—over Hank’s doctrinal positions on issues such as Roman Catholicism, Calvinism vs. Arminianism, or the Faith movement, and over certain leadership decisions that he had made. But between the uprising of June 1990 and March of 1994 there was no concerted effort to oust Hank from his position as president of CRI. However, on Friday, March 4, 1994, Brad Sparks was laid off from CRI. The following Monday Sparks filed his lawsuit. *That week* Sparks began sending out copies of his legal complaint with its outrageous allegations to ministries, publications, and Christian leaders across the country. Within a few weeks he galvanized disgruntled former employees and a few former volunteers, who formed the so-called “Group for CRI Accountability.” On April 23 Sparks’s wife Valerie and some of this group picketed a CRI warehouse sale, holding signs and passing out literature that accused Hank of financial and employee abuse. Since then they have been pursuing a full-scale public relations war against Hank and CRI, and doing much harm to the ministry and cause they supposedly care about in the process (e.g., the enemies of what CRI stands for are predictably citing Sparks and the Group’s claims as “proof” that their unbiblical positions have been vindicated).

Clearly, Brad Sparks is the instigator of the current attack on CRI. And *the unrighteousness of this attack becomes clearer once the historical relationship of Sparks to CRI is understood.*

Sparks represented himself to Hank and CRI as having a strong research background in creation science and archaeology. He stated on his application form that he had received a B.A. in astrophysics from the University of California at Berkeley. However, it has recently come out that he misrepresented his credentials to us. In a September 26, 1994 deposition for his lawsuit he admitted that although he majored in astrophysics at UC Berkeley, he never graduated and did not possess any B.A. degree.

Sparks conducted an interview with Hank and then was formally hired in an interview with then Vice-President of Research Bob Lyle, beginning his employment at CRI on May 26, 1992. In his lawsuit Sparks claims that he was wrongfully terminated because he had an oral agreement with Hank that he would be a permanent employee. He also alleged that Hank promised him a beginning salary of \$30,000, with merit raises thereafter. However, Hank denies that either of these agreements were made, and Lyle testifies that—as was his practice with *all* new employees—he explained to Sparks at the time of his interview that his employment with CRI would be on an “at-will” basis, meaning that either he or CRI could terminate his employment at any time without cause. Furthermore, Sparks never received a salary as high as \$30,000 at CRI, and there is no record of his complaining that his oral “contract” with Hank was not being honored.

Sparks was to work with Erwin de Castro as a research assistant to the president. Hank told Sparks that he would be drawing on Sparks’s expertise in certain areas as needed, but it was clearly stated from the start that Sparks’s job would consist of “answering [some of Hank’s] personal correspondence and assisting in research projects,”<sup>8</sup> and that he would be working under Lyle and directly under de Castro. Yet Sparks persistently acted as though he was accountable to no one at CRI but Hank.

He further assumed that he had the right to spend substantial portions of his time at CRI pursuing his own book project on the Exodus—a project that he affirmed he had been working on prior to coming to CRI and that was *never* assigned to him as a CRI project. In all my 18 years at CRI I’ve never seen

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<sup>8</sup> “Welcome Brad Sparks!” a memo from Bob Lyle to CRI staff dated May 28, 1992.

anything like it: Sparks would regularly be found for extended periods of time tying up either the upstairs (Research Department's) or downstairs copying machine while he worked on his own personal projects. His assigned responsibility of answering correspondence for Hank persistently suffered as a result. Even during times when there was a pressing project Hank needed him to accomplish he would often he found engaged in his own personal projects. It was widely felt by CRI staff who observed Brad, including his supervisors, that he was giving much less than his expected 40 hours a week to CRI.

In addition to these abuses of his CRI position, Sparks habitually arrived at the office late (often extremely late), even after his schedule was adjusted so that he could come in an hour later (11:00 am—6:00 PM), and at other times he would leave early, take excessive lunch breaks, or not show up at all without notice. He engaged in frequent and lengthy personal telephone calls on CRI time. He excessively used the CRI fax machine for his personal business use. All of this behavior is documented in his personnel file, dating back to the first month of his employment at CRI. Furthermore, although Sparks has since denied it, many of these concerns were brought to his attention in conferences as early as June 15, June 24, and July 1 of 1992.

Not only did Sparks misuse CRI resources, but he also created public relations problems for Hank. This he did by the sometimes inflammatory and offensive manner in which he represented Hank to the public (e.g., in correspondence).

Still other concerns about Sparks's behavior surfaced. In July of 1992 he got involved in a debate with a CRI researcher (since resigned) who, by his own admission, had a problem with his temper when sufficiently provoked. As the intensity of the argument became serious, Sparks could be heard<sup>9</sup> speaking in a provocative manner, refusing to back off as the other researcher heatedly demanded that he leave his office. Concerned that this fracas might escalate into a physical fight, researcher Ron Rhodes interposed himself between the two men and broke it up. In a report to Hank following the incident Sparks stated that the provoked researcher *had* physically accosted him and it was only Ron Rhodes who saved him from being thrust into a book shelf. However, Rhodes states that this version of the altercation was an outright lie: the researcher had not laid a hand on Sparks.

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<sup>9</sup> The conversation was so loud that, even with my office door shut, I could clearly hear everything that was said.



In another disturbing incident, Ron Rhodes reported that on Thursday, January 27, 1994, at about 2:50 PM (just before Sparks was about to participate in a *Bible Answer Man* program), Rhodes could clearly hear a telephone conversation Sparks was having just outside Rhodes's open door. Rhodes wrote in his report: "During the phone call (I don't know who he was talking to), he became angry and heated, raising his voice. I point this out to emphasize I could clearly hear what Brad was saying. At one point in the conversation, I clearly heard Brad say, with a raised and angry voice, 'That's a goddamned lie.'" The following day Rhodes reported the incident to Sparks's immediate supervisor at the time, Paul Carden, and then the following week he reported it to Hank.

This was not the first instance in which Sparks used foul language while on the job at CRI. On September 22, 1992 he was upset that his computer was not operating properly and so was swearing in the presence of other employees. Lyle reprimanded him and recorded the incident in Sparks's personnel file.

As an employee who was not directly involved with the situation, I was amazed that Sparks was tolerated for as long as he was (this, in fact, is the only true failing of CRI in its dealings with the man). However, in the spring of 1993 action was taken to bring Sparks under strict accountability. In a May 11 meeting with de Castro Sparks was told that (1) his daily office hours would be moved to 9:00–5:30 with two 10-minute breaks and one 30-minute lunch. He would have to punch a time clock, and any tardiness on his time card would have to be signed by de Castro. Furthermore, cumulative tardiness in excess of 15 minutes per week would be deemed grounds for immediate termination; (2) all office-hours activities were to be confined strictly to items assigned and approved by de Castro or Hank, and the progress of such projects would be tracked. Personal research projects were to be handled outside CRI during non-CRI hours; (3) he was restricted from using CRI equipment to print, fax, photocopy, or bind personal items; (4) his use of CRI phones for personal calls was to be kept at a minimum and confined to break periods. He was also to pay for them; (5) he was to obtain prior approval from Hank or de Castro before issuing any public statement on behalf of CRI; and (6) all absences and personal time off were to be preapproved by de Castro.

