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"AN ANSWER TO HIM THAT ASKETH US!" (1Pet.3:15).

9/95

—The Why's and Wherefore's Behind WS's Letter to the Judge!—By Maria

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For the last three years our dear sister Pearl has been involved in an ongoing court case in the British Isles as she has fought to retain custody of her son, who is now three years old. It has been a long, drawn-out affair which has been very difficult for her and the other Family members involved.

2. During the 75 days that the actual case was being heard before the judge, witnesses from and for the Family, as well as witnesses for the grandmother (Pearl's mother) were heard. Most of the grandmother's witnesses were ex-Family members, many of whom have spent a good deal of their time actively fighting the Family. Among these ex-members were some who left the Family as teens, who, while testifying against the Family, manifested a great deal of bitterness towards us. Some of them had legitimate grievances, especially when they spoke of past sexual advances by certain adults, as well as unfair, harsh disciplinary action. Although some of their testimony is true, we believe significant parts were highly exaggerated, if not outright lies.

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

4. Throughout the case WS has been asked by Pearl both for counsel and to answer the court on various matters. Twice during the

case the court has asked WS to respond on certain matters, so Peter has written to the judge.

5. Peter has remained in close communication with those involved in the case. He has done his best to answer their questions as well as to respond to the queries from the court.

6. Because it is a child custody case, it has been held behind closed doors. No one is allowed into the court except those involved, and no court documents can as yet be released to the public. The press has not been involved, as they were in Australia and other places.

7. Although the case originated as a custody case between a young child's mother and grandmother, it is apparent to many that it is the Family that is on trial. The grandmother has done all she can to portray the Family as the most horrific environment in which to raise a child, or to live one's life.

8. After hearing 75 days of testimony, the judge took a full year to write his book-length judgement. At this point his judgment is confidential, although he has said he may release it in late October this year. Although he has given WS leadership permission to read it, he has warned that if anyone leaks it, they will be charged with contempt of court and will spend time in jail. So we cannot quote from it or even say much about it. But I believe I can safely say that overall it is certainly not complimentary, and it is my prayer that the judge will not release it to the public in its entirety, as there is no doubt that those who are bent on attacking us, particularly the so-called anti-cult outfits like CAN, ADFI and others, would use it to try to goad the authorities in other parts of the world to take action against us.

The Judge's Request for Assurances from WS

9. As part of his ruling, the judge has asked Pearl to reappear on the witness stand to answer further questions. He has also asked her to have WS respond to a number of questions. He is asking these questions to determine if he can rule that the child can remain with Pearl in the Family. As it stands now, Pearl's child is a ward of the court, which means that the judge is responsible for his welfare. He wants to make sure that the negative things which different ex-members have testified of will not happen to this child.

10. The judge wants assurances from Pearl and WS on several important matters. He wants to ensure that the child will not be harshly disciplined or abused in any way. He wants assurances that he will be able to have regular contact with his relatives who aren't in the Family. As well, he wants to be assured that the child will receive sufficient education to enable him to carry on in society if he doesn't want to remain in the Family when he is older, and that if he eventually decides to leave the Family, he will still have loving contact with his mother. I want the same things, not only for this child but for every child in the Family, which is why we spent so much time prayerfully producing the Love Charter. These points are specifically covered in the Charter and I have absolutely no problem letting the judge or anyone else know that these are our goals as well.

11. In order to make sure these goals are reached, he is asking questions and seeking assurances from WS. Again, because all of this is confidential at this time, we cannot tell you specifically what he has asked WS, but generally, he wants some changes instituted in the Family child discipline rules in the United Kingdom so they will be more lenient. Of course, because of the Charter, WS cannot just change the child discipline rules in any given country. We have purposely limited our authority in this regard, so, in keeping with the Charter, the European CROs submitted a referendum to the Homes in the United Kingdom to vote on. The Homes there have now agreed to the proposed changes in the child discipline rules for those living in the United Kingdom.

12. The judge has also wanted assurances that various points regarding the education of our children, which Peter had written to him about in the past, were in fact happening. Virtually all of these points have been addressed in the Charter.

13. Another point he wanted reassurance on was in regard to our Ministry of Reconciliation and our openness to those outside the Family. He wants to know that we intend to remain open and that we encourage Family members to keep in contact with relatives. It is common knowledge throughout the Family that our Homes are now open and that we are neither isolated nor unsocialized. Family members are free to decide on the amount of contact they personally wish to have with their relatives, just the same as they are in society at large.

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

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

15. 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."

16. 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.

17. 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 ac-

tions 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.

18. In a prophecy we just received while working on this Letter, Dad said, "No matter how much good you do or try to do, it's inevitable that you hurt people, that you don't do everything right. You don't really see it yourself because you're trying to do the right thing. But as your life rolls before your eyes [after death] and you see it all, then you understand better, for you see as others see you. You understand their feelings, and it hurts.

19. "I do apologize to anyone that I hurt in any way, for I did not intend to hurt, but I see now that I did hurt others at times by my words, by my actions. I never intended to harm, but I have learned that what one intends is not always the outcome.

20. "So go ahead and show that I should have been wiser, so that you can carry on and move on and move forward. Our folks will just have to learn to accept that everyone has clay feet. There is none righteous, no, not one; only God is righteous. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But that just goes to show you how much credit the Lord gets for all the good." (Mama:) Dad is obviously sorry for any harm that was caused to anyone.

21. 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.

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

22. In 1988 in our statement entitled "Child Abuse?!" Dad wrote, "We do not approve of sex with minors, and hereby renounce

any writings of anyone in our Family which may seem to do so! We absolutely forbid it!" Let's take a closer look at this statement:

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

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

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

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

minors."

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

Peter's Letter to the Judge

28. The judge in the British case wants to make sure the Family is a safe environment for Pearl's son to be raised in. I do too, and I am absolutely convinced that the Family is a very safe environment, not only for Pearl's son, but for all of our children. But as I said, the judge asked Peter to respond to his questions and make assurances, which Peter wrote, along with the help of Apollos and others. I believe it is a well-presented letter which addresses and answers the judge's questions. We are presenting this letter to you in this GN so that you will know what we have told the court.

29. Of course, you know me!—I wouldn't make such a move without first seeking the Lord and asking Him for a confirmation that this letter to the judge is of Him and that the presentation reflects His will. In addition, I wanted to hear Dad's confirmation from the Spirit World since the questions were about him. For this reason, we brought the matter before the Lord on a number of occasions, both before writing the letter and afterwards. There were numerous prophecies, but since they would be too long to include in their entirety, I thought we could give you some excerpts of the things the Lord and Dad said to us.

30. I was especially encouraged to hear the Lord confirm that we were doing the right thing in answering the judge, and that our answers were of Him. He promised to lead us as we decided how to present our answers.

"Bending," but not Breaking!

31. Upon initially hearing that the judge

was asking us to answer his questions, we brought the matter before the Lord, seeking His guidance. He said, "You say unto Me, 'What can we do?' I say unto you, you can bend, but you cannot break! For as the wind blows, the tree can bend. But it must not break, for when it breaks, it loses life. So you can bend here and you can bend there, but you must not break.

32. "Then trust Me for the outcome. I say unto you, trust Me for the outcome! Go forth not knowing, but know in your hearts that I do all things well. Do not look at the waves or the wind, or the seeming outcome, but just trust Me. Trust Me in the darkness, that you may see the light." (*End of prophecy.*)

33. (*Mama:*) As you will see when reading the next prophecy from Dad, he indicates that bending is putting blame on him, while breaking would be to deny the Law of Love. Of course we understand, and have made it quite clear that the Law of Love does not include adult sexual contact with children.

