

An Open Letter of Apology from Maria and Peter

January 1, 2008

Dear Current and Former Second Generation Family members,

Although we have written a number of apologies in Letters published since 1993, we felt we could express these more personally if we published an apology specifically addressed to each of you, the second generation of the Family, whether you are still a member or have chosen another path for your life.

Peter and I, as the Family's current leadership, want to personally apologize to you for anything negative or hurtful which may have happened to you during your youth or time in the Family. We acknowledge that from the latter part of the '70s to the mid-1980s the Family wasn't as safe an environment for children and young teens as it should have been. We sincerely apologize that you were not better protected when you were younger. We are very sorry if you had any untoward sexual experiences. We apologize if you were treated harshly in any manner or received excessive discipline at any time, or if any of you did not receive an adequate education.

We apologize to you, our former members, if you felt stigmatized upon leaving the Family, or if you didn't get all the help and support you felt you needed or wished you would have had. We regret any actions by anyone that were unloving, unkind, hurtful or harmful.

We acknowledge that some of Dad's writings misapplied the Law of Love to sexual contact between adults and minors, and as such were the direct cause of any misconduct that occurred at that time. This was rectified in 1986, when any sexual contact between adults and minors was banned.

We regret that this policy was not in place during the earlier years of the Family to protect minors from hurt or harm. Sadly, because such rules were not in place, some of you experienced inappropriate sexual contact with adults, and we acknowledge that abusive actions occurred. You should not have been exposed to such situations. It was wrong that it happened. We are deeply sorry for this. If any harmful occurrences of any kind happened to you at any point during your time in the Family, we are truly sorry.

Dad bears the responsibility of promoting sexually liberal doctrines, while not putting in place strict rules to protect minors from inappropriate behavior or harm. As the sole authority for deciding what was published at that time, he also bears responsibility for any harm which occurred because of these writings. In 1988, Dad renounced any and all literature which alluded to sexual contact with minors, and by 1994 this had been expurgated altogether from Family writings.

Clearly articulated and strict rules to protect minors from inappropriate sexual behavior are in place today and have been since 1986. In mid-1989 any such contact was made an excommunicable offense. We acknowledge that for the first year or two after this policy was enacted, in some instances leadership were lax regarding the length of the excommunications; however, these rules soon became very strict and remain so today.

Further measures were taken in the early '90s, to uphold the rights of children and to ensure that they would receive the best quality of care, education and upbringing possible. Since 1995, with the publishing of the Charter, clearly articulated rules and regulations have been in place to govern all aspects of Family life. The rights of children within the Family are clearly defined therein, as well as the rights and responsibilities of parents. Guidelines were put in place to ensure that any discipline of children was appropriate. Rules regarding education, leadership authority, medical decisions, etc., are codified, placing the ultimate authority and responsibility for all decisions pertaining to their minor children in the court of the parents. Our Charter also restated our zero tolerance policy regarding any form of abuse of minors. The Charter has been, and continues to be, the Family's governing document since 1995, and is adhered to. We are confident that these guidelines have served to ensure that Family Homes provide as safe an environment as possible for children and young people.

We wish we could change the past, but sadly that's not possible. As the Family's leadership of today, we ask your forgiveness. To any Family member or former Family member who suffered hurt or harm because of the effects of Dad's misapplication of the Law of Love, or mistreatment of any kind, by anyone, we are truly sorry and ask for your forgiveness.

We pray that you will accept our apologies as a sincere, heartfelt attempt to express our regret for any pain or unhappiness you experienced during your youth or time in the Family. We pray that this apology will help you find healing and closure.

Sincerely,

Maria and Peter