

THE FAMILY'S HISTORY, POLICIES, AND BELIEFS REGARDING SEX

—PART 2

By Peter

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Introduction

In the first GN of this series, we reviewed the Family's history, as far as how our sexual theology and practices developed from our early days. We saw how the Lord gave us a number of freedoms in the sexual realm through the Law of Love. Dad wrote a number of Letters in which he laid the scriptural foundation for these freedoms, as well as the conditions attached to practicing them. We explained how the Lord led Dad and Mama and me to eventually rein in some of these freedoms to ensure that their misapplications, or extremes and excesses, would not be detrimental to others or hinder the Lord's work. We also acknowledged that mistakes were made, freedoms were handled somewhat immaturely or even wrongly in the early years by some, and thereafter Mama and I issued apologies to any who suffered hurt or mistreatment during that time.

2. In this GN, I'm going to focus on how this period of experimentation affected the lives of our second generation, specifically those who grew up in the Family during the more freewheeling period from the late 1970s to about 1989. Most of the mistakes that were made as we learned to apply the liberties granted to us under the Law of Love date to this period of time, when safeguards were not in place to ensure that children were protected from inappropriate or premature exposure to sexuality. In hindsight,

it's clear that an overly sexualized atmosphere had developed in a number of Family Homes, of which children were a part.

3. Once Dad and Mama became aware of the impact this degree of liberality had on some of the young people and how they viewed their experiences, this period of liberality ended quickly, and our stringent policies for the protection of minors were instituted. A conservative period ensued from the late 1980s all the way through the mid-1990s, at which point the Lord led the Family, through His Word, to find the balance between maintaining the immovable foundation of our guidelines and policies for the protection of minors, while nurturing and protecting the beautiful treasure of the Law of Love that the Lord has entrusted us with.

4. As you read through these explanations of the mistakes of the past, particularly in relation to our second generation of that time period, and the guidelines and policies that were enacted to rectify these mistakes, please bear in mind that we are focusing specifically on a mistake that Dad made—a serious one that negatively affected a number of Family young people. During the time period between approximately 1979 and 1986, Dad articulated the position that sexual interaction between adults and minors could fall under the Law of Love, but he was mistaken. It was a fundamental mistake. Dad should never have opened the door

Required private reading for ages 18 and up. Senior teens should read this series with a parent or shepherd. Parents and shepherds can share portions of this counsel or information with their JETTs and junior teens as the Lord leads.

to such contact, or applied the freedoms the Lord granted us under the Law of Love to interaction of this nature. Once he recognized his mistake, he banned any such interaction, and renounced any literature that indicated it was acceptable, and had it destroyed. At the time, some 20 years ago in the mid-1980s, while Dad was still alive and leading the Family, policies were put in place to protect minors. After Dad's graduation, Mama and I issued a number of apologies over time to both current and former members.

5. Some of you had negative experiences during that time, and you were exposed to things that you shouldn't have been exposed to, for which Mama and I are very sorry. You, our second generation, are a priceless gift to the Family, and Mama and I love and appreciate each of you. We are deeply committed to ensuring that the Family is the best it can be for our second generation and your children, and for every Family member. The Family is certainly not perfect, and there are many areas that need continued growth and progress, but we're confident that the Lord has made the Family of today a safe haven for our children and young people.

6. The majority of you second and third generation young people reading this GN did not live through this particular time period that I'm referring to (1978–1989), or else you were very young at the tail end of it. You never experienced it, so the details of what we are covering and the things we apologize for may be difficult for you to relate to, or may even be shocking in some cases. Others of you, although you did live through this time period, were not exposed to the issues we are covering in these GNs. Even though these events of the past have little or no direct relation to your lives,

your attention may be drawn in this direction, due to hearing of accounts of the experiences of others, whether from those in the Family or former members.

7. Some former members have genuine complaints from the past, which we have acknowledged and apologized for long ago, and we have taken measures to ensure that hurtful behavior of any kind does not recur. Others tell outrageous tales that have little or no basis in truth, which they use in order to attempt to convince the public and authorities that children in the Family are at risk today.

8. A small number of our former members have made it their business to focus on these issues and attempt to keep them in the public eye, and through this to focus your attention on them. They try to target you younger Family members who didn't experience this time period, in the hope that you will lose faith in the Family and leave. Some of you may have been confused, stumbled, or at the least have had questions about all of this. For this reason, it's important that you fully understand these issues of the past.

9. And to you, our FGAs: I am sure that a number of you carry some burdens of remorse over things that occurred in the past. Some of you may have found out at some point that unbeknownst to you, your child was exposed to sexually inappropriate behavior when someone had taken advantage of the overly sexualized climate of the time. Some of you may have participated in actions that were encouraged or sanctioned by Dad's Letters, and discovered further down the line that you had unintentionally hurt others. Or perhaps something happened to someone you knew that you didn't agree with, but you didn't feel you had a means to take

Please note that for the purpose of this GN, the term "minors" specifically refers to those under 16. Although our current rules in the Family don't allow those over 21 to interact sexually with 16- and 17-year-olds, these GNs address periods of the Family's history when age allowances differed. For simplicity's sake, "minors" will refer to those under 16 in this series of GNs.

action, since the door had been opened to such interaction. You probably feel that these things would not have occurred had the climate of the time not been permissive of such actions, and had Dad not given allowance for them. And you're right. Mama and I are very sorry for any burdens you may be carrying. Our prayer is that through these GNs all of the Family, both SGAs and FGAs, can come to a greater understanding of how the Lord views this time period, and find full healing and closure. We'll address the steps to healing in the third GN in this series.

10. In the first section of this GN, I want to explain the background on how our current rules and guidelines for the protection of minors evolved. You'll see that this was a process that took place over a number of years. Remember, we were a brand-new nation building our own "constitution" from scratch, and we were determined to find God's way and code of ethics. This was a process that took prayer, discussion, researching the Word, and meetings with field leadership, all of which represented a great deal of time and eventually resulted in the Charter. The Lord certainly blessed this investment of time, and it resulted in the solid policies and guidelines that have stood the test of time and official scrutiny for over 15 years as of this writing.

History of our policies to protect minors

11. In early 1986, Faithy and Gary (Paul Papers) were commissioned by Dad to travel through North America to meet with current and former Family members. Their trip was dubbed a "Searchers'" mission (see ML #2097), as many living in North America were discouraged and drifting away from full-time service to the Lord. Faithy and Gary's commission was to love and encourage all whom they met, and to lead as many former members as wished to return to the Family, back to full-time service for the Lord.

12. During their visit, Gary and Faithy reported that many of the teenage and preteen children of Family members had expressed a deep desire for more Family fellowship and training. Consequently, Mama suggested that a special series of meetings be held in Mexico for the teens during their summer vacation. This became the Family's first-ever youth camp, the Mexico Teen Training Camp (TTC), which lasted for two months, and brought together approximately 110 teens from all over North and South America. It was the first of a series of TTCs that were later held in other areas around the world.

13. In order to get to know the attendees and to better understand the needs of our teens, which was a new age group in the Family that we had very little experience with, a questionnaire was drawn up to help them to express their questions, problems, goals and wishes. Some of the questions inquired about their boy/girl relationships, and asked if they had any questions or wanted to make any comments regarding sexual matters. In response to this point, some teens shared their hearts about sexual experiences they had had with adults, which they regretted or considered unpleasant.

14. After reading these questionnaires, Dad and Mama were saddened and dismayed to hear that some young people had been hurt, and Mama had an urgent internal notice sent out to the Family, making it clear that sexual contact between adults and minors was not permitted. This notice went out to the Family in November 1986 and brought to the Family's attention their concerns regarding the well-being of Family young people, and the importance of protecting our minors. It explained that some teens had experienced sexual interaction with adults that had affected them negatively. The announcement concluded that, in order to protect Family minors from inappropriate sexual behavior, adults should refrain from sexual involvement with minors.

15. In December 1988, in response to a widely broadcast news program in the U.S., accusing the Family of child abuse, WS issued an official statement entitled “Child Abuse?!” in which our policy prohibiting all sexual contact between minors and adults was stated and spelled out for the general public. In this statement, Dad also officially renounced any Family publications which could be construed as promoting or condoning any such contact:

We do not approve of sex with minors, and hereby renounce any writings of anyone in our Family which may seem to do so! We absolutely forbid it!

16. In June 1989*, Mama officially announced to the Family that anyone found guilty of sexual interaction of any kind with a minor would be excommunicated from the Family, in a Letter entitled, “Child Abuse—A Final Warning!”:

We’ve already put out an urgent notice to the Family and to the whole world that we don’t do such things, and we mean it, we don’t do it!—And anybody who does is in serious trouble, not only with the world but with us!

So if we hear of anybody who violates these rules, we’re going to immediately excommunicate them! Any such involvement with minors is definitely against our rules!

So let me warn you again, if we or our leadership hear of any cases of this, and the cases are authenticated, it’s going to result in automatic immediate excommunication of any such offenders! (ML #2536:10,12,15, Vol. 19; 1989.)

