

For age 16 and up. Parents and shepherds can share portions of this counsel or information with their JETTs and junior teens as the Lord leads.

The Truth About Angela's Death and Ricky's Suicide, Part 1

By Peter and Maria

FD/MM/FM 3529 1/05

Dear Family,

God bless you! We love you and are so thankful for your love and support and prayers right now—and all the time, for that matter!

2. In preparing the GNs with the Lord's messages about Ricky and Angela and what really happened—as opposed to our detractors' misinformation and outright lies—we felt we should include the notices that we've posted on the MO site about the situation so far. These compiled notices provide a lot of background to the messages the Lord gave, as well as helpful counsel not included in later GNs. We pray they'll be a blessing to you, and we pray for your outreach, protection, anointing, health, strength, and our Husband's supply of your every need. Keep going for God in the power of the keys!

Much love and prayers,
Peter

MO site announcement #1

Timely announcement and prayer request

From Peter and Mama January 10, 2005

Dear Family,

3. We love you very much. You are in our prayers. We have some sad news to share with you. It is about Pete (Davidito), our son. (You might know him as Ricky.) Please do stop a

minute now to claim the keys of faith, peace and grace, as this is shocking news. I will explain the situation in brief, although we do not know all the details at this time.

4. Pete had been living in Tucson for the past several months, where he had an apartment and a job as an electrician. Recently Gabe and Amy made a trip to California and while there they called him and he seemed quite happy to hear from them, the conversation was positive, and he commented that he would like to see them sometime.

5. A few days ago Angela (Joy), a Family member who lived with us for many years, who was visiting in Tucson, and who knew Pete very well, called him and asked to have dinner with him, knowing that he had responded positively to Gabe and Amy's call. The situation is still being investigated, but it looks like, after dinner, they went to his apartment, where Pete killed her. He then drove to California where he took his own life. His body was found Saturday night [Jan.8] by the police in California.

6. We know the Lord is in control, and nothing can happen except He allows it, so we can trust that He will bring good from this tragedy.

7. As you might recall, Pete has threatened violence against Mama and me. However, when he left our Home in Portugal years ago, he was positive; he wanted to continue in the Family as a missionary, and did so for a few months. It was only after he had contact with some extremely vocal vindictive detractors that he became so

negative. (This process that happens to those who leave new religious movements and become apostates is explained in "None of These Things Move Me.")

8. If you could please take some time to pray for the following, we'd be very thankful:

- For all the Family members who knew and loved Angela, that they'll have grace and faith when they hear this news.
- For Angela's relatives in their time of grief.
- For Elixir, Pete's former mate—for peace of mind and heart for her, for stability and faith.
- That the Lord will bring about victories through this terrible tragedy.
- That our Husband will help us all to understand that the spiritual warfare has intensified and that we must do all we can to keep ourselves spiritually prepared.
- That our vindictive former members, who will undoubtedly try to blame this on Mama and the Family, will realize that they have played a part in this sad situation through their negative influence on Pete and that they will reflect upon it.
- For Mama, Techi and me. The Lord has given us miraculous grace, and we know it's a result of the keys of mercy and the undefeatable weapon of praise.

9. Thank you very much! We are depending on your key-filled prayers!

Much love in our Husband,
Peter

MO site announcement #2

Timely P.S. from Peter and Mama

January 11, 2005

Dear Family,

10. Mama and I love you and pray for you, as we know you are also praying for us. Our Husband is helping us and upholding us.

11. I wanted to post a short P.S. to the timely announcement and prayer request I posted yesterday, regarding Pete (Davidito) and Angela (Joy).

12. A number of you have written in asking if, when, and how you should explain this situation to your children. When we prayed about it, the Lord reminded us that because everyone in the Family, including the children, knows about Davidito, it's important to inform them of his death in an age-appropriate manner. Although it's vital that the adults and young people who know the full scoop exercise extreme wisdom and prayerfulness by not discussing the situation around the children, Davidito's death will undoubtedly come up sometime soon or in the future, so it's better that they hear it from you parents and/or shepherds in a calm, prayerful, wise manner than for the children to find out about it some other way.

13. When informing your children, of course please go according to your faith and how the Lord leads you to proceed. The Lord gave a few suggestions that you might find helpful in knowing how to present it, which we'll share with you here.

14. The Lord said that the children don't necessarily need to know any details of how Davidito died, nor do they need to know about the connection with Angela. You can simply tell your children that he went to Heaven, and focus on positive thoughts. You might even want to consider combining it with a class or some stories or talk time questions about Heaven, to make it a memorable and uplifting experience

for the children. (If your children have already heard the news accidentally, and perhaps more details than they should have, then you will need to pray and ask the Lord how to explain it to them simply and answer any questions they may have.)

15. If your children ask for more information, or ask how Davidito died, as some older ones may probably ask, you parents/shepherds/teachers should again go according to your faith and what the Lord has shown you to do. Some ideas are that you can either avoid answering, or else say that he just got hurt very badly. This is not lying. This is telling the truth, but not going into details that are unnecessary and inappropriate for younger audiences.

16. As far as what and how much to explain to your JETTs and junior teens, Mama and I leave that responsibility with you to pray and proceed with what the Lord shows you to do. More background and information from the Lord on the situation will be coming out in the near future, God willing, and in many cases you will want to share portions of that with your JETTs and junior teens, as the Lord leads you. So you might want to give them a more full explanation at some point, or even now. It's up to you to pray about.

17. As far as dear Angela's death, the Lord said that if the children didn't know Angela personally, then it's better not to even mention her. If the children did know Angela, and the Lord shows you parents and/or shepherds to tell the children about her death, you may do so with wisdom. Again, following the same guidelines above—not getting into details of how it happened, and focusing on her wonderful heavenly reward. Focus on the positive. Talk about Heaven and not about the details. Also, if the children knew Angela, it may be better not to inform them of Davidito and Angela's death in the same sitting, in case a connection is made.

18. Our Husband promised that He would show you, dear parents and/or shepherds, how to present this news without making the chil-

dren fearful. Much depends on the age of your children, so you'll have to hear from the Lord for the specifics of exactly how to present it, within the boundaries of these guidelines. We'll be praying and claiming the keys of wisdom, insight and faith for you.

Love, Peter

MO site announcement #3

Notice from Peter and Mama

January 14, 2005

Dearest Family,

19. Thank you for your continued prayers for us. We are praying for you as well.

20. We wanted to let you know that we are working on putting together some of the abundant instruction, counsel, and comfort that our Husband has poured out about the situation with Ricky (Pete, Davidito) and Angela, and we will be posting it for you on the MO site via GNs as soon as we can. As you can imagine, there is a lot happening right now that we have to attend to, but we wanted you to know that we have a lot of counsel from the Lord to share with you, and He has given answers and insight that help to shed light on this situation and will help us learn from it all we can, as well as partake of His perspective and comfort.

21. Mama and I want to thank those of you who have heard from our Husband for us and sent us the messages you received. We have been so encouraged by them. We're very thankful that you have taken the time to do it, not only because of the great encouragement they have been to us, but also because the Lord has been able to speak to you and comfort you and help you to have His perspective on the matter, which is very important.

22. There is a lot of confusing information floating around about this situation, and there are some people who are exploiting this tragedy and trying to use it to their own ends to hurt

Mama and me and the Family, and tear down our work for the Lord. Some of our detractors are trying to get as much mileage out of this situation as possible. As always, it's your choice whether you'll listen to those who are bent on destroying the Family, or whether, as a strong disciple, you'll turn to our Husband and open your channel to Him to receive His perspective and counsel.

23. It's natural to be curious about the details in a situation like this, but please be aware that you're not going to find out the truth via the news media or the Internet. Unfortunately, the media is being contacted and fed extensively by some of our most hostile apostates; the reports in the newspapers are for the most part not giving the full picture, nor are they referring to the official studies credible academics have done and published on the Family.

24. Mama and I are interested in the truth, and we want to give you the truth. We are working on finding out what happened, so that we can inform you of the full story and also give you God's mind on the matter. However, the media is being stirred up by rhetoric from our apostates and detractors, who are using this situation to their own ends.

25. I find it nearly unbelievable that some of our detractors will stoop to such low levels to blame Mama for what happened. Mama is the sweetest, most loving person I know, and has lived to give and sacrifice for others for as long as I've known her. And at a sad time like this, some people have the nerve to say that Mama deserves this, that it's her fault. They're trying to make Ricky look like an innocent victim, and even a hero and role model, ignoring the fact that he actually murdered someone. No matter what his motives might have been, and no matter how overcome by the Enemy and forces of darkness he was at the time, that does not justify his killing someone.

26. Ricky was 29 years old. He made his own decisions—decisions that Mama had nothing to do with. To the contrary, Mama went to

every length she could to love Ricky, to try to communicate with him, and to pray for him. This turn of events is very sad for Mama and me; we never wanted Ricky's life to turn out this way. But it did, because of his choices.

27. We explained briefly in the first notice posted on the MO site the events that took place surrounding this tragedy, but for those who have heard bits and pieces here and there from the news media and would like more of the full story, this is what happened.

28. At the time of her death, Angela was not in the Family. She had written Mama and me about a month ago, explaining that she was taking a furlough from the Family for a time. Approximately two months ago, she had left the mission field she was on, and had gone to help her aunt in the U.S. She was living in her own apartment in California. She was favorable and kept in touch with some of our staff and others in the Family who she was good friends with, but she wanted to travel around and have some time to think about what she wanted to do with her life. She wasn't sure how long she wanted to have a break, or what her long-term plans were.

29. Ricky was at the time living and working in Tucson, Arizona, and had been there for several months. He was in contact with Mama's relatives who live there, and had spent time with them over Christmas; he was friendly with them. He had recently gotten a job as an electrician. We had been praying for him to find something that he was happy doing. Communications from Ricky were nonexistent in recent years, and ours were limited to sending him Christmas or birthday greetings. Our last communication was when Mama and I sent him a card and present this past Christmas.

30. Saturday night, January 8th, Ricky and Angela met for dinner. Angela was in Tucson on a visit. She was on the board of directors for the elderly care home that Mama's relatives run, and twice a year when they would hold board meetings, she would travel there to at-

tend. While there she would do what she could to help out. During this last visit, she wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to visit Ricky. She and Ricky had been friends before, so they made plans to go to dinner. She was not going on our behalf, nor did she have any message to give to Ricky from Mama or me. It was something she wanted to do. Mama and I were not involved.

31. At some time in the evening, we believe after they had dinner, Angela and Ricky went to Ricky's apartment, where he stabbed Angela to death. Then he drove to Blythe, California, where he checked into a motel and made some phone calls, then left the motel, drove some distance away and then shot himself. He was found in his car in a parking lot early Sunday morning, dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. In one of the calls he made before he died, he apparently asked the person he was talking with to alert the Tucson police to check his apartment. Later the police found Angela's body in his apartment; she was dead.

32. Mama and I, as well as the other relatives, were notified on Sunday, and on Monday stories started running in the Arizona and California newspapers.

33. Over the next days we began to hear from a number of different people that Ricky had made a video which he wanted sent to certain people. We have not yet seen this video, nor at this time do we know what it contains, though it is our understanding that he filmed it shortly before meeting with Angela and that it made reference to his intentions to do her harm.

34. Ricky had made public reference to doing harm to Mama and me in the past. In 2002, he posted on the site how he thought of returning to Portugal, finding Mama and me, and cutting our throats. Then five months ago on the Moving On site, this subject came up again, in which he talked about destroying the Family, and he was looking for people who wanted to join him in his mission. He said this would "probably involve a great deal of sacri-

ifice, and would best be accomplished by people who have nothing to lose, such as myself. ... someone needs to put an end to it because only then can we feel some semblance of justice."

35. Our detractors and ex-members are saying that Angela had gone to see him as our representative, that she was sent with an "ultimatum" from us, and that it was something she said or did that made him go into a violent rage and kill her. While we don't know what transpired between them that night, we do know that Angela was meeting with Ricky of her own accord, and while he might have looked on her as our representative because she lived with us for many years and was very close to us personally, she had gone to see him of her own volition, and there were no ulterior motives that we know of, nor was she bearing any kind of message from Mama or me or WS for Ricky.

36. Others of the ex-member camp are saying (and it's being picked up by the media) that this happened because Angela had abused him as a child, and so he had pent-up rage against her. The truth is, Ricky and Angela were friends, or at least had been during their time in the Family. While they were from two different generations, Angela was very youthful in spirit, and when they lived together, they would often hang out or do things together. They had had a mutual friendship, and enjoyed each other's company on a friendship level.

37. Angela was also never Ricky's nanny, as some of the media and our apostates are insinuating. Angela was always a secretary in our Home. Much of the time that Ricky lived with Dad, Mama and me, Angela also lived with us. During all those years that they both lived with us (until Ricky was approximately 20 years old), he never showed any unhappiness with Angela at all. They had always been friends. They did things together. Angela had a boyfriend at the time, and she, her boyfriend and Ricky would regularly do activities such as hiking together,

and he never showed any anger whatsoever toward her.