Instead of appreciating the fact that, despite his poor record, he was being offered an opportunity to save his position at CRI, Sparks responded to these restrictions as an *infringement of his constitutional and biblical rights*. Without authorization, he printed a "newsletter" entitled "Your Rights as a CRI Employee" and, on May 20, 1993, placed it in the mail box of every employee.

Based on misapplications of both the U.S. Constitution and Scripture, Sparks announced to his fellow employees that CRI had no right to take disciplinary action towards them without offering them a “trial-type hearing before an impartial outside decisionmaker.” He further advised them that they had “right to advance notice of the proposed disciplinary action and the reasons for it, right to confront or cross-examine *all* witnesses and charges against you...in which the burden of proof is on the accusers,” and so forth.

Sparks had a reputation around CRI for being a litigious individual—he often bragged about his legal prowess and his lawsuit against the university of California. He came across as the type of personality who would fight for his own “rights” at the drop of a hat. In fact, in June 1994 when Sealy Yates asked Sparks why he was suing CRI he replied, “They terminated me and they can’t do that!” In his May 20, 1993 “newsletter” he affirmed:

I am a fighter. That is how God made me. I will fight for what is right, fair, honest and merciful until the very end. If I make mistakes I will own up to them and ask for forgiveness. *But I will not be a doormat ready to be victimized again and again.* I spent 14 years fighting for God’s truth against the multibillion dollar University of California, losing every step of the way until at long last God brought total victory in the California Supreme Court on February 4 of this year. *I am willing to fight again.* (emphases added)

In this newsletter Sparks said he was “under attack” for conducting the creation and Exodus research Hank hired him to do, adding that he had the documentation to prove that he was hired to do such work. The documentation in question turns out to be his *own* notes of his interview and of his subsequent conversations with Hank (yet even these say nothing about his being allowed to work on his Exodus book or other personal projects on CRI time).

Sparks repeatedly referred to the “threats of immediate termination” made by de Castro as a “punitive” personnel action for the “most trivial of alleged infractions.” He compared it to the “shaming” and “social murder” of employees that led to the “recent postal tragedies.” In a larger document written to the managers (on which the “newsletter” was based), he went so far as to affirm that de Castro’s confronting him with his past job performance failures violated the scriptural principle that love “keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Cor. 13:5). In actuality, Sparks had flagrantly abused the “honor system” that had prevailed in

Hank's department, making it *necessary* for de Castro to impose on him the structure and provisions he found so objectionable.

In the 'newsletter' Sparks accused CRI management of conspiring against him while Hank was away on an Israel tour. It is relevant to note that never during this or any time *prior* to his March 1994 lawsuit is there evidence that Sparks made any allegations against Hank. Rather, Hank was spoken of in very positive terms and was considered his ally.<sup>10</sup> In fact, when Hank returned from Israel he found that Sparks had managed to get inside Hank's gated community without Hank or Kathy's permission and had left an envelope at the Hanegraaff home with the following message handwritten on it:

Hank,

It is *extremely important* that you review enclosures right away & call me at home [gives phone number].

They're pulling another Craig Hawkins-like action—this time against *me* and indirectly against you & timed it while you were away.

Yours in Christ always,  
Brad

It is noteworthy that in his lawsuit Sparks alleges that he was terminated as retaliation for "whistle-blowing" (i.e., reporting an alleged violation of a statute of public importance) about Hank's alleged financial improprieties. But the only example of this "whistleblowing" he cites is the distribution of the "newsletter," which, again, made no allegations against Hank, nor did it mention financial impropriety.

After Timothy Folkers and Scott Larson, two CRI vice-presidents (managers), became aware of Sparks's unauthorized distribution of his "newsletter," they convened a meeting with Sparks that also included de Castro and Ron Rhodes. In a written report, Folkers recalled:

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<sup>10</sup> For example, in the "newsletter" he complained that after being physically assaulted by a CRI employee (again misrepresenting what happened in the above-mentioned confrontation), "I was isolated almost as a pariah, no one (except Hank when he came back from CBA), coming to offer me any assistance or even a word of encouragement...." However, when Sparks submitted his "newsletter" as a court document in his suit against Hank, this positive reference to Hank was missing—a move that opens Sparks up to the charge of perjury!

During the meeting, after many heated words, it was apparent that Brad Sparks was unwilling to operate within the confines of the corporate guidelines established at CRI, that he refused to recognize his immediate boss, Erwin and his authority. At that time, I stated to Brad that “he was fired, for insubordination effective immediately,” at which time he asked in what authority, to which I responded by the position that I had at CRI as appointed by Hank Hanegraaff. Brad objected, and when I asked for his keys to the building, he refused...after repeated requests for his keys by myself, Ron Rhodes advised Brad that he should comply, and that he would hold the keys for Brad in a sealed envelope (Brad did comply, and after writing that he was complying but not happy about it on the envelope, he gave the envelope to Ron).

At that time, because of Brad’s animate [*sic*] objections and his appeal to Hank, I told Brad that it would be best if he were not on site until after he met with Hank, and gave Brad 2 days off with pay.

To this account Larson added that “during the course of this meeting Brad Sparks was asked about the issues he was concerned about and quickly became defiant and insubordinate to both Timothy Folkers and myself. This defiance and insubordination came because Brad Sparks felt that neither Timothy Folkers or myself had any authority over him in the position he held. He felt that he only answered to Hank Hanegraaff—President.” Larson and Folkers explained to Sparks that, as vice-presidents of CRI, they did have the authority to act on Hank’s behalf in his absence. Nonetheless, they decided to leave the matter unresolved until it could be addressed with Hank on his return.

On May 24, after Hank returned, a conference to deal with these issues was held in his office that included Sparks, his wife, the vice-presidents, and de Castro. In that meeting Hank supported the authority and actions of de Castro and the vice-presidents while seeking a means to resolve the situation. Hank hoped to avoid a lawsuit from Sparks at a time when he was anticipating possible legal action from faith teachers due to the recent release of his book. Furthermore, he still believed that in the right working situation Sparks could be beneficial to CRI. Hank thus decided to reassign Sparks to a position as assistant to the international coordinator, Paul Carden, with the provision that Sparks would still receive assignments from Hank on an as-needed basis.

During the nine months he worked under Paul Carden, Sparks was more careful about his behavior on the job. He did accomplish some short-term assignments

for Carden, especially in the first months. Past problems persisted, however, such as excessive use of the copiers and telephone for personal reasons, lack of completion of long-term assignments and initiation of unassigned projects, and a general resistance to accountability.

While recognizing the problems with Spark's employment history at CRI, Hank nonetheless remained his strongest supporter within the organization, seeking his advice on different issues and even featuring him on *The Bible Answer Man* as recently as February 1, 1994. Again, this is an important point, because Sparks alleges in his suit that CRI's representing his termination as a layoff for financial reasons was pretextual, and that Hank actually fired him in retaliation for raising concerns about Hank's alleged illegal and unethical management of CRI. In actuality no such concerns had been raised, the two had had a positive relationship throughout Sparks's tenure at CRI, and there is no evidence whatsoever that Hank decided to lay Sparks off in retaliation for *anything*.

