

To:

Bro. Thurman Wade  
Director, Macedonia World Baptist Missions, Inc.

Pastor Wayne Cofield  
Pastor, Whitfield Baptist Church

Attached you will find Becky Earnhart's personal testimony as prepared by her for Dr. David Gibbs and the CLA law firm. We would ask you to read this formal complaint filed this day, November 4, 2004, against Mr. Austin Gardner. It is never easy to do what is right but this situation demands a Biblical response and Biblical action. My desire is that a brother be restored so that the cause of Christ is not hindered in his life or in the lives of those with whom he serves.

A detailed description of these charges is included in Becky's Testimony, a separate document.

Over twenty years ago, while Becky Earnhart was between the ages of 12 and 18 and living in the Gardner home, a series of ungodly and wicked acts were committed against her by Mr. Austin Gardner. During this time Mr. Gardner committed physical and sexual abuse against Becky on numerous occasions.

This child abuse consisted of horrible fits of anger where Mr. Gardner would strike Becky many times. Various items were used to administer punishment such as a belt, board, switch, fly swatter, extension cord and fishing rod. On one occasion she was struck at least 100 times. These beatings were conducted extremely inappropriately. Often Mr. Gardner would beat Becky on her bare bottom as a bargain for administering fewer swats. There were times when Becky was beaten from head to foot and could not leave the house for days because of the bruising. Many times Becky was beaten with such frequency that she would bleed.

After these beatings, Mr. Gardner would pretend to be interested and concerned with Becky's physical health. He would ask to "examine" her to make sure she was "ok and healing properly". Mr. Gardner would have Becky lie across his lap while he touched her inappropriately Mr. Gardner would physically examine Becky when his wife, Betty, was in the shower and the other children living in the home were asleep or away.

Mr. Gardner sexually humiliated Becky by making her do actions that showed a "show of obedience". Mr. Gardner also would touch Becky while "helping" her "see" the immodesty of a dress, skirt or style of sitting.

The manipulation, control and abuse of Mr. Gardner have not only been directed against Becky. Members of Mr. Gardner's own immediate and extended family have been victims of his anger and physical abuse.



What Mr. Gardner has done is called Child Abuse. He could, in fact, be committed of felony child abuse and his anger constitutes, not only criminal level assault and battery, but an unquestioned spiritual disqualification for ministry (1 Timothy 3, 2 Timothy 2:24).

The manipulation and fear tactics that Mr. Gardner uses are unacceptable and unethical in any context or situation and these things are sinful abuses of authority, not just 'unacceptable'. Name calling, inappropriate physical contact (hitting, pushing, intimidating), yelling, belittling, public humiliation and manipulation are all tactics that Mr. Gardner uses in his ministries in Peru, South America. He also makes many inappropriate sexual comments in mixed company as well as sexual innuendos. These are manifestations of the same sins and abuses committed against Becky and others.

Mr. Gardner has denied every allegation with which we have confronted him. He has admitted to being "too hard" on his children and Becky or being a little too "severe" at times. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." We have sought to deal with this situation in a God honoring, Biblical way and have confronted Mr. Gardner according to instructions in Matthew 18 with no success. He holds to the position that he was just "too hard" at times. After confronting Mr. Gardner, it was clear he had no intention of seeking reconciliation. We ended our conversation with the understanding that we would not be deterred from making the accusations and in the proper time we would continue. He continued to maintain the justification of his actions and made it clear that in his opinion Becky was obviously lying.

An important factor is that his kind of response does not satisfy God's imperative requirement that sin be dealt with truthfully with full submission to corrective measures, and that evidence of repentance be clearly demonstrated (Psalm 51, 2 Corinthians 7:9-11). What Mr. Gardner has done is called Felony Child Abuse. If convicted, Mr. Gardner would be listed as a sex offender and would spend time in jail for the wicked crimes committed against Becky Earnhart.

As a secondary result, such a response does nothing toward dealing with the victim in a way that will provide any measure of comfort, let alone any degree of reconciliation. Mr. Gardner has never made any attempt to biblically ask for forgiveness and repair the incredible damage and hurt he has done to Becky.

Mr. Gardner should be held accountable for his sin before God as God's Word promises in Proverbs 11:31 "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner."

Mr. Gardner should also submit himself to his authorities under whom he has made himself accountable, those being his local church, Whitfield Baptist Church and his mission board, Macedonia World Baptist Missions.

We ask that the following items be carried out by those Scriptural authorities:

1. A full investigation into the allegations mentioned in this formal complaint.
2. All authority of Mr. Gardner over Becky Earnhart and the Earnhart family be immediately suspended.
3. That Mr. Gardner be prohibited from contacting Becky Earnhart or the Earnhart family for the duration of these investigations.
4. That Mr. Gardner put in writing his responses to the allegations filed against him in this formal complaint and Becky's personal testimony (included)
5. That Mr. Gardner be willing to submit to a lie detector test in response to the allegations in this formal complaint as well as Becky's detailed testimony.

We have been consulting with a Biblical counselor and she is advising us with regard to helping Becky handle the memory of this experience in a constructive, healing manner. She has recommended that in order to protect Becky, I should keep her from talking face to face with anyone she does not absolutely need to talk to. Per legal advice which we continue to receive from Dr. David Gibbs and the CLA, we are willing to provide Becky's testimony in sworn format and she is willing to submit to a lie detector test. I am also willing to correspond with Pastor Cofield or the mission board leaders to discuss these allegations.

Upon submitting this Formal Complaint to the leadership of Macedonia World Baptist Missions, Inc. and Whitfield Baptist Church we will leave this matter in the hands of Mr. Gardner's Scriptural authorities (local church and mission board) to follow through in a Biblical and ethical manner.

We are not pursuing any legal action against Mr. Gardner; however we have sought legal counsel from the Christian Law Association.

We will be praying that God directs you all to do what is right and that His Wisdom will guide you in this very difficult and unpleasant task.

Fellow laborer,

Jonathan Earnhart