38. It's possible that Ricky says on the video that the reason he did what he did is because of the "abuses" he "suffered" in the Family. We will not be surprised if he blames Mama and the Family for the murder, or if he explains this as his deserved "revenge," but whatever his tack, we must not lose sight of the fact that he brutally murdered someone. That is never, under any circumstances, justified or right! He was not the victim; Angela was the victim. She was a wonderful woman who suffered a cruel and violent death!

39. As we have explained before, Ricky left our Home on good terms. He and Elixir left WS in early 2000, and continued on in the Family for a few months, first in a Home in Southern California, then at the Activated desk in England, then in Venezuela. Mama and I helped them all we could to get them set up in a Home, we gave them a gift and landing funds, and for several months we continued in fairly close communication with them, and they wrote some sweet letters that showed they were happy and wanting to be in the Family.

40. It wasn't until they left the Family, and started having a lot of contact with some very vindictive apostates, that Ricky started coming out with accusations against us, complaints about his upbringing, and demands for money. At that point, Ricky started openly vocalizing his complaints and bitterness, including many that he had never expressed before. His contact with these apostates grew, and so did his complaints. This is the cycle of apostasy which we have explained before. (See "None of These Things Move Me.") Eventually he told us that he didn't want to be in contact with us at all, and to please stop writing him. So we respected his wishes with the occasional note at Christmas or birthday. Some time later, he came out with a physical threat in his post on the Moving On site, saying he wanted to find us and physically kill us.

41. Some of Ricky's former associates apparently were aware of the seriousness of Ricky's threats. They had heard him talk about his desire to kill his mother and they knew he had a penchant for knives. We can only assume that they tried, unsuccessfully, to convince him that this was wrong.

42. Unfortunately, however, there are a few apostates who don't seem to have a problem with violence—not only tolerating it, but even saying such things as that's what Mama "deserves" and, "Maybe it's callous to say it, but WTF [what the fuck], if he had to go, he might as well have taken one of the fuckers with him; it's almost too bad he only got one." Another said: "Yeah, it is terrible but I honestly couldn't give a shit about the fam member/former personal abuser of him. I hope she died knowing why she died." Or another said, "In Ricky's case, it was no more wrong to kill than it was to remove an annoying splinter from your thumb."

43. We're appalled that these apostates would publicly make such statements, and even more so that those who administrate the ex-member sites would promote such statements by allowing them to remain on their site. I would think that they and those who visit their site would be ashamed to associate themselves with those who speak so ill of someone who was so violently murdered.

44. There's a whole lot more to this situation that happened in the spirit, which those of us who are blessed to understand and believe in the spirit world can comprehend—and we'll be getting more of this information to you in GNs as soon as we can, as I mentioned earlier. But in the meantime I wanted to clear up a few of the rumors circulating, with the facts, for the benefit of those of you who are getting your information from the media. If I were you, I'd be very wary of believing most of the information that is circulating at the moment.

45. Besides giving you a bit more information on what has happened, Mama and I want to

warn you about who you listen to regarding this tragedy. We are trying to get the Lord's Words to you on this as quickly as possible, but in the meantime, we don't recommend that you go online to find the "news" and see how things are developing. As more reliable information becomes available, we will communicate further with you.

46. Here is a short message that we'd like to share with you for your encouragement. This isn't enough to cover the subject, of course, but as I said, there is more counsel from the Lord coming.

47. (*Jesus:*) Even though the Enemy has manifested his power in a very physical way, and desperately wants to cause fear and trembling as you hear of these events, let Me remind you, My brides, that there is nothing that I cannot turn for good in your lives, and in the lives of My children everywhere.

48. I know you have a lot of questions about how and why, and if it's even possible for good to come of something like this. But watch and see, for My promises will be fulfilled, and the time will come when the Enemy will rue the day this attack was mounted, for all his intended evil will be turned to good, and he will have only helped to bring about a greater witness, a greater victory, a mighty strengthening. Even though he succeeded in bringing about death, those who died are in My hands, and both went straight to a better place—Angela to her great reward for her years of faithful service to Me, and Ricky to a place where he can slowly turn to face the light and begin to let go of his pride and rebellion, which has caused him so much torment. Both are My children, and though both came Home to very different rewards, yet they are both safely Home, where no harm can touch them again. That is one great and irreversible victory for Me.

49. This will also bring about persecution, media coverage, and opportunities for greater

witness. For those who are ready and obedient, the persecution will bring blessing and open doors to get out the message like never before. It will fill the cups of iniquity of those who fight My children. It will wake up some in the ex-member camp who have been duped by the lies when they see how far the apostates and detractors have gone, to be taking a situation as tragic as this and twisting the facts to their own advantage and breathing out threatenings. Their strong delusion will become apparent for all to see, and it will save many more from falling into their camp. It will wake up some of My blind and sleepy wayward children and cause them to turn away from the poison of the detractors and their evil words, for they will want no part in it.

50. It will also be a thundering wake-up call for you, My children of David, who are entering the year of strengthening, and will cause you to grow and mature and prepare in ways you were not anticipating. I will use it in each of your lives.

51. Many victories will come of this, until like I told you, the Devil will regret the day that he brought this attack to Earth, for it will backfire severely on his own camp, and cause him great defeat.

52. Be comforted, My loves, and know that I have much to speak to you about on this topic. Come to Me and hear My Words. Shun the ranting of those who have rejected Me and been given over to strong delusion.

53. Be comforted that as long as you stay close to Me, you have nothing to fear. Be encouraged to know that I will use this to get out the message like never before. Be encouraged to remember that I am a God of justice and righteousness, and the wicked will not go unpunished. Be encouraged to remember that I am the good Shepherd, and My sheep will hear My voice and follow.

54. What can you personally do to bring about good, you ask? Witness like never before, and give as many as possible the op-

portunity to receive and know Me personally before the great darkness falls upon all the earth. Prepare for persecution through having a solid witness, through strengthening your testimony, through obedience to Me in your personal lives, and through praying that I will hold back the wrath of man until it suits My purpose. Prepare spiritually through connecting with Me each day, practicing with the new weapons, and training for the war which is already upon you.

55. And then know, My loves, that though the time you are living in will wax even darker, yet My light will shine forth from you like never before. Though the accusations against you will grow more vile still, yet will your testimony become more and more spotless for all the world to see, and many will be drawn to Me. Though the attacks of the Enemy in both the physical and spiritual realms will increase in intensity, yet will you also be strengthened in spirit to face them fearlessly and without loss or casualties.

56. There is nothing to fear, nothing to worry about, but much to prepare for. So strengthen your spirits, strengthen your brethren, prepare, for we are at war! The victory is promised to those who persevere. (*End of message.*)

57. (*Peter:*) Mama and I love you very much, and we appreciate your continued prayers for all those involved, including us personally. We know it is a miracle of grace that we are able to continue taking care of all that is facing us at this time, and we are thankful for your prayers, which are giving us strength and comfort.

Much love in our Husband,
Peter

58. Here is a rebuttal that one of our Family spokespersons wrote to one of the negative articles that was published. Thankfully, after receiving this information, the same reporter then wrote a second more balanced article.

From Claire Borowik for The Family International

I am writing to express how appalled I am by the coverage your newspaper is giving to the deaths of Ricky Rodriguez and Angela Smith. I believe that it opposes all journalistic ethics, in its one-sided nature and its basis in unsubstantiated hearsay and rumors.

Both these deaths are cause of great mourning and grief to the members of our fellowship and the families involved, and it is grievous to see them handled in such a callous way.

I would like to clarify the following in honor of Angela Smith, whose memory has been slandered by individuals who never met her, nor knew Ricky Rodriguez throughout his entire childhood. The blatant lack of respect for the loss of Angela's life is appalling—one would think she had committed the crime in this sad tragedy, rather than been a victim.

To set the record straight, Angela Smith was never Ricky Rodriguez's "nanny," nor was she "sent on a mission" to speak with Ricky. She was on an extended furlough from the Family and lived in her own apartment, detached from Family communities. From what she told friends, she believed Ricky to be on friendly terms with her, which is why she visited him. Ricky published several statements in the latter years of his life, after connecting with our vitriolic former members, but never once did he state therein that he had been abused in any way by Angela Smith throughout his childhood.

Ricky Rodriguez withdrew from The Family fellowship in 2000 in order to pursue his education and other interests. Although he departed on good terms, he later became estranged from his mother and sister.

After contacting some of our more vitriolic apostates on the internet, he began to manifest violent tendencies, which were encouraged by this circle of former members. A careful perusal of the site brings up a number of instances where hate and violence are discussed without restraint.

In searching for a motive for this tragic crime, journalists should take care to not casually write off Angela's death and justify the actions of an obviously disturbed young man. Our society is rife with violence—regularly the public is exposed to violent crimes of individuals that act out the violence they witness via the media, and discuss anonymously via the internet. Such crimes are not particular to religious groups; in fact, such violence is shocking and entirely unheard of in Family communities.

As Christians, we deplore and are diametrically opposed to acts of violence and the suffering these inflict on innocent people. We believe that human life is sacred, and each person should be respected as an individual created in the image of God. It is our belief that God's love is the solution to all of man's problems, even in such a complex, confused, and highly complicated society as that of today. As Christians, our duty is to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:39), and to share the news of God's love and salvation for humanity and care for the needy.

In 1994, The Family initiated a concerted reconciliation process to attempt to resolve differences with any and all former members who held grievances either from their time in The Family or from the lack of communication with Family members after they departed. In 1994 and 1995, in open letters to former members, Family leadership officially addressed concerns in regard to any questionable past actions of individuals regarding discipline, education, or sexual misconduct that any may have undergone from 1978 to 1985 before clear guidelines were articulated. These apologies were published and have been reiterated in official Family publications over the years. The Family's Charter (first published in 1995) also advises parents to assume responsibility for assisting their children through what can be a difficult transition from a close, nurturing, faith-based support system to an independent secular lifestyle. Ricky Rodriguez received ample financial and emotional support to assist him in this transition.

In 1986, the Family enacted stringent policies to ensure the safety and protection of our children, at which point any inappropriate contact between an adult and minor (any person under 21 years of age) was rendered an excommunicable offense. All previous literature underwent careful scrutiny to ensure that it was in line with this position, and any questionable publications were expunged.

The Family's success in protecting our children and ensuring their well-being has been documented by independent and court-appointed investigations in the early 1990s of almost 700 children living in Family communities. After extensive physical, psychological and educational testing, all of the children were found to be healthy with no sign of abuse in a single case. This total absence of abuse speaks for the efforts made to safeguard children in Family communities.

We would suggest in future that you consult a broader base of third-party resources regarding our fellowship. Several reputable academic books have been published in the last 7 years, by researchers who have studied the Family, and their research has been reviewed by their peers. (We would be happy to make these available to you.) None of these people have been contacted, nor has their expertise been sought out. Balanced journalism would require offering us a fair possibility to present our side of the story, as well as consulting unbiased third-party sources who have performed serious research on our movement.

MO site announcement #4

Additional information re: Ricky and Angela

By Peter

January 17, 2005

Dear Family,

59. God bless you! We love you and are so thankful for your prayers, as we feel their ef-

fects every day. Over the past few days we have received further information regarding the death of Angela (Joy) at Ricky's hand. We wanted to update you on what we know so you will be informed and can continue to pray.

60. First of all, I want to let you know that Mama and Techi are holding up well through all of this. Mama told me that she is using the invaluable weapon of praise, which is helping her to rise above the sadness of it all. We know that your prayers are helping us in great ways. Thank you so much.

61. We are presently working on a GN which gives the Lord's insight on the matter. We believe this GN will explain a few more things which will be a help and strength to you. When we prayed about what is the best thing we could do to help you in this trying situation, the Lord said that giving you the Word would be the most effective thing we can do. The Word gives faith, and faith is what you need at difficult times such as these. The Word gives peace; it gives truth, strength and hope. We're sorry we haven't been able to get this GN to you more quickly, but it takes time to receive the prophecies, write the GN, and get it to you. However, you have an abundance of Word at your fingertips which should help to strengthen you and give you faith.

62. If you have specific questions, or things that are bothering you about this situation, you can get the Lord's personal Words to you if you bring those questions to Him and let Him speak to you in prophecy. A number of "Letter Links" will be posted very soon, so you will have a list of previously written GNs to read which will be a help to you.

63. If you are struggling in any way in regards to this situation, we ask that you please go to the Lord and the Word. We ask that you seek the help and prayers of your shepherds. Please don't feel ashamed if you need help, or if you are doubting, or if you have questions. If you are battling fear, of either repercussions of this event or that your life or the lives of your children

are in danger from other hostile ex-members, then please take those fears to the Lord. Let Him speak to you and comfort you. Talk about it with your shepherds, pray and hear from the Lord. He can give you His Words which will give you answers and will give you peace.