The true circumstances leading to Sparks's layoff are a matter of record, and thus easily demonstrable. Although CRI had grown financially in 1993, it had not grown at the same rate as in previous years, and thus in 1994 was facing a budgetary deficit of approximately \$22,000 per month. CRI's current executive vice-president, Paul Young, was initially retained by CRI as a management consultant and was charged with the task of eliminating this deficit. An organization-wide layoff—amounting to a monthly savings for CRI of \$10,561—was included in the ultimate overhead reduction plan implemented by Young. Nonessential positions were eliminated as part of this layoff, including those of librarian, secretary to the vice-president of research, and interim assistant to the international coordinator (Sparks's position).

### **Sparks's Suit: How Can It Be Taken Seriously?**

Brad Sparks was laid off on Friday, March 4, at 4:30 PM. On Monday morning, March 7, he was already filing his complaint against CRI, Hank Hanegraaff, Kathy Hanegraaff, Paul Young, CRI vice-presidents, and the CRI board (including Walter Martin's widow, Darlene) in Orange County Superior Court. Investigations have indicated he had been preparing his case against CRI *prior* to the lay-off, on CRI time and using CRI resources. To date, the suit has actually been amended three times and thus filed in four forms. In his first two complaints Sparks acted as his own attorney. It appears that, emboldened by his previous success in his suit against the University of California, he now thinks he can take on the world in court and win.

The amazing thing about Sparks's lawsuit is that so many people have taken it seriously. Even if one does not know the facts of the case, it should not take long to discern the frivolous nature of the complaint. This was especially obvious in its first two versions, before he got an attorney to give it the semblance of a legitimate lawsuit.

Included among the frivolous charges found in the first two versions of the complaint filed by Sparks are:

- **Federal RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) violations.** Specifically, Sparks asserted that "defendants formed an 'enterprise'...for the purpose of soliciting and misappropriating charitable contributions across state lines and then traveled across state lines to reach Calgary, Alberta, Canada, to meet with defendant YOUNG and to preliminarily establish a plan for protecting the enterprise from exposure, said plan including the use of harsh administrative actions to suppress complaints about misuse of charitable funds from CRI employees." In actuality, this trip "across state lines" by Hank and Young was for the purpose of attending a CRI Canada board of directors meeting! Sparks would have you believe that not only Hank and Paul Young but also Darlene Martin, widow of Walter Martin, as well as other members of the board were racketeering across state lines.
- **Illegal seizure of fax wire communications.** This supposedly occurred when CRI vice-president of operations Jane Huckaby, concerned that Sparks was receiving too many personal business transmissions on CRI's fax machine, intercepted one such transmission with the intention of showing it to Paul Young before passing it on to Sparks. However, Sparks tracked it down and "seized" it himself before Young had an opportunity to look at it. According to Sparks, Huckaby's action was in violation of the Communications Act of 1934 (as if employees have a legal right to receive communications wired to them on their *employer's* equipment).
- **Occupational safety hazards.** CRI's air conditioning system violates state standards by recirculating stale air, Sparks claimed. As a result, he said that he had been almost continually sick with influenza and other viruses since November 1993. Furthermore, he alleged that complaining about the air conditioning had resulted in the May 1993 attempt to terminate him! It is a bit of a stretch for Sparks to blame his alleged perpetual ailments on germs being circulated by CRI's air conditioning system. His inclusion of this in his first two complaints underscores the *manufactured* character of his grievances.

A further indication of the frivolous and vindictive nature of the suit is that one of Sparks's demands in its first two versions was that he be "reinstated to his employment at CRI." If Hank is so abusive of employees; if the organization persists in illegal and unethical activities, including the defrauding of its constituency; if the working conditions are so unhealthful; and if, as he alleges, it "has no business being called 'Christian'" because it has "shamed the name of Christ," why would he want to work at CRI again? Indeed, why did he not *resign* as a statement of conscience long before? In actuality, he seemed quite happy to be working at CRI all along. His charges of illegal and unethical activity were only made *after* his position at CRI was taken away (except those he made against others besides Hank *after* he came under discipline by de Castro in May 1993), and he made them in hopes of obtaining \$1,000,000 in "punitive and exemplary damages" *and* receiving his job back.

No doubt one of the reasons some people have taken Sparks's allegations seriously is that they assume they are based on inside knowledge of CRI activities. For example, when he alleged that he was almost fired for complaining about CRI's air conditioning, one might infer that he had some objective basis for drawing that conclusion. In fact, however, Sparks had no documentary or oral basis for making such an allegation. It was based purely on his own subjective speculation as to motives. And it turns out that *his entire lawsuit is strung together in this manner*. It is woven entirely out of groundless conjecture— thus the entire suit unravels once its subjective fabric is put to the test.

It needs to be clarified that Brad Sparks did not occupy a high-level position at CRI. The statement in Texe Marrs's newsletter that Sparks had been a "top official" drew laughter from the CRI staff. Yes, he did assist Hank with research projects and thus was privy to *some* confidential information. But he did not enjoy a position of *special* confidence with Hank, nor was he involved in any executive decision making. As a research assistant to the president working under de Castro, his position within CRI was below that of a full-fledged research consultant. It's no accident that he never had an article published in the *Christian Research Journal*: the quality of his work was not considered good enough. Therefore, it is a mistaken assumption to think that Sparks was in a position to reveal much confidential information about CRI.

Sparks is not speaking from firsthand knowledge but purely from cynical speculation when he makes allegations such as the following:

- The March 1994 layoff was *not* based on economic considerations.

- CRI resigned from the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) in 1992 to enable Hank to evade the ECFA fund-raising standard on “Conflict of Interest on Royalties” (see below).
- The “main impetus” for Sparks’s nearly being fired in May 1993 was his criticism of Hank’s “goofy-sounding” voice and nervous grin in a CRI promotional video.
- His March 1994 termination was actually in retaliation for his having criticized Hank’s management decisions, such as his choice to employ the services of Sealy Yates.
- Kathy Hanegraaff’s former position as Director of Marketing was actually a cover for conducting personal business.
- CRI’s monthly chapel services are not conducted for the good of the ministry as supposed, but to deceive authorities into believing CRI is a church so that Hank can receive a “pastor’s housing allowance” (see below).
- Many employees have been fired for complaining about Memory Dynamics or other “questionable” practices.

Concerning the allegations that being critical of Hank resulted in retaliation, Hank gave Sparks no reason to draw this conclusion. It is an injustice to portray Hank as one who can’t take criticism. (I should know; I’ve probably expressed more direct criticism to Hank than any other CRI employee, and I’ve always found him open, reasonable, and nonretaliatory in response.)

As to the allegation concerning employees being fired for raising ethical questions, in each case *when* the employee truly was terminated (most of the employees Sparks refers to resigned) there were entirely different, documentable reasons for letting them go. Although we could detail those reasons here, we will not do so out of respect for employer-employee confidentiality—even though some of the people whose reputations we wish to protect are now opposing us as part of the Group.