34. (*Dad speaking:*) "Some of the things I did and said surely stirred up trouble. But I did the very best I could. I truly did the best I could. My only desire was to give His Words and His Truth, to give love to others.

35. "That was my goal. That's what I tried to attain. That was my mission, that was my heart's desire, to give love—His Love, His Words, His messages. As imperfect as I was, that's what I tried to do. I knew I fell short, and that discouraged me sometimes, but in spite of that, I kept trying to just give what He gave to me to give to you.

36. "Don't be afraid to put some of the blame on me. I don't mind. I know there are sometimes things you have to do that you don't really want to do, but sometimes you just have to do them, and this is one of them. But don't be afraid, these things will work together for good!

37. "Don't deny the Truth, don't deny the Truth-Giver, and don't deny the messenger. But if you have to poke a little at the messenger, some of the faults and failings, and point some blame here and there, don't worry about it! There are lots of things I could've

done better, and boy, if I had known then what I know now, there are things I would've done differently. I think I would've even listened more to you and to your counsel. But we made a good team! We did what we could do, got as far as we got, and then the Lord took me Home!

38. "So don't worry that you've got to bend like this. Yes, I know it's a little uncomfortable and it hurts and you don't like to do it, and it really goes against your nature. But you've got to do it, so do it!

39. "You're not denying the Truth, you're not denying the Lord, and you're not denying all that He gave through me to give to you! You're just acknowledging that I was a man, and that the Family is made up of sinful people, just like the world. Nobody's perfect. But the Truth is still the Truth, so don't deny that. Keep giving the Word, keep preaching the Word, keep living the Word, keep strong on the Foundation, rooted in it, established in it, strengthened in it!" (*End of prophecy.*)

40. (*Mama:*) As Dad pointed out above, he tried to do the best he could to be a faithful messenger of God's Words, but like everyone, he fell short sometimes, which was discouraging for him. That's just how Dad was, he would get discouraged when he felt that he had failed to live up to what the Lord expected of him. He went on to say that it was OK to put some of the blame on him for things that went wrong, that he wasn't perfect, he had faults and failings like we all do. As we pointed out above, bending is putting blame on Dad and breaking would be to deny the Law of Love.

41. Many of those outside the Family misunderstand the Law of Love. They strongly criticize it, and think it deals only with sex. They don't seem to understand that this principle governs more than just our sex lives, it governs every aspect of our lives. Back in 1977 Dad said that the Law of Love was the foundation principle of our entire religion, not just of our sex lives. In fact, he said that this belief in the grace of God given through the Law of Love was the cornerstone of every Christian's religion. He wrote:

42. "We believe Jesus is the Son of God, a sort of picture of God Himself, and in His salvation through His Law of Love! When Jesus came, He abolished all other laws but Love! He gave only one law which fulfills all the laws of the Bible, both old and new, and that is Love!—For God and fellow man!

43. "This is our specific religion and the religion of every Christian who truly believes in the Love of God in Jesus and the Bible! We are Christians and we believe in the religion of Jesus Christ, His Law of Love! We believe in the Bible, God, Jesus and Love—because God is Love! (1John 4:8). Jesus preached Love, and when asked what the greatest law was, He said God's only law now was Love. 'Love God ... and love thy neighbor as thyself! ... In these are all the law and all the prophets!' (Matthew 22:37-40)." (From "Our Answers to the Daily News!" ML #633, 11/77.)

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

45. Within those freedoms we believe that it is acceptable for consenting adults to have sexual fellowship without sin, providing it is done in love and in accordance with what we have laid out in the Charter—principles which were originally given in the Letters. We do not believe, however, that these freedoms extend to adults having sexual contact with minors, as is evidenced by our rules against it.

46. In the above prophecies the Lord is telling us not to deny the Law of Love, which of course we can't, as to do so would be denying Jesus' words to love our neighbors as ourselves. And I believe He also wants us to make

it very clear that the liberties we are granted under the Law of Love do not include sex with minors, that to have sex with minors is wrong.

How We Initially Handled (and Mishandled) the Law of Love

47. The Lord revealed to Dad that through God's Law of Love we can enjoy freedoms that most other Christians can't, because they do not have the faith for it, "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom.14:23). Because of the Word we've received on the subject, we do have the faith that sexual fellowship between consenting adults is perfectly okay in the sight of God, providing it is done in accordance with the rules of the Law of Love, which we have now very clearly outlined in the Love Charter.

48. There was a time when those rules, or boundaries, were not as clear-cut as they are today. In fact, they were more along the lines of very general guidelines 20 years ago when the revelation that we could enjoy sexual fellowship with one another was first given. In time Dad did say that any sexual activity out of the norm of marital relationships needed to have the approval of the Home's leadership. But later, in 1978, when the RNR was declared, Dad made it clear that everyone was free to exercise their faith in regard to sexual sharing with one another, that they no longer needed leadership's permission.

49. In some Homes and areas this led to quite a wild time, with a lot of sexual activity amongst the adults. It was a time when there was virtually no leadership except Home shepherds. The Family received the Letters and applied them as they saw fit, without any oversight. During this era, a great deal of sexual freedom was taken, and because of immaturity, some were hurt through selfishness, lack of love, inconsideration, etc. This is a case where, with 20/20 hindsight, we see that some stricter guidelines would have prevented such hurt, or at least much of it. Unfortunately, there weren't stricter guidelines in place at that time.

50. It was during this period that Dad wrote Letters which removed other barriers as well. He explored the possibility that a mild degree of male with male sexual activity, i.e. masturbation, between adult men could be al-

lowed under the Law of Love, as he explained in the Letter "Homos" (ML #719). In a few cases some Family men entered into such activity. When Dad saw that the fruit of such freedom was not good he rescinded that freedom (ML #792:48-52). The Letter "Homos" has since been withdrawn, and such activity is now excommunicable.

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

Hurtful Behavior Was Never Intended, and Is Apologized for

52. 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.

53. 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.

54. 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.

55. 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.

56. 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.

Addressing and Dealing with Problems from the Past

57. We are thankful that most of our members today have successfully dealt with any past mistreatment. They have been able to face and deal with their hurts or resentment or ill feelings by counseling with their parents or competent shepherds and through prayer and forgiveness.

58. However, if you have past hurts or grievances which you have been unable to resolve, we want to encourage you to please speak up about it by sharing your heart with your parents or a good shepherd in your Home or area, someone that you feel comfortable honestly and openly communicating with.

59. And you parents and shepherds, if your children or anyone in your Home or area expresses a desire to talk with you about such matters, we implore you to be as open and understanding of them as possible, in no way being critical, condemning or demeaning. If someone entrusts you with hearing about anything of this nature, it's your responsibility to handle their heart gently, lovingly and carefully, letting them talk it out, and then counseling and praying with them afterwards. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal.6:2).

60. So if any of you young people or adults

were harmed by any past activities, sexual, disciplinary, or otherwise, and you are bothered or burdened by any such experiences, we want to do what we can to help you "lay aside the weights" from the past. If you don't feel comfortable sharing your heart with your parents or shepherds, we encourage you to please write your CROs about it, and they will do what they can to help you. Or if necessary, you can write to Peter and me.