(*Please note that in a couple of Letters [ML #3016, ML #3307] it states that infractions of

our policy to protect minors became excommunicable in 1988. Although excommunication for infraction of these policies began to be used by leadership as early as 1986, there was not an official policy published for the Family until June 1989. Therefore, we have decided to tag June 1989 as the date in which this offense officially became excommunicable, in line with statements made in our publications.)

17. In 1989, it became clear to Dad that the Family needed a detailed outline of Family rules and requirements, and the Lord led him to publish a concise list of rules for Family disciples (then known as D.O.—Disciples Only). Dad made it clear that only those who were obedient to Family rules could receive Family pubs or be disciples, and referred to this as a tightening up of the Family. This Letter, “D.O. is for Doers of the Word,” codified for the first time the fundamental requirements for discipleship, as well as rules and offenses for which one could receive a disciplinary measure, ranging from Babes Status (similar to today’s probationary status) to excommunication from the Family. Sexual interaction with minors was one of the excommunicable offenses listed:

“Whoso shall offend one of these little ones!”

We want to reiterate that the “Child Abuse” tract [*published in 1988*] was not only our official statement to the System but also our official statement to any Family members, part-time or otherwise, that any such practice is strictly forbidden within our group, and anyone found guilty of such will be automatically and immediately excommunicated—totally severed from receiving any literature or from having any contact with the Family whatsoever! (**Right!—D.**) (LNF 121:10, July 1989) (ML #2531:14, Vol. 19.)

18. In October 1989, in referring to interaction between adults and teens, Mama pointed out that sex with minors was not only disallowed, but it was wrong:

There's nothing wrong with fighting against giving in to sexual desires if in some particular situation they're wrong. Let's face it, sex is not something that's always good, clear across the board. Just because we promote sex and we believe God made it and that it's His wonderful creation doesn't mean that it's always good under every circumstance! "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient or edifying!"—1 Corinthians 10:23.

There are times when sex is not good! And you men just have to realize and be "fully persuaded in your own minds" (Romans 14:5) that one time when it's definitely not good is when it involves a minor! We've already made that pretty clear by telling you you'll be excommunicated if you indulge in it (ML #2590:6,7, Vol. 19; 1989).

19. Lastly, this policy was stated officially in the Family's "Position and Policy Statement Concerning Attitudes, Conduct, Current Beliefs and Teachings Regarding Sex," first published in April of 1992:

Although the laws in many countries do allow adults to have relationships with teens of legal age, communities in our fellowships strictly disallow it. Our membership has unanimously agreed to respect a total ban within our communities on any and all sexual contact between adults (defined as anyone 21 years of age and over) and anyone under 21 years of age, under penalty of excommunication if not respected. Teens are also expected to refrain from engaging in any form of sexually enticing activities or

behaviour specifically aimed at provoking a sexual response in an adult. Normal warmth and affection may be shown between an adult and a teen, but it may not cross from a social exchange into an overtly sexual expression.

We are diametrically opposed to any form of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of children whatsoever, and all our membership are resolute in their agreement to abide by and support this position under penalty of excommunication from our fellowship.

20. As you know, in the early 1990s the Family faced a number of police raids and court cases in Australia, France, Spain, and Argentina. These raids were instigated by a small number of hostile former members, working in conjunction with anti-cult groups, to pressure officials to take action against Family members. These apostates presented unpurged literature and old dance videos to officials and the media, alleging that children in the Family were at risk and being mistreated.

21. During the course of the investigations of the courts, over 600 Family children underwent extensive psychological and physical examinations and evaluations, in many cases under traumatic conditions. The courts looked for any signs of abuse, whether mental, physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, as a result of their upbringing in the Family. In each of these cases, the courts concluded that there was no trace of abuse in any of the children examined and that there was no need for further intervention of the court, or for removing the children from the Family or our communal structure. The children were returned to their parents, and their parents' right to raise their children in a religious group according to their beliefs was upheld.

22. These rulings clearly showed that the policies and guidelines that were enforced in the mid-1980s were adhered to, and the fruit

of these policies was evident in the clean bill of health given to the Family children examined by the courts. Our children were found to be healthy, both physically and emotionally, up to par educationally, and free from any sort of abuse or mistreatment. These court findings serve as irrefutable evidence of how seriously the Family took its responsibility to implement the policies to protect our children, and how successful these policies have been.

The raids had one positive effect from the members' perspective in that a large representative sample of the Family's children and teenagers had been examined by government-appointed physicians and psychologists. Where one might have expected the authorities to discover a minimal level of physical or sexual abuse similar to that in the larger society, they actually found no evidence of any kind in any of the several countries where action had been taken. (*Dr. J. Gordon Melton, 1997.*)

23. If such intrusive raids were performed at random on average System households in different countries around the world, and 600 children were examined, the findings, according to government statistics, would have been quite different:

- In the United States, child abuse has been rated a national epidemic, with estimates ranging as high as one in six children having suffered sexual abuse. In the United States **there are nearly 3 million reports of child abuse made annually.** In 2003, there were 906,000 child abuse convictions. The rate of child abuse is estimated to be 3 times greater than is reported. (“Statistics

from the Administration for Children & Families of the US Department of Health & Human Services—Child Maltreatment Report 2003.”)

- In Japan, out of 350 women students surveyed, 68 percent had been sexually abused during childhood.
- In April 1997, a survey in the Ukraine revealed that every fifth or sixth child of both sexes under 18 suffers from sexual harassment. (U.S. Department of State: “Ukraine Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997.”)

24. These statistics show how rampant child abuse is in the world, and how blessed we are to bring our children up in a safe environment.

Summary

25. In the early to mid-1980s some Family minors were exposed to sexual experiences with adults. During the Mexico TTC in 1986, some of the teens present shared their hearts about their experiences, and expressed mixed or negative feelings towards them. Dad and Mama were deeply concerned for the young people and their well-being, and after hearing these reports, Mama had an urgent notice sent out to the Family in November 1986, which Dad heartily endorsed, making it clear that such interaction should not be permitted, and had not borne good fruit in the lives of those who had been exposed to it. Subsequent notices in December 1988 and June 1989 reaffirmed our stance disallowing sexual interaction between adults and minors or teenagers of any age, even those of legal age to do so. In June 1989, it was officially announced that infractions of this policy would result in excommunication. These policies were later restated in our official Family Policy Statements in April 1992, and again in the Charter, which was first published in 1995.

26. The strict adherence to these policies is evidenced in the 600+ Family children that were subjected to government-enforced examinations in the early 1990s in several countries. Our children were found to be healthy, both physically and emotionally, up to par educationally, and free from any sort of abuse or mistreatment. These court findings serve as irrefutable evidence of how seriously the Family took its responsibility to implement the policies to protect our children, and how successful these policies have been.

Pubs Purge

27. As I explained in the previous section, in December 1988 Dad officially renounced any writings published by the Family which would seem to approve of sexual interaction between adults and minors. This was followed up with what became known as the “Pubs Purge,” in which questionable quotes, pubs, books or drawings were officially removed from circulation. WS systematically reviewed Family publications one by one, and marked out portions that were not in line with our stance or that were questionable in any way. Advisories listing the questionable material to be removed from circulation were sent to the Homes—one in June 1991 and another in March 1994.

28. In order to maintain their membership status, Homes were required to expurgate* the questionable pubs, following the instructions in the WS Pubs Purge Advisories. This ranged from whiting out sentences, to removing pages, to adding bikinis to topless pictures, and in a few cases, to destroying entire books, such as the FFing volume and *Heaven's Girl*.

**Expurgate: edit something by removing offensive parts: to remove words or passages considered offensive or unsuitable from a book. (Courtesy of Microsoft Encarta Reference Library)*

In the early 1990s, the Family leadership, with Maria's approval, “purged the literature” of a large number of Mo Letters that contained material and teachings that were no longer acceptable, along with drawings that were considered inappropriate because of their sexual content. This purge included material on, for example, flirty fishing and some questionable statements about sexual behavior. Even earlier, in 1989, the Davidito book was dropped from the canon of Family literature. The effect of this was to remove the materials from all Family Homes, make them inaccessible to Family members for review, and eliminate them as resources in developing the Family's contemporary perspective.

The process of systematically reviewing the large amount of literature began as early as 1989 and continued through 1994. Additional purging has occurred periodically to the present. While these materials are relevant to understanding the Family in the 1980s, they no longer reflect its teachings and beliefs. (*Dr. J. Gordon Melton.*)

29. Dad and Mama didn't just eradicate any publications that could be construed as condoning sex with minors, but they also officially renounced them. We reaffirmed this stance in the first edition of our statement, “Attitudes, Conduct, Current Beliefs and Teachings Regarding Sex” in April 1992:

Any and all previous writings, philosophic and theological speculations, or individual opinions of members taken contrary to this position or that in any way could be construed as lending credence, support or

justification for any form of sexual touching of children, have been officially categorically renounced and forbidden, and all printed materials deemed objectionable have been ordered by our founder, Father David, to be removed from use and destroyed.