The first two versions of Sparks’s suit are the ones that have been circulated all over the country, and the allegations that CRI’s critics keep publishing are largely drawn from these two earlier complaints. Two relevant facts conveniently escape the notice of these critics: (1) allegations do not of themselves constitute guilt (anyone can sue anyone for anything, but legally and biblically [Deut. 19:15–20; 1 Tim. 5:19], one is presumed innocent until proven guilty); (2) most of these allegations are *not even found* in Sparks’s present complaint. *Sparks himself* threw them out of court, but that hasn’t stopped people such as Jim Spencer



(author of *Heresy Hunters*) and James Lloyd (in his publication *Christian Media*) from printing the old allegations as though they are incriminating to CRI. Furthermore, although Texe Marrs devoted nearly three pages of his July 1994 newsletter to luridly describing the details of Sparks's earlier complaints, he (predictably) never even noted in subsequent issues that most of those allegations had been dropped from Sparks's suit. Thus, even though these charges should not be considered live issues, we are forced because of the way they are being irresponsibly circulated to address them here.

Frustratingly, Sparks's first two complaints contain *so many* allegations that this document would become too voluminous if we attempted to answer them all. Thus we will have to limit ourselves to addressing the following allegations, which seem to be causing the greatest stir.

**Allegation:** "Hanegraaff withdrew CRI from ECFA in 1992 so that he could keep \$500,000 in book royalties from *Christianity in Crisis*."<sup>11</sup>

**Response:** CRI has issued a public statement that sets the record straight concerning its withdrawal from ECFA (available on request) that in part states:

In November 1992, the board of directors of the Christian Research Institute (CRI) voted to temporarily withdraw the organization's membership in the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) and did so as a member in good standing. The organization was not under investigation, nor was any review pending....

CRI was concerned about what we believe were serious violations of ECFA's own policies and procedures in its dealings with certain member ministries. Of greatest concern to us were clear breaches of confidentiality relative to the review process. These breaches were known to us and to virtually everyone else because ECFA officials and representatives were quoted in numerous publications both Christian and secular commenting on various aspects of the review process involving another member organization.

This concerned us because many of the issues raised by ECFA representatives in the press were, at that time, merely allegations (it turns

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<sup>11</sup> As reported in John Kennedy, "Mixing Politics and Piety," *Christianity Today*, 15 August 1994, 46.

out that, in some cases, *many* or *all* of the charges against the ministries in question were proven false). Yet, we saw many in the Christian community drawing conclusions about fellow believers and ministries based on information that, by *ECFA's own admission and policies*, should never have been discussed publicly.

We realized that if ECFA would conduct an onsite review of a member ministry (something they have every right and responsibility to do) and publicly discuss confidential aspects of that review—fueling speculation about a particular ministry or ministry leader—that they easily could do the same with any other ECFA member or applicant. Consequently, we resigned our membership and immediately expressed these very reasons to ECFA in writing.

CRI was not and is not opposed to ECFA conducting on-site reviews of member organizations....What we did object to were clear and inexcusable violations of the confidentiality of the review process.

It is for these and other substantial reasons that CRI withdrew its membership from ECFA. However, we remain fully committed to meeting or exceeding ECFA's seven standards of financial accountability, as we will gladly certify to anyone who asks....

As to Hank's alleged motive for withdrawing from ECFA, he wrote the following to *Christianity Today*: "The allegations are far-fetched because while the sum of money cited in the story may have accrued to CRI's benefit, it certainly did not accrue to mine! It is equally far-fetched to suggest that in 1992 I could have known what the royalties would be on a book to be published the following year. In any case, the figure cited in your article is preposterous."

That Spark's ECFA allegation is entirely without merit is evident from the fact that although CRI withdrew from ECFA, *Hank still followed ECFA's standard regarding book royalties*. This, by the way, has resulted in a substantial profit to the ministry.

Sparks apparently misunderstood the ECFA standard to prohibit the leaders of member ministries from receiving *any* royalties from their books, if those books were used by the ministries for fundraising or promotional purposes. In actuality (as confirmed by ECFA spokespersons), the point of the standard is that the leaders should not receive royalties from *those copies of their books that are sold by*

*the member ministry itself* for fund-raising or promotional purposes. This prevents leaders from crassly exploiting their positions by using direct mail campaigns for personal profit. And CRI not only meets this standard but exceeds it, since Hank and the board have resolved that *all* CRI authors (not just principals such as Hank) should turn over to the ministry the royalties from *all* copies of their books that are sold by CRI (not just those used in direct mail or on radio for promotions or fund raising).

**Allegation:** CRI employees typically earn poverty-level incomes of \$13,000 a year.

**Response:** This is simply false. The lowest salary of a full-time CRI employee (let alone the *average* salary) is higher than \$13,000. Although CRI staff make less than their counterparts in the secular business world, their income is close to the average of what is paid by parachurch organizations in Southern California. Furthermore, after Hank assumed the presidency of CRI he was responsible for the biggest across-the-board salary raises in CRI history, and these were followed by additional substantial raises as well.

**Allegation:** Hank receives excessive salary and benefits (close to \$200,000/yr.??<sup>12</sup>). In fact, according to Texe Marrs's reading of Sparks's lawsuit, Hank receives "\$50,000 per year for a pastor's housing allowance *in addition to* an inflated six figure annual salary," *and* benefits.<sup>13</sup>

**Response:** What is actually quite excessive here are these estimates of Hank's salary. As an ordained minister Hank does receive a housing allowance. This is perfectly legal and legitimate. It does not depend, as Sparks alleges, on fraudulently portraying CRI as a "church." Rather, it depends on Hank being assigned by his own church (Calvary Chapel) to the ministry of CRI—which he was. It results in a tax savings that benefits not only Hank but CRI. Furthermore, the dollar amount of Hank's salary is exactly *reduced* by the dollar amount of his housing allowance—the housing allowance is not "in addition to" a full salary.

Hank's total salary, plus housing allowance, plus "perks" come to a total of roughly \$100,000. This is a matter of public record (CRI's audited financial

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<sup>12</sup> This guess at Hank's income was printed in a CRI Group for Accountability paper, "Were There Dissenters to the CRI 'Board' Letter of April 26, 1994?—A Rebuttal to the 'Board,'" apparently written or co-written by Sparks.

<sup>13</sup> "CRI's Hank Hanegraaff Accused of Financial Fraud and Other Criminal Activities," *Flashpoint*, July 1994, 1.

statements and Hank's Forms 990 filed with the IRS), thus Sparks's allegation that CRI failed to disclose this information, and that Hank's salary constitutes a fraud on CRI's contributors and the taxpaying public, is without merit.

Hank's salary sounds very high when compared to the average CRI salary. But when compared to the salaries of other chief executives of religious organizations of comparable size and geographical location to CRI, it too is well within the standard range. It also is consistent with the guidelines of ECFA.

Unlike other CRI employees, Hank has the weight of the entire organization on his shoulders. The demands on his time and energy (and indirectly on his family) often know no bounds. Furthermore, CRI is dependent on him not only for its survival but for its growth and the fulfillment of its mission. As was stated earlier, after five years with Hank at the helm the organization's income has dramatically increased. It is certainly appropriate, and not scandalous, for the C.E.O. of an organization that generates \$5,000,000 per year, and greatly depends on that C.E.O. for that revenue, to receive a salary in the range of \$100,000. It further should be noted that *before* the current controversy, CRI's board—recognizing Hank's value to the organization and the high cost of living for a family of nine in Southern California—sought to raise Hank's salary above its present amount, but Hank refused to accept that raise.<sup>14</sup>

**Allegation:** Sparks was offered \$2,230.76 in hush money to “forever conceal and cover up all knowledge and claims of violations of law and ethics by CRI and its officers and employees.”