64. In regards to our former members, the great majority of them are friendly. Of the tens of thousands of former Family members, all but a small number have moved on with their lives. Many of you have contact and fellowship with former members, they know you well and love you, so you should not let Ricky's actions change that relationship.

65. There is a very vocal group of former members who regularly post on the former member websites. While they have grievances with the Family and speak of them on a regular basis, many, if not most of them, have not advocated violence against the Family. They speak of fighting the Family, but in terms of either trying to take the Family to court, or to convince Family members that the Family is "evil" and that they should leave.

66. There are, unfortunately, those who have posted on the former member sites who have advocated violence. Ricky was one of these. In his posts he was seeking others who were of a like mind. Since Ricky's murder of Angela, there have been a number of postings condoning the murder. There was very little in the way of other former members challenging these statements. Thankfully, the administrators of the site took down these postings, albeit after several days. Our hope is that they are beginning to see that such material is detrimental.

67. We want to reiterate that we don't feel that these events should cause you to pull away from former members out of fear. However, if it's necessary for some reason for you to have contact with former members who are very hateful towards the Family, who are apostates who have said things in the past or recently which would make you feel unsafe, then we suggest that you keep your distance, at least physically,

during this time. It's not that we think there are a lot of apostates who would cause violence, but at this time emotions are running high and some postings have indicated that there are those who agree with and condone what Ricky did. Please be very prayerful and wise.

68. It has recently been confirmed that Ricky premeditated the murder. He made a video beforehand which makes it quite clear that he planned to kill Angela. He had originally moved to Tucson (where Mama's relatives live) to find out Mama's whereabouts, with the hopes of finding Mama and killing her. He changed his plans when he found he could meet Angela. While we haven't personally seen the video, those who did have explained that the video is of Ricky with his gun and knives as he explains his plans to kill Angela, and to then take his own life. He makes a general call to our former members to hurt and damage the Family. When we have seen the video we will share more about it with you.

69. There has been a great deal of misinformation about Ricky's motives, affirming that it was a "crime of passion," and that Angela was sent to give him a message from Mama, etc. All of this has now been disproved by his video. It is now understood that his goal was to harm Mama. When he found out that Mama had paid a visit to her relatives, he moved to Tucson to develop a relationship with them, in the hopes that he would discover Mama's whereabouts.

70. A few years ago, when Angela was living in Texas, she visited Mama's parents, who own a small retirement home. After that, she would visit once or twice a year. During her visits, she would assist with the old folks and help in any way she could. In time, Mama's relatives invited her to join the board of directors of the retirement home, as it was a non-profit foundation. She agreed, and from that point on she visited for board meetings twice a year. Angela's role on the board was totally unrelated to her being a member of the Family.

71. Some former members are now claiming that Mama bought the retirement center for her parents. This is totally false. Mama did not buy the retirement home for them, nor has she ever had anything to do with the retirement home. Her personal family is in no way connected to The Family.

72. Upon hearing about the death of Angela and Ricky's suicide, we sent a message to Elixir, Ricky's former mate, via her father, offering our help, especially with the costs of the funeral. She initially refused any help or contact whatsoever, but later accepted some financial aid to pay for the expenses in Tucson, which included mortuary and other related expenses.

73. Elixir made it clear that she didn't want anyone from the Family to attend Ricky's funeral and that she didn't want contact with any Family members, except her father. We have honored her wishes.

74. We also want to reiterate that when Ricky broke off friendly relations with us several years back, he made it very clear he no longer wished to hear from Mama or me. We honored his wishes and only sent Christmas greetings each year since then. Contrary to what some apostates allege, Ricky made no attempt whatsoever to contact Mama or me, or to discuss issues. There was no indication at all that he was seeking to talk with us. We never received an e-mail from him or a response to our Christmas notes. He never sent word to us via Family members he saw or talked to that he knew could easily contact us. He never sent word to us through Mama's relatives. The idea that Ricky tried numerous times to have a dialogue or initiate reconciliation with Mama and/or me is completely false.

75. During the past week there have been a number of news articles published in Tucson, Arizona, where Angela was murdered. There were also three articles published in national American papers, one in the *New York Times* and two in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. We're not sure at this point how extensive the media coverage will be, taking into account what has

transpired so far. Our detractors are attempting to drum up as much media as possible and are trying to use the deaths of Angela and Ricky as a platform for their stated purpose of harming the Family. Thank the Lord for His wonderful key power to bring to naught the attacks of our enemies! “When you call on the power of the keys of protection, My strong angels of defense who stand ready to keep you from harm will do whatever it takes to protect you.”

76. That’s the latest news we have at the moment. We will update you as to any further development. We’re sorry to have to write you the details of all of this. However, because the media and the former member sites publish a lot of misinformation, we wanted to keep you informed. We will be publishing an official statement from The Family on all of this in the near future.

77. Please pray that we can complete the GN and get it to you very soon. In the meantime, please keep praying, keep going to the Word, and keep doing the job of witnessing and winning the world. We love you and are proud of you.

Love, Peter

MO site announcement #5

The Next Focus in the Battle!

By Peter

January 20, 2005

Dear Family,

78. Mama and I love you very much! Thank you so much for your prayers, and also for your faith and devotion to the cause of winning the world! We want to update you a bit more via this notice, as well as to pass on some important counsel from the Lord.

79. I have been writing these recent notices for you, dear Family, because Mama has been very busy working on the GN that we pray will be posted very soon. Thank you for praying for Mama’s strength. She has been very tired

because of the extra workload, and her eyes are very sore, but our Husband is giving her grace and rise-above power so that she can keep working and preparing the Lord’s Words.

80. We know you have been praying for Mama and me, and we are so thankful that you sacrifice your time to uphold us in prayer, and we really do need it!

81. The Lord gave an important message last night that we want to get to you right away, in which He explains that we need to put much more emphasis on prayer for this media battle we’re fighting right now. Our wonderful Love is doing miracles, He’s opening doors to get out the message, and even if the media coverage we have had so far has not been that great, it could have been much worse. Our media spokespeople and those on the International PR board have been very busy, and they are very thankful for your prayers.

82. It’s possible that the media war will increase, as there have now been a few TV programs aired. This has potential to take things to another level. It remains to be seen how many other networks in other countries besides the US will pick up the story, and that will affect how long this battle continues. We don’t need to worry or fear, but we do need to work hard and pray hard and make sure we’re in step with the Lord, checking with Him each step of the way.

83. When checking in with our Husband on what we should do next, if there was anything more that we could do to fight the negative media coverage we’re getting, He explained that we can’t expect to get fair treatment, and certainly not positive treatment, at the hands of the media. Already there have been numerous wrong and completely false statements—some way out there—printed by the media, and we can expect more of the same. We still need to do what we can to get the truth out, we need to answer the questions and rebut the false statements in the articles, but we won’t necessarily “win” this media war simply by fighting hard and working hard. The secret to turning this

battle around is found in desperate prayer, and the Lord has instructed Mama and me to issue a proclamation calling all Family members to pray desperately against these attacks. He said:

84. (*Jesus:*) I wish for you, My dear Family, to put much, much more emphasis on prayer. You are praying, I know, but you've mostly been praying for Mama and Peter. Those prayers have been prayed in love, and they have been felt. They have been effectual. Now I ask that you broaden your prayers to include the battle for souls, for your flocks, for the faith of your teens and young people. Prayer is the first line of defense. Prayer must be the priority.

85. Just as My queen sent a stirring message to the Family to pray when you were involved in extensive court cases in the past, I ask that you do so again. You must see that prayer is the key; prayer is what will win the battle. This battle is not going away until it's won, and it won't be won without your desperate prayers.

86. Victory is not guaranteed. It's contingent upon your prayers! This is a call to arms to prayer! Rally to fight in prayer! If your enemies want a battle, then they'll get one! We have not yet begun to fight; and fight you must—in prayer! These who attack you laugh and rejoice now at their seeming victories, but they shall be brought low in defeat. But this will be done by aggressively fighting in the spirit, in the best ways you know how—through prayer and through actively giving the truth.

87. This will be a heavy battle, but not as long as some in the past have been. Most of the time it may even look like you're losing, but don't worry. Don't judge by outward appearance and how things seem on the surface. I will deliver the victory into your hands, and you will glorify Me.

88. Use this opportunity to prove the power of God. Praise Me for the opportunity to wield the keys that will defeat these puny attempts to stop My rain. (*End of message.*)

89. (*Peter:*) Here is an excerpt of the call to prayer that Mama issued in the past when we were suffering serious persecution. While this present situation hasn't progressed to the same point as these excerpts refer to, when many of our brethren were in jail and our children were in the care of social services, still, the principles apply.

(From "We Must Pray!—And Pray!—And Pray Again")

(Mama:) All Hell is arrayed against the children of God—God's Family worldwide. All the mighty power of the System is being brought down upon those few who would dare to speak or act against it with the truth of God's Word. It's funny how they think they can so easily snuff us out, because of course they see things so carnally in the flesh, and their eyes are blinded so they can't see our mighty God and all His great hosts of Heaven who stand ready to protect and defend us! So no matter how great the fury of our enemies, nor how proud their boastings, nor how clever their machinations, nor how violent and widespread their opposition, their threats and boasts hold no danger for us. They're lying vanities, for we have God's promise, "If God be for us, who can be against us!" (See also "They Can't Stop Our Rain," ML #128.)

Remind My People to Pray!

We have all these wonderful promises that the Lord has given to reassure us that "I, the Lord thy God, am a mighty God, I will come and save thee," and "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." "Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed for I am thy God." He's promised to give us the victory, take vengeance on our enemies, save our children, make us a witness to the world, and show His mighty power. What more could we want than that?

He's told us the battle is His and to stand back and see Him fight. Does that mean we can now just go our merry way and forget all

about our enemies? Well, not exactly. The Lord always has a job for us to do, and we work in partnership with Him.

After I heard some beautiful, beautiful prophecies and verses and visions that our staff here received, I said, “Well, Lord, it looks like You’ve got everything under control, and there’s not much we could do even if we wanted to. But is there anything that You do want us to do, any way we can help those who are in the midst of these battles?” And the Lord said, “The main thing I want you to do is to remind My people to pray.”

Victory Is Not Guaranteed, Unless We Pray!

Just because something is the Lord’s will for you does not automatically mean that everything is going to go your way. Why are we told repeatedly to pray, if everything is all settled and everything is going to automatically be fine? What are we doing spending all of this time praying desperately if it’s automatically all okay? We would just be wasting our time if that were the case. He says, “Ye have not because ye ask not.” What a sad thing to realize that sometimes the Lord can’t give protection, supply, healing or souls because we have failed to pray. As Dad said: “God said to Israel one time that bad things were happening because, ‘No man stirreth himself to call upon Me’! (Isa.64:7). So the Lord really does leave a lot up to us: If we stir ourselves, then God will stir Himself. An awful lot depends on us, our faith and our prayers and what we want done.” (ML #1957:34; See also Good Thots, pg.637, #243.)

“But,” you say, “this is different, because the Lord has given us prophecies and verses.... He’s not going to let anything bad happen and He’s going to take vengeance on our enemies. He has said it Himself.” Yes, but do you see why He said it?—Because He knew that we were going to pray. He knows the future and He knows that you are going to

take up the commission to fight desperately in prayer.

The Lord can fulfill His promises only if we do our part. All these beautiful promises the Lord has given have one condition, that His people far and wide in all parts of the world pray. But He knows you’re going to pray, He knows you’re going to obey, therefore He was able to tell us the glorious outcome through prophecies. What a wonderful thing to know the outcome and not have to worry or fear!—But we must do our part! (Please see also “The Spiritual Warfare Depends on Us!” ML #2327.)

Not only is it our job to pray, but also to fight with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. We need to not only pray, but we need to use the Word. That’s what our people who are directly involved in these persecution situations have to do; they have to actually stand up and give the Word of the Lord to our enemies. They have to give clear testimonies of our life for the Lord and what His Word tells us to do. So the most important ways that we can fight are in prayer and with the Word. (ML #2783:3–6, 8, 10, 13–14, DB 11).

90. (Peter:) We are in the year of strengthening, and we can’t allow the Enemy’s attacks to stop us or even slow us down. We cannot allow our time to be taken up by these media battles and other related attacks when we need to focus on the forward movement of strengthening our Homes and winning the world. We must nip these attacks in the bud and thwart our enemies’ plans, and we can only do that through prayer.

91. Mama and I ask that you please take time in your daily prayer vigils to pray for the following prayer requests:

- That the media storm will die down quickly, and that as much as possible, it will not go international.
- For the wisdom of our media spokespeople, especially for Marc and Claire who are on the front lines, doing many

interviews, writing rebuttals to the inaccuracies being published, going over publications, appearing on television, etc. They have been getting very little sleep. Please pray for their wisdom, anointing, conviction, articulation, faith, encouragement, security and health, and also for the members of their Home who need strength and encouragement as well.