30. Mama explained this in more detail in “An Answer to Him That Asketh Us”:

Dad’s 1988 Renouncement of any Lit that Condoned Sex with Minors

In 1988 in our statement entitled “Child Abuse?!” Dad wrote, “We do not approve of sex with minors, and hereby renounce any writings of anyone in our Family which may seem to do so! We absolutely forbid it!” Let’s take a closer look at this statement:

First let’s start with, “We do not approve of sex with minors.” The definition of “approve” is “to consider right or good; think or speak favorably of.” A second definition is “to consent to, officially or formally; to confirm or sanction.” So this first part of Dad’s sentence is in effect saying, “We do not consider it right or good, we do not think or speak favorably of, we do not officially or formally consent to, nor confirm, nor sanction sex with minors.”

Okay, let’s examine the next part of the sentence, which reads, “and hereby renounce any writings of anyone in our Family which may seem to do so.” The definition of “hereby” is “from this fact or circumstance; as a result of this.” The definition of “renounce” is “to reject; disown; to abandon or give up (a belief or opinion) by open profession.” The next word, “any,” means “without limitation as to which, and thus every one of them.” The definition of “seem” is “to appear to be.” So this second part of the sentence is saying, “As a result of the fact that we do not approve of sex

with minors, I reject, disown, abandon and give up by open profession every single writing of any person in the Family which may appear to approve of it.”

The last sentence says, “We absolutely forbid it!” The word “absolutely” is defined as “without condition or limitation; unconditionally, unreservedly.” The definition of “forbid” is, “to command a person or persons not to do, have, use, or indulge in something.” So this sentence says, “Without condition or limitation, we command Family members not to indulge in sex with minors.”

When you put it all together it states: “We do not consider it right or good, we do not think or speak favorably of, nor do we officially [or unofficially] consent to, confirm or sanction sex with minors. As a result of this fact, I reject, disown, abandon and give up by open profession every single writing of any person in the Family which may appear to approve of it. Without condition or limitation, we command the Family not to indulge in sex with minors.”

I don’t think that Dad could have made it any more clear than that! And then to back it up, he made it an excommunicable offense, and it very explicitly remains so in the Charter. Based on his renunciation of such Family literature, he approved of our lit purges, which expunged all such literature, no matter who it was written by, including his own. So, folks, you can see that Dad was quite determined to not only stop any and all sexual activity between adults and minors, he also wanted all lit destroyed which in any way alluded to it (ML #3016:22–27, Vol. 22; 1995).

31. In “None of These Things Move Me,” Mama further addressed this issue: “Dad renounced all literature, including his own, that indicated in any way that sexual activity with

minors was permissible. Based on his renunciation of such Family literature, he approved our lit purges, which expunged all such literature, no matter who it was written by, including his own. Dad didn't just renounce his old writings; he had them destroyed" (ML #3307:83, Vol. 28; 2000).

32. I want to further clarify that not only was such literature renounced, but any literature that indicated in any way that sexual activity with minors was permissible should never have been published. For this reason these publications were not only removed from circulation, but renounced, and we continue to stand by that. These Family publications were expurgated from 1990 to 1994, and the purged portions are not part of our theology and beliefs.

33. Some of our former members have attempted to use excerpts of these dated and renounced publications to not only paint our past in a negative light, but also to lead the media, the public, and officials to believe that these quotes or publications reflect our current theology and lifestyle. As you know, that is not the case. The majority of people in the Family today have never read the pubs that were purged, and these have no bearing on their lives or service for the Lord.

34. It can be quite disconcerting, though, or even unsettling, to be presented with a quotation from renounced literature that you're unfamiliar with. One of the reasons for this is that you don't have a context or a point of reference for what you're reading or hearing. The Family has changed a lot in twenty years, and the fact that most of our young people don't have a context to be able to relate to the purged pubs is proof that the Family has left the past far behind. The ideology or degree of liberality reflected in these quotes and drawings, renounced by Dad in 1988, has no part or acceptance in the Family of the past 19 years.

35. I hope that the outline of our sexual history in the first GN of this series helped to provide somewhat of a context, so that you can better understand how these issues played out from 1978–1986. But having said that, I want to clarify once again that we don't stand by or justify these pubs—we have renounced them. We've destroyed them and they don't exist in any of our Family Homes, and haven't for many years. You shouldn't feel that you have to justify them, explain them, or answer for them. You don't. So if you're presented with alleged purged pubs, first of all, bear in mind that you can't be sure that what you're being shown is actually what was written, as you don't have access to the originals. Secondly, even if they are authentic, chances are you've never read or seen them before, and they certainly have no bearing on life in the Family for the past 19 years. As I mentioned earlier, the purged portions are not part of our theology and beliefs. And lastly, the Family has renounced this literature, Dad renounced it, and we hereby acknowledge that it was wrong to have ever published literature that in any way indicated that sexual interaction with minors was permissible.

To further provide a context, perhaps it would help to know what the "real" percentages are for the subject matter of Dad's writings.

Although a number of them do focus on sex or refer to it, in the final analysis, it's not a high percentage.

Dad's Letters can be arranged into twelve basic categories, according to the main theme of each. Following is a list indicating what percentage of his Letters fall into these different categories:

15% Inspirational and Bible studies

14% Endtime, Heaven and eschatology

- 13% Dreams, prayers, prophecies and the spirit world
- 11% Spiritual life, counseling, correction and advice
- 9% Current affairs and economics
- 9% Administration, leadership and organization
- 6% Family missions, outreach and witnessing
- 6% Childcare, children and education
- 5% Discipleship, family life and persecution
- 5% Practical instruction, health, and finances
- 5% Sex, nudity and FFing
- 2% General interest: Jews, Arabs, other religions

Summary

36. After Dad renounced all literature that could be construed as sanctioning sex with minors in 1988, WS undertook the task of reviewing all Family pubs and marking portions to be expurgated. The Family was required to go through their libraries and expurgate the pubs as per the advisories sent to the Homes, a process known as the “Pubs Purge.” These took place from 1991 to 1994. Not only was such literature removed from circulation and destroyed, but it was officially and categorically renounced and has no part in Family doctrines or beliefs. Furthermore, literature of this nature should never have been published. As such, we do not stand by or justify any literature that was removed from circulation. Most current Family members were probably never exposed to this literature, and it has no bearing on the Family of the past 19 years, or the Family of today.

37. (Question:) I’ve heard that some of the purged pubs also talked about other sexual

issues, such as incest and male homosexuality, and that Dad promoted these.

38. As I explained in the last GN, during the period from 1978–1986, Dad wrote literature that challenged traditional boundaries and barriers on a number of sexually related issues. During that time, he did speculate as to whether what is today termed as “incest” and used to broadly refer to any sort of sexual interaction with a relative, no matter how distant, was inherently and scripturally wrong. Of course, moral taboos and social restrictions placed on sexual relations with relatives have changed over the centuries. In past eras, it was common for first cousins to marry, and it is still common in some parts of the world. In early Bible history, there were also examples of marriages between close blood relatives, such as Abraham and Sarah, who were half-brother and sister. However, the theological debate on this issue was laid to rest, and Dad’s earlier comments on the issue affirming that such interaction fell within the boundaries of the Law of Love were renounced.

39. In April 1992, when the Statement regarding our beliefs on sex was published, a clear and strong position was articulated, which has been our official stance since that time:

We in no way condone or promote any form of incestuous sexual relationships whatsoever among our membership. Any and all theological speculations or writings that would in any way seem to imply or appear to be contrary to this position, we do not recognize as being in any way, shape or form our policy or a license to engage in any such relationships.

40. Despite the fact that Dad himself was very opposed to male homosexuality and had been brought up with the understanding that it was absolutely unacceptable, he put aside

his personal opinions on the matter to explore whether any degree of male with male sexual interaction would be permissible under the Law of Love. Mama explained Dad's exploration of this issue in the past:

It was during this period that Dad wrote Letters which removed other barriers as well. He explored the possibility that a mild degree of male with male sexual activity, i.e. masturbation, between adult men could be allowed under the Law of Love, as he explained in the Letter "Homos" (ML #719, *published in early 1978*). In a few cases some Family men entered into such activity. When Dad saw that the fruit of such freedom was not good he rescinded that freedom (ML #792:48–52, *published in December 1978*). The Letter "Homos" has since been withdrawn.

It was also during this time that lit was published that challenged the barriers between adult/minor sexual contact, opening the door to some members crossing over that barrier. As mentioned earlier, all such lit was eventually renounced by Dad and withdrawn from our Homes. If we had known then what we know now, we would not have published this material (ML #3016:50,51, Vol. 22; 1995).

Mama's Role in the Implementation of Child Protection Policies

41. By the late 1980s, Mama's role became more defined in creating and promoting the organization of programs to help train our teens, and publishing childcare Letters and publications to help the Family better care for our children, such as "Raise 'em Right" and a number of milestone Letters about communicating with and understanding children, such as "Love is the Answer" (ML #1396), "Let'm Ask" (ML #2650), "Let'm Explain" (ML #2652), etc. If you have the time to reread some

of the many Letters Mama wrote at that time, you'll see how the Lord anointed her to teach the Family how to love, how to communicate, how to understand each other and our children, how to work with others harmoniously, and how to love others with the Lord's love.