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<sup>14</sup> 2008 update: Thirteen years later Hank's salary is now just under \$200,000. This raise needs to be viewed in light not only of roughly thirty-five percent inflation over the period but, more importantly, the fact that CRI's annual income has nearly doubled. Hank has actually refused raises that the CRI board wanted to give him several times and has not had a raise since 1999. Alnor regularly cites Hank's salary as being \$251,886. This, apparently, is based on a *Christianity Today* (CT) article about the ECFA probe, which stated: “Employees were also concerned about Hanegraaff's salary. According to publicly available financial disclosure forms, CRI paid Hank Hanegraaff \$251,886 in 2001 (the most recent year for which statistics are available). This represents an increase of \$52,886 (26.5%) over the previous year.” (Marshall Allen, “Christian Research Institute Accused of ‘Naïve’ Bookkeeping,” *Christianity Today*, August 2003, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/august/6.19.html>.) What CT and the employees did not understand, however, was that the \$52,886 in question was actually a one-time pay out for unused vacation time accumulated over Hank's previous thirteen-year tenure at CRI (a standard CRI practice for any employee who does not use his vacation time), not a raise.

**Response:** Once again, this account of events is warped beyond recognition by Sparks's cynical view of things. His allegation that CRI offered him hush money to conceal its guilt presupposes that CRI had guilt it wished to conceal. Rather, CRI was attempting to protect itself from the very kind of malice that Sparks has shown toward CRI.

Here's what really happened: all employees who leave CRI are directed through a formal exit procedure, which involves turning in one's keys and receiving a check that covers salary up to the final day worked, unused vacation days, and severance pay. An "Exit Summary" form records this transaction and notes the nature of the exit (e.g., layoff) and the terms on which the employee left CRI (e.g., in good standing). In order to receive the severance pay, it is necessary to sign the form, which includes the following statement: "In return for [a certain amount of money, \$2,230.76 in Sparks's case] in severance pay, I agree not to make any claims against CRI and waive claims that I have arising out of my employment and its termination." The form also includes a declaration that states: "I agree to leave on CRI premises all equipment, office materials, books, tapes, papers, and other information purchased by CRI or prepared on CRI time. I agree not to divulge any CRI confidential information to anyone, even after my dismissal." Sparks refused to sign this form, labeling the standard severance pay "hush money."

The clauses in the Exit Summary to which Sparks objected (agreeing not to make claims against CRI, not divulging confidential information) were included on the advice of an attorney. Their purpose is to protect CRI from litigious individuals (a serious concern for employers in today's lawsuit-happy climate) and from disgruntled former employees who would take inside information about CRI out of context and publish it in such a manner as to imply guilt where no guilt exists. Are such protections really necessary in a Christian organization? Sadly, Sparks has proven that they are.

As previously noted, Sparks has discarded most of the above allegations from the present draft of his lawsuit. Does that mean that he has a stronger case now? *No.* His major claim is that he was fired for "whistle blowing" about a violation of public policy. (Federal law prohibits employers from taking such retaliatory action where violations of actual public policy statutes are alleged.) However, as we've already seen, the specific "crime" that Sparks attributes to Hank and CRI—using a nonprofit organization as a cover for personal profit—violates no existing public policy statute; in fact, it is not even illegal, but only results in the loss of the organization's tax-exempt status. Therefore, Sparks's alleged efforts to

blow the whistle about this would not qualify as whistle blowing under the law. But, as we've also seen, Hank and CRI were not truly guilty of tax fraud. Furthermore, Sparks was not terminated in retaliation for any perceived effort to blow the whistle. And, finally, there is no evidence that he *ever attempted* to blow the whistle about any perceived violation of public policy. And so, there is absolutely nothing to his public policy case! Furthermore, the lesser points in the present version of his lawsuit are likewise insupportable.

### **The "Group": Can "35 People" All Be Wrong?**

The above-referenced *Christianity Today* article stated that the Group for CRI Accountability has 35 members. One of the arguments that the Group has used in an attempt to justify its attack on CRI is: "How can 35 former CRI employees all be wrong?" In response we must first note that 35 people *could* be wrong. After all, there are many more than 35 current and former CRI employees who disagree with the Group's assessment of Hank.<sup>15</sup> (In fact, no one else who was laid off at the time Brad Sparks was has joined the Group.) Obviously, one or the other of these "groups" is wrong.

This is not surprising: large groups of people are misled all the time, as the ministry of CRI is tirelessly dedicated to pointing out. Can eight million Mormons all be wrong? Yes! Biblically, in Numbers 14:2 all the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron. But their perfect unanimity in rejecting their leaders only illustrated how infectious sinful attitudes can be among God's people—it did not prove that Moses and Aaron were guilty of wrongdoing.

The question must therefore be, *who* in this case is being misled—the people who believe Hank or the people who believe Sparks? As even the Group would be forced to admit, we must look at the facts and not the number of followers to determine that. We believe this document demonstrates that the facts are on the side of Hank and CRI.

We must point out, however, that there is no evidence that the Group consists of 35 people. Only 25 names have ever been identified as Group members

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<sup>15</sup> Just to name 35: Rich Abanes, Janette Aragon, Howard Benson, Lynette Benson, Laura Blackwelder, Marian Bodine, Terry Bryan, Dwayne Cogdill, Melanie Cogdill, Erwin de Castro, Kathy Delph, Karen Encinas, Carri Foote, Oona Fritz, Baron Harris, Jane Huckaby, Deb Hurdle, Lynn Hylton, Scott Larson, Melissa McGowan, Elliot Miller, Joan Moore, B. J. Oropeza, Andy Phillips, Rich Poll, Ron Rhodes, David Rimoldi, Stephen Ross, Diane Schnizer, Andrew Simpson, Thom Snyder, Virginia Straughn, Sandy Torres, Kristen Warren, Amy Wilson.

(including Sparks). Of those 25, only 19 were former employees of CRI (one is the *spouse* of a former employee; four were members of Hank's Bible class whose main grievance was that Hank quit the class and they wanted him to keep teaching it!). Of the 19 that were CRI employees, eight responded to an inquiry we sent in the mail maintaining that they are *not* members of the Group for CRI Accountability and that they never authorized Sparks, Bowman, or anyone else to use their names as Group members. They stated that all they had ever signed or authorized was the so-called "Matthew 18" statement demanding a meeting with Hank (see below), which was issued before the Group was formed. Several said they had never heard anything from or about the Group. And of the remaining 11 so-called members of the Group, most do not appear to have continued as active members after writing letters of complaint about Hank to CRI's board.

Is it really that amazing that 11 former employees from over a five-year period could be marshaled into a cause by someone like Brad Sparks? Sparks has the ability to sound very credible and authoritative—even when he doesn't know what he's talking about (as when he speaks about Hank's violations of "public policy"). After the death of the founder of the ministry, after the 1990 uprising with all of its fallout (including the confusion about Memory Dynamics and "private inurement"), with several people unhappy that they were terminated from CRI (even if CRI had good reason for doing so), and with several former employees not agreeing with Hank's theology or leadership decisions—of course there would be a certain number who would sign on to the demand letter for a meeting with Hank, and a lesser number who would write letters to the board (although only a few have been actively involved with the Group).

If one listens to their stories and examines their grievances, one finds that they are not all coming from the same perspective or voicing the same concerns. In fact, there is much variation among them. Thus the argument, "How can so many people all be wrong?" begs the question of whether they are all making the same claims, which is clearly not the case.

Now, after they all listened to Sparks and traded their stories they did develop certain themes (e.g., Hank fires people who ask questions about the ethics of his business dealings), but this was a very uncritical process. Because they were all unhappy with Hank to begin with (the only thing they *really* have in common), they were willing to believe a lot of claims without verification and then blended the most scandalous elements of their stories together into one large STORY that they passed off to the public as fact. But the public should realize that there are

two sides to every story; not only their large story but their individual stories as well—just as we’ve seen in the case of Sparks.

Another stratagem the Group has used in its war on CRI is a false appeal to Matthew 18. In an anti-Hank tract that members of the Group passed out at the above-mentioned CRI warehouse sale, they affirmed: “24 former CRI employees and Bible-class members recently sent Hank Hanegraaff a Matthew 18 letter asking to meet with him personally. Hank refused to meet or follow Matthew 18.” Of course, if Hank refuses to follow Matthew 18 then this would justify the existence of a “Group for CRI Accountability,” for Hank would be disobeying Scripture and refusing to be accountable to the body of Christ. But this incident does not truly fall under Matthew 18.

In a letter sent to Wes and Marie Dayan, members of the Group and former members of Hank’s Bible class, Sealy Yates—who in addition to his legal career has had a ministry in the field of Christian conciliation—explained the following:

With respect to your concerns as to why Hank Hanegraaff would not attend the meeting that you, Brad Sparks, and several others demanded that he attend, and which was held on April 17, I can answer that for you. I told Hank Hanegraaff that he could not attend such a meeting. The meeting had nothing to do with Matthew 18. You gave Mr. Hanegraaff no information as to what the purpose of the meeting was. If you doubt that just take a new look at the demand notice. The meeting was called and demanded by twenty-one individuals with as many as twenty-one different stories and concerns. Matthew 18 does not require any Christian to show up at a lynch mob meeting of the sort put together by Mr. Sparks....Matthew 18 makes it clear that the procedure to follow never includes any mob accusations or demands. That passage says that (1) you go to your brother alone and show him his fault, “just between the two of you”; (2) “if he will not listen to you” you are to take “one or two others along” (not twenty others); and (3) “if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.” You tell me how a demand that Hank Hanegraaff attend such a meeting (“or else”) with twenty-one mostly unrelated individuals fits anywhere within Matthew 18.

The Group’s appeal to Matthew 18 overlooks the fact that one member of the Group (its prime mover) had already initiated a lawsuit against Hank.



Consider what the CRI board of directors noted in a public statement on this matter:

On March 7, 1994, Mr. Sparks filed his lawsuit—seeking payment by CRI in excess of \$1 million—without first attempting to resolve his complaints by meeting individually with Hank Hanegraaff or any of the others he has sued concerning his claims or demands, thus making scriptural mediation or arbitration impossible (1 Corinthians 6:1–8). On April 4, 1994, Mr. Sparks and others issued a written demand that Hank Hanegraaff appear at a “meeting” (the purpose of which was not disclosed), ostensibly under the guidelines of Matthew 18:15–47—even though the suit filed against Hank Hanegraaff the month before directly violated both the spirit and intent of Jesus’ instructions on reconciliation. While Mr. Sparks now seeks redress under Matthew 18, his own unbiblical actions have mandated that the truth of this matter be established in the courts of the State of California. It is inappropriate and unfair to expect CRI and its leadership to try this case in two forums at the same time.

Consider also what I wrote to the board in a June 12, 1994 memo:

It is simply bogus to say Hank violated Scripture by not meeting with them when their ringleader was simultaneously suing him and other CRI leaders in a court of law. How dare they appeal to Scripture in a situation like that? Sparks is the one who is in violation of Scripture. Appeals for biblical accountability and reconciliation ring hollow under such circumstances. How can Hank be expected to face the person who’s suing him on the issues he’s being sued over in a separate forum? Things he said in the nonlegal forum could be used against him in the legal. If they were really interested in biblical restoration they would not be going through the courts! And if the others are so concerned about integrity, why are they teaming up with Sparks? (All they have to do is read his lawsuit to see he’s not coming from a position of truth and righteousness.)

There is no call for a “Group for CRI Accountability” because Hank *is* accountable: to the CRI board of directors; to several Christian leaders, including those of his own church affiliation (Calvary Chapel) and to others who act as consultants to CRI; and to the staff of CRI.

From the time he first came to CRI Hank has conducted an open-door policy for staff members who were concerned about anything taking place within the

ministry, and several of us have put this offer to the test and found it good. He is willing to meet individually with any member of the Group and has met with a few who agreed to do so.

Most of the Group, however, never even took step number one in the three-step Matthew 18 confrontation process before as a group they decided to aggressively take the final step of taking their accusations to the church. In fact, *before* Hank received the "Matthew 18" demand notice that contained Sparks's signature Sparks was already "telling it to the church" by sending out his legal complaint across the country! Thus it is fair to ask, Who is holding *the Group* accountable for the damage they are doing to the apologetics mission of CRI?

In addition to these two major ploys to discredit CRI leadership, the Group has devised new allegations beyond those included in Sparks's suit. It is perfectly clear that they went on "fishing expeditions" in hopes of catching Hank in some improper or even illegal act. Suspecting that they had indeed found evidence of illegal activity, in a June 2, 1994 letter they presented the first two allegations listed below to the CRI board, demanding that the board "lay to rest all of these questions" that they themselves had raised, and threatening that if the board did not respond to their demands for documentation they would notify the proper authorities and make their suspicions public.<sup>16</sup> And it would appear from the *Christianity Today* article that when they did go to the media with these matters they presented them not merely as "questions" but as allegations. Here are the major allegations from the Group with CRI's response.

**Allegation:** As they wrote in the June 2 letter (which has been circulated all over the continent): "Hank has told people over the years that he is an ordained

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<sup>16</sup> In several letters to the board during June and July the Group would back up their demands for Hank and the board to meet with them or for the board to supply them with confidential information by threats that they would make all of their allegations public. In fact, however, they had *already* sent Brad Sparks's lawsuit and their own packet of information to numerous Christian leaders, countercult ministries, and publications across the country, personally contacted many of the same people, put the lawsuit on various computer bulletin board systems, and picketed and passed out defamatory literature at the CRI warehouse sale. Texe Marrs had *already* mailed out his widely circulated July newsletter devoted to describing (and embellishing!) Sparks's defamatory allegations when Rob Bowman disingenuously wrote Sealy Yates in a July 11 letter: "It is precisely such a spectacle ['public embarrassment to your clients'] that we have been avoiding, seeking instead to resolve our differences with your clients with a minimum of public exposure, both for their sakes and for the sake of CRI's future." After Marrs's July newsletter it would only be a matter of time before the story would be picked up by the major Christian media, as well as the heretical and cultic opponents of CRI, as indeed it was.

minister in the Assemblies of God (AG). However, AG headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, has no record of his licensing or ordination with them. . . “ From this the Group raised questions about whether Hank is legally receiving a minister’s housing allowance.

**Response:** It is amazing that former CRI employees could raise this issue, since for the entire time Hank has been president of CRI he has had his ordination license framed on his office wall! Furthermore, Hank has never told anyone that he was ordained through the Assemblies of God—it is no coincidence that the Group can provide no specific examples of this.

Hank was originally ordained on January 31, 1986, when he became an associate pastor at the Mt. Paran Church of God in Atlanta, Georgia. However, because he was not theologically comfortable (on minor doctrinal points) with having his ordination tied to that church’s denomination (the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee), the church recommended that he obtain his ordination through the International Ministry Fellowship, a credible ordination organization that has pastors and missionaries serving all over the world. Furthermore, after Hank moved to California and became affiliated with Calvary Chapel, he received a second ordination through them on January 1, 1992. Thus there is no legal problem with Hank receiving a minister’s housing allowance as part of his salary.

**Allegation:** “A 35-member ‘Group for CRI Accountability,’ which includes several terminated employees, allege Hanegraaff....secretly borrowed \$100,000 from CRI as down payment for an expensive residence. . .”<sup>17</sup>

**Response:** There was nothing secretive about this loan. First, it was properly authorized by CRI’s board of directors (Hank abstaining), who were more than happy to arrange for the loan, since Hank offered to pay CRI double the interest that the same funds were earning in the bank, and since he had the assets to pay off the loan within its three-year term.<sup>18</sup> Second, the loan was publicly disclosed

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<sup>17</sup> Kennedy, 46.

<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the board arranged for the loan because the Hanegraaffs had sold their home in Marietta, Georgia to come to CRI only to find the cost of real estate in Southern California staggeringly high, and thus had been forced to rent for a few years. Desiring them to have the kind of security and stability they had before accepting the call to CRI, and a better investment of their money, the board was happy to help them with their down payment—something that is done all the time when principals of organizations are required to move from one area to another, *particularly* to Southern California.

in CRI's audited financial statements in accordance with standard accounting procedure. Third, the Hanegraaffs properly disclosed to their lender the fact that \$100,000 of their \$182,750 down payment was a loan (assuming the opposite, the Group threatened to turn them in to the U.S. Attorney and F.B.I. for this), and this presented no problem to the lender since the Hanegraaffs had the assets to cover the loan and simply needed time to liquidate them.

Concerning the fact that the Hanegraaffs live in an expensive home, it first of all needs to be understood that Hank had long been a successful businessman and did not come to CRI as a pauper—Hank's salary at CRI is not the sole means by which he is paying for his home. Second, the high cost of his home is more reflective of the land value of a 1.7-acre property in Southern California than of the house itself. I have been in the home and it is not ostentatious, nor a mansion; it is rather a functional home for a household of 10.<sup>19</sup> The reason Hank purchased a property with a little acreage (not that that should need to be justified) is that he hopes to accommodate his and Kathy's parents in their old age.

**Allegation:** Hank engages in "hidden profiteering." This charge is handwritten on a CRI financial statement included in the anti-CRI packet that the Group is sending all over the continent, with an arrow pointing to the following statement (i.e., this is the part of the statement that they allege proves hidden profiteering on Hank's part):

Non-interest bearing unsecured obligation under *deferred compensation contract* payable to *an individual* in monthly installments of \$1,667 per month, maturity date June 1999.  
Less unamortized discount at imputed interest rate of 8%.  
Obligation less unamortized discount.

**Response:** The "individual" the Group is accusing of "hidden profiteering" in this financial statement is not Hank Hanegraaff, but Walter Martin's wife, Darlene. The "compensation" referred to, however, is a life insurance policy on Walter Martin, now being dispensed to Darlene, which Walter directed to be administered by CRI's bank account so that CRI could receive the benefit of the interest over the years.

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<sup>19</sup> The Hanegraaffs have seven children and also have opened their home to others in need, currently one individual.

The irresponsibility and malice of the Group is clearly seen in their readiness to label as “hidden profiteering” something about which they have no knowledge, and then to send that material to every place they can think of where it might damage the reputation of Hank and CRI. Once again, truth and righteousness are not their driving concerns. Rather, their agenda is to portray Hank in the worst possible light, and that for their own political and vindictive reasons. It doesn’t seem to bother them that in their reckless pursuit of propaganda material they might malign the innocent widow of the man whose memory they *claim* to be serving.

**Allegation:** “A 35-member ‘Group for CRI Accountability,’ which includes several terminated employees, allege Hanegraaff....intimidated, manipulated, and fired workers without cause.”<sup>20</sup>

**Response:** As we’ve already partially seen, this is yet another of the Group’s “trumped up” charges. For example, the front page of the stapled handout that Group members distributed at the CRI warehouse sale reproduced the Christmas 1991 *Christian Research Newsletter* cover, which featured a picture of the CRI staff. On their handout the Group had the heads of several former employees in the picture circled, and connected those circles to captions such as “‘Lay off’ firing,” “Fired,” “Forced to leave,” and “Quit.” The purpose of this, of course, was to convey the impression that there had been a high turnover at CRI, and to suggest that the reason for this was employee abuse.

There are several reasons, however, why this propaganda piece was maliciously misleading. (1) The Group has no proof that what they call “lay-off firings” were firings and not merely lay offs. In fact, they were *not* firings. For example, Joan Moore, one of the alleged “lay-off firings,” was very dedicated to the ministry and had a perfectly good work record—she was laid off along with Brad Sparks and others purely for economic reasons, because her position was nonessential.

(2) When they say that someone was “forced to leave” they are often speaking merely of the individual’s subjective perception of his or her departure from CRI. We are aware of some people who quit out of fear that their job performance was substandard and therefore they might be fired, even when no objective indication that they would be fired had been given.

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<sup>20</sup> Kennedy, 46.

(3) The number of people whose heads are circled, 14 out of 39 over a two-and-a-half-year period, is not high enough to be considered scandalous even on the face of it. Having worked at CRI for the past 18 years I can say unequivocally that the turnover rate was higher under Walter Martin than it has been under Hank. Does that mean Walter abused his employees? No, it means that Christian ministries typically don't pay very much and so people in lower and middle-level positions usually don't stay very long.

(4) The Group unethically misrepresented several individuals' situations in hopes of making CRI look as bad as possible. For examples, they signified that Bob Lyle had "resigned" while he was in fact still working at CRI; they state that Ken Samples was "forced to quit" when I know from talking with both Ken and Hank that quitting was Ken's decision and that Hank was surprised by it; they have the word "quit" over former customer service representatives Baron Harris and Carri Foote's heads, as if to say, "Here are two more people who couldn't take working for Hank Hanegraaff," whereas Baron simply moved out of state to attend Bible school and still enthusiastically works at CRI every summer (something Brad Sparks *observed* in the summer of 1993), and Carri resigned on good terms to raise her first child, and wrote the following in a June 28, 1990 letter to the board concerning the claim (made during the 1990 uprising) that if one said anything displeasing to Hank it would be the end of one's job:

I did not buy that lie for a minute! Hank has never portrayed a angry dictator, uncontrolled style of leadership. He has been firm when needed; in addressing sin and in particular gossip, which seemed to go unheeded by some. He exhorted us to practice Scripture by "going to your brother if you have ought against him. . . ." He took the bull by the horns in addressing issues of sin within CRI which causes me to respect him even more.

Hank is a warm, approachable, friendly person who always greets us in the morning with a smile and humble spirit. He takes time to be personable with not only employees but also with customers who are in the lobby. He praises and encourages us. He treats us as valuable members of one family.

...He has maintained an open door policy and I have never felt that he did not mean what he said. Nothing ever contradicted that.

In conclusion I feel very positive about the direction CRI is going and the man who is leading it. I have never seen anything that would cause me to think evil of Hank and his motives, nor has his behavior ever caused me to question him.

A substantial majority of current and former CRI employees would echo Carri Foote's assessment of Hank. For example, Dr. Ron Rhodes, CRI researcher, editor, and *Bible Answer Man* participant, wrote in a June 10, 1994 memo to the CRI board concerning the Group's allegations:

It has been alleged by some that Hank can't take criticism. We are told Hank has temper tantrums, raises his voice, and the like. GIVE ME A BREAK!

I've *never* seen this in Hank. I criticize Hank at least every two months (I edit his *Newsletter* articles, marking red all over them). Hank has never raised his voice or gotten offended at my criticism. In point of fact, Hank often asks me for constructive criticism *as the article is in progress*.

And Marian Bodine, who began her ministry at CRI with her husband Jerry 21 years ago, wrote a personal letter of encouragement to Hank on June 8 that stated:

Over the time you have been at CRI, I have had the opportunity to observe you in various situations. I have noticed you were caring, helpful, insightful, encouraging and open. You have told the staff often that you had an "open door policy," and that if they felt there was a problem to come and talk with you about it. For instance, about a year and a half ago, Ed Decker was here for a week on the BAM [*Bible Answer Man*] program....The next morning I listened to the tape of that show and heard one error you made and many that Ed made. I made a list of them, and Bob Lyle told me to take it to you, and go over some of the problems I heard.

When I entered your office, you were working at your computer. I remarked that on the BAM program the day before, you had said that Joseph Smith's claim to the size of the "Golden Plates" was 6x8 *feet*, and that was not correct. It was *inches* not feet!...I showed you the photocopied information from Mormon sources....You were very appreciative for the correction and changed it in your notes....You then asked me to be on the

BAM show with you and Ed that day. On the program, you skillfully corrected your error of the day before, and Ed also handled his errors with expertise.

Everyone makes mistakes at times. This is just part of our fallen nature. However, I have never seen you take offense when someone approached you to offer some helpful criticism. I just thank the Lord for your humility.

In light of the positive testimonies of such credible CRI veterans as those cited above, what are we to make of this group of former employees who claim that Hank intimidated and manipulated them? Some CRI staff no doubt have felt intimidated by Hank, simply because of who he is, the position he occupies, and his personality strength. But in six years of working closely with him I've seen no evidence that Hank deliberately intimidates and manipulates the people working under him. I am aware of situations where individuals *interpreted* him in this way, but I also am aware of what Hank actually said (I was present in some of these cases), and can see how the individuals misunderstood him.

### **The Source of This Attack**

We have not used the claim, "This is an attack of the Devil" as a cop-out. We have faced the charges being leveled against us and answered them with facts. However, the facts being known, we believe that it is extremely important that our supporters have the proper perspective about what is happening to us. As CRI has become more visible and vital, Satan has launched an all-out effort to destroy its ministry.

When the current attack against CRI began to mount, Marian Bodine wrote the following words of encouragement in her June 8, 1994 letter to Hank:

The Lord led Jerry and I to Walter Martin and CRI in 1974, and over the years we have had the opportunity to see many changes and growth. We knew the dreams Dr. Martin had for CRI. Some of them took place in his lifetime, but the rapid growth and expansion of this ministry has taken place under your leadership.

In my opinion, I unequivocally believe that you are God's man for this ministry. Under your leadership. the position of president of CRI is now filled by a caring, God-honoring man who is not afraid to take risks for righteousness' sake. Before you came, excepting Walter Martin, the



leadership of CRI was held by people who proved to be unqualified spiritually for the task. Spiritual warfare in a ministry like this leaves people shell shocked if they are not walking close with the Lord, having all the armor in place.

. . . Down through the years I have seen more than a few at CRI who should never have been connected with this ministry. I have seen them do much to ruin other people around them and CRI in general. Somehow it was allowed to continue and firm action was not taken to remedy the situation. Since you have been here, gossip and backbiting are not allowed. Because you have taken affirmative action based on what you know should not be tolerated in a Christian ministry, you have come under vicious attacks from some whose jobs were terminated because of continued unchristian behavior.

Since the ministry of CRI puts us behind the enemy's front lines in spiritual warfare, those who are here must expect to be attacked by the enemy. Satan plays by no rules, and loves to use a Christian to destroy another Christian. He wants to destroy CRI, especially under your administration, because your leadership has been so effective.

You and Kathy have served CRI sacrificially from the beginning of your presence here. Because of that you have suffered incredible attacks without cause. I am thanking and praising the Lord for your endurance and tenacity. If you were not God's man for this place, you would not have suffered so at the hands of the enemy. Keep the whole armor of God in place for the fiery darts cannot destroy you. Be of good courage for "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

Under the leadership of Hank Hanegraaff CRI has grown from being a ministry that spoke to a specialized interest group (the cult apologetics crowd) to a voice that is recognized and heeded by the evangelical community at large. At a time when many voices over the Christian airwaves are promoting false doctrine, sensationalism, and self- and experience-driven theology, CRI stands for biblical fidelity and reason. It has promoted the study of Scripture, concern for sound doctrine, interest in apologetics, and a desire to reach out to people of other faiths with the gospel. Furthermore, it has made a significant dent in the empire of the faith movement, pointing charismatics back to the Bible as the source and standard of their theology.

Through all of these efforts, CRI has stood in stark opposition to the forces of darkness and their malignant plans for our generation. They were not about to take this lying down. Through the current attack on CRI, Satan is attempting to destroy our reputation and drain us financially.<sup>21</sup> And we have definitely taken some heavy hits.

If you believe in the ministry of CRI , and if you believe that the current attack against us is unjust, we would certainly appreciate your support. If there has ever been a time when we needed you to stand with us prayerfully and financially, this is it!

We are not quaking in our boots. We are confident that truth, and the God of truth, are on our side. Therefore we must prevail. Even as this document is being completed the ministry of CRI is moving forward. But that ministry cannot continue to move forward without you. You are our partners in ministry, and in this battle. Together we will continue to drive back the powers of darkness with the light of God's word, which is truth (John 17:17).

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<sup>21</sup> That Satan would use doctrinally sound Christians rather than the doctrinal opponents of CRI to do his greatest damage to this ministry may be surprising, but it is not unprecedented. As Charles Spurgeon observed, "The craftiness of the Devil is discovered in another thing—in the agents the Devil employs...You remember how David lamented of this evil: 'For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me....But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance...(Ps. 55:12–14). 'Ah!' says the Devil, 'you did not think I was going to send an enemy to speak evil of you, did you? Why, that would not hurt you. I shall choose a friend or an acquaintance; he will come close to you and then stab you in the back.'" (*Spiritual Warfare in a Believer's Life*, comp. and ed. Robert Hall [Lynnwood, WA: Emerald Books, 1993], 33–34.)