- That the reporters we're involved with will be changed through seeing our sample and hearing the truth.
- For the teens and young people in the Family, that they will not be stumbled or have their faith hurt by the lies of our enemies, that their parents and shepherds will have wisdom, love, patience and anointing in answering their questions, leading them to the truth, and helping them to put things into perspective.
- For our sheep, followers, outside members, potential disciples, Activated members, relatives, etc., that they will not give heed to the lies of the Enemy, but will believe the Word and be strengthened.
- For the Family's wisdom, initiative, faith, boldness and conviction in going on the attack to answer the accusations of our enemies, and strengthening the faith of those who want to hear the truth.
- For all Family members to get quality and feeding Word time during this time of increased attacks on our faith and lifestyle. Against the Enemy's doubts, fears, and mind battles.
- That no one will be bothered with bad pictures due to the very sad and cruel way that Angela was killed.
- That this media storm will not affect the tool distribution, provisioning and fundraising of our Family Homes, for miracles of supply.
- That no officials will be moved by the accusations of our apostates to take action, as has happened in the past.
- For all the Family to be prepared in heart and spirit for any repercussions that might come about because of this media storm.
- That the truth will be preached.
- Against those that want to use the deaths of Angela and Ricky to destroy the Family, that the truth will come forth, and that those who seek to do us harm will be caught in the web of lies that they are weaving, and will be exposed, humiliated, and set back.
- For those who do not know who to believe or what to believe, that they will see the truth clearly and will be strengthened in their convictions.
- That those who are skeptical but still undecided will be receptive to the truth, the Lord's still small voice speaking in their hearts.
- That the Family will be wise, loving, and full of conviction when they talk with their sheep, friends, contacts, outside members, etc., and answer their questions; that the faith of our flock will not be hurt by this very negative media coverage and its distorted and wrong presentation of the Family's past.
- For the vast majority of our former members, who have moved on with their lives, that they will not be affected by this negative publicity or the "call to arms" to fight the Family. For the peace, stability and well-being of those who remain favorable or indifferent.
- Against those who have declared themselves our enemies, especially against Daniel Roselle, James Penn (Philip Sherwood), Sam Ajemian and others, known and unknown, who are very active in spearheading this attack. That they will be discredited.
- For the continued wisdom of our lawyers and academic sources as they advise us in what steps to take.

- That the academics who have done studies on the Family and who are experts on new religious movements will be given a platform from which to speak the truth. That others who are concerned about religious freedom and fair press coverage will rise to the occasion to defend us and speak out on our behalf.
- For Mama's and Angela's relatives, for the Lord to supply all their needs, give them spiritual strength and stamina, help them to not be weakened by the Enemy's lies, for encouragement, good health and rest, and that they will not get pulled into the ugly media war.
- That we in the Family will have the Lord's perspective and attitude toward our enemies, that we will not get bitter, that we will love our enemies with the Lord's love, and pray for those that persecute us. (See Mat.5:44.)
- That the small handful of vengeful, bitter, vitriolic apostates will be exposed for the part they played in poisoning Ricky's mind and provoking him to do what he did.
- That the Lord will have His perfect way, that He will be able to accomplish His plan through this, and that we will be faithful to pray desperately so that the Lord will have free rein to work as He knows is best.
- That WS will not be disabled from getting out the Word to the Family.
- That we will continue to use the undefeatable weapon of praise.
- That we will not be distracted from our important work of winning the world for Jesus, that we'll keep the vision, stay on the attack, and come through this stronger than before.
- That our eyes will be opened to the spiritual warfare through this, and that we'll be more effective fighters as a result.

Spirit helpers we can call on in times of persecution

92. To aid us in our prayer efforts, Mama asked the Lord who we can call on to help us in this battle of persecution, for the media, for our former members, for protection, etc. Below is our Protector's answer and insight on who we can call on at this time.

93. (Jesus:) Michael the Archangel stands ready. The forces under his command are on high alert. Many have already been deployed to key positions. Their primary task is to protect the Family, to answer your prayers in thwarting the Enemy from his attempts to stir up further publicity. Their secondary task is to be ready to launch counterattacks to silence and stop those who would do you harm.

94. In individual situations, My Family can call on Tola and Tor for your protection. You have Watchdog and Haven who are the custodians of the children, who will faithfully stand guard over the children. And you have the keys of foresight, wisdom, insight, angelic protection, and heavenly speech, which will cause those you speak with to marvel at the answers, for they will be at a loss to find a way to twist them to sound bad.

95. Each Home should claim their personal key craft to be hovering overhead at all times, as well as key crafts to accompany any who go out witnessing, or need to go out for any other task, so that they will carry with them all the power and wisdom of Heaven.

96. Call on William Gladstone to help your brethren who are at the forefront of the battle handling the media, for Gladstone is a master of the wisdom of turning controversy into promotion of the Gospel. He has been in special training for this time of persecution and knows the Enemy's plans thoroughly.

97. The Enemy has launched a full attack; it's time to call in the Wildcats of Heaven. These will not so much shield you, but instead will launch counterattacks that will set the Enemy

back and cause him so much trouble that he will be unable to focus a serious effort on attacking you.

98. I also send you the Activation Angel of Miracles, who will stand guard ready to blind eyes, stop the mouths of your enemies, turn the hearts of the authorities, and give you advance warning of what the Enemy is trying to do.

99. I have sworn to bring you before the world as My greatest witnesses. The time is near at hand when you will find yourselves catapulted into key positions in preparation for the days ahead. I have been slowly moving My children into these places and situations for the Endtime scenario, but the pace will now pick up.

100. How much or how little persecution will touch your life depends on how faithful you are with the tools I have already given you, how desperate you are to know My highest and best for you, and how diligent you are to obey those leadings. I will use persecution to work My plan when needed, but I will also not allow persecution to touch you unless it is for a purpose, to increase your message, to cause you to grow and be strengthened, to fill the Enemy's cup to the full that you can see My judgments upon the wicked, and rejoice the more to be counted worthy to be one of My Endtime witnesses.

101. The battle is in full array. The Enemy shouts his taunts. He sees but a small band of soldiers, but he is unsettled by the glow of My Spirit around them. As he begins his charge, expecting easy victory, he will be faced with the very forces of Heaven as they appear all around you.

102. This battle will be fierce but short and the Enemy will be fully routed as never before. As you use all that I have already given you, you will see My power manifested as never before. You will look in wonder as the seemingly vastly superior forces of the Enemy are forced to flee in terror at the onslaught of the forces of Heaven as they rush past you into the fray, and the Enemy's expected destruction of My Family

is turned into a mighty slaughter of his own forces. They will be shamed and humiliated. You will be vindicated as My children. This will begin a time in which the Family will become the many things I have promised in preparation for the final scene.

103. There will be casualties along the way—stragglers who have not moved into the positions I gave them. But for those who desire to follow all the way, it will be a day of realizing that the power and weapons you need are all at your disposal. Pick them up and use them. Call on your spirit helpers or seek them out if you have not already. Time is not just short, it is almost nonexistent. I can give no more till My children use what they already have, and what they have is more than enough to conquer the whole world. (*End of message.*)

104. (*Jesus:*) For you, My Endtime army, I say all of Heaven awaits your command at this time. Great legions of fighters and warriors in the spirit—with Archangel Michael at their helm—are at your side as you access the keys. Great spirits and fighters from all ages, including Cromwell, Alexander the Great, and William Wallace rally to the cry!

105. (Vision: I'm seeing what looks like a huge arena and stadium. From above, these huge and powerful gates are being opened and out into the arena storms what looks like legions upon legions of thundering light! It's so immense that I can't see any details—it's just like a giant wall of incredible power and force approaching. They're the armies of Heaven, and you can tell they are ready to fight and do some serious damage!)

106. All are at your command; all are for you, the children of David. Each one of you has many personal warriors and fighters of the spirit—revealed and unrevealed—as well as those I have revealed to My queen as helping the Family in general. All are at your com-

mand—the onus is on you to activate and use their power.

107. But yes, there is one army which has been training long and hard in preparation for this particular time and battle—that is Armina and her forces. She has a great army who stand ready to fight for those who are persecuted for My Word's sake. Now is her day! The days of preparation for open war are over for both Armina and for you, My Family. Now you and they are unitedly being called to the front lines to engage in battle.

108. She and her forces have been specially trained to fight against those who would try to stop My work through you. One of her fighters stands at the side of every child of David, supporting you in spirit, counseling you, melding with you—so you become as one attacking offensive warrior. This is what they have been trained for. You—each one of you—are about to become one with their training and their skill as you call on Armina's power.

109. Remember, their particular skills lie in their ability to stay one step ahead of the Enemy—advance strategy. They're masters at covert undercover operations in the spirit. They've become experts in preemptive warfare. Their training has been tough and rigorous, but now they're fully equipped and ready to fulfill their ultimate calling in assisting you in this battle. They're not afraid of adverse conditions of persecution—in fact, they thrive on them! They stand alert—every fiber of their beings focused—ready to attack and conquer!

110. Now is Armina's hour and your hour as the joint conquering army you are destined to be. Use that power! Conquer and gloriously defeat the Enemy with that power! (*End of message.*)

111. (*Peter:*) Besides calling on these spirit helpers, please also remember to pray against the Vandari and Satan himself.

112. Another question that Mama had a few of her channels pray about was: Who can we

call on in spirit to protect and shield our many favorable former members so that they won't be harmed by this barrage of negative input and media coverage? Who can we call on to help fight in the spirit against the actions of the ex-members who are actively campaigning to harm the Family? Few of our former members are vindictive, and even the ones that have really become apostate, the Lord must have someone we can call on to help them—or hinder them—according to the Lord's will.

113. Please remember, dear Family, that we have a large number of former members—nearly 32,000, in fact—and the vast majority of these are not participants in this campaign being currently launched. Thanks for your prayers for these folks, that the Lord will continue to work in their lives and bring them closer to Him. As a review, here is an excerpt of a previously published GN.

(Mama:) There's a huge range of attitudes and relationships among our children and loved ones who have left. Some are bitter, angry, and vindictive. Others are unhappy and struggling. Others are indifferent toward the Family, or fairly content in their new lifestyle. Others remain very hungry for the Word, counsel, love and fellowship.

I don't like to dwell on the negative, but this GN is going to focus mainly on your relationship with those who have bitterness or grudges against you or against the Family, or who even go further than that and are actively working against us. But before we get into that, let me say that there are many former members who don't fall into that category at all. In fact, in com-

parison to the many thousands of former members, just a very small but very vocal minority fall into that category.

We have many former members who still appreciate our love and communication, and do their best to stay positive and to dwell on the things we have in common. We are proud of them, and urge you to help and encourage and support and feed them spiritually in whatever ways the Lord shows you are appropriate in your situation.

It's not easy for our young people who've left the Family to be out on their own, surrounded by so much negative influence and bitterness, especially now that our enemies have launched an all-out attack to pull more of our young people over to their side—barraging them with negative input, and in some cases even offering financial payment to speak against us. Those who have withstood that and stayed true to what they know is right deserve a tremendous amount of credit and appreciation. They are on Peter's and my daily prayer list; and we hope they're on yours, too. They really need our prayers and a firm support base of unconditional love, as the battle is very intense and they have to face it alone. We want them to feel our love and our prayers, we want them to have their needs met, and we're very proud of them for choosing to do something productive with their lives rather than dwell on the past and any bitterness they might have. (ML #3459:6–9, GN 1044).

114. (Peter:) Now we'll get back to the Lord's message revealing the spirit helpers that we can call on specifically when praying for our former members in general, and when praying

against those few who are actively fighting to destroy the Family.

115. (Jesus:) For some of those who have strayed from My side, My angels of conscience will work in their lives and bring them back to the light; I refer to My wandering ones who have not yet strayed far from the light and into the darkness of this world. For these, the power of the angels of conscience can be called upon and activated on their behalf to influence and speak to them, for their spirits have not rejected My light.

116. These angels have influence and positive power over their thoughts, and having known each one of My children intimately from birth know best how to aid and help each person in turning them away from strong pride, rebellion, and the Enemy's downward pull. However, if at any point their voice is silenced, ignored, or brushed aside due to someone persistently making the wrong choices and choosing darkness over light, then My angels of conscience and their power to influence and help a person is handicapped and limited, just as My help is limited depending on the majesty of choice.

117. But there is one whose power I now urge you to call upon and activate in addition to My angels of conscience. For this one, with his army of co-workers, will actively guard and fight for My children who have left the fold—even those who through pride have chosen the Enemy's rebellion and rejection. For these are still Mine, even if they have chosen the Enemy's camp of darkness over My light and truth at this point. As you are now witnessing, there is a great dividing amongst the peoples of the world, as well as My children who have left your side. Soon none will be able to sit on the fence.

118. Now I introduce Shadow and his team. He it is who steps in when the influence of conscience has been nullified due to wrong choices and decisions made. Shadow cannot be brushed aside or ignored. One from the army of Shadow is assigned to each of My children who

has left the fold of David, and like the helmet of salvation, this spirit being cannot be forcibly detached or cast aside. Once this one is specifically called upon and “attached” to someone in spirit through prayer, he will always remain, just as surely as one cannot remove their own shadow. In the spiritual realm, his mere presence beside one of My children is enough to send Obtherion and his putrid pride cowering and slithering away in ignominious defeat.

119. To explain the power of Shadow and his army: In the spiritual realm, when you call on Shadow, one of his army is literally attached in spirit to the person you are praying for. It’s as if he is sewn in spirit to the soles of their feet, so that where they walk he walks—he’s always right behind them, just as your shadow you always have with you. I urge you to activate Shadow’s power, for he has been created to specifically follow and stay on the heels of all of My children of David—young and old—who have left the fold. He is many, for he has an enormous army at his command, those who do his bidding, those who carry his power and accomplish his mission; these ones are sufficient in multitude to care for each of My children of David as needed.

120. This is why I am giving you Shadow and his multitude, who I am sending to these ones who wander in the darkness of this world. Where an angel of conscience has had to step aside because of many wrong choices and much exposure to the ways and darkness of the world, one from the army of Shadow will take her place.

121. For some Shadow will be a “soft sole” under their feet—helping pull them slowly back to the light—for that is all some will need as the conditions of the world worsen and they begin to see My Word fulfilled before their eyes. But for others he will be as tight, ill-fitting shoes, or as sand or a pebble constantly rubbing underfoot—so that they cannot escape his annoyance or persistent irritation and bother, to the point that they will have to stop, sit up and take notice.

122. For yet others, he will be as a hindering sharp “thorn” that digs itself deeper and deeper into the layers of skin upon the foot, so that every step is fraught with pain in order to halt the feet that run faster and further into the pits of pride, darkness and destruction.

123. For are not the soles of the feet one of the most sensitive parts of the body?—From whence a network of nerves trace themselves throughout the entire body? What is felt in the foot is felt in the body. And so is Shadow’s power—and those who work with him—as they go to work beneath the feet of those who have set about the path of the world.

124. So it is a slow work in some, and a more pronounced and painful one in others. But it will be a work wrought by Me, and as I have begun a good work in each of My children—even those who have left the fold—so shall I perform and complete it. (*End of message.*)

125. (*Jesus:*) Call on Faithful. She and her band of helpers work to touch the hearts of the former members. They have been working overtime since Angela and Ricky’s deaths, because a flood of lies from the Enemy has been sent to engulf those apostates who have rejected My Word and My existence, those who are completely reprobate in their minds. Faithful and her band have simply stepped aside and let this flood have its way, and the results as seen in the actions of these few are serving as a living sample of how far astray someone can go when they reject My Word, My truth, and My existence. Those former members who are still sensitive to My Spirit are seeing the actions and hearing the lies of these few apostates, and they are being warned; they are seeing a true-life example of the progression of events, of what happens when people reject Me and must be given over to a reprobate mind.

126. To varying degrees many former members have chosen to set aside or in some cases reject My truth, and therefore the voices of Faithful and her band have at best been faint

in their hearts until now. However, the shock of recent events has caused many to stop and reconsider all that they have been fed by these apostates. Many know that they have been fed much of the same poison as Ricky, and they now see where that led him.

127. They have through their questioning and seeking opened the door for Faithful and her band to enter in and carry the truth into their hearts. This is only a temporary situation. The doors will not remain open for very long. Those who choose to accept the light will again turn toward Me, but those who again reject it will find it replaced with even greater darkness than before. Each must choose. The day of sitting on the fence is over, and they must either fight to get back on My side or they will be pulled down more than ever.

128. In times of war those who willingly choose to wander into the Enemy's territory cannot be protected the way those who remain where they belong can be. Some will be singled and flee back to My camp at a later date, but as each day passes the chances of their making it back grow less. This is their last easy chance to open their eyes, forsake their pride, and return to the fold—but it is their choice, and no one, not even Faithful and her band, can make the choice for them.

129. As for holding even the most vindictive apostates in check, there will come a time when their words will be silenced, but at this moment I am allowing their tirades to accomplish My purpose in dividing the sheep from the goats. I will not allow it to bring harm, and will personally silence their lying mouths when they have accomplished their purpose. (*End of message.*)

130. (*Peter:*) Thank you so much for taking time each day to pray for the prayer requests listed earlier and any others that you are personally aware of as the battle progresses. Please do faithfully call on these magnificent spirit helpers, so that we can be availing ourselves

of all the tremendous power at our disposal.

131. Besides the need to fight desperately in prayer, the Lord also gave important counsel about how we need to faithfully care for our flocks, to protect them from being stumbled by what they might read in the newspapers or see on television or hear from the former members. Here is the Lord's counsel on what we need to do to protect our sheep and loved ones from having their faith hurt. You will need to pray about what to do in your specific situation. Not only is each person different, but each country will be affected differently at this point in time. Obviously, the news is hitting the US much more strongly now than other countries. But that could change quickly.

132. (*Jesus:*) The most dangerous fallout of this media war will be with those who are closest to you, your sheep, your followers—those who are intimate with you, who feel they know you, those who risk having their faith hurt, or who could turn away from you due to worrying about their reputation. You must focus on your precious sheep, the ones that have been laboring to enter the fold and grow in faith. You must protect their light of faith. These, your followers, are the ones who stand to be truly hurt through these lies. The masses will watch and forget and go on with their lives, dull and untouched. But your precious sheep will fear, suffer confusion, and possibly even lose faith.

133. My king and queen, you just have to get the truth into the hands of those who will run with it. And who will run with it? Well, I will tell you now of your secret weapon. You know you won't get a fair shake from the media. You wish to find those reporters who are fair who will present your side. But all the while, there in your hands, you have thousands of such "reporters" at your disposal. And these reporters don't need interviews, for they are prepared, they know the story, they speak the truth from their hearts—they are your own brethren, your dedicated missionaries. They

are the ones who will spread the word and get out “the other side” to those who really count, those who are truly searching—not to the masses, not to the multitudes through the media, but personally, one by one to their sheep, contacts, and friends.

134. Let that be your next “push” in this war. You must have your spokespeople continue to carry on in their arena, but you can put in motion the literal “army” you have on the front lines, to speak to the people. Give your troops the ammo. Give them the compilations, give them the background, give them the GN excerpts, give them the truth in an easily accessible format that will refute these lies of your apostates.

135. The Family is willing to go, to tell, to proclaim. They need to be instructed and told the battle plan, and then they will mobilize and fight! They will engage in hand-to-hand combat in spirit that will bring to naught this major mass media attack of the Devil. You might not be able to turn around the minds of the masses; in fact, you won't be able to. But that's okay. You're not to worry about the masses, for the majority are already given over to the Evil One. You are to focus on the few that can be saved, the few that will receive the truth, the few for whom there is still hope.

136. Those who want to believe, who want to continue to follow, will find the faith to believe if you give them the truth. Your sheep and followers need the answers, they need material to use when people question them, they need to be able to answer with boldness and conviction. In order to do this, the Family must be given the ammunition.

137. Time is of the essence. This is an urgent venture. This information for the Family will need to be pulled together quickly, because it's in these next days that many will make decisions; they will move toward the light or turn away.

138. Challenge the Family to get the truth out, to combat the lies in the way they know

best . . . person by person. You have to take this battle to the front lines, to hand-to-hand combat in spirit, as your soldiers give the truth, witness, explain, pray and win the confidence of one person at a time. When all is said and done, it may look like you have lost the media war, but you will have saved your flocks. (*End of message.*)

139. (*Peter:*) Please do pray about what you might need to do to help your friends, contacts, sheep, outside members, Activated members, provisioning contacts, friendly former members, etc., to weather this media storm by giving them the truth of the Word. In order to help you do this, we will be posting an official statement from the Family soon, hopefully within 24 hours. Also, our international PR board will be compiling other material that you will find helpful. That too will be posted on the MO site very soon.

140. We don't have time to write a lot of new original material to address these accusations, but since much of what the apostates are saying has been covered already in the pubs and statements in the past, we are compiling that information for you in a way that can be easily accessed. Not that you are obligated to give these things directly to your sheep, but you can. You can also study the material and then speak to your sheep personally. We have seen in our own contact with people who we've needed to give explanations to regarding Ricky and Angela's deaths that those who want to believe, who have faith, readily accept our explanations of the truth with thanksgiving, if we just take the time to explain.

141. This same material will help you to answer the questions of our own teens and the young people in your Homes, which is another crucial part of your witnessing to save your flocks. Please do take the time to find out what the teens and young people in your Home are hearing and reading, so you can help them sort out their questions. Many young people are

being sent the postings from the Moving On site, so please communicate with those in your Home and ask the Lord how you can help them to stay strong in faith.

142. A notice has gone up on the MO site that explains that you can also pull excerpts of the previous notices of explanation that Mama and I have written to give to those who have questions, if you feel some of that information will help your sheep and friends and relatives. Those notices or excerpts of them could be particularly helpful for those friends and contacts who have read the newspaper articles or seen any television programs.

143. We love you very much, dear Family, and keep you in our daily prayers. God bless and keep you as you pray fervently and give the truth to the hungry!

Much love in our Husband,
Peter

MO site announcement #6

By Peter

January 22, 2005

Dear Family,

144. God bless you! We love you and appreciate you so much. You are in our prayers and we are very thankful for yours.

145. Since the last update, a number of things have come up which we want to keep you informed about. We're sorry that some of this is unpleasant news, but it's important that you know the state of things so you can both pray and understand. Since some of the details in this update are rather gruesome, please stop and claim the keys for peace and faith before reading any further.

146. As you know, Ricky filmed a video of himself the evening before killing Angela. It's a very disturbing, profanity-filled, 45-minute video, in which he talks about his hatred of Mama, Dad, me, and the Family. He talks about

his past in the Family, his desire to find and kill Mama and me, and his thoughts of suicide.

147. He also talks about his plan to gather information in order to find Mama's location, and about plans to torture Angela into giving him this information. He shows the various weapons and instruments he intends to use for this. He displays and talks about his knife, which he had specially sharpened, and says it's only "for one purpose, and that is taking out the scum...". He also displays and talks about his semi-automatic handgun, spare magazines of which he loads throughout much of the video.

148. Following is a quote from the *San Francisco Chronicle* written by a reporter who had viewed the video: "Rodriguez also displays a large Kabar knife along with duct tape, a drill and a soldering iron he intended to use as implements of torture. Tucson police Detective Ben Jiminez said Smith was stabbed several times in the arm, indicating that she put up a struggle before Rodriguez slit her throat, but said there was no evidence that she was tortured."

149. Thank the Lord that despite the terrible circumstances surrounding Angela's death, we know that our Husband delivered her, and she now has peace and eternal happiness in Heaven. Also, in the new GN which will be coming to you soon, our Husband talks about Angela's last moments, and the wonderful miracles He did for her. We know you will find it comforting.

150. There continue to be some newspaper articles in the U.S. about the incident and the Family. Reporters in England and Japan are calling Family spokespersons for interviews as well.

151. The television media is now focusing on the story. There was a U.S. program that devoted about 10 minutes to it on CNN, a five-minute spot on one of the morning shows, and a Spanish language program which was broadcast in the U.S. and Mexico. A number of other shows have called, asking our U.S. spokespersons to participate in upcoming programs. So we can expect that over the next few weeks

there will continue to be television shows about the Family.

152. Most of these shows, while mentioning Angela's murder at the hand of Ricky, will probably be focused on child abuse. This is the issue that the antagonistic apostates who are fueling the media campaign and are appearing on the TV shows are focusing on. They are making a number of false claims, namely that Mama and I have never apologized for any problems along these lines that occurred in the past, and that we never acknowledged that it had happened in the past. They are also insinuating that it's an ongoing problem within the Family. They are wrong on all three accounts. At the end of this update I will include those apologies, which were written at various times since 1993. Mama and I stand by those apologies.

153. One matter of concern to us is that these TV shows could stir up authorities to raid Family Homes, similar to how the same false accusations of abuse of children caused the raids and imprisonment and the taking of our children in the early '90s. Some of the active apostate former members who are fueling the media campaign claim that this isn't their goal, and that they don't wish for it to happen—however, they have no control of the outcome. We must all pray desperately that it doesn't go that far.

154. On Wednesday, some Family young people put up a website at www.myconclusion.com which is a platform for second-generation Family members to post their—and others'—thoughts on all of the recent happenings. It's wonderful to hear what you second-generation Family members have to say about the events of the past days, and about your lives in the Family. We're very proud of you for standing up and telling the world how you feel. It's really great. If you have a chance to get online and read the responses on that site, I think you'll find it very inspiring.

155. The handful of second-generation former members who are speaking ill of the

Family apparently have no idea that there are over 1,800 of you second-generation members over the age of 18 who are disciples, who are ready to stand up and fight for your faith and religious freedom. They can't seem to understand that you are happy to be in the Family. They can't seem to get it that you are in the Family of your own free will, that you have chosen to serve the Lord in the Family, and that you have a desire to help mankind through your service to God.

156. In reading over the posts on this new website, Mama and I were very impressed not only with your conviction, but also the comments you made in regards to our many former members who are not part of this latest media campaign, and don't care to be. A number of you expressed your respect and love for those who have left the Family and who have built a new life. This is how Mama and I feel as well.

157. And, while we must fight back against the verbal attacks of a few of our former members, those that we consider apostates and who have openly declared that they want to destroy the Family and what we stand for, the vast majority of former members do not fall into that category, as I mentioned in "The Next Focus in the Battle." The majority of those who have left the Family have the same respect for your choice to remain as you do for their choice to leave. Our hope is that those of you in the Family and the level-headed former members can somehow help the media, the authorities, and the general populace to understand that a relatively small number of people who are angry and bitter about their time in the Family are fueling this media war with the goal of destroying the Family, but they don't speak for all of you.

158. One last point in regards to former members: We have said, and many of you who knew Ricky while he was in the Family have confirmed, that Ricky did not express hatred toward the Family or his mother or his Family life while he was a member. We have explained that

through his contact with some apostate former members he took on much of their bitterness and hatred, which brought about such tragic results. In saying this, we don't mean to infer that all former members contributed to his downfall. That's not the case at all. We know that some of those who knew him understood that he was angry and making threats, and they tried to help him to see that he was heading down the wrong road. We know that some sincerely tried to help him get over his anger and to move on with his life. We want to thank those former members who tried to help him. Even though he left the Family and eventually wanted nothing to do with us and made threats against us, he was still our son, we loved him, and we're grateful to any and all who tried to help him.

159. Thank you, dear Family, for your many notes, web postings, prophecies and words of love and comfort that you have sent to Mama and me. They have been a source of encouragement to us. It's painful to lose a child and a dear friend, especially under such circumstances. We're very thankful that you continue to uphold us in your prayers, because without them, it would be much more difficult.

160. A number of you have asked how Mama is coping with all of this, so I asked her, and here's what she said:

161. "This is of course a difficult time, as my son, whom I loved dearly, has killed someone who was like a sister to me, and has taken his own life. I have felt deep sadness at their deaths.

162. "Angela was a dear friend of mine for close to 30 years. For the many years she lived with us she was Ricky's friend as well. She lived a beautiful life, one full of love and service for those around her and for God. While I am sad about no longer having her here with us on Earth, I know that she's enjoying Heaven, so that brings me happiness.

163. "Ricky was my son, but I never knew him as Ricky. At the beginning of his teen years

he chose to go by the name Pete, a name which he kept until leaving the Family when he was 25. Pete was a wonderful boy—charming, fun to be with. I loved him and he loved me. We enjoyed each other's company.

164. "He left our Home, as a Family member, to go to the mission field. I was proud of him for that. That was the Pete I knew.

165. "In time he decided to leave the Family. He started to communicate with apostate-type former members, including James Penn. It was then that he became Ricky. He started to write terrible things about me and about the Family. I had read things that were very similar before, in letters James Penn and others had written. He was beginning to take on the complaints of others. Pretty soon his letters were filled with foul language, language that Pete hadn't used, but Ricky did. Next came the threats.

166. "While I loved Ricky because he was my son, I was deeply saddened at what he had become. The young man who made a foul-mouthed video saying how he wanted to kill me and how he planned to kill Angela, was not the Pete that I had last seen. He was someone very different. He was Ricky, someone who had changed drastically and had taken on the attitudes of those who wished to use him to their own ends.

167. "I know I wasn't a perfect mother; no mother is, but during the nearly twenty-five years Pete lived with me he was a sweet boy, a loving boy, someone who was happy, who was well adjusted, who had a zest for life. That was my Pete. He became Ricky when he began to rub shoulders with hostile apostates.

168. "The video he made shows what a tortured soul he had become. This was very difficult to see. What he did was a terrible and seemingly unforgivable thing. I know, however, that Jesus died for our sins, no matter how horrible the sin. Jesus died for Ricky, too. I know Jesus forgives Ricky and I know that Angela, who is now in Heaven and wonderfully happy, forgives Ricky, and I forgive him too."

169. With the prospect of negative TV coverage on the horizon, we anticipate some difficult days ahead. However, we know that prayer is powerful, and that as we use the unbeatable force of praise, claim the keys of victory, and stand on the Lord's promises, He will protect us, keep us, and move us forward. So please keep praying, keep fighting, and keep doing the job of reaching the world with His love and salvation.

Love,
Peter

170. Today, when looking at the myconclusion website, I came across a posting from someone in WS who lived with us when Ricky did. I felt it would be helpful for you if I included it here. It's not that this one is superior to what the rest of you have written; it's just that this one gives a clear picture of what Ricky was like when he lived with us, in contrast to what he became after leaving.

Ricky was my friend!

171. My name is Amie, I'm 26 years old, and I just wanted to say a few words about the recent Ricky and Angela murder/suicide "nightmare."

172. It's unbelievable! I knew both Ricky and Angela, so it's pretty close to home. Ricky was always a very nice guy, and I liked him a lot. I lived in the same Home with him and his wife—and Ricky's mother—for over two years, between June 1997 and early 2000. He was a nice, kind, friendly guy. But sometime after he left and apparently got into contact with a small group of people who seem to have a vendetta against The Family, he started speaking against his mother and against the Family, and getting into violence and all kinds of horrible things.

173. Here is an excerpt of a note that I sent to Ricky's mother in 2002, after Ricky had started threatening to kill her and "take down" The Family:

174. "I wanted to write you, because I have been very saddened to hear some of Ricky's stories about you and Peter, about the Family, and even what he has indirectly said about me, one of his former friends. Because I lived with him almost the entire time he and Elixir were living with you, it's shocking to hear the things he's now saying. He's talking about the same time period I know. I was there. I lived in the same house, ate the same food, participated in the same activities, and saw the same things he did.

175. "I can't believe the things Ricky is saying about you. You have always been loving, kind, understanding and accepting of me, and I've seen you treat others the same. You've treated me like your own daughter in many ways, and right from the beginning I've always felt accepted—not because of what you could get out of me, but just because you loved me. If you had wanted someone you could have gotten more mileage from, someone you could "manipulate," someone who would have been more skilled in what you needed, you would have found someone else. But instead you had patience with me, teaching me what I needed to know to help you, and always believed that I could reach my potential. I'll always treasure the times I've been with you, what I've learned from you, and the love I've felt.

176. "I saw the love you had for Ricky, too; you spent time with him, you talked with him, you walked with him, you invited him to your room for dinner with you, and so much more. He always looked happy to see you, to be around you, and I could tell that you loved him. To tell you the truth, I often wondered what it would have been like to be in his shoes, to be able to spend special time with you—or to have the blessing of living with my mum again, and being able to spend special time with her. And to know that he now says that he never felt any love from you ... I just can't do the subject justice!

177. "I was happy to get to know and live with Tech, too, and during the time I lived

with her, and in my recent communications with her, I've known her to be happy, well-adjusted, smart, friendly, and gifted. She's a skilled teacher and a good mother, which is something I admire in her; just seeing Trevor and how smart and talented he is, is proof of this. She had the same upbringing, opportunities, and education as Ricky. She's happy and working to achieve her goals in life, while it seems Ricky has chosen to look on his past very differently.

178. "Ricky was a good friend of mine—and even though I'm not happy with what he's doing and the things he's saying, I still love him. When I first came to live with you, he and Elixir were the first ones who befriended me. They invited me to do things with them, they confided in me. Ricky told me what he thought and we had a lot of good conversations. Never once did he tell me, or even hint, of some of the things he is now saying. I knew he had a difficult time with some doctrines, and especially prophecy, but I never once felt that he didn't love you, or didn't feel your love for him.

179. "He also always spoke very highly of Grandpa (Father David). He would talk with a big smile on his face about the happy memories of his childhood—the fun things he did with Grandpa, the things Grandpa taught him, and how much he loved him. So to hear him now saying such opposite things, even about Grandpa, is shocking, and I just can't make sense of it. He also always spoke in very high regard about Peter, that he was so happy he was able to marry you, and that he couldn't think of a better person he would want to take care of you and help to lead The Family. Why does he now feel so differently?

180. "I don't know much about his earlier years, because I didn't know him or you then, but if he received as much love from you in those years of his life as I saw him receive during the years I knew him, then that to me would seem a very enviable childhood. Although I imagine you weren't able to be with him 24 hours a day, and

had others who helped you care for him, what career women these days have that luxury? Most mothers put their children in day care, school, or have babysitters (or a combination) so that they can pursue their careers. You had a career too, but unlike most working mothers, at least you were always at home, always on call, and very attuned to his needs.

181. "I always considered Ricky to be sociable, diplomatic, and well educated. When I was with him, I felt like I was in the presence of a smart man—certainly smarter than me in many respects. He appeared to have excellent writing, speaking, and communication skills. He knew how to express himself; he had an extensive vocabulary, and always impressed me in that way. He seemed to have an aptitude to learn, and retained most everything he heard, saw, or read. He was always a gentleman—kind, courteous, and amiable. I'm surprised that in many of the things he writes now, he uses foul language and vulgar terminology. That's certainly not the Ricky I knew.

182. "I recently visited my family, and it was a special time we all enjoyed. As you know, I have nine brothers and sisters, and most of them are no longer in The Family. We are still all very close, though, and love each other. I'm thankful that we are able to respect each other's decisions. They respect that I have chosen to be in The Family, and I respect their decisions to have chosen a different life. I appreciate almost more than anything their love and acceptance of me and what I've chosen to give my life to, even though they don't agree with everything I believe in or all the doctrines or theology of the Family.

183. "I'm proud of all of my brothers and sisters (and stepbrothers and sisters) who have gone on to do really good things—chefs, joining the police force, architecture, photography, etc. Some of them have decided to continue their studies, and others have integrated into the workplace, and seem to be excelling for the most part.

184. “Well, I’m getting off the subject. All that to say, I don’t understand why Ricky is saying so many untruths about you. I wish he would just get on with his life and engage in some sort of evangelistic work, winning souls and telling people about the simple love of Jesus. Or else do something worthwhile and for the good of mankind. All of the other issues, doctrines, beliefs, and all the rest, are so unimportant when it comes to what really matters. At least The Family is winning souls and witnessing. All doctrinal issues aside, we’re obeying Jesus’ call to ‘Go into all the world and preach the Gospel.’ I wish Ricky would do the same, and I pray that he does.

185. “I’m praying for you. I’m sorry for the sadness the things Ricky says must bring you. Having a child of my own now, I can imagine how crushing it would be if I were in your place. But I know the truth. I know you and Peter are sincere, loving, and most of all dedicated to Jesus and helping The Family to fulfill our mission. I’m thankful for you, and I’m praying for your health and happiness.” (End of my note to Mama.)

186. It’s shocking to me how Ricky changed from a nice guy to a cold-blooded murderer. It’s just unfathomable. But I guess we all have to make decisions in our lives, and sadly he definitely made some really wrong ones.

187. As for Angela, she was a wonderful woman, and such a kind soul—always giving and sharing. She didn’t deserve this one bit, and if it weren’t for my belief in Heaven and knowing she’s in a better place, I’d probably feel very sad and bitter about the whole thing. But I know she’s probably happier now than she’s ever been before, and I know she wouldn’t want us to be sad. She was one of those people who was always smiling, always happy—sort of like a ray of sunshine in your life.

188. It saddens me that some of the media and a few antagonistic apostates are using this tragedy to their own ends. I find it ridiculous

that The Family has to address issues of child abuse, yet again, when we have already been through enough court cases to last us a lifetime. Believe me, I know exactly what The Family’s like, because I’ve been in it for over 26 years. If it was anything but safe, I wouldn’t be here, and I certainly wouldn’t be raising my son here. The only abuse I ever suffered as a child was when I was taken away from my parents in pre-dawn raids by the Australian authorities (department of community services) in May 1992, along with a number of other Family children—only to be returned a week later when they found out that we were normal, well-adjusted, happy children.

189. I’m truly sorry for those former members from the second generation of The Family who had bad things happen to them in their childhood, and are now speaking against The Family. I can’t say if their stories are true or false, because I wasn’t there. But one thing I do know is that stuff happens in all of our lives—sometimes good and sometimes bad—and we go on. In the end, if we let the experiences make us better rather than bitter, we actually come out on top. So it seems completely illogical for these people to try and hurt the lives of hundreds of the perfectly happy Family members today, people who are actually helping people and doing good in over a hundred countries, just because of their personal troubles. How is hurting people in The Family today going to make their life any better? Are they forgetting that the Family is made up of real people, real mothers and fathers, and real children?

190. When thinking about the small minority who are speaking out against The Family, I’m reminded of the story in the Bible, in the Book of Acts, when Peter and the apostles were brought before the high council for their preaching, and the high priests “took counsel to slay them.” Then Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, said, “Take heed to yourself what ye intend to do as touching these men. . . . Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this

work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:34–39).

191. If the work of the Family was as bad as some people say it is, then it will come to nothing without anyone's help. But since our work is good and godly and making a difference in the world, we're not going to be stopped. I'm sure that just as day follows night, that storm will blow over in time and the truth will be heard. And until that time, there are many dedicated and sincere individuals within the Family who know beyond a shadow of a doubt that giving our lives in service to Jesus is our calling, and we will go on helping others, and telling people about Jesus and His love, no matter what happens. I and my husband, for sure, will not be dissuaded. We wouldn't want to live any other kind of life.

192. I think that what some people don't understand about The Family is that it's not about Maria David or Peter Amsterdam, or Father David before them. Our group is not about any one person, or any special group of people. It's all about serving Jesus and others. It's all about personal faith and conviction. Each of us has a personal relationship with and connection with Jesus. He speaks to us every day. So, no matter what happens to the structure or leadership of The Family, everyone I know is going to keep on living the way they do today. We're going to keep on witnessing and doing what we can to make the world a better place.

193. The Family is different. We're not mainstream. There's no doubt about that. But there's nothing wrong with being different; in fact, in my opinion, there's everything right about being different. I know it's not the life for everyone, but it's the life for me. It feels so good to not live for a career, a house, a car, and all the frills. I know I'm privileged every time I think about Jesus, the spirit world, the afterlife, and everything spiritual that I believe in. I look at my friends within the Family and know that their support and love and care is something money could never buy. I consider my son and the safe, happy, loving life he's going to lead for the next years of his life, and I know I couldn't give him a better start.

194. I owe my dad and mum everything for my upbringing and childhood in The Family. I was never abused in any way. I had a wonderful life, a happy upbringing—and even though I had a few times that maybe weren't that great, as every child does, those times shaped my character into what it is today. I'm sure that when my son grows up, there might be some things he won't particularly like about his life, but I'm confident he'll know he was loved, well cared for, and given the best upbringing my husband and I could offer him.

195. I have no regrets and no complaints about my life—a life filled with love, happiness, true friends, a reason for living, and a religion that truly satisfies. If God had given me the choice to live any life I wished, I wouldn't have changed a thing. I have been richly blessed.

Official Apologies Tendered by Family Leadership To Current and Former Family Members

Preface:

Since 1993, Family leadership has issued a number of official apologies to former and current Family members for any hurts, grievances or inappropriate treatment they may have been subjected to by other Family members. We have compiled these herein for the sake of current and former Family members who may not have read or recall reading these apologies. They are listed in chronological order. This is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather highlights of published apologies.

intentionally or unintentionally—were literally breaking the Law, the Law of Love. And we cannot condone this, neither have we ever condoned it. However, even though some people may have misused the freedoms granted under the Law of Love, that does not negate the Scriptural truth and Godly principles behind it.

(From: “Our Beliefs Concerning the Lord’s Law of Love,” ML #2858, June 1993. World Services. Para.50–51)

Regarding the Law of Love

We realize that there were instances in which some individuals did not always strictly follow the principles and guidelines of the Law of Love, and in some cases, some of these liberties unfortunately were used as an “occasion to the flesh.”—Gal.5:13. If any of you were personally guilty of any unloving acts, we trust that you have sincerely asked the Lord to forgive you. If you haven’t already, we’re sure you’d also want to ask anyone you have offended to forgive you, providing they are in your Home or nearby in your area, and you’re able to verbally apologize to them. We do not recommend that you write others about things of this nature. And if you were in a situation where you feel someone in the past was unloving to you, then we hope that you have sincerely forgiven them. “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you.”—Eph.4:32.

We are truly sorry if any of our members were hurt or offended in any way by someone who misapplied or in some way strayed from the strict guidelines of the Law of Love. We are sorry if anyone was stumbled or confused or embittered by any such actions in the past. The people who misused their freedoms—either

Dad’s Responsibility for the Family’s Former Sexual Excesses

When Dad first introduced the concept of sexual freedom to the Family 20 years ago in 1974 with the Letter “The Law of Love,” he did give some restrictive guidelines as to its use. They were, however, quite general and subjective instead of very explicit like our current rules are, which are clearly listed in the “Fundamental Family Rules.”

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.

Some young people were hurt by inappropriate sexual behavior on the part of adults, and in 1986 he and I moved to ban all such conduct. We were firm and explicit in banning it, making it an excommunicable offense. In 1988, Dad went as far as to say he renounced all literature, including his own, that indicated in any way that sexual activity with minors was permissible. He clearly stated that any sexual activity between an adult and a minor was not to be tolerated and was grounds for immediate excommunication.

Hurtful Behavior Was Never Intended, and Is Apologized for

In 1986 after some of our young people complained about some adult sexual contact, Dad and I slammed the door on any and all such activity by making it an excommunicable offense. Our young people, our children, are very precious to us and we do not want to do anything at all that could possibly hurt or harm them. Again, in 20/20 hindsight, we should have had rules in effect much earlier that would have prevented any of our children from being hurt. We are sorry that we didn't and we're truly sorry if any of you young people were hurt as a result of it.

We regret that more restrictions, guidelines and safeguards were not in place during the Family's sexually freewheeling era of 1978 through the early eighties. So to anyone, young person or adult, who due to Dad or the Family's exploration of the Law of Love, feels that they were subjected to inappropriate sexual behavior of any kind, we sincerely apologize.

Also, we apologize to any of you young people who may have been harshly and unlovingly disciplined in the past. We have heard a number of testimonies of past excessive corporal punishment, prolonged "silence restriction" and/or isolation, as well as other means

of discipline which some of you experienced, and we want to say that it pains us to hear such things. It was wrong, and we are truly sorry that any of you received any such treatment.

We've made it clear in a number of Letters, as well as in the Love Charter, that sexual or physical abuse of any kind are absolutely disallowed in the Family today. If you feel you suffered either of these in the past, we ask you to please accept our apologies. We have prayed and asked the Lord to forgive us for not doing more in the past to prevent any such behavior, and we ask you to forgive us too.

To any Family member or ex-Family member who feels he or she has suffered because of the effects of Dad's and the Family's exploration of the Law of Love, or for any mistreatment of any kind, by anyone, we say we are truly sorry and ask for your forgiveness.

Likewise, if any of you ex-members who may be reading this have had negative sexual experiences while with us, or you were treated unlovingly or harshly, either before or after you left the Family, we are sorry. Our goal is to be the Lord's Family of Love, so if you suffered unloving treatment from any Family member, we ask you to please forgive us. The Lord has been teaching us all a lot about how important it is that we are loving and kind with one another. As a Family, we are asking Him to help us to love Him and others more, for, without love we have nothing! So if we failed you in not being loving enough, please forgive us.

Why Dad Initially Failed to Impose Needed Sexual Restrictions

I've already explained that Dad ultimately bears responsibility, as he was the one who should have put stronger rules in place from the beginning. As the old saying about leadership goes, "The buck stops here." When you are the leader, you get the blame, as well as the credit. Like Dad said in "So You Want to Be a Leader," "You'd better enjoy being a buck private while

you can—with very little worry or responsibility, credit or blame, cursing or fame. One of these days, you may be the general and have most of the work and nearly all the worry—and usually, all the blame! Just be a good follower, and be thankful that you don't have to do the leading, make the decisions, carry the burden of the responsibility, and suffer the blame!" (ML #31:19,20).

I lived with Dad for 25 years and knew him better than anyone else did. He had his shortcomings and sometimes made mistakes, but I know that Dad never intended to harm nor wanted harm of any kind to come to any member of our dear Family. He loved the Lord and the Family with all of his heart, soul, mind and strength, and would do anything for both. He also believed that for the most part all Family members felt the same about the Lord and the Family as he did.

So when the Lord revealed to him the sexual freedoms granted under the Law of Love, his hope was that Family members would understand the principles of loving and even sacrificial sharing, and would therefore be motivated by loving concern for others. Sadly, this wasn't always the case. Therefore, as the author of the Letters, he accepts the blame, but this doesn't mean that everyone else is completely blameless.

Anyone who attempted to use the Law of Love to justify any unloving, selfish or hurtful behavior is responsible before God for it. Throughout the years, especially in the area of adults sharing with one another, some people hurt others due to misapplication or misuse of our sexual freedoms. They acted in lust instead of love, their motives were selfish and unloving, and as such, they weren't following the primary guidelines given for the Law of Love.

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 bound-

aries for us. He goes on to say that if we cross over those boundaries, it is sin. What are those boundaries? The boundaries that Dad put in place concerning sex were:

- 1) No sexual contact between adults and minors.
- 2) No male with male sexual activity.
- 3) No sex with outsiders.
- 4) No sex with new members until after their first six months in the Family.
- 5) Any sexual activity between adults must be done according to the Law of Love.

These rules are all precisely reiterated in the Love Charter.

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.

(From: "An Answer To Him That Asketh Us! (1Pet.3:15)—The Whys and Wherefores Behind WS's Letter to the Judge," ML #3016, September 1995. World Services. Para.15–21, 52–56, 62, 64–67, 85–87)

Maria's Letter to the Family's Former Members

(*Mama:*) Since writing the above Letter, I have heard from Peter that not only is this a

gathering of our TRF Supporter brethren, but that also in attendance are some of you former members. And of course I knew that I couldn't write a letter just to the TRF Supporter members and ignore you, the former members. Well, it's not that I couldn't, but I didn't want to! It's not very often, after all, that I have a chance to talk to you, to share my heart with you and to love you via my Letters.

I'm so thankful that Peter and Gary and Dust have had the opportunity to talk with you. Peter has spoken with me on the phone and briefly told me about some of the conversations that he has had with you and some of the others there, how his heart has broken for you, and how he has wept for you and with you.

I'm so sorry, my dear ones, for how you have suffered and for the difficult things you have experienced, both during the time you were in the Family and in recent years. I'm so sorry for how you have felt hurt and abandoned. It hurts me to think about how you hurt. It breaks my heart to see how your hearts have been broken. It pains me and I'm crying now to think how you have cried. I know there are times that you have felt alone and in despair and without hope. Questions, doubts, feelings of bitterness and resentment have overwhelmed you. You have questioned the love of the Lord, and the love of Dad, and me, and the Family.

I understand your feelings, and I don't condemn you. I don't think I can honestly say that I can completely fathom all that you have been through and experienced to bring you to the point where you are today. But I can honestly say that I'm so thankful you're there now with our Family and with Peter and Gary and Dust. I can honestly say that I love you, and they love you, and especially that the Lord loves you.

I'm not going to pretend that these three days that you have spent together with Peter and Gary and the brethren have healed all the

hurts of the past, or completely renewed our fellowship and reconciled all our differences. But it is my prayer that it is at least a start, and that through this time of fellowship and communication and loving the Lord and each other, we will be on the road to greater unity and love and fruitfulness.

I know you love the Lord, and I believe you have some desire for fellowship with the Family, or you wouldn't be there at the TRF Supporter meeting. I only hope that in the days to come you will find what you need, and that we will be able to continue walking this road together toward greater communication, greater understanding, and forgiveness.

I've said this before to our TRF Supporters, and I'd like to say it to you former members as well, and that is that I am sorry for the way the Family has failed some of you in the past. I'm so sorry for the unloving behavior some of you experienced from some of our leaders and Family members. There are certainly many ways we could have done better. We could have been more tolerant, more accepting of other people's opinions. We could have practiced more teamworking in our earlier years. We could have listened to people's feelings with greater openness and been more human and willing to show ourselves weak. We could have been more ready to admit that we didn't have all the answers, that we were still learning. We could have been more gentle with some members who were weaker.

We could have done all these things, and we should have. I'm sorry—very sorry—for our past failures and mistakes and shortcomings, of which I know there are many that affected both you and our dear TRF Supporter members. Please accept my humble apology. I ask your forgiveness in the name of David and myself and the Family.

I was telling some of the Family the other day how the Lord has used our failings and shortcomings to teach the Family humility, to teach us brokenness and greater dependence

upon Him. Yes, the Family has been blessed with some marvelous accomplishments. We've preached the Gospel around the world and won millions to His Heavenly Kingdom. But when you see all that could have been done, all that we had hoped would be done, and you read past MO Letters of all that Dad spoke of, you realize that we have fallen short in many ways.

But when praying about this, the Lord showed me that the most important thing, the greatest benefit or fruit that has come from these failures and shortcomings, is that the Family is now more humble and broken and dependent on the Lord. We now realize how weak we are and how much we need Jesus. We can't pat ourselves on the back and feel proud and strong because of our great accomplishments. We've made some good progress on many fronts, but in some cases it's not the progress nor success nor accomplishments that we had hoped for, or the fulfillment of all the ideals which Dad had written about in the Letters.

So, yes, I know the Family is not perfect, and we as a whole have gone through a lot of breakings and lessons and a time of training. In many ways we were children. But now, by God's grace, we have learned and matured and we have put away childish things. And the Lord has used it all to prepare us for what He has for us in the future. We who remain in the Family have had to put away our disappointments, our regrets, and the sadness we have felt because of our shortcomings and because we have not been all that we could have been or done all that we could have done.

I pray that as you leave this fellowship you will feel strengthened and renewed and that you will feel closer to the Lord and also to us.—That as you continue in your different ministries and walks of life, you will see His Love manifested more clearly, and you will have a renewed desire to serve Him to the best of your ability. I pray that your fellow-

ship with the Family will be sweeter, and that through it you will find strength and encouragement. I pray that our bonds together as Christians will grow stronger, that the Love of Christ will constrain us in our interactions one with another, and that with time we will gain a greater appreciation one for another.

There is so much to do to win the world for Jesus, and we are not kidding ourselves by thinking that someone has to be in the Family, either as a DO member or a TRF Supporter, in order to serve the Lord and bring forth fruit for Him. If you haven't found it yet, I pray that each of you will find a place of service and a ministry that will bring you great satisfaction and joy and fulfillment in your lives. I pray that your children will be happy, healthy and strong in their love for you and the Lord. It must be very difficult being on your own without the immediate strength of brethren close at hand, but I know the Lord will lead and guide you and supply your needs, as you follow Him. I love you! I hug and kiss each one of you. God bless and keep you.

Love, Mama

(From: "Bridging The Gap!—Between DO and TS Family Members," ML #3068, August 1996. World Services. Para.100–110, 115–116)

An Open Letter to All Current and Former Family Members

Dear Ones,

Greetings in Jesus' name! Maria has asked me to write this open letter to you as part of our continued effort to help break down the walls of partition that have arisen between current and former Family members over the years. Throughout the Family's 28-year history, thousands of people have joined the Family as full-time members. Many of them, for a variety of reasons, have felt led to leave the Family and pursue other courses in their lives.

There is a great diversity in the way those previously in the Family feel about the Family and their time as members. Some look at their time in the Family as a positive experience, others as a negative one. Some wished to remain in contact with current Family members; others did not seek such contact. Some feel that the Family benefited their lives; others feel it was detrimental. Some have spoken out on the Family's behalf; others have spoken against the Family.

Because of past Family rules, up until a few years ago the Family did not actively seek to have contact with former members. For some former members this was a welcome relief, but for others it was a sign of abandonment. Over the last couple of years, and even more so in the past few months, we, the Family's leadership, have become painfully aware of the hurt that some former members have felt. We have looked for ways to heal the pain and rejection some former members have experienced and to reconcile with those who have been hurt. It is our hope to be able to further undo some of that hurt by apologizing to those who have been offended, and to continue to open channels of communication for any who wish to communicate with us.

The Family took a significant step toward a change of attitude vis-à-vis its former members in October 1993, when a dialogue was opened between former and current members.

From that time on, the Family has taken a number of steps to meet with former members and discuss ways to bridge the gap between them and current members. A toll-free number was set up for anyone wishing to communicate with the Family or desiring to locate friends or loved ones within the Family. A meeting was held in California in November 1993 between Family representatives and David and Mary Lou Hiebert (known in the Family as Zebedee and Zorah Rabbit, or "the Z's"), editors of the "No Longer Children" newsletter,

a publication for former Family members. In time there were meetings between other current and former members, all of which began to lay the foundation for a mutual bond of trust, the basic building block for any kind of meaningful relationship.

In July 1996, in Laurel, Maryland, during a Family fellowship organized by some of the TRF Supporter Family, I, Peter Amsterdam, and Gary—together representing Maria, World Services and the Family's leadership—held various conversations with Sharon Wilson (known in the Family as Joanna Cook) and George and Woodie Terrel (known in the Family as Vessel and Lamb Harper). Sharon, George and Woodie are members of "Safe Haven," a communication and support network made up of former members of the Family. They were not attending this fellowship meeting as representatives of "Safe Haven" but as independent former members. We also spoke extensively with former member Happy Wotila (Joab). During this fellowship I read an open letter written by Maria to all former Family members, portions of which are included with this letter.

In October 1996, Dust and Simon (both members of the North American Continental leadership) and I met for two days in Jacksonville, Florida, with "Safe Haven" members Sharon and Pope Wilson (known in the Family as Jaakan Giant), George and Woodie Terrel, John and Linda Hardy (known in the Family as Nekoda and Bathshua) and Abraham Brosius. The purpose of this meeting was for all of us to gain a better understanding of one another, to explore ways to overcome past hurts and to find ways to prevent future problems and misunderstandings between current and former members, in an effort to heal the rift and establish a relationship of love and acceptance of each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

During this meeting there was a healthy and spirited exchange of ideas, grievances, ex-

planations and the like. All parties went away with a better understanding of the other's point of view, which seemed to draw us all closer together, having seen and heard each other's hurts, opinions and outlook....

We, the Family's leadership, have acknowledged that some former members were treated unfairly, harshly, and in an unloving manner, and we have officially apologized for this in a number of publications over the last few years. It is also understood that some former members have spoken out in the media against the Family, while others have actively campaigned for governmental action against the Family, all of which has resulted in Family members being harassed, Homes being raided and, in some cases, children being forcibly taken away from their parents at gunpoint.

There has been hurt on both sides. However, it's important to understand that not every Family member was responsible for or caused the hurt experienced by those who left the Family, just like not every former member was responsible for the trauma suffered by Family members and their children at the hands of the media and government authorities. It would therefore be best to avoid blaming either the Family as a whole, or former members in general, for the hurt and pain experienced on either side.

On several occasions, Family leadership has written and encouraged the Family to foster friendly and loving contact and communications with former members who likewise desire such contact.

As stated earlier, we clearly understand that some former members have had negative and hurtful experiences in the Family. We have apologized in written publications a number of times over the last years. However, you personally may not have received a copy of these publications. The following is an excerpt from one of those publications, written by Maria in September 1995:

“Likewise, if any of you ex-members who

may be reading this have had negative sexual experiences while with us, or you were treated unlovingly or harshly, either before or after you left the Family, we are sorry. Our goal is to be the Lord's Family of Love, so if you suffered unloving treatment from any Family member, we ask you to please forgive us. The Lord has been teaching us all a lot about how important it is that we are loving and kind with one another. As a Family, we are asking Him to help us to love Him and others more, for without love we have nothing! So if we failed you in not being loving enough, please forgive us.” (*End of excerpt by Maria.*)

The following is a portion of a letter written by Peter Amsterdam to a judge during a court case involving custody of a Family child in Britain in October 1995:

“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 apologized to those who have suffered harm, and we recognize this litigation and these communications as an opportunity to apologize 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 behavior. The judgment 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 behavior between adults and minors, such sanctioning being a direct cause of later abusive behavior 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 immediately 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 sexualized 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 behavior.”
(*End of excerpt of Peter's letter to the judge in Britain.*)

It is the Family's sincere hope that the differences, the hurts of the past, the distrust and anything else that divides current and former

members can be overcome and forgiven, and that we all can accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our prayer is that anyone who wishes to contact and communicate with a current Family member will feel free to do so, and that such contact will be met with enthusiasm and love. If you have any questions about the Family or our current doctrines or practices, or if you wish to contact someone in the Family, please don't hesitate to call the 800 number or contact the e-mail address listed previously. We will do our best to answer your questions and to pass on your message to the one you are seeking. Those answering the phone do not have information as to the whereabouts of every Family member, but they will do all they can to contact the various major centers around the world in order to help locate the person you are looking for in order to give them your message.

We ask that you please understand that the Family is made up of thousands of individuals who are encouraged to act according to their own faith in all matters. It is our hope that each one would welcome communication with any former member who wishes to communicate or fellowship. However, this may not always be the case. If you are rebuffed by specific Family members, please do not consider that their actions reflect the whole Family's feelings or policy. We are trying to bridge the gap between current and former members, and we sincerely wish to do our part to heal any wounds or hurts. We ask for your understanding, forgiveness and cooperation in these matters.

God bless and keep you,
Peter Amsterdam

For Maria and the Family Leadership

(From: “An Open Letter to All Current and Former Family Members” [excerpts], ML #3091, February 1996. World Services)

Reply to Allegations from a Former Member

ACCUSATION: It took Maria and Peter years to admit the obvious; sexual abuse of minors had occurred in the Family, MO was directly responsible for it, and that it is a sin in the eyes of God. Neither MO, Maria, nor Peter were ever truly sorry for advocating that adults have sexual contact with minors. They were terribly sorry, however, that after years the court forced them to publicly admit that MO was wrong, and responsible for the harm that children had suffered.

(*Mama:*) It is sad that issues that have been resolved for years are once again brought up, but because they have been, I will address them once again. Before doing so, I want to point out that the claim that Peter and I are not sorry for any hurt that happened to individuals in the Family is absolutely false. We are very sorry that anyone was hurt, and have publicly apologized and have asked for forgiveness in various Letters or other publications. (*See the 1992 Statement on Child Abuse; "Our Beliefs Concerning the Lord's Law of Love," ML #2858:50-51, published in 6/93; "An Answer to Him That Asketh Us," ML #3016:18-20, 52-56, published in 9/95; Mama's Letter to Former Members in "Bridging the Gap," ML #3068:101-108, published in 8/96; "An Open Letter to All Current and Former Family Members," ML #3091:3,10h,15-22, published in 12/96.*)

If some choose not to believe or accept our apology, that is their prerogative, but God knows our hearts. We are sorry about anyone who has been hurt in any way during their time in the Family. Not only are we sorry, but we have established firm rules regarding sexual contact between adults and minors, making it an excommunicable offense in 1986. We have also included clear rules and punishment in the Charter to ensure that no harm of any kind related to sexual or physical abuse happens,

and if it does, that those who caused it can be disciplined. Our apologies were not only words, but actions which have significantly changed the governance of the Family.

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 1988, again years before any court cases, sex with a minor became an excommunicable offense, and it very explicitly remains so in the Charter.

In 1988 we published the "Child Abuse?!" tract in which Dad made the definitive statement, "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!" This clearly showed Dad's stance regarding the matter.

Later, in the Letter "An Answer to Him That Asketh Us," we used the definitions of the words in that sentence in order to further clarify our position, so that it read: "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" (ML #3016:26).

In that same statement of 1988 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.

The Letter "Child Abuse: A Final Warning" was published in 1989, a few months after the

1988 Child Abuse statement came out. In it, we stated: “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!” (ML #2536:10).

Also in 1989 the Letter “D.O. Is for DOers of the Word!” (ML #2531) was published, in which Dad listed the excommunicable offenses, including the following:

14. Sex with Minors

We do not advocate nor practice sex between adults and minors (someone who is underage)...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.)**

Excerpt of LNF 121, sent out in 1989

10. “Whoso shall offend one of these little ones!”

...We want to reiterate that the “Child Abuse” tract 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.)**

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 12 years. 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.

We’ve been accused of flip-flopping in our stance on adult/minor sex. We haven’t. It is clear that 14 years ago, in 1986, Dad and I put a ban on any adult/minor sexual activity. In 1988, 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.

Everyone knows, and numerous courts acknowledge, that solid safeguards have been put into place to protect young people in the Family from abuse, and as such, they are no more likely to suffer abuse than young people in society at large. You who are in the Family know that for 12 years any sexual crossover has been grounds for excommunication; you also know that you need to protect your young people and all young people in the Family from

any abusive situation. You know that our official stance is that any form of adult/minor sex is a sin. If you know of any infraction of the Charter rules taking place, it is your duty to report it. This is a resolved point.

Our detractors, however, continue to bring it up and try to document supposed wrongdoing on my and Peter's part. The facts stand. We've faced these accusations in many court cases and have won every time. We have admitted and apologized for the past, we have asked forgiveness, we have put strong rules in place, and we have moved on from all of this. My question is, why don't they?

Again, I want to apologize to any of those who have been hurt by any wrongdoing by anyone during their time in the Family. We ask your forgiveness. We have done all we can to prevent any such things happening again. The Family has changed, and even the judge who so strongly condemned some of the things that happened in the past officially stated in his written judgment that the Family is a safe place for children.

(From: "None of These Things Move Me," ML #3307, July 2000. World Services. Para.64–66, 80–86, 91–96, 122)

It is our prayer that this reconciliation process will continue to provide support and friendship to those making the transition from a close, communal, faith-based support system to an independent secular lifestyle.

If you have any questions or comments, we invite you to contact us at one of the following addresses:

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