42. When the Family first began, Dad was at the pinnacle of leadership and was quite involved in just about everything that made the Family tick. Most of us who joined in the early years were raw recruits, fresh off the streets, with little or no experience in witnessing, missionary work, organization, the running of a large communal center, or administration. It fell to Dad to teach us everything from how to witness and teach the Word, to how to keep our Homes financially solvent, how to take care of our health, cars, and houses, and any number of details that were necessary for our missionary work and our communal lifestyle. Dad also had to tune in to the production of literature, posters, tapes and videos for distribution to the public. He had to teach us about the Endtime and prepare us for our role in it. He also had to give us the vision, as parents, for the important role that you, our children, would play within the Family, and help us to see the importance of investing in you, training you, and preparing you for your future role.

43. As you can see, Dad carried an enormous load, and much of it fell squarely on his shoulders. Mama worked first as his secretary, and over time, as his counselor. As Dad got older, he began to gradually give Mama and me the reins of leadership, to where we had an active role in the formulating of policy and decisions regarding the organization of the leadership structure on the field, and the focus of the Homes. Prior to that, Dad was the one who had the say on all such matters, and his word was final. In the late 1980s, Mama began to write more Letters for the Family and for Family leadership. By that time, Dad had given her the authority to work toward bringing about change in the Family, and

she was particularly concerned about helping the Family to focus on practical ways to improve the care and training of children and young people, which Dad very much approved of.

44. To this end, in 1991, she published “The Discipleship Training Revolution” (DTR), which was addressed to the JETTs and teens of the time:

You see, we really started praying about this and asking the Lord for some direction, because we love each one of you very much and are very concerned about you. We want to see you all have the changes in your life that you need. We want to do all we can to help you learn and grow and progress and be challenged and become strong soldiers for the Lord. We want you to be happy and fulfilled, so you can do your best for Jesus!

Improving the care of all our JETTs and Teens is a big project to tackle, and we began to see that in order to do that, we'd have to make a lot of changes in our Homes' schedules and priorities and ways of operating (ML #2677:23,24, Vol. 19; 1991).

45. The DTR was a monumental revolution in the Family, as our Homes refocused their time, schedules and priorities around the needs of the young people. The program was the Lord's plan for that day and it brought about many important changes to the Family, as well as a lot more organization, training and method to our Homes. A number of lessons were learned about the needs and training of Family teens that led us along the road of progress and improvement.

46. Mama also played a crucial role in the implementation of child protection policies, with Dad's wholehearted approval and support, and was deeply concerned about the well-being, safety and happiness of Family

young people. Justice Ward, the judge ruling in Pearl's custody case in England (more detail on this court case below), rightly credited Mama with an integral role in the building of safeguards for Family children and instituting needed policies to protect them from abusive treatment of any kind. Both Mama and I remain committed to the well-being of Family children and young people, and to doing everything we can to ensure that the Family is not only a safe place for its children, but a happy and a blessed place. Our goal is that the Family can continue to grow and improve the quality of life and upbringing of the children the Lord blesses us with. We pray that this is an important goal and priority of your Home as well.

Conclusions of Justice Ward in British custody case

In 1995, after three years of studying former and current member testimony in a British custody case, Justice Ward issued a lengthy ruling in which he leveled harsh criticisms of past eras of the Family's history, while also concluding that the Family had undergone numerous positive changes. In his closing remarks he stated that he was satisfied that the Family provided a safe environment for children raised within the group, and the court consequently awarded the mother, a member of the Family, care and control of her infant child. He stated,

“The Family are and will remain a minority religious movement whose way of life will not appeal to the majority of the communities in which they live. Their children will live a different life. It is however in my judgement not a life beyond the pale. Within the limits of tolerance which make ours a free

society Family life no longer presents such risks of harm.... By harm I mean sexual abuse or any form of ill treatment or any impairment of health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioral development, in the colour coding of harm.

“I am now totally satisfied that The Family, I would think at Maria’s prompting, has since 1986 made determined and sustained efforts to stamp out child sexual abuse and to prevent any inappropriate contact between adults and children, whether young children or teenage children. I have no evidence that child abuse is presently prevalent any more within The Family than outside of it.” (W 42 1992 In the High Court of Justice Family Division Principal Registry in the Matter of ST (a minor) ND in the matter of the Supreme Court Act 1991.)

Sexual Contact Between Minors

47. Now that we’ve reviewed the background on how our child protection policies came into being, I’m going to review the background on our rules governing sex between minors, which also became defined during the same period of time.

48. In Letters published in the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, Dad questioned whether modern practices of preventing and discouraging young teenagers and children from exploring their sexuality were in line with the Bible. His conclusion on the matter at the time was that sexual exploration and interaction between minors, including children, need not be discouraged or condemned, but should be treated as something natural.

49. In the late 1970s, Dad wrote a Letter entitled “Child Brides,” in which he ques-

tioned why young teens should be prevented from marrying, as is the custom and law in many countries today. This did not become a widespread practice in the Family, and few underage teen marriages occurred. This Letter was later removed from circulation during the pubs purge, but the discussion regarding teen marriages continued.

(Dad:) You notice how the marriage age used to be pretty low in the old days and the rules weren’t so tight.—Because parents were better and teenagers were better and were taught responsibility. Families were bigger and the teenage girls by that time had a lot of family experience at taking care of children and learning how to cook and keep house with their mothers and taking care of their little brothers and sisters, so they could be trusted to get married and have homes and children of their own. (ML #2061:38, Vol. 16; 1985).

Historically and Statistically

In Ancient Rome, people didn’t marry because they were in love. Folks married to carry on the family bloodline and for economical or political reasons. Women were under the jurisdiction of their fathers, so young girls were often married off when they were between the ages of twelve and fourteen. Some young men married at the age of fourteen also.

[In Europe] during the Middle Ages, the practice of youthful marriages continued, and women married as early as fourteen. Men generally waited until they were more established in life, which was usually when they were in their twenties or early thirties. In 1371, due to the plague, the average

age at marriage for men was 24, and for women it was 16. By 1427, the average male of all classes did not wed till he was in his mid-30's, usually choosing a bride about half his age.

It is obvious from a historical perspective that marriages of teenagers (at least teenage girls) were quite common. However, that trend has changed in most countries of the world. Today, young love is neither encouraged or readily accepted by society. Why are so many people against young married love? Because it is believed that more than half who marry in their teens will be divorced within 15 years. That is a pretty sobering statistic.

Additionally, according to the Center for Law and Social Policy, "Compared to girls who marry later, teenage brides have less schooling, less independence, and less experience of life and work." Teen brides are also at more risk for being abused and living at poverty levels.

There is another side to the story of teen marriage, though. That is the number of success stories that married teens share.

(Written by Sheri and Bob Stritof, a longtime, happily married couple who teach workshops and give lectures dealing with marriage issues. Sheri and Bob are the authors of *The Everything Great Marriage Book*, which was published in October of 2003 by Adams Media.)

50. As I mentioned earlier, the period from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s was when Dad wrote most of the literature that challenged traditional concepts regarding sex. Different

discussions and concepts were published during that time regarding the sexual interaction of minors with one another, based on the premise that if sex is pure and natural, children should be allowed to be natural about it and explore it without reproach.

On childhood sexuality, Berg reiterated what he had said earlier. Children should be taught that their bodies are beautiful creations of God and that sexual functions and feelings are as normal as eating. He added in no uncertain terms that "our bodies in no respect must ever be abused or misused or overused, or exposed or used in such a way as to offend or hurt others." Behavior that was allowed or even encouraged included mixed nude bathing, mixed nude play, sexual self-examination, and experimentation when playing or sleeping together. If a child happened to see adults engaging in sexual intercourse, this should be no cause for particular concern, he wrote, but that each situation should be handled on its own merits according to the parents' comfort level and the individual child's reaction.

Very much in line with the instructions on childhood sexuality were passing references to it in the otherwise lengthy treatment of child-raising issues contained in *The Story of Davidito* (1982), a book about a Jesus baby—an infant born to Maria as a result of her flirty fishing. (*Dr. J. Gordon Melton, 1997.*)

51. As more of our children became teenagers and we began to gain experience in raising them, it became apparent that many of our teens

were not prepared to cope with the battery of complex emotions and responsibilities which invariably accompany sexual and marital relationships. With the introduction of the "School Vision" in November of 1987, and the creation of organized Family schools with large groups of teens, it became increasingly evident that a stricter, more clearly defined code of sexual conduct for teenagers was needed. In June 1988 Dad published new guidelines in a Letter entitled "Make It Work," limiting sexual activity between teenagers to those intending to marry. He wrote:

We need a program for teenage marriages! We need a program of training for husbands—I like that term, believe it or not—and wives—we haven't abandoned that term either!...

As far as I'm concerned, God's plan still holds, and is the only solution, and it's mapped out right in the Bible as clear as can be! One simple set of rules is right there in 1 Corinthians 7. "Better to marry than to burn, to avoid fornication let them marry!"—1 Corinthians 7:2,9... .

And I want to tell you right now, I want to set myself on record in black-and-white right now, that I am not in favour of teenage promiscuity, sexual freedom, but I am in favour of encouraging marriages!—Did you hear that? Marriages!—Fatherhood, motherhood, babyhood, loyalty, faithfulness of mates, responsibility, duty, obligation!—Just as much as the System is, if not more!

Help us to develop a program that doesn't just encourage teenage sex, but encourages teenage marriage and legitimate sex within the confines of faithful, loyal matehood and marriage, in Jesus' name! (ML #2433:25,26,28,33, Vol. 18; June 1988.)

52. A policy was put forth in this Letter to allow teens who would like to get married

to begin a three- to six-month engagement period, known as a "Make it Work" plan.

(Dad:) When a teen couple decides that they would like to get married, they could even start "going steady."—In other words, start seriously working together, having their Get-Out together, Word time together, etc. Back in the early Letters I strongly advocated this, that prospective couples learn to be real friends and co-workers before even considering marriage! I used to recommend that they work very closely together for at least 3–6 months before marrying!—That way they can make sure it's real love, the Lord's will and good for His work! (See MLs #58:14,15; 154:65–69; 1566:130.) (ML #2433:109, Vol. 18; 1998.)

53. In September 1989, the guidelines for sexual fellowship and marriage of young people were further clarified in the Letter "Teen Marriage Rules!—More on How to Make It Work!" These rules required that teens wishing to "go steady" had to first apply to their Home shepherds and begin a six-month trial period. At the end of this period, they could then apply to get "betrothed," providing they were both at least 16 years of age. The area shepherds and parents had to approve of the prospective marriage (at least a 2/3 majority). (See ML #2589, Vol. 19.)

54. More detailed guidelines concerning sexual relationships for young people were established and presented to the Family in 1991. These disallowed any dating between JETTs (preteens, 11- to 13-year-olds at the time). Junior teens (ages 14–15) could begin a marriage prep course, and begin a "Make It Work" program three months before turning 16. Senior teens (ages 16–17) were allowed to date the person they were engaged to, three months after starting their engagement. YAs (ages 18–20,

then called EAs, or Experimental Adults) could date within their age group only, with approval from the Home teamwork. Those 21 and over were full-fledged adults. (See LNF 145, GN 475, 8/91.)

55. As you can see, from the time our first children moved into adolescence in the early 1980s, policies developed regarding sexual interaction with each other, and were modified and defined over time until the publishing of the Charter. At that time, clear policies were restated. There have been a few changes since then, leading up to the formation of our current policies as articulated in the Charter:

E. For teens 16 and 17, sexual interaction is permitted only with consenting 16- to 20-year-olds.

1. 16- and 17-year-olds may not engage in sexual intercourse unless they have first counseled with and received permission from their resident parents to do so. This permission is required regardless of whether the young people involved choose to use some form of protection.

2. Even if permission to have sexual intercourse has been granted by the parents of a 16- or 17-year-old, the teens having sex must still agree together before beginning any sexual activity as to whether they will have sexual intercourse or not. If the teens haven't talked about it ahead of time, then it should be clearly understood by both partners that they will not have sexual intercourse or any sexual activity that could result in pregnancy.

F. For junior teens (14 and 15), dating with other teens ages 14 through 17 will be governed by the junior teens' parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

However, sexual intercourse or skin to skin touching of genitals is not permitted either by or with those under the age of 16. Teens 14 and 15 are not permitted to date or have any sexual activity with anyone over the age of 17.

G. For those under the age of 14 dating is at the parents' discretion, but only nonsexual affection is allowed. (Sex and Affection Rules, The Charter)

Summary

56. In the late '70s and early '80s, a period when Dad wrote and speculated on traditional taboos toward sex, he concluded that children and teenagers should be allowed to explore their own sexuality without condemnation. He also contended that children and teenagers should be permitted to interact sexually with one another naturally. By the late '80s, policies were developed altogether disallowing sexual interaction between those under 16. Dad also wrote about teen marriages, and eventually concluded that teens shouldn't be permitted to marry until they were 16. Sexual interaction between teens was limited to those engaged to be married. Policies were developed over time, marking clear age boundaries on sexual interaction, and limiting it to senior teens (16- to 17-year-olds), who are able to interact sexually with those ages 16 to 20.

Sex Involving Minors and the Law of Love

57. We've explained that in the early 1980s Dad had presented the possibility of adult sexual interaction with minors as an extension of the Law of Love, and that such interaction should never have been permitted, and was subsequently banned and deemed an excommunicable offense. Let's review the conditions given in the original Law of Love Letter,

to gain a better understanding as to why such interaction could not have fallen under the Law of Love.

58. As mentioned previously, for the purpose of these GNs, we have chosen to use the broad term “minors” to refer to anyone under 16. In some ways, this can be problematic, as in a number of countries and cultures, both in the developed and developing world, a 14- or a 15-year-old is legally able to engage in sexual relations. As such, it's debatable whether it would be considered universally wrong or morally reprehensible for a 14- or 15-year-old to have a sexual relationship with someone older, since different countries hold to different moral and legal standards, and there is not a clear consensus on this. Thus, grouping both teens and children together as minors is not ideal. We have chosen to refer to those under 16 as minors because in the majority of countries in the world, 16 is a more widely accepted age for teens to interact freely with those older than themselves. Please bear in mind as you read these GNs that although we've chosen to group all minors in the same category, there is a difference between teens and those younger—preteens and children. Although we don't generally make the distinction throughout this series, it is nevertheless an important distinction to make.

59. When Dad first introduced the Lord's revelation of the Law of Love, there were a number of clearly articulated boundaries and provisos that were attached to the practice of the sexual side of the Law of Love:

Any variation from the norm of personal relationships, any substantial change in marital relationships, any projected sexual associations should have the willing consent of all parties concerned or affected, including the approval of leadership and permission of the Body. If this is lacking in any quarter and anyone is going

to be harmed or unduly offended, then your action is not in love nor according to God's law of love!

“Love doeth thy neighbour no harm,” for “thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself”: this is God's law of love! “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” “Against such love there is no law.” This is the Lord's Law of Love. Obey it and you can have total love, life and liberty in the Lord. These are God's conditions (ML #302C:14,15, Vol. 3; 1974).

60. So let's summarize those conditions:

- 1) Must have the willing consent of all parties concerned or affected.
- 2) Must not harm or unduly offend anyone.

61. Dad then asked a number of questions in this Letter, to help us to evaluate whether our sexual sharing met these conditions.

- Are you doing it because you want to unselfishly and sacrificially help someone else who really needs it, and by which you can show them God's love?
- Does it bring forth good fruit—either spiritually or physically or both? “For by their fruits ye shall know them.” Does it bring forth the “fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance”? (Gal.5:22,23.)
- Is it good for you, others, and His Kingdom, and does it bring forth good fruit for all?
- Can you be trusted with it, or will you abuse it and use your liberty as license to do wrongfully and lustfully instead of rightfully and lovingly? Will you use it to heal and help, or harm and hinder? (ML #302C:16,22,23,7, Vol. 3; 1974.)

62. As we examine the conditions laid out for practicing the sexual aspect of the Law of Love, you'll see that these conditions could not be applied to sexual interaction between adults and minors.

- 1) Must have the willing consent of all parties concerned or affected.

63. One of the bedrock principles Dad presented in the original Law of Love Letter was that any sexual interaction must have the willing consent of all parties concerned or affected. The dictionary definition of the word consent is: “compliance in, or approval of, what is done or proposed by another; *legal*: the voluntary agreement or acquiescence by a person of age or with requisite mental capacity who is not under duress or coercion and usually who has knowledge or understanding.” (*Merriam Webster's Dictionary*).

64. In other words, for a person to give their consent to a proposal or action of another, they have to be of an age to be knowledgeable and understanding, and not under pressure.

As I mentioned earlier, a case could be made that teens of a certain age are able to make a knowledgeable decision regarding sexual interaction (and some countries do have a lower age of consent based on that premise)—but the same case cannot be made for the majority of minors.

65. This important condition of giving knowledgeable consent could not be met in sexual interaction between adults and minors.

When Dad encouraged sexual freedoms that would affect or include minors to some degree, he neglected to take into account the fact that a minor in most cases would not be in a position to give consent to enter into sexual interaction, due to a lack of maturity, understanding and experience. There is also usually an unequal relationship between an adult, who is generally in a position of authority over the minor, and

the minor who is expected to respect the elder, which makes it difficult for the minor to freely give or refuse their consent. Of course, once Dad and Mama received reports from teens about negative experiences they had been exposed to, Dad became aware that guidelines for their protection were needed, bearing in mind their vulnerability, and he approved the age guidelines Mama built in to our rules governing sexual activity—in other words, an “age of consent.”

66. The reason governments around the world have instituted “age of consent” laws (developed in the 20th century for the most part) is because they have come to the conclusion that minors (particularly under 16 years of age) are generally not mature enough to make decisions about or give knowledgeable consent to important issues such as leaving home, dropping out of school, certain medical decisions, and, yes, having sex. Minors can make decisions that may seem right to them at the time, due to their limited experience and the volatility of their emotions, which later in life may seem dead wrong to them.

67. For this reason, society in general has set an age of consent, to protect minors from being placed in the position of having to make decisions that they are not knowledgeable enough to make, or don't have the life experience to be able to weigh the outcomes or consequences of that decision. Nor are they necessarily able to predict or foresee possible negative repercussions of decisions or actions, particularly in the sexual realm. These laws are also in place to protect them from being exploited and taken advantage of. This is why parents are responsible for their minor children, as it's generally understood that they are not yet prepared to be fully responsible for their actions, and it's the parents' responsibility to protect them from decisions that would harm themselves or others.

68. In the case of teenagers, governments have tended to limit the sexual interaction

of teens to their peers within their own age range. The reason for this is that it's generally understood that there can exist what is known as an "imbalance of power" between an adult in authority over a minor and that minor. Because of this, a teacher, a pastor, a guidance counselor, or a doctor, for example, are considered to be in a position that makes it more difficult for a minor to refuse when requested to do something, as their relationship is one of obedience and respect to the person. Dad also referred to the sort of imbalance this relationship creates in the Letter "Make it Work" in 1988, condemning the misuse of that position. (ML #2433:43,47, Vol. 18; 1988.)

69. There is an ongoing debate in many cultures regarding what is an appropriate age for minors to become sexually active. The age of consent varies from country to country, and in some countries like the U.S., from state to state. Different cultures consider minors to be able to make responsible decisions regarding sex at different ages. For example, some countries, such as the Netherlands and Canada, have an age of consent as low as 13 and 14. However, in such cases, they generally have laws limiting that sexual interaction to those 3 or 4 years older than themselves. In other words, they box the interaction around teens to a limited age range, which we have also attempted to do in our rules.

70. The average age of consent around the world is between 16 and 18. Our rules governing sexual conduct were crafted in line with what would generally be acceptable in most countries around the world, since we are a multinational society, operating in a diverse array of countries, cultures and legal systems. We therefore set the Family's "age of consent" at 18, with the exception that those who are 16 and 17 can have sex with those up to four years older than themselves (up to 20 years old), similar to the age ranges established in some countries.

Age of Consent: In law, this is the age when persons are considered to be fully bound by their words and deeds. The age of consent varies for different actions. For example, one has the right to consent to marriage at an earlier age than one may legally sign a contract. In most of the U.S. one acquires the legal capacity to conclude a contract at the age of 18. A boy at age 14 and a girl at age 12, however, are capable of matrimonial consent under common law, but again U.S. state statutes differ on the age of consent. The age at which a female is held capable of consenting to sexual intercourse has generally been raised in the U.S. to as high as 18. Persons under the age of consent are said to be minors.

Social (and the resulting legal) attitudes toward the appropriate age of consent have drifted upwards in modern times; while ages from 10 to 13 were typically acceptable in the mid-Nineteenth Century, 15 to 18 had become the norm in many countries by the end of the Twentieth Century.

The general moral philosophy behind age of consent laws is the assumed need for the protection of minors. It is a common belief in many societies that minors below a certain age lack the maturity and/or life experience to fully understand the ramifications of engaging in sexual acts. These fears may include but are not limited to resulting pregnancies and psychological or physical damage. There is an ongoing debate in many cultures regarding child sexuality as it relates to age and an appropriate age of consent. It is these debates that have informed the various laws in different jurisdictions and account for their disparity. Different cultures regard minors engaging in sexual activity as anything from normal to deviant behavior in need of correction. (Excerpts from *Encarta Encyclopedia* and "The Age of Consent: Young People, Sexuality and Citizenship" by Matthew Waites, 2005.)

71. The second condition Dad and the Lord laid out for practicing the Law of Love is:

2) Must not harm or unduly offend anyone.

72. In some cases where teenagers had sexual interaction with adults, they felt that the experience was a positive one for them, and they look back on that experience as something that benefited them in some way; in their situation, their experience seemed to fulfill the original conditions of the Law of Love.

73. But on the other hand, a number of SGAs who had such experiences in their younger years, particularly women, over time have expressed negative feelings toward these. Some agreed to the experience at the time, only to later regret it. Some felt pressured and regretted the experience. Due to the relationship of deference and respect for adults, some felt compelled to partake of an experience that they had mixed or negative feelings about afterwards. Such mixed or negative feelings are not uncommon, as researchers have generally concluded that most teens that have gotten involved in sexual interaction or relationships with adults have not considered them positive experiences in the final analysis.

(Mama:) Furthermore, it's been researched and proven by the experts that in almost every case where an adult got involved with a teen, the relationship failed simply because there are too many differences of interests. Young people have better experiences with other young people. Of course, a lot of young people don't have very good experiences with other young people, but it's been proven that the vast majority of those who tried it definitely didn't have very good experiences with adults! Teens who have had such involvement with adults have almost unanimously manifested a very

negative, regretful or remorseful reaction to such experiences (ML #2536:13, Vol.19, June 1989).

74. Considering that a number of those who experienced such interaction, both current and former members, felt it affected them in a negative way, and some were subjected to harmful or abusive treatment, it's clear that such interaction should never have been contemplated, as it placed children at risk.—And that is a risk that should never be taken with minors, who are not in a position to foresee harm and choose to avoid the risk.

75. Due to this risk of harm, and the fact that minors are generally unable to knowledgeably give consent, adult sexual interaction with minors did not meet the conditions Dad outlined in the Law of Love, and should never have been contemplated or encouraged as an extension of the Law of Love.

76. On this point, Mama said in “An Answer to Him That Asketh Us,”

(Mama:) We've made it quite clear in the Charter that the basis of our beliefs regarding the Law of Love are the above Words of Jesus. [See Matthew 22:37–40.] These Scriptures are the foundation for our Law of Love doctrine, just as they are the basis for all other Christians' faith. We try to apply the Law of Love to all of our actions, and try to show love and kindness in all we do. Of course, unlike most other Christians, we feel that God's Word grants us freedoms in our sexual lives as well.

Within those freedoms we believe that it is acceptable for consenting adults to have sexual fellowship without sin, providing it is done in love and in accordance with what we have laid out in the Charter—principles which were originally given in the Letters. We do not

believe, however, that these freedoms extend to adults having sexual contact with minors, as is evidenced by our rules against it.

The Lord is telling us not to deny the Law of Love, which of course we can't, as to do so would be denying Jesus' words to love our neighbors as ourselves. And I believe He also wants us to make it very clear that the liberties we are granted under the Law of Love do not include sex with minors, that to have sex with minors is wrong (ML #3016:44–46, Vol. 22; 1995).

77. As Mama explained in an earlier Letter, Dad also acknowledged that he was wrong to have introduced the Law of Love without clear boundaries prohibiting sexual contact between adults and minors, and he apologized for this from the spirit world. (See ML #3307:77, Vol. 28; 2000.)

Summary

78. When Dad presented the Lord's revelation of the Law of Love, which allowed us to interact sexually with one another freely, he also laid out specific requirements that had to be in place in order for us to be able to partake of this freedom. These conditions specified that any such sexual interaction had to have the consent of all parties concerned, and offend or cause harm to no one. Adult sexual interaction with minors did not generally fulfill those conditions. Therefore Dad should not have contemplated or encouraged sexual interaction between adults and minors as an extension of the Law of Love. When Dad became aware that some young people were being hurt by such interaction, he and Mama immediately banned all such interaction, and Dad later renounced any literature, including his own, that was not in line with this stance.

Our Theological Stance on Sexual Interaction Involving Minors

79. We've already reviewed how our rules and policies to protect minors developed, and these had been in place long before the persecutions we faced in the early 1990s, or before the Letter "An Answer to Him That Asketh Us" (ML #3016, Vol. 22) was published in 1995.

(Mama:) Let's remember that 14 years ago, in 1986, Dad and I banned all sexual activity between adults and minors. This was years before the Family was involved in large court cases, and therefore it cannot be said that we made this ban under pressure from the courts or the System. In 198[9], again years before any court cases, sex with a minor became an excommunicable offense, and it very explicitly remains so in the Charter (ML #3307:80, Vol. 28).

80. I want to explain how that Letter and subsequent GNs drew together the spiritual principles behind those rules and policies and helped to crystallize our moral and theological stance regarding sex with minors. Let's start by reviewing some of the important bedrock principles that were established in "An Answer to Him That Asketh Us."

81. It's been 12 years since "An Answer to Him That Asketh Us" was published (1995). At the time this Letter was written, we were addressing concerns raised by Justice Ward in England, in reference to his decision regarding Pearl's custody case. As a refresher, Pearl's mother had filed for the custody of her unborn grandchild, on the grounds that she contended that the child would not be protected from harm in the Family. Justice Ward, as the judge deciding the outcome of this dispute, was requesting assurances that the necessary safeguards were in place to protect this child from any form of mistreatment and abuse. In the final analysis,

he was satisfied that the guidelines and policies in place were adequate, and that children in the Family were no more at risk than children in mainstream society.

82. If you haven't read this Letter before, I would suggest that you do so. This Letter not only addressed the concerns of the court in England, but it also represents an important definition of the Family's perspectives and attitudes regarding this specific era of our history (from approximately 1978–1989).

(Mama:) **It seems that many Family members do not understand the explanations in this GN** [which contained "An Answer to Him That Asketh Us" and "World Services' Letter to Justice Ward"]. Maybe you didn't realize that it has an important message that is for the Family as well as for the judge to whom it was written. If you don't have a clear understanding of these matters, we suggest you study this GN carefully.

A review: The judge in the British case stated that in order for him to award the care of the child to the mother, he needed assurances from WS that would ensure the safety of the child. In short, those included:

- changes in the Family child discipline rules for children in the United Kingdom,
- points regarding the education of our children,
- continued openness and contact with relatives,
- to acknowledge that because of Dad's writings, he was responsible for some children in the Family in the past being subjected to sexually inappropriate behavior, and that he was therefore wrong to write such things (ML #3307:73–74, Vol. 28; 2000).

83. In this Letter, Mama and I acknowledged that some of the former members

who testified in the British court case had legitimate complaints, and we apologized for any mistreatment that any had suffered while in the Family, making it clear that if any part of what they shared was true, it was wrong that these things had happened to them, and it was a reproach to the Family:

(Mama:) **Among these ex-members [who testified in this case] were some who left the Family as teens, who, while testifying against the Family, manifested a great deal of bitterness towards us.** Some of them had legitimate grievances, especially when they spoke of past sexual advances by certain adults, as well as unfair, harsh disciplinary action. Although some of their testimony is true, we believe significant parts were highly exaggerated, if not outright lies.

It hurts me deeply, though, to hear about what some of these kids claim to have gone through. If any of it is true, it is a reproach to the Family, and a reproach to the cause of Christ! We are supposed to be a Family of Love, but unfortunately, some of our people have not treated others in a way that they would want others to treat them. Thus they've violated the "Golden Rule" and the foundation principle of the Lord's Law of Love: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets" (Mat.7:12). (ML #3016:2–3, Vol. 22; 1995).

84. Mama and I furthermore made it very clear in 1995 to the court in England and to the Family that sexual interaction between adults and minors was not only wrong but a sin. At this point in time, it may seem like an obvious conclusion to you that if such interaction was wrong, it was also a sin. But at the time Mama published the "Answer

to Him That Asketh Us” GN, this represented an important definition of our beliefs, and the culmination of discussions and prayer and policy-setting on the issue over a period of nine years, from 1986 to 1995.

85. Prior to this, Dad had written on a number of occasions that actions done in love were free from sin, and this was the overall measuring stick we used to gauge whether our actions fell within the parameters of the Law of Love.

86. Of course, when Dad wrote these Letters he was not speaking of or focusing on children—he was discussing the ethics of FFing and the implications of becoming sexually involved with other adults. Dad’s discussions and construction of the Law of Love and our theology on sex were not built with children in mind. At the time of the writing of the original Law of Love Letter, there were few children in the Family. Dad was focused on the pioneering of the FFing revolution, receiving the Lord’s words and confirmation for this radical ministry, and preparing the ground for the Family to get started in it.

87. As Dad explored the scriptural foundation and boundaries of the Law of Love (within the conditions and guidelines the Lord laid out in the original Law of Love Letter, directed to an adult audience), he concluded that actions undertaken in love were free from sin and answered to a higher law than man’s law (see ML #648, published in 1978). He speculated as to what limits could be placed on God’s love, considering that He was the One Who had created love and sex, and Who had given them His stamp of approval. Where children were concerned, he questioned whether they should be restricted from exploring their sexuality, as they naturally felt led. Although only a very small portion of his writings and discussions on sex addressed sexual interaction with minors, these were generally encouraging of the principle that if one’s ac-

tions were done in unselfish love and harmed no one, they would be acceptable and without sin. And as I have explained earlier, he later realized that those conditions were not being met in sexual interaction between adults and minors, and he renounced those writings.

88. After Dad and Mama moved to ban all sex with minors, the discussion among leadership as to whether these issues were inherently wrong in all cases continued to a lesser degree. These discussions did not represent a shift in policy or a change in our strict rules disallowing all such interaction, nor was such a shift ever considered or contemplated. Such discussions explored whether interaction of this nature was inherently wrong, or whether it was one of those cases of “All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient” or edifying (1Cor.10:23). Mama’s conclusion of the matter in “An Answer to Him That Asketh Us” (in 1995) slammed the door shut on that discussion, and the Lord officially deemed it a sin.

(Jesus speaking:) **“The bounds that I have set, because I have set them, are the boundaries, and you are to go no further.** For to go further is sin, for these are the boundaries that I have set. I have set these boundaries that these things would not be a testimony against you. I have set these boundaries in wisdom and in love.

“As I lead you step by step, so did I lead your Father David step by step. So did he too learn the need for boundaries. And so did he set boundaries for your safekeeping, for your protection. So stay within the boundaries of God and sin not, for he that oversteps the boundaries sins in My sight. For these are the boundaries of God, the boundaries that your David has set forth by the wisdom of God. Remain within the boundaries and you are free. Step without the boundaries and you sin...”

(Mama:) Although the Lord has given us in the Family much freedom, there are, nevertheless, some restrictions. The Lord says clearly here that He, through Dad, has set some boundaries for us. He goes on to say that if we cross over those boundaries, it is sin.

What the Lord is saying is that if you break these rules, cross these boundaries, you are sinning. He said these boundaries were set up by Him. “The bounds that I have set, because I have set them, are the boundaries, and you are to go no further. For to go further is sin, for these are the boundaries that I have set.”

What is it that gives us faith? The Word, right? “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom.10:17). So if the Word gives you faith for something, like it does for us to have sexual fellowship with other consenting adults, then you can engage in those activities without sin. However, when the Word says that you cannot do something, then you cannot have the faith to do it, because you would be acting in disobedience to God’s Word. So to cross the boundaries the Lord, through His Word, has set up, is sin (ML #3016:81, 82,85–87, Vol. 22; 1995).

89. Mama revisited these points in the Letter “None of These Things Move Me.” At that time, she made it clear that any and all theological discussion along those lines had been laid to rest and a definitive theological position had been taken, which has stood since the early ’90s.

(Mama:) The preceding excerpts of Letters and statements make it obvious that we had definite rules against sexual contact between adults and minors since 1986. As I said in “An Answer to Him That Asketh Us,” we should have had rules in

effect much earlier that would have prevented any of our young people from being hurt. We didn’t, and we’re sorry we didn’t because it made it possible for some young people to be hurt. Adult/minor sex has been an excommunicable offense for 11 years [*since 1989*]. Any sexual crossovers in the Family are considered sin and they remain an excommunicable offense, which will be disciplined according to the guidelines in the Charter. If you are aware of any type of sexual impropriety, you know what to do—report it! In fact, those who do not report such things are guilty as well and subject to the same discipline....

It is clear that 14 years ago, in 1986, Dad and I put a ban on any adult/minor sexual activity. In 198[9], 12 years ago, we made it excommunicable and it has remained so since then. We made it quite clear that any such activity was wrong and not allowed within our communities. While the theological discussion may have continued, the fact is that any adult/minor sex was excommunicable.

As far as we’re concerned, that’s the final word on it. Any questions about whether adult/minor sexual contact is at all possibly permissible in theory or theologically were laid to rest. This overrides anything that was ever written suggesting otherwise. Once the Lord said it was sin, we announced it to the Family and that has been our stance since that time.

I want to emphasize this point, because I don’t want any of you thinking that our stance on this issue is ambiguous. The Lord made it clear at the time of “An Answer to Him That Asketh Us” that all adult/minor sexual contact is sin. We consider it as such. It is wrong and results in excommunication (ML #3307:91–94, Vol. 28; 2000).

90. The point that Mama made clear here, and that I want to reiterate, is that our stance prohibiting sex with minors was built on our concern for the well-being of all our children and minors, and our determination to protect them not only from harm, but from even the risk of harm. Mama and I are unwavering in our commitment to ensure that every child brought up in the Family has the best possible quality of life, and that they are as safe as is humanly possible from any risk of being hurt, harmed, or exposed to potentially harmful situations. We consider our children precious, priceless, and irreplaceable, and that each Family child has the inalienable right to be loved, nurtured and protected. There are thousands of pages of material in our Family publications written about how to love, care for, and provide for our children, and our policies to protect them are a reflection of the counsel in these publications devoted to how to give our children the best possible upbringing. Our policies provide a safety zone for our children—the purpose, spirit and intent behind these policies is our resolute conviction that we must protect our children from any form of abuse or the potential for harm.

91. Our policies and stance were built on the fact that such behaviors are harmful, wrong, and a sin—not to mention illegal (and for good reason), and generally considered unacceptable. And as I've just explained, it does not meet the requirements for practicing the Law of Love. When the original notice went out to the Family in 1986 banning such interaction, it explained that such behavior had caused hurt and harm in some cases, and since our minors are the most precious treasure the Lord has entrusted to us, it was our responsibility to do everything within our power to protect and nurture them. That was the reasoning and foundation of this ban, and it continues to be the case. Although the Lord gave us a lot of freedom under the Law of Love, that freedom

was restricted to the conditions and guidelines the Lord laid down. Sexual interaction involving minors did not meet those requirements, and therefore should not have been explored, encouraged or permitted, whether through the Letters or other publications, or in actual practice. As Mama said in 1989, “You need to know that there are some definite rules and restrictions. In spite of the fact that we have a lot of freedom, we don't have freedom to destroy other people's freedom!” (ML #2590:37, Vol. 19; 1989.)

92. This stance is not just about our rules and policies. This is our firmly held moral and theological stance on the issue—and it's Mama and my deepest personal conviction as well. We personally and unequivocally* believe that sexual interaction between adults and underage minors is wrong, and a sin, and any such actions are a reproach to the cause of Christ.

**Unequivocal: unambiguous; clear; having only one possible meaning or interpretation; absolute; unqualified; not subject to conditions of exceptions. (Courtesy of Random House Unabridged Dictionary)*

Summary

93. Dad and Mama banned sex with minors in 1986, and it was declared an excommunicable offense in June 1989. This policy has remained unchanged. The theological discussions as to whether such interaction was inherently wrong in all cases continued up until the early '90s, and in 1995 Mama officially announced to the Family that not only do we consider sex with minors to be wrong and an excommunicable offense, but it is also a sin. This stance overrides any previous writings or discussions that suggested or debated otherwise, and is the Family's position, both internal and official, on the matter. Our firmly held moral and theological stance on the issue is that sex

with minors is wrong, and a sin, and we don't tolerate or condone such actions.

Dad's Role and Responsibility

94. As Mama explained in "An Answer to Him That Asketh Us," at the time of writing his ruling, Justice Ward wanted us to acknowledge that because of Dad's writings, Dad was personally responsible for any children in the Family in the past being subjected to sexually inappropriate behavior, that children were harmed as a result, and that Dad was therefore wrong to write such things.

(Mama:) **The last point is that he [Justice Ward] wants us to acknowledge that because of Dad's writings, Dad is personally responsible** for any children in the Family in the past being subjected to sexually inappropriate behavior, that children were harmed as a result, and that Dad was therefore wrong to write such things.

The judge in the British case wants to make sure the Family is a safe environment for Pearl's son to be raised in. I do too, and I am absolutely convinced that the Family is a very safe environment, not only for Pearl's son, but for all of our children (ML #3016:14,28, Vol. 22; 1995).

95. After hearing from the Lord and Dad (who had graduated to Heaven by this time), we did acknowledge this, as Mama explained at the time,

With 20/20 hindsight we can look back and see that it would have been better to explain things more clearly. We should have anticipated potential problems and put in more stringent rules to keep them from happening, including prohibitions on all adult/minor sexual contact. By not having such restrictions in place, some people were able to act in ways that were harmful to others.

Because of the insight Dad gave into the Scriptures which granted us a great deal of sexual freedom, without clearly stated explicit restrictions that prohibited all sexual activity between adults and minors, it resulted in actions that caused harm to some children. He must therefore bear responsibility for the harm. Today it's easy to see that it was wrong not to put explicit restrictions in place earlier, but Dad didn't see the need for such explicit rules when he first introduced sexual freedoms (ML #3016:16–17, Vol. 22; 1995).

While I don't believe the general principles of the Law of Love as the Lord revealed them to Dad are wrong, I have stated clearly in the above-mentioned GN ["An Answer to Him That Asketh Us"] that Dad was wrong to not clearly state explicit restrictions that prohibited all sexual activity between adults and minors from the beginning. Now we know. We are much wiser today than yesterday (ML #3307:78, Vol. 28; 2000).

96. At the time, I wrote a letter to Justice Ward (see "World Services' Letter to Justice Ward," which was published in the same GN as the Letter "An Answer to Him That Asketh Us"). This letter served as our official response to the court, and I want you to make note of the concessions we made to the court in this letter, as they were not just meant to address the issues raised by Justice Ward, but also to serve as our internal stance on the issues.

Maria, Gary and myself and World Services acknowledge that any abuse of children is abhorrent, whether it be sexual abuse or other forms of abuse, and we are determined that the Family will be a safe environment for all our children and teens to be brought up in.

We acknowledge that in certain places at certain times the Family has not been as safe an environment for them as it should have been. Over the last nine years, we have taken progressive steps to make it as safe as possible, and have apologised to those who have suffered harm, and we recognise this litigation and these communications as an opportunity to apologise again. We sincerely believe that the Family today is a safe place, and we have established safeguards to make sure it will remain so.

Your Lordship has asked us to acknowledge that Father David, through his writings, was personally responsible for children in the Family being sexually abused. Father David wrote a series of Letters concerning sexual behaviour. The judgement refers in particular to “The Law of Love” and “The Devil Hates Sex”, and we accept that as the author of ideas upon which some members acted to the harm of minors in the Family, he must bear responsibility for that harm. Maria, and all of us in World Services leadership, also feel the burden of responsibility. Maria in particular has done an enormous amount to put a stop to any sexual maltreatment of children and instituted strict safeguards to make sure it will never happen again.

We acknowledge that it was wrong to proclaim a teaching of sexual liberty (i.e., in 1976 and 1978) without establishing clear rules to ensure that sexual contact did not take place between adults and children. Further, in 1980 Father David’s statements in his discourse entitled “The Devil Hates Sex” opened the door for sexual behaviour between adults and minors, such sanctioning being a direct cause of later abusive behaviour by some Family members at that time. In addition, we also acknowledge with regret that more specific and concrete restraints were not introduced earlier, and that Father David should have done so im-

mediately upon receiving indications that problems were beginning to develop.

The extension of the Law of Love to sexual matters was a unique contribution of Father David’s to the Family, and we accept and acknowledge that he bears responsibility for what arose as a result of it. Among other things, we acknowledge that his beliefs and teachings led to the setting aside of ordinary sexual taboos and restraints, particularly between adults, and this significantly contributed to the development of an overly sexualised atmosphere in a number of Family communities, of which children were a part. Unfortunately, this further led to a number of children being subjected to sexually inappropriate behaviour.

Reading, and in some cases re-reading, the accounts of some of the former Family teens who testified on behalf of the plaintiff is a painful experience. The accounts of sexual maltreatment of minors described in the judgement are deeply distressing. (*World Services’ Letter to Mr. Justice Ward, from Peter Amsterdam, September 1995*)

97. As you can see by my letter, the Lord made it clear that it was wrong of Dad to publish Letters that sanctioned sex with minors, and this opened the door to children being exposed to inappropriate sexual behavior.

It also enabled some to take advantage of and harm minors. That was never Dad’s or the Lord’s intention, and it’s clear that such behavior should never have occurred.

98. At the time, Dad saw nothing inherently wrong or harmful with children being able to explore their sexuality in a natural way.

However, as we have already explained, Dad failed to institute the necessary boundaries between adults and minors, and this lack of boundaries and guidelines took away the necessary protections. As such, what was initially an allowance for children’s natural curiosity about sexuality

opened the door to other behaviors that were clearly wrong, and in some cases, harmful.

99. Such interaction would not have occurred in most cases had literature not been published that built a theological argument that sanctioned adult sexual interaction with minors. Once guidelines were instituted, clearly delineating the boundaries, Family members rallied behind the new rules and enforced these guidelines in their Homes. Clear child protection policies have been in place for nearly 20 years, and we believe that the Family of today is a safe environment for our children. Our overall guidelines and focus on the care of our children serve to nurture our children, while our excommunication policies provide protection from hurt or harm.

100. Thankfully, since rules were instituted in the late 1980s, there have been few occurrences in the Family of children being taken advantage of or exposed to situations of harm, and guilty parties are promptly and permanently excommunicated to ensure that our children are protected from any sort of abuse. It's clear, though, that Dad should not have made allowance for crossing the barrier between adults and minors in sexual interaction, and should have instituted guidelines much earlier to avoid any incidence of harm.

101. (*Jesus:*) David's postulating of the Law of Love and the resultant sexual freedom that was allowed in the Family plainly demonstrates what a serious responsibility a leader has to his followers. The Law of Love was right and the sexual freedom between those of age was right, but the practice of it went beyond the bounds of what was right. David didn't see it that way at the time because the Family was made up of mostly young adults with few teens or children. He wasn't seeing

the issue from all sides, and he chose to favor freedom by leaving the restrictions and safeguards open-ended.

102. As a result, some actions crossed over the boundaries of the true, right and godly principles of the Law of Love that I had given, and David has had to bear the ultimate responsibility for that. And that is something that he has acknowledged. If the Law of Love had been followed strictly and practiced correctly, the problems and mistakes could have been avoided. But to give David credit, he pulled in the reins when it became obvious what had happened. Although others helped to instigate the change, the responsibility fell to David to approve it. And he did, wholeheartedly. (*End of message.*)

Summary

103. In 1995, Mama and I officially acknowledged to the court in England and to the Family that Dad was personally responsible for any minors in the Family in the past being subjected to sexually inappropriate behavior, and that some children were harmed as a result. It was wrong of Dad to publish Letters that sanctioned sex with minors, and this opened the door to children being exposed to inappropriate sexual behavior. Such interaction would not have occurred in most cases had literature not been published that built a theological argument supportive of adult sexual interaction with minors. Once guidelines were instituted from 1986 to 1989, Family members rallied behind the new rules and enforced these guidelines in their Homes. Subsequent court examinations of Family children in several different countries confirmed that these rules had been closely adhered to, and there was found to be a total absence of abuse of any kind among the hundreds of Family children examined.