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From: **Ron Luce** <[REDACTED]>

Date: Wed, Jul 30, 2025 at 12:57 PM

Subject: Re: Media inquiry - Response to docuseries

To: Josh Shepherd <[REDACTED]>

Thoughts regarding shp

These days there are video productions presented as documentaries that imply fact based representation of an event or in this case of ministry. Many so-called documentaries, while pretending to tell the story of how something really was is really a reflection of the bias of the producers, while looking for a vehicle or a story, drama or other people's Pain through which to tell their story.

Such as the case with the recent happy, shiny people production. The producers for the sake of their own anti-Christian and evangelical belief system bias, exploit the very real pain of those who have a negative story of their experience with teen mania. They took five stories from the ministry that impacted 3 million face-to-face with Acquire the Fire, Took 80,000 teenagers on mission trips around the world all of which returned home safely, and 7000 Interns and try to shape a false picture of reality and the positive impact of millions of people, bent towards their obviously skewed view of biblical Christianity.

While it is impossible to imagine that every single person that was part of the various ministry efforts of teen mania had a positive experience, we've been flooded by real life stories for decades of those that have gone on to build ministries that rescue abandoned babies, build significant churches, reach people in unreached areas of the world, rescue people out of sex trafficking, and a myriad of other amazing stories as a result of how they were inspired one of the efforts of teen mania.

However, those who had a negative experience, have always been a profound source of pain for my wife Katie and I. We tried to set up a life giving ministry for teenagers and young adults so they could find a dramatic encounter with Christ and see a glimpse of their destiny, and be launched into whatever God called them to do. Each year many times a year our staff would constantly comb through the experiences of young people in each part of the organization, thanking God for the positive ones (which were always the overwhelming majority) but also taking seriously any and every negative comment to see how we can improve and get better. Even several of those that were interviewed for the documentary have been engaged personally over the years, asking for forgiveness asking what could be done to make it right.

This brings up a much broader question.: When when two people experience the same exact circumstances with the exact same leader, the exact same program and one has a positive experience and one has a negative experience, How do we process that? How do you explain it? if the person who had a negative experience had a pre-experience in their life, maybe an unhealthy church environment,

an abusive home situation, a horrible leaders in the past, and that shapes the perception of their current experience, Is that still the responsibility of the person or ministry that produced that experience?

That doesn't mean there shouldn't be Grace, kindness and effort to help the person through the experience, which we have always tried to demonstrate.

The word Mokumentary is not an effort to diminish the pain experienced by those interviewed, but More as a description of how these producers refused to use sound research techniques of legitimate reputable reporting of news outlets. To be fair, they should have had at least as many positive experience stories as negative experience , but to be more scientific, they should've made an attempt to discover what percentage of those that have any involvement with teen mania. acquire The fire or the honor academy had a positive versus negative experience, and then interview accordingly. If they want to make a true documentary, then tell the true story of What actually happened through an unbiased lens as much as possible. instead they chose to espouse, their own worldview while using the pain of others to do so. In a sense, the mockery of the Christian message mocks all the good that happened with the millions that were impacted positively, and mocks the generosity of those who gave sacrificially in donations in time and sweat to make all that impact possible.

1. regarding injuries and the safety of our mission trips: over three decades we took 80,000 teenagers on trips around the world to more than 60 nations. We would take them realizing they are somebody else's babies, and do everything possible to go to the furthest extent to make sure they were always safe. We would also train our leaders to look for all the possible hidden variables to make sure their own people in their care were safe. However, when traveling overseas, there are definitely possibility of medical emergencies in the case of Phil boltz and others. We always acted with the greatest amount of alacrity to get them the best care possible and get them home if needed, and by the grace of God all young people came home to their parents

2. Regarding the LTE's, which were life transforming events, we were very intentional in creating experiences that would break them out of their norm and make discoveries about themselves and Christ. While we wanted to make these experiences very adventurous, we intentionally push the limits of normal life. Sometimes we would create a perception of danger that wasn't real danger so we could help the young person understand that someday they might be put in that situation to get them to consider how they would respond. Having said that we constantly refined all of our retreats and LTEs to make sure ultimately they were safe.