61. Similarly, we have received reports that some of you TS brethren were handled roughly or unlovingly when you were transferred to TS status. As we have said before, we are very sorry to hear about such instances, and ask you, once again, to please accept our apology on behalf of the Family. If you feel you were mistreated and haven't been able to resolve it and you wish to get it off your heart, then please write your CROs or us about it.

62. 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.

63. In a recent prophecy Dad said he too is making amends for things that went wrong. He said this apology is "my way of making amends for some of the wrongs that did happen. It's just that simple! Some things did go wrong. Some went too far, some did things they shouldn't have done; even I went too far sometimes. I got too angry, too upset. I was too definite, too extreme. Not always, sometimes you needed it, but sometimes it was so." (Mama: In an earlier prophecy Dad also said, "I was too impatient. I expected too much sometimes. I was upset when people didn't deliver.") "This is an opportunity to repair some of those things that we should have done

differently. For there are some that are hurting, and you can repair it."

Why Dad Initially Failed to Impose Needed Sexual Restrictions

64. 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).

65. 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.

66. 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.

67. 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.

"Be Ye Doers of the Word!"

68. This next portion of prophecy points out that even if people don't use God's Word the way He intended it to be used, He still has to give it, as those who receive it and use it benefit by it.

69. (Jesus speaking:) "The Words that I spoke were pure Words full of Truth, for they are My Words straight from Me that revealed to you the Truth of Heaven, the Truth of the Spirit, the Truth of Love. These are pure Words and these are Holy Words, and these are Words that have brought forth great fruit in the lives of many.

70. "But there are those who walked in sin, who perceived not the love of this Truth. These have done damage, for they have hurt others and have cast doubt upon the veracity of My Truth, just as all Christians who do not live My Words cause others to doubt that My Words are true. For they do things in the name of My Words, but they do things not in accordance with My Words, because they have not received the spirit of My Words.

71. "But what?—Should I have not spoken My Words? Should I have not had My prophets speak My Words throughout all generations because some would take the Words and wrest them, and some would do things in My Name that I had not told them to do? Has not untold damage and harm been done in My Name? Did I not know that this would happen? But still I gave My Words, because My Words, when received in open and receptive hearts, bring forth fruit. My Words spoken and written down have brought forth the eternal fruit of those who will live with Me forever." (End of prophecy.)

72. (Mama:) Unfortunately, this has been a blotch on the face of Christianity since its beginning: that some people who claim to be doing things in the Name of the Lord aren't really following what the Lord said to do in the Word. Those who are hurt as a result of this

poor example believe that God has failed them or that the Christian way of life is unloving and unworkable, and that God's Word has no practical application or no power to effect positive change in someone's life. But the fault is not in God nor in His Word. What is wrong is the wicked hearts of those who wrest the Scriptures.

73. This applies to the Law of Love and our sexual freedoms as well. When people knowingly misuse the Law of Love and wrest it to satisfy their lusts, instead of applying it in a loving, giving manner, it causes others to question it, to wonder how it can possibly be a good thing. In some cases, Family members have acted unlovingly, and when they have, they have sinned. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

74. Besides the biblical definition just given, another good definition of sin is "deliberate disobedience to the known will of God." If you know that the will of God is to be loving to others, and instead you act in an unloving manner, then it's sin! If you know that the Lord has put down some boundaries to keep you from hurting yourself or others, and you cross those boundaries, it is sin. The following prophecy talks about this and about how the Lord sees these matters.

The Liberties and Boundaries of God!

75. (Jesus speaking:) "The Words I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life, and they bring forth life. The Words your Father David gave to you were life-giving Words, Words of My Spirit, Words of My Truth, Words that set you free from the captive's bonds, that set you free from the snares of Satan, that set you free from the clutches of this world. And whom I have set free is free indeed!—Free to love Me, free to serve Me, free to give love. But in this freedom, as in all freedom, there are those who take it as a liberty to do things which are in their hearts which are not of Me. Any time one does an unloving act, a harmful act, a selfish act, a hurtful act, it is not of Me.

76. "For I am the Creator of all things, and I judge the heart of man. I know the heart of man, I know all that is therein, so My judge-

ment is just and true. At the day of judgement, the day when you stand before Me, and your life is reviewed, I judge by the act and by the intent of the heart, thus I judge righteous judgement. For I know the heart of man, and there is nothing hid from Me.

77. "So when you seek to do a thing, know that I see and understand the thoughts and intents of your heart. So in all that you do, be motivated by love—My Love, love for one another, love for Me and love for the lost—that you may be found perfect before Me, perfect in love.

78. "For some will be shocked to arrive Here in Heaven, to understand and to see and to feel the depth of My Love, for they have no idea how deep My Love runs, how broad My Love is, how full My Love fills! They have no concept. Even you, to whom I have given this great Truth, do not fully understand the depth, the breadth, the height, the width of My Love. The puny mind of man cannot encase the broadness and the fullness and the completeness of My love, for it is not possible.

79. "Because the Truth of God, the freedom of the Heavenly Realm, is too broad for the mind of man and for the heart of man, so are there restrictions put so that man can operate within the bounds of the heart of man. For the heart of man is wicked and evil. And though I abide in the heart of those that love Me, that have received Me, yet there is a constant struggle to yield to Me. So I have put the bounds on these freedoms as protection—protection of others and protection of self—that you, My children, can move freely within the bounds, bounds which are much broader than those who do not receive My Truth.

80. "For I have set wider boundaries for you to operate in because of your belief and your receptivity to My Truth. So can you move within these bounds in love without sin. For great is your faith in that you have believed the Words that I spoke to your Father David, and you have received these truths from Heaven. Thus I have widened your bounds, and you are free. You are free as children of the King to roam freely within the bounds that I have set—wide bounds. Whereas those that receive not My full Truth operate within much stricter

bounds. If they cross over their bounds, because of their little faith, it is sin.

81. "The bounds that I have set, because I have set them, are the boundaries, and you are to go no further. For to go further is sin, for these are the boundaries that I have set. I have set these boundaries that these things would not be a testimony against you. I have set these boundaries in wisdom and in love.

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

83. (Mama:) Isn't that an amazing prophecy? What a warning about doing all things in love, knowing that the Lord is looking at the motives of our hearts. As the Bible says, "Let all your things be done with love!" (1Cor.16:14). I thought it was very interesting, too, how He pointed out that the boundaries He has set for us are much broader than those set for most other Christians because of our faith and our acceptance of the freedoms that He offers to us. Because most other Christians don't accept these freedoms, their boundaries are smaller.

84. For example, because of our faith, we can enjoy sexual fellowship with another consenting adult outside of marriage, without sin. Whereas if a Christian who doesn't believe as we do were to do the same thing, for him it would be sin. The Bible brings this principle out clearly when it says, "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned [condemned] if he eat [or commits any other act that he's doubtful about], because he eateth [acts] not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom.14:22-23).

85. Although the Lord has given us in the Family much freedom, there are, nevertheless,

some restrictions. The Lord says clearly here that He, through Dad, has set some boundaries for us. He goes on to say that if we cross over those boundaries, it is sin. What 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.

86. 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."

87. 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.

Confirmations from the Lord on Peter's Letter to the Judge

88. Because we needed to answer the judge about these matters, Peter and I were desperate to make sure we were doing the right thing. We have prayed a great deal about it and heard from the Lord numerous times, each step of the way. When Peter met with Apollos and others to write the letter to the judge, we here were in desperate prayer for them. Once they were finished, we asked the Lord to confirm in prophecy that this letter was indeed what He wanted it to be. Here is some of what the Lord gave us:

89. (*Dad speaking to Peter:*) "It doesn't matter that they want to put the responsibility on me for the Law of Love, and they want me to take the blame for any misuse of the Law of Love. I've told you that that's fine. As I've always told you, the buck stops with the leader, and he is always the one who must take the blame and the responsibility. But don't worry, everything will work out just fine."

