

May 31, 2024

After many months of mostly silent suffering, it is now time for me to close this chapter.

I am publicly releasing the GRACE report that details the findings and recommendations of the investigation on myself and Larry Getz. GRACE has given me written permission to distribute this report how I feel appropriate. I have been in communication with the ministry to try and come to a mutual agreement on how and when this report should be released; however, we have not been able to align. I feel now is best so I can start my healing journey. This investigation has come at great cost for me. My life has been forever changed by agreeing to do this. That being said, I am extremely grateful the findings of the GRACE investigation validate and support me.

Attached to this letter is the report. I have redacted information that is sensitive and pertains to details of my experience. The redacted information has already been thoroughly investigated by GRACE and is not needed to understand the findings; it does not change the outcome of the report.

As we go forward into the future, I would like to pass on a few things I have learned throughout this journey:

1. There is a person behind every investigation. A person who is giving up a lot to be there. A person who feels and a person who could be hurting. Try to put that person's well being before your own wishes or preferred outcome. Know that a conclusion will come and there is a lot that is going on that you do not know of.
2. When speaking to others remember that the survivor could be the person you are talking to. Speak with love and grace.
3. Respect and believe all victim-survivors. They should not have to prove that they have been harmed. Even more so when the victim-survivor is a child. Hear them, support them and act accordingly.

Finally, I would like to give a public thank you to the Lord our God. He has not abandoned me one time throughout this experience. He is the one who gave me strength to get through the past 9+ months. His mercy is abundant and His love is unmeasurable. I am so thankful to Him. If you are struggling, if you have questions, if you think you have life figured out or anything in between, I encourage you to open your mind, open your heart and turn to Him. He and only He can give true understanding and peace. While His timing may not be our timing, His timing is perfect. His plan is perfect and He has not and will not abandon His children.

Thank you for keeping me anonymous, thank you for accepting the findings of this report, thank you for believing me, thank you for supporting me.

-RV

Summary of the GRACE Report

This summary captures the essence of the GRACE report while providing a coherent narrative of the findings and recommendations. It focuses on the key aspects of the investigation, the background of the Friends and Workers organization, the allegations against Larry Getz, and the suggested improvements for the future.

I. Introduction

The GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment) report investigates allegations of sexual misconduct by Larry Getz, a leader within the Friends and Workers organization in Washington, Northern Idaho, and Alaska. The report, conducted independently by GRACE, evaluates the organization's response to these allegations and provides recommendations for improvement.

A. Background on Friends and Workers

Structure of Authority:

- Overseers: Male leaders with authority over geographical areas, delegating tasks to ministers called workers.
- Workers: Individuals called to ministry, supported and assigned by overseers, living without personal financial autonomy and relying on fellowship members for sustenance.

Doctrinal Beliefs:

- The Bible is the sole doctrinal guide.
- No official documents other than a hymnal, "Hymns Old and New," are used.
- Emphasis on community and fellowship.

Meetings and Functions:

- Weekly fellowship meetings in elders' homes.
- Special Meetings and annual Conventions for broader community engagement.

B. Background on Larry Getz and Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

Larry Getz, an elder since 1976, has been accused of sexual misconduct. The investigation focused on:

- Disclosures by RV: Initial allegation disclosed 10-15 years ago and renewed in 2023.
- Leadership Response: Examining the Friends and Workers' knowledge and reaction to the allegation.

II. Methodology

The investigation involved:

- Interviews: Conducted with various witnesses and members.
- Documentation Review: Evaluating policies and historical responses.
- Surveys: Gathering broader feedback from community members.

III. Findings

A. Allegation and Disclosures of Sexual Misconduct by Larry Getz

Incident Description and Initial Disclosures (Early 2000s - 2011):

- RV described to GRACE an incident that occurred in the early 2000s, when she was a young teenager and Larry Getz was around 60 years of age.

- Approximately 10 to 15 years ago, RV disclosed this misconduct to two witnesses. One witness, a close friend, received the disclosure around 15 years ago, and another, a mother of young children, learned about it around 10 years ago. RV's motive in disclosing was to protect the children of those she disclosed to.

Second-Hand Disclosures (2009 - 2011):

- After RV's initial disclosures, the mother of young children shared the information with other parents to caution them. Two witnesses gave accounts of receiving this second-hand information 10 to 13 years ago.

Recent Disclosures by RV (2023):

- In 2023, RV disclosed the misconduct again to several individuals, some of whom had previously heard second-hand accounts.
- It is important to understand that the disclosure in 2023 that led to leadership knowledge was accidental and not disclosed by RV but by another person. This investigation did not uncover a plan or preconceived motive on the part of RV to fabricate the incident, and did not uncover evidence of any ill will toward Larry Getz, or any incentive to lie or exaggerate the allegations.

3. Credibility Assessment of Disclosures Made by RV:

- GRACE found RV to be a very credible witness.
- GRACE found RV's motivation for coming forward to anyone outside her intimate circle of family and friends was in situations where a child's safety was in question.
- RV's disclosures were consistent over time, aligning with her patterns of behavior and actions following the incident.
- Witnesses spoke about RV's trustworthiness and credibility:
 - One witness told GRACE: "I do know the victim and I don't think she would make something up. And I know it's devastating to their family to go through this."
 - Another witness described RV as a trustworthy and believable person who would have no reason to make up an allegation against Larry Getz. This witness told GRACE, "[RV's] not one that's trying to burn the church down."
 - An additional witness, who has known RV well for many years, described RV as someone who is "honest and real" and that she would not think "that in a million years [RV] would make something like this up. That's just not who she is."
 - Additionally, a witness, who has known RV for approximately 15 years, described RV as an honest and trustworthy person who is loyal and has good boundaries.
 - Finally, a witness described RV as a kind and thoughtful person of wisdom who knows Jesus and "weighs things very heavily, whether it's important or not important and truth and all those things."

4. Response of Larry Getz to the Allegations:

- Larry Getz was reportedly guarded and spoke very little when he was first presented with the allegations. During the interview with GRACE, he claimed no recollection of any interactions that could have been misunderstood.
- Similar to when he was presented with the allegations, GRACE found his responses during the interview were guarded and lacked empathy, and were not appropriately responsive for

a person who has had spiritual influence for a significant period of time within the fellowship.

B. Knowledge and Response of Friends and Workers Leadership:

- Leadership first learned of the allegations in 2023
- RV was required to meet with a male overseer to report the misconduct in order for the report to receive any action from leadership.
- After RV met with an Overseer, and he found her allegation credible, leadership began discussing a third-party investigation.
- An Overseer met with Larry Getz, requesting he not host or attend meetings pending the investigation. GRACE was subsequently engaged to conduct the investigation.

C. Policies:

- GRACE highlighted the absence of written policies on misconduct within Friends and Workers, which traditionally relies solely on biblical guidance.
- The lack of clear, written policies and procedures creates safety concerns, especially given the practice of Workers staying in members' homes.
- Witnesses reported varying experiences with Workers, underscoring the need for established guidelines to ensure safety and proper conduct.
- GRACE recommended developing robust policies to address misconduct, define behavioral expectations, and create clear reporting structures to promote safety and accountability.

Summary:

The allegation of sexual misconduct by Larry Getz was disclosed by RV over a span of years to multiple individuals, both directly and indirectly. GRACE's investigation found RV to be a credible and motivated witness, with disclosures consistent across time. Larry Getz denied the allegations and responded with a lack of empathy. Friends and Workers leadership has begun addressing these issues, though significant gaps in policy and organizational culture need attention to ensure safety and proper handling of misconduct allegations.

IV. Further Analysis and Recommendations

This section explores the findings through Scriptural principles and SAMHSA's Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice, aiming to guide Friends and Workers towards a more Godly organization by focusing on safety, trustworthiness, transparency, peer support, mutuality, collaboration, empowerment, voice, choice, and humility regarding gender, cultural, and historical issues.

A. Safety

Safety encompasses physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects. Essential for trauma-informed practice, safety involves protection from harm and addressing dismissive attitudes, cultural and gender biases, chaotic changes, unclear boundaries, and misuse of spiritual authority. Scriptural references supporting safety include Ezra 8:21-23, Psalm 82:3-4, and Mark 10:14.

- Safety and the Power of a Spiritual Leader: Spiritual authority should be used for the good of others, recognizing it as derived from God. Misuse of power can exploit the vulnerable. Accountability, humility, and trustworthiness in spiritual leadership are crucial.
- Safety and Vulnerability: heavily redacted area of the report

- Safety and Reporting of Misconduct: Reporting misconduct often lacks safety due to unclear policies, mandatory meetings with male overseers, and uncertain information flow. Safe reporting and response are vital for mental health.

B. Trustworthiness and Transparency

Trust grows through truthful communication, consistency, and observed follow-through. Lack of transparency regarding misconduct allegations against Larry Getz led to confusion and mistrust. Clear, transparent communication is essential for safety and trust.

C. Peer Support

Supportive relationships are key to resilience after trauma. Peer support, reflected in Scriptures like Proverbs 17:17 and Galatians 6:2, involves identifying supportive relationships and enhancing skills to access support. The exclusivity within Friends and Workers often limits peer support, with doctrinal beliefs fostering an environment of secrecy and isolation.

D. Collaboration and Mutuality

Collaboration and power-sharing are essential for healing. Scriptures such as Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and Ephesians 4:16 emphasize mutual support. Power imbalances within Friends and Workers hinder collaboration, with overseers and workers holding significant authority. Addressing these imbalances can promote greater collaboration.

E. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

Trauma disempowers individuals, and trauma-informed practice seeks to return power to them. In Christian communities, leaders should use their God-given power to uplift and protect the vulnerable. Friends and Workers should work to restore empowerment, voice, and choice, addressing unspoken rules and expectations that restrict freedom.

F. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

Trauma is influenced by cultural, historical, and gender factors. Scriptures like Leviticus 19:33-34 and Galatians 3:28 highlight equality and care for the oppressed. Friends and Workers should be mindful of these factors, recognizing their impact on trauma experiences.

Overall, this analysis urges Friends and Workers to implement trauma-informed principles by ensuring safety, promoting trust, encouraging peer support, fostering collaboration, empowering individuals, and addressing cultural, historical, and gender issues.

Summary of GRACE Report Recommendations for Friends and Workers

V. Recommendations:

A. Invite Collaboration from RV to Plan the Communication of Report:

- Friends and Workers should involve RV in planning the communication of the report, prioritizing her safety and support throughout the process.

B. Publicly Confess Failures and Wrongs:

- The organization should publicly acknowledge and confess their failures and wrongs with sincerity, reflecting deep remorse and commitment to transparency.

C. Make Appropriate Amends to Victims:

- Public acknowledgment should be followed by reparative actions, such as asking victims about their needs and offering support like memorials, donations, or mental health services.

D. Facilitate and Participate in Collective Lament:

- Leadership should facilitate collective lament to acknowledge harm, honor victims, and seek wisdom for a safer future, possibly during events like the Children's Sabbath.

E. Accountability Plan and Participation Guidelines for Larry Getz:

- Develop and implement guidelines for holding Larry Getz accountable, ensuring safety and adherence to the church's beliefs and policies.

F. Institutional Memory:

- Preserve these events in the institutional memory to ensure ongoing efforts to restore trust and promote safety.

G. Broader Fellowship Care:

- Develop a care plan to help the fellowship process the investigation results and provide psychological and spiritual support.

H. Training and Education:

- Offer comprehensive training on abuse prevention and response, ensuring all community members are educated on abuse dynamics, power misuse, and trauma.

I. Identify a Point of Responsibility to Lead a Trauma-Informed Approach:

- Identify a responsible party or team to lead and sustain trauma-informed care efforts, including survivor support and policy development.

J. Review and Update Policies Implicated by this investigation:

- Update all policies to reflect trauma-informed principles, ensuring effective implementation and enforcement.

K. Referral System:

- Maintain a referral system to connect individuals with appropriate mental health and support services, collaborating with local advocacy centers and law enforcement.

L. Collaboration with Trauma-Informed Organizations:

- Build collaborative relationships with other organizations committed to trauma-informed approaches, sharing progress and learning to enhance safety efforts.

By implementing these recommendations, Friends and Workers can create a safer, more supportive community, addressing past misconduct while fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and care

VI. Conclusion

The GRACE report underscores the need for significant changes within the Friends and Workers organization to address and prevent sexual misconduct. It emphasizes transparency, accountability, and the importance of supporting victims through a trauma-informed approach. Implementing these recommendations is crucial for the safety and integrity of the community.

To view the full report go to <https://www.wanidakag.org/communication> (under Third Party Investigation Reports).