3. The word trauma is a widely used concept now in our society to explain scenarios that might feel hurtful or that something is perceived as doing something intentionally wrong to another. Not all stress is bad. Stress helps us to grow. Most of the soft living Christian background of Americans has produced soft faith. A pseudo stress environment was created to help them grow to help give them grit help give them a backbone.

4. in all of our promotional Tools for the honor academy we always told them that part of their internship is 30 hours at work in the ministry. This gave them opportunity for professional development depending on their department, but also to make a huge difference in their generation. Many interns took their work experience and leveraged it into a great career, and were always highly sought after employees when they left the honor academy. When 10 Interns walk into an arena with 10,000 young people and realize that they are the ones That made that even possible and all the life change that happened with part of what they the fruit of their lives they are never the same. If they leave thinking, “wow I’m only 18 and God can use me like this now. What could he do through me the rest of my life,” That’s exactly the kind of destiny that we were praying we get birth in their hearts.

5. Teaching ‘Dying to self’ is a very common historical Christian teaching. Jesus himself said us to ,”deny himself, takes up his cross and follows me, or He can have no part of me.”(.)Instead of being impulse driven,instead of living a me-centered, pleasure-driven life, The virtue of giving your life away to impact others is what we always tried to emphasize. The mocumentary skews this to say we were trying to make people intentional martyrs. This is not scriptural and that is not what we taught. . This is sensationalism to get more eyeballs so they can get a good deal the next time they propose a series to Amazon.

6. Jeff Charlotte is a well renowned left-leaning author that has never fairly reported on anything Christian. He was by no means an expert on teen mania or my personal life. This again demonstrates the amount of shallow research that the producers would set him up as an expert anything concerning biblical Christianity. Biblical Christians know they cannot take any of his comments seriously as a commentary on biblical beliefs.

7. I have no regrets in general regarding the teachings that me or any of my staff at our event or on campus. The were all based in scripture designed help young people understand ancient mysteries of scripture. The only thing I would change is that I’ve continue to grow in my understanding of scripture and how Jesus wants us to live And reflect that in the current writings, books and events.

8. Generation next now exists to help the church do what we did so much of teen mania. In other words, we are teaching churches how to host their own epic events to build their churches with young people, and have them experience the reality of Jesus. In addition we have developed tools to help these young people be disciplined after they get on fire for Christ so it’s not simply an emotional experience. Finally, our goal to help churches build young people so by the time they graduate into adulthood, the roots are deep and we can beat the latest trend that reports 71% of those they grow up in church Do not continue to follow Christ

Pastors have asked me to come alongside them and their next-gen team to build a lean-mean. world-class, soul- harvesting machine, that impacts the young generation in their region as we coach their team via zoom monthly and give them access to master class training tools, PDfs, and templates to The dramatic impact, reaching the young people in their region.

Ron

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From: **Ron Luce** <[REDACTED]>

Date: Wed, Jul 30, 2025 at 3:30 PM

Subject: Re: Media inquiry - Response to docuseries

To: Josh Shepherd <[REDACTED]>

Josh

For almost our entire 30 years of operation, teen mania was a member of ECFA. Financial integrity was always very important to us, and even had Paul Nelson (former president of ECFA) on our board for a number of years.

When we had need of an outside PR firm to write some of our press releases, Cindy got her feelings hurt and began to take advantage of partial information (since she was not in the leadership team she did not have full access) and leak to outside half truths even as she took a salary from teen mania.

Over all the years with our bank, we never missed a payment and there was never any foreclosure proceedings initiated (except one month we made half payment then paid the rest within 2 weeks).

After financial analysis, 2 board members and myself went to meet with the president and CFO of our bank noting the 2.5 m annually overhead (not all do that we're bank costs) for the campus was not wise use of funds (since we could rent offices and warehouse space far cheaper than the cost to maintain a 470 acre campus). After several hours of discussions and negotiations we offered and the bank agreed to take the property back for what we owed, with no penalty. It was truly a win win for both sides.

They mentioned in passing that the technical term for what we agreed to is called a "friendly foreclosure" even though we were not foreclosed upon. We chose to describe in the press release what actually transpired rather than use the phrase "friendly foreclosure" because of the misperception of technical language in banking transactions. Cindy did not like that choice.

Ron