* * *

90. (*Dad speaking:*) "Well done, I knew you could do it! I counted on you—on your wisdom and your prayerfulness—and you've done well! You've worked well with your co-workers and you've counseled well."

91. "So don't worry, you've done well! You've been in tune, you've been prayerful, and you've been listening to my whispers and those of the many, many counselors who have been gathered around you. So don't be fearful. I know you feel the weight of the responsibility, and I know you feel like the buck stops with you, and it is wise that Mama has asked for prayer and asked for a confirmation, because the Family will need to hear these words of confirmation from me and from the Lord."

92. "To admit that there should have been safeguards and we should have done things differently—and if we had known then what we know now, we would have done things differently—is not showing weakness, it is showing strength! People who are sensible will respect you for it, and the Family will understand. So don't worry or fear about what you've written, but go in full confidence, knowing that I have guided and directed your thoughts and your words. I have established your counseling and your decisions. You've done a good job! You've done well! You've been wise and prayerful, and I'm well pleased!"

93. "You've done the best you can. It's a

difficult assignment, because it goes against your grain to have to publicly admit that I made mistakes. It doesn't set well with you, and you feel nervous and insecure, and I understand this. To have to admit that I was wrong and that I didn't do things as well as maybe I could have done is difficult for you.

94. "Don't worry, you've done a good job! Well done! I'm proud of you! You've really done it, you've really hit it! You've really listened and you did well. God bless you! Now go in faith and don't worry!"

* * *

95. (*Jesus speaking:*) "You have been given skill and power from on High in the formation and the writing of this letter. You have done your part, in which I am very pleased. Words have power and carry great significance. Though you may not see everything clearly now, the paths ahead have been charted by Me. And although you do not see clearly down the road, do not feel you are failing. One step at a time is sufficient for you." (*End of prophecies.*)

96. (*Mama:*) These prophecies did greatly encourage Peter and the others who were working on this letter to the judge. They confirmed that the letter is indeed of the Lord and His will. It is now our prayer that the judge will clearly understand what we have said in the letter and that it will help him understand that the Family is indeed a truly safe environment for Pearl's son, and in fact for all of our precious children. Please pray for this judge, as well as for Pearl and her son and all those involved in this case! Thanks! We love you!

Much love,

Mama

WORLD SERVICES' RESPONSE TO MR JUSTICE WARD

From Peter Amsterdam

September 1995

Dear Mr Justice Ward,

I am replying to you on behalf of World Services, myself, Maria and Gary.

Thank you for the opportunity you have given us to read your judgement and respond to the Court's concerns.

We appreciate the findings you have made about changes that have taken place in the Family, and that these changes are irrevocable. Maria, Gary and I and the entire Family are determined that the Family be a safe and wholesome environment for children to be brought up in, and welcome your acknowledgement of the steps that have been implemented that help to ensure this.

You have asked us to respond to four points. We now give our response, and also ask you to consider further developments that have taken place and are continuing to take place in the Family.

1. Child Discipline Rules:

Since your Lordship heard evidence, the Family has produced and implemented a "Charter of Responsibilities and Rights and the Fundamental Family Rules", which is now the constitution of the Family. It sets out how decisions are to be made as well as establishes the rights and responsibilities of membership. The Charter Rules incorporate the child discipline rules set out in the "Family Discipline Guidelines" (GN 591) which your Lordship has already reviewed. World Services agrees to the modification of these rules which your Lordship has called for in the UK. However, because World Services' power to order changes is now limited by the Charter, we advised all the Family Homes in the UK to consider adopting your Lordship's further restrictions and arranged for a referendum to be held amongst all the members of our Homes in the UK. This referendum has now been held, and the UK Homes have overwhelmingly agreed to permanently implement these restrictions, and they are now in force.

The referendum proposed the following:

1. The provision to allow other people, even with parental permission, to administer corporal punishment to children of Family members in the United Kingdom is hereby revoked. Also, the use of any form of corporal punishment on Family children, even by their parents, is strongly discouraged.

2. Conversation restriction may still be used in moderation as a disciplinary measure; however, the time allowable will now be strictly limited. No child shall be placed on "silence restriction" for more than one hour in a day and for no more than five days in a month.

3. The amount of time a child can be isolated from his peers or given "time out" will now be strictly limited. No child shall be placed in isolation or separated for "time out" for more than 15 minutes in a day.

4. We discourage any over-zealous use of Open Heart Reports (OHRs) with children. If OHRs are used with young people, it should be as a means for free and voluntary communication between children and their parents, teachers and shepherds. Children should receive non-judgmental, loving and prayerful reactions and replies to their queries and communications. OHRs should not become a source of undue mental, emotional or spiritual pressure or duress for children, or a means of excessive intrusion into their lives. Those reading OHRs need to understand that these are confidential, and they should respect the child's right to maintain a certain comfortable margin of personal mental privacy.

5. A majority "Yes" vote beside item #5 on the referendum ballot would mean that you are in agreement with WS rescinding the need for the six-month Vote of Confirmation on the Area Goals 1 - 4 proposed above for the United Kingdom, thus allowing the above changes to become permanent in the United Kingdom. (End of referendum proposal.)

This referendum was sent to the Homes throughout the United Kingdom, and has now been voted upon and accepted by our members there.

We hope your Lordship will find this acceptable.

2. Progress Regarding Educational Steering Committee:

For ease of reference, we annex a copy of the part of the letter from me (Peter Amsterdam) to your Lordship concerning education, together with a progress report.

In the "Fundamental Family Rules", provision is made for parents to send their children to outside schools if they so desire. This is a decision to be made by the parents, and needs to receive the agreement of a 2/3 majority of the voting members of their Home (those over 16). This decision is not subject to review or approval by any other Family authority. If the other members of the Home are not in agreement, the parents are free to move to another Home that is, or start their own Home without prejudice to their status in the Family. (See "Fundamental Family Rules", Section 9, Subsection J.)

Also enclosed is some introductory literature from Christian Light Education, the Mennonite home tuition package referred to in the report. We have negotiated an agreement with Christian Light Education to obtain discounted packages. Each Home can make use of the package as they wish, and they can also make use of the ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) scheme (which is widely used in Australia), or Beka or other educational opportunities they may wish to pursue.

Initial responses to the Christian Light educational programme have been very positive.

The Steering Committee will continue to monitor and explore ways of improving the Family's home education provision.

3. Reconciliation:

The Ministry of Reconciliation continues to be an important aspect of the work of the Family. It has brought a number of ex-members, relatives and TRF Supporters into closer and more favourable contact with Family members and their relatives. I enclose a report I have written on the continuing progress of this ministry, with particular references to the UK.

4. Father David's responsibility for inappropriate sexual activity with children occurring in the Family:

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

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

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

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

Reading, and in some cases re-reading, the accounts of some of the former Family teens

who testified on behalf of the plaintiff is a painful experience. The accounts of sexual maltreatment of minors described in the judgement are deeply distressing.

The period when this was most likely to have occurred was from about 1978 to 1985/6. No one knows the extent of such activity. With so many full-time independent communities and individuals spread around the world during that period, it is difficult to realistically judge what happened in any number of them, let alone all. Although Father David communicated directly via the Letters, there was no direct guidance to go with those mailings to ensure a uniform response. Only with the Fellowship Revolution of 1981 and the move over several years to a smaller number of much larger Homes with greater communication and oversight did WS have more direct contact.

Further developments:

1. The Charter of Responsibilities and Rights:

We ask the Court to appreciate that the "Charter of Responsibilities and Rights and the Fundamental Family Rules" is an important and significant document that, for the first time, clearly defines and codifies the relationship between Family members, their Home and World Services leadership.

We see the Charter as establishing a balance between the rules the Family operates by, and the rights and freedoms of each individual member. It empowers each member and his or her children, and will be an effective safeguard against abusive relationships of any kind arising within the Family. This is an important objective in our implementation of the Charter.

In addition, World Services is encouraging Family members to take much more responsibility for setting their own goals and deciding upon the means for achieving them, and making their own decisions and taking responsibility for them, and thus moving away from being overly dependent on leadership. This document reaffirms that each Family community is a community of individuals who, of their own volition, have agreed to live in accordance with the Charter as members of our church.

World Services is committed to making the Charter work. Already, there have been instances where CRO leadership has been overruled and Homes have claimed the right to do things that the CROs had opposed; but since it is not proscribed by the Charter, the CROs have had to defer.

The process of producing the Charter was consultative. Eighty members of World Services and CRO leadership and 120 members drawn from a cross section of the entire membership, teens, young adults, child-care workers, etc., took about nine months to produce it. After going through four drafts, the final version was unanimously approved.

At the implementation of the Charter, all National Area Shepherds were asked to resign, as were a number of CROs. Matthew (Stephen Pascarelli) is no longer a National Area Shepherd, nor presently a full member of the Family, and now lives in the USA.

World Services will be appointing Visiting Servants. As prescribed in the Charter, they will not have executive functions, but will work in an advisory capacity only.

2. Family Literature:

The Court has commented critically on a number of MO Letters. There are tens of thousands of pages of Family literature, much of which needs to be reviewed in light of the Charter and Fundamental Family Rules. In light of actions taken by the Family in 1986-88, including Father David's renunciation of any literature that appeared to advocate or endorse adult/minor sexual activity, some Letters have been removed and others revised. "The Devil Hates Sex" has had passages that the Court found offensive expunged. Much work remains to be done to identify Letters that reveal our core beliefs and for us to provide a proper hermeneutic reading of the literature, identifying those Letters that still represent Family beliefs and teachings and those that need to be seen in their historical context. Initially, World Services will be concentrating on identifying those core Letters that are central to Family beliefs.

3. A Ministry of Healing:

World Services acknowledges the concerns of the Court about the need for help and counselling of those in the Family who may have suffered abuse. We are moving cautiously as we do not want to create wounds where no wounds existed, nor do we want to reopen old wounds where they have healed. We are concerned to create a climate and a mechanism where young adults and older teens who are the most likely to have been affected negatively by any sexually inappropriate behaviour can feel the freedom to raise any remaining issues and hurts in a non-judgmental set-up where privacy and confidentiality can be respected and where their feelings can be met with love and understanding.

Further, we are contacting some psychological experts who have been recommended to us, but who have not been involved in any of the litigation to date, to seek their assistance and counsel as to how to proceed should we identify any of our members in need of further assistance. World Services realises that to implement a means of providing help to members worldwide is a challenging task since the Family exists in a wide range of countries with widely varying standards of facilities available.

We are also interested in reaching out to former members. Probably the largest group of ex-members is in the USA, since that is where our movement originated, and we are reviewing various means of contacting them, as well as other ex-members worldwide, to invite them to contact us if they still feel they bear old wounds. We have committed ourselves to listen to any such ex-members and explore ways of healing their wounds as part of our ministry of reconciliation.

4. The Judgement:

We are concerned about the prospect of publication of the judgement.

We appreciate that the Court is concerned primarily with S. However, the Court has also looked at the wider issue of the future of the Family and considered the basis upon which the public could show tolerance towards the Family's current behaviour patterns and beliefs and the further changes that need to be undertaken before the Family can be accepted at society's table. We are concerned that the publication of the judgement could unleash forces that might make it very difficult for the Family to survive in open communities, or at the least, could make it much more difficult for us to continue to channel our energies towards the positive changes we have initiated recently.

Over the past year, the absence of official intervention in Family Homes has given us an opportunity to devote time and resources to consolidating the changes that have been introduced, and to produce and implement the Charter. If once again we have to face intense media campaigns and intervention, it will most definitely divert resources.

We are also concerned at the use to which the judgement may be put. Free-lance action against the Family is a very real problem in some parts of the world. Under the umbrella of "just cause", based on findings in respect of events that occurred a number of years ago, we believe that some of our most persistent detractors, who have dedicated time and resources to opposing us, may use this judgement as justification for their own intervention in our lives.

We are also concerned for the many members of the Family and their children who are innocent of involvement in any of the activities the Court has criticised. Over 3,200 of our number are children of 10 and under, all of whom are likely to be adversely affected by bad publicity, or, in the worst case, traumatic raids such as we suffered in Australia, France and Argentina.

Your Lordship has offered the Family an opportunity to put the past behind us and open a new chapter and effect a more subtle and significant change. We would like to take the opportunity offered, and ask your Lordship not to now effectively take away that opportunity by publicly releasing your judgement, as we believe it would undoubtedly be used by the Family's detractors to create a new wave of public hostility that could effectively isolate Family members from society at large and undermine a good deal of the progress made in recent years.

Your Lordship will no doubt bear in mind that we have undertaken a great deal of positive changes through the "Charter of Responsibilities and Rights and the Fundamental Family Rules", and those changes are now being put into practice across the world by our members.

We are publishing this letter in its entirety, making it available to all our members. We will make this published version available to the Court as well.

And lastly, but most importantly, it is also our hope that your Lordship will be able, with good conscience, to allow S. T. to remain with his mother, N.T., living in a Family Home.

I conclude by acknowledging that we have learned a great deal from these proceedings. We appreciate your Lordship's openness and tolerance in taking into consideration all sides on the various issues which have been raised. We are also appreciative that these hearings have underscored a number of areas in which the Family has needed to adopt different approaches towards our interaction with and understanding of society at large. We have undertaken to do this very determinedly, and have admitted to past mistakes and oversights on our part. Our earnest hope and prayer is that the Family provide the best environment possible in which all our members, young and old, can worship and serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sincerely and respectfully yours,

Peter Amsterdam

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

A Report by Peter Amsterdam

September 1995

WS is wholeheartedly committed to maintaining and advancing the programmes of reconciliation and openness that have been in effect for the last few years and which I described last year in detail in my letter to the Court. I now present a summary of the progress which has been made to this effect in the past year.

Contact with Relatives Outside the Family:

Generally speaking, Family members are having significantly more regular contact with their relatives than in times past. We expect this trend to continue and are confident that it will benefit all concerned. I have visited my parents twice in the past two years, most recently on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. On both occasions, members of my biological family accompanied me. Gary also visited with his mother recently. David and Techi, Maria's children, have both visited their grandparents in the past two years. Most of our personal staff have made similar visits.

In our March 1994 *Open Letter to Former Family Members*, published by "No Longer Children", a group that has long campaigned against us, we offered to help relatives locate Family members who had lost contact with them. We have received a number of inquiries, and done our best to expedite renewed contact. We intend to continue this programme.

For example, in Switzerland some remarkable progress has been made in reconciling alienated parents with their adult children who are Family members. For several years Mr and Mrs Trottmann, Mr and Mrs Willi and Mr and Mrs Hofstetler actively opposed the Family. Mr and Mrs Trottmann in particular travelled throughout central Europe speaking against us in the media. Because of this, their daughter Charity decided to break off contact with them. However, within the last year, at the urging of Family members, she finally agreed to meet with them to try to make amends. They are now fully reconciled. Mr and Mrs Willi and Mr and Mrs Hofstetler experienced a similar reconciliation. All three families are now close friends of the Family in Switzerland, and support them publicly.

In England, there is an active ministry with the parents of local members. The members of the Dunton Bassett Home have contact with over 90 parents whom they write to regularly and keep up to date with current news. They have circulated the Dunton Bassett address and phone number to parents and relatives and have encouraged them to ring if they are concerned about their children in any way. Dunton Bassett receives phone calls and letters from parents thanking them for their help, and some parents have even taken the step of writing, expressing thanks that their children are in the Family, and have asked that these letters be made available to other parents. Some write, asking if they can encourage their adult children to communicate more, and the Dunton Bassett team forwards these requests. Many parents and relatives have visited and stayed at Dunton Bassett and other Homes in the UK over the last year. Some inquiries from parents have come via INFORM, and efforts to find the subjects of the inquiries have been fruitful and contact has been renewed. One couple, Mr and Mrs Wareham, had contacted an anti-cult organisation who would not give them the Family's number, but they eventually managed to get in touch through Canon Slee of Southwark Cathedral, with whom the Family in the UK has regular contact. Mr and Mrs Wareham were delighted when we encouraged their son, who was in a foreign country, to telephone, and they have been in close contact since then.

Family leadership feels that the nature and degree of contact each member has with their relatives is a personal matter which is best left up to each individual to decide. There is certainly no stigma attached to having amicable relations and regular contact with relatives. On the contrary, we consider it to be desirable. However, we also realise that, as in society at large, there may be legitimate reasons why some individuals choose to have little or no contact with their relatives.

Because we wish for Family members to establish relationships with their parents and relatives as they personally desire, we deliberately avoided laying out any specific guidelines on this issue when formulating the Charter, except for a brief point stipulating that parents of children under the age of 16 years are responsible to determine the amount of contact that their children should have with relatives. We felt it important to make it clear that this was a decision to be made by the parents themselves, not by their leaders or Home teamworks.

Relations with Former Members:

We continue to actively reach out to former Family members, inviting them to renew contact, and if necessary, apologise for any past wrongs and reconcile as much as possible. WS leadership considers this "ministry of reconciliation" to be a priority. We have seen that everyone involved benefits, and we are convinced that reconciliation is far more preferable than confrontation.

As the Court may recall, in March 1994, "No Longer Children" published an Open Letter from the Family in which, among other things, we apologised to former members for our negligence in failing to maintain contact with them, and declared our commitment to the reconciliation process. This letter continues to accurately reflect Family policy. We have just written a second letter, and will shortly send it to as many former members as possible, inviting them to renew contact with us if they so desire.

Family members continue to have regular contact with former members in many countries, particularly in the UK, the US, and Australia. In the past year, our members have personally met or corresponded with several hundred former members. We are also in regular contact with ex-member support groups.

Our willingness to engage in reconciliation includes contact with former members who have been publicly hostile. I will cite the following as examples, since the people in question are known to the Court. When Christopher Jones and his daughter Celeste recently visited the UK, they met with Valerie and Kristina Jones. E. P. has visited the Family Home at Dunton Bassett and had a friendly game of football with the teenagers.

In the US, Father David's son Hosea visited his sister, Deborah, and his niece, Mene. Faithy, Father David's daughter, also visited Deborah in August this year and went on a camping vacation with her and Deborah's husband Bill. They stayed at a campground where Mene works as a youth counsellor. From what I have heard, this went well and was quite significant, as the two sisters had been personally estranged for many years.

Leslie Dupuy, Rick Dupuy's estranged wife, also met with Rick. Since he gave evidence to your Lordship, he has said that he would now like to reconcile his differences with both her and the Family. Also in August this year, several Family members, including a CRO, visited a centre in Massachusetts that several young adult ex-members have set up for themselves and other ex-members. Apollos' son J., who gave evidence before the Court, is among the residents, and the visiting Family members were able to have several in-depth conversations with him and the others. Although there remained differences of opinion on issues which the ex-members voiced in no uncertain terms, the dialogue was friendly and reconciliatory, with all agreeing to maintain regular contact. Meetings were also held with

the parents of several of these young ex-members who live in the vicinity. These Family members were able to convey our apologies to all these ex-members for any inappropriate treatment they may have received when in the Family, and also sought their recommendations and views as to how to continue to reconcile with them and others. We have recently been informed that Romeo Dupuy, Rick and Leslie's son, has also recently gone to stay at this centre.

Recently the Family in Thailand was able to reconcile with two former members, Ron and Anneke Schieberl, who were founding members of the "No Longer Children" group. Ron's elderly mother, Liz Grey, was a long-time Family member in Bangkok. She died recently from cancer. In June, Ron and his sister Dawn flew to Bangkok and spent several days visiting his mother and the Family there. Until this time he had been publicly critical of the Family. His correspondence with Family members in Thailand after his visit reflects a change.

In a fax dated June 8 of this year, he wrote,

"Thank you for such good care that you took of Dawn and me. And, especially thank you for all the love and care you show my mom. Abby's love and care and long hours are amazing to me. She must have a real love for the Lord and for Liz. Thanks, Abby! ... I enjoyed meeting and getting to know all of you and re-acquainting myself with some old friends."

(P.S. from Anneke:)

"I'm so glad that Ron has had good experiences with you all, because we have heard so much garbage in the past few years that we haven't known what to believe, but based on Ron's experiences, we will be much more cautious in the future about believing malicious allegations."

In a second fax dated June 17, Anneke wrote,

"Ron's experience with you all has changed my outlook on the Family. My only information came from newsletters sent out by former members who have nothing better to do than live in the past. Maybe I will take a closer look.... I know that I certainly have changed over the past 17 years.... I guess what it all boils down to is that 'by their works...' and yours have not gone unnoticed by us. Please keep in touch."

There have only been a few older adult members of the Family who have left our church in Britain in recent years, and we keep in touch with them. We have also taken positive steps to either establish or maintain friendly contact with ones who left years ago. Regular mailings are sent to 32 ex-members, and six others have been added to the list recently. These mailings are to keep them updated on what is happening in the Family. They are not asked for support or expected to rejoin, but our members are trying to have good relations with them, answer any questions they may have, and heal any hurts. Some phone from as far away as Germany, the Canary Islands, etc., and they have all been happy to be back in contact. One ex-member drove hundreds of miles to find the Dunton Bassett Home after having read a newspaper article mentioning it. Some, on their own volition, have felt so positive that they have begun to help financially. Family members in turn have visited some ex-members at their request. They have spent hours together talking over things that have happened in the past and asking forgiveness if necessary, or, if possible, trying to throw new light on situations which may have caused hurt in some way.

We do not imply in the above-mentioned cases that all differences have been resolved—far from it—but they illustrate our ongoing commitment to the reconciliation ministry.

TRF Supporters:

Over the past year a great deal of progress has been made in our relations with TRF Supporters (TSers), and the headway made has been very gratifying. As a matter of policy, WS will continue to forge close relations with TSers in order that we can all work together at our principal task of evangelism. We consider TRF Supporters to be Family members, something we are encouraging the DO Family to remember.

As the Court may recall, in April of 1994 WS removed all restrictions on interaction between DO and TS members. I subsequently wrote an Open Letter to the TSers, which addressed a number of issues, including an apology for some actions of the past. Again, as this letter illustrates changes in our thinking as well as current policy and direction, I would like to quote a few pertinent paragraphs:

The Lord has shown us that we need to "shorten the cord" between the various concentric circles of the Family. He looks upon the heart and not upon the outward appearance of Family classification (1Sam. 16:7). He loves all the Family, regardless of whether they are DO or TRF Supporters.

Having become more aware of your needs, we want to try to better meet them by making some immediate changes which we hope will express our gratefulness and give due recognition to you who are such a vital and important part of the Lord's Family.

Before we explain these changes, we'd like to make some apologies. We know that in some cases some of you have not been treated as lovingly as you should have been, *either at the time of your move to TRF Supporter status or since then. We have received reports that some of you have been deeply hurt by a lack of love on the part of your DO brethren. Hearing of such behaviour saddens and hurts us. Struggling through the hardships many of you have experienced has been difficult enough without the added burden of feeling unloved or unwanted by the rest of the Family.*

We acknowledge that some of this behaviour was probably a result of the DO brethren trying to implement the policies that were put in place at the start of the TRF Supporter programme. At that time it was necessary for there to be a more definite line of distinction between the DO and TRF Supporter Members, but we did not intend for the TRF Supporter Members to be treated in an unloving manner.

For any of you who were treated in such a way, we apologise and sincerely ask you to forgive us. We're very sorry we did not foresee all the difficulties that you were to encounter when we started the programme, and that the policies associated with it were often implemented without sufficient love, consideration, understanding and mercy. We have been slow in addressing these matters, and we apologise for that.

From now on there are no longer any general restrictions on contact between DO and TRF Supporter Family Members. It will now be up to you and any DO Family Members you come in contact with to decide how much you want to meet and fellowship or possibly work together. Circumstances and conditions vary so greatly from one situation to another that the only stipulation we will make is that whatever you decide upon must have the full agreement and consent of everyone immediately concerned. No permission is needed from Area Shepherds. Likewise, there is no obligation on the part of anyone to do anything that they don't really want to.

WS has since published a "Statement on TRF Supporters", subtitled a "Definition and Explanation of TRF Supporter Membership in the Family". This clearly outlines the minimum requirements for TS members. A copy of this is annexed to this document.

In the past year, a number of fellowship meetings have been held for DO and TS Family members in several different countries. The Family in the UK has been in the forefront of this and has established very close relations with the TS members there. They have monthly TS meetings in the UK, with sometimes over 200 attending. The DO and TS members work together far more closely than in the past. Large meetings have also been held in the US, the most recent of which, at the beginning of July, had 200 TSers attending. A message of encouragement from Maria to all the attendees was read at this occasion, and subsequently sent out to our entire TRF Supporter Family. The meeting was also attended by one of the three North American CROs.

After one TS meeting in Washington, D.C., a long-time member named Kenaz, who is now a TRF Supporter wrote us, saying,

We just returned from a very inspiring visit to the TS Fellowship in D.C. and several very healing visits with old friends and some delightful Family young people. This evening was marked for us by some very significant developments. We truly sense not only a real openness on the part of the Family folks we talked with, real heartfelt fear-free communication, but a beautiful, humble I-miss-the-Family-no-matter-what-has-happened hunger on the part of the TS members. There was a hope and enthusiasm re-kindled in every heart in the room that still "strangely warms our faith" and a sense of love and unity with the DO folks and each other that frankly hasn't been so strong in the last few years.

Many TSers have asked for help from the Family. Primarily, they are very concerned about the education of their children and teenagers and would like access to more Family educational material. We have tried to accommodate them in this regard, and also put them in touch with Christian Light Publishers, from whom a number of DO Family members are now purchasing their home schooling teaching materials.

Many TSers have also requested that their older children and teenagers be allowed to rejoin the DO Family, or at least have regular fellowship with them. Most of these young people have very good memories of their time in the Family and feel that it is the best place for them to serve the Lord. The programmes that we set up to accommodate these teens, and which I described in my previous letter to the Court, are still functioning, and from all indications those involved seem satisfied with them.

In addition, WS asked the CROs to "please encourage your DO Homes to organise fellowships, witnessing excursions, catacomb ministries, and other types of activities for these TS pre-teens and teens, so we can channel their energies and help them grow spiritually and use their talents to reach the lost".

We are also receiving many requests from TSers wanting to rejoin the DO Family. We feel that in many cases this will be beneficial. A number of TSers are living an exemplary life-style and are doing a wonderful job of actively witnessing their faith. Some TSers have already begun the process of rejoining, and the CROs are presently appointing personnel in each region to process all such applications from TSers.

Teens Who Leave the Family:

As I mentioned in my first letter to the Court, we have accepted that it is inevitable that

a number of young people who were born and raised in the Family will eventually decide to leave to pursue other interests. We also realise that we should do what we can to make the transition as smooth as possible, unconditionally extending them our love and support.

In September of 1994, WS published a Letter from Maria entitled "When Teens Leave the Family!" (ML #2942). I quote excerpts of it, as I feel it accurately reflects the change of attitude that we are promoting within the Family, as well as current and future Family policy.

Because of our emotional involvement, we may have a hard time relating to the fact that in most churches and denominations, very few missionaries' children remain forever with their parents on the mission field. At some time or another, most of them go back to their home country, and they often choose to pursue different careers entirely.

In the past, I believe we have in some ways resisted even admitting to ourselves that a choice exists that each of our teens has to make for themselves. We haven't even wanted to face the fact that some of them might want to do something other than serve the Lord in the Family and be missionaries. I think that some Family Members have probably done everything possible to avoid talking about really giving them a choice.

We've done our best to try to hang on to them, even to the point of trying to persuade some of them to stay with us long after it was obvious that their heart was not in the Family and that everyone would be better off if they were elsewhere.

After knowing everything we have taught and having had our warnings, if they still decide they want to go, then we should say, "Okay, praise the Lord! You go out there and do the best you can, and we'll pray for you and we'll help you as much as we can. We'll do what we can to help you get off, and we'll try to make some arrangements for you. And we want you to know that we still love you, no matter what. We hope you'll be successful." One thing I'm sure of, they will be a much better testimony to the good fruits of the Family if they do well than if they do not.

We need to show our kids the Lord's unfailing Love.—No matter what they do or what they decide or how far they go astray, we'll never stop loving them.... How can we withhold our love and prayers—even from the defiant and the rebellious—when now is the time when they most need to know that we love them?

In April 1995 another Letter by Maria on this subject was published, entitled, "Braving the Winds of Change!—Helping our Teens to Face the Future", in which Maria put forth the idea of "halfway houses" for teens who wished to experience secular education or employment. She said:

In light of what the Lord has said about concentric circles of service, and how it doesn't have to be only black or white for such young people, if any of you parents or shepherds would have a burden and feel a definite call of God on your lives to set up a Home for some of our sincere young people who want to serve the Lord in the Family but also experiment with secular school or jobs, then please let your CROs know about it. If the Lord calls you to such a place of service, it could help some of our young people, ... to find out what they want to do with their lives without having to leave the Family, or be plagued by doubts or double-mindedness while remaining in a normal DO Home. We don't want anyone to feel obligated to open such a Home, but if the Lord lays it on your heart, we'd like to hear about it. If you start such a Home, we would be very interested in the lessons learned and progress made.

Even before this Letter was written, we had been exploring the possibility of setting up some sort of halfway houses. Aside from the above purpose expressed by Maria, these could also help young people who decide to leave the Family to successfully integrate into secular society. There is currently a pilot project of this type of home underway in the US, in Texas, run by a couple who were long-time missionaries in Latin America. When two of their teenage daughters decided to leave the Family, this couple resolved to return to the US and open a Family Home that would be devoted to helping their daughters, and other teens in the same situation, adapt to life outside the Family.

However our members decide to handle such individual situations, we are encouraging them to do whatever they can to help our departing young people, and most of all offer them unconditional love and support. In the UK, in particular, they are trying to make their transition into greater society as easy as possible by offering guidance and help and making themselves available for telephone or personal contact. They have also helped the departees financially and with finding accommodation, and they are trying to encourage them to take courses or find a suitable job. The members at Dunton Bassett have researched, compiled and sent out a leaflet which lists opportunities to receive accreditation in this country with the different examining boards like RSA (Royal Society of Arts) and AEB (Associated Examining Board). Quite a few departing teenagers have now gone on to take secretarial courses or GCSEs. Even before the Charter came out, two teenagers from one family asked if they could do their GCSEs, and they were supplied a place with a TS couple and started college. They completed 5 GCSEs in one year, and the older boy plans to complete 3 A Levels in one year. Now with the implementation of the Charter, this is also quite possible to accomplish from a DO Home and is indeed already happening. The general opinion expressed by both the young people and their parents is that they have had no problems integrating into formal schooling, and most have done well scholastically.

They have had M. S. and C. A. visit at Dunton Bassett. M.'s mother has also been over to spend time with her, and her brothers K. and D. S. D.'s dad has also been over to spend time with him. Gideon and Rachel's daughter was staying at Dunton Bassett even when the *Daily Mail* "exposé", which you are familiar with, came out after she had decided to leave the Family. Gideon and Rachel were looking after her when she had her baby, and she and her husband Gabe decided to return to the Family and are now serving the Lord in Africa. Gideon and Rachel's son A. also left, but has visited regularly and kept in close phone contact. Apparently he also has now made a decision to return to the Family.

General Policy of Openness:

Our policy concerning overall "openness" remains unchanged from when I wrote the Court last year. I include excerpts of that letter:

Gone are the days when a Home could hope to exist in a corner out of the public eye. We have now virtually required of every Home that they openly present themselves as the Family to their neighbours, landlords, and in all their dealings with the public. The only exceptions are Homes which are operating in countries such as China or some Islamic countries, where any form of Christian evangelisation is outlawed.

We believe that this move to greater openness has greatly benefited the Family in many ways. Primarily, we have been able to be a much better witness of the Gospel than ever before. Secondly, we have dispelled many of the allegations that have dogged us for years and thus are better able to avoid harassment from authorities. Thirdly, we have won many new friends and supporters in all areas of society. And lastly, increased

openness has helped us to identify areas where the Family needed to change.

So even if tomorrow the Family ceased to be involved in any legal proceedings, the changes that have occurred would continue. We believe wholeheartedly that this is the way that God wants us to move. We believe that by doing so we are more effectively fulfilling the Great Commission of evangelisation that He has given us in the Gospels.

As a leader of the Family, I would like to affirm that we are committed to a long-term policy of fostering as much openness as possible, both within our communities and in our relations with outsiders.

Our desire to encourage openness is manifested in many ways. The most obvious is the Charter, where we have codified all the workings and governing of the Family. Anyone, including non-members, can study it and have a very clear understanding of all aspects of Family life. This document effectively introduces the rule of law into Family Homes, laws which must be respected by everyone, including WS leadership, and removes much of the arbitrariness that resulted from not having defined limits and regulations concerning many matters of Family life.

Our members have continued to get involved in their local communities at every level. Many are involved in joint projects with local churches. Our "consider the poor" ministries are an increasingly important aspect of our overall activities. Since the devastating earthquake in Kobe, Japan, dozens of Family members have spent several months there helping with disaster relief work. Similarly, after the Oklahoma City bombing, local Family members assisted the rescue work, with some of our teens supervising large emergency kitchens. For the last several years a small team has been in Croatia and, when possible, in Bosnia, ministering to the victims of the war there. More recently, Family members were flown by the government to help in the relief efforts on Sakhalin Island in Eastern Russia after the catastrophic earthquake there.

These are some of the more well-known areas that Family members are active in. However, almost every Home is in some way involved in materially helping the disadvantaged of society, ministries which we collectively have termed "consider the poor" after the passage in chapter 41 of the Book of Psalms. Ministries such as these usually require a significant degree of integration into the local community.

We also have participated in numerous international conferences in the past year, several sponsored by UN agencies.

We continue to open our Homes to different academics who wish to learn more about us. A book has just been published in the US which includes many of their findings. ("*Sex, Slander and Salvation*", by James Lewis and Dr. Gordon Melton.)

We continue to have extensive contact with academics, sociologists of religion, leaders of established churches, and in the UK, with INFORM at the London School of Economics.

Family members continue to participate in media interviews, even when they have prior knowledge that such encounters are going to be hostile, especially in the UK. We feel it important to constantly be seen and heard by the public in order to make known the changes that have taken place in the Family.

I do hope this has given you a good overview of what we are accomplishing in these areas. I apologise for the length of this letter, but it seems that to give an overview of these points has necessitated going into some detail.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Amsterdam

PROGRESS MADE ON RECOMMENDATIONS PUT FORTH IN JANUARY 1994 BY THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

A Report by Peter Amsterdam
September 1995

(Editor's note: In a previous letter to the judge, Peter included a number of recommendations and proposals by those responsible for the Family's educational program. The following report assesses the progress made on each of these proposals.)

Recommendations of the Educational Steering Committee

A. That the CROs should establish a local Educational Resource Department which will work with the NAS MOM and the Home Childcare Teamworkers to ensure that the parents have a supply of all resources needed to properly home educate their children. (*now called Family and Education Department, and referred to as such in the remainder of this document)*

Action Taken:

* At Summit '95, a leadership meeting held in November 1994, the CROs discussed and agreed to establish special Family and Education Departments in each area to help provide needed assistance to the Homes in the areas of childcare, family and educational assistance. Each area is in the process of establishing these offices and finding suitable personnel to staff them.

* The "Charter of Responsibilities and Rights" (hereafter referred to as the Charter) defines it as a clear responsibility of each Continental Office to establish a Family and Education Department. (See p.82, number 24, item I: "Establish a Family and Education Department to offer counsel on the childcare and educational needs of our children, and recommend educational materials and resources.

("The concerns of the Family and Education Department will include many areas of family life, especially those concerning the children and young people, such as: childcare and shepherding, pregnancy and baby care, health, home schooling, teacher training, parenting, JETT/teen shepherding, JETT/teen education, Christian Vocational College [CVC], educational resources, etc.")

B. That WS, the CROs and each local [Family and Education Department] will work together to:

1. Produce more specialised educational publications, plus encourage the use of good educational books and materials from Christian and secular sources.

Action Taken:

* Each CRO area has submitted lists of locally available educational and reference books and materials to Family Care, who are compiling these recommended book listings and making them available to the whole Family.

* WS-recommended reference books, videos, computer programmes, etc., have been significantly expanded in the Family's Christian Vocational College (CVC) programme.

2. Produce and/or otherwise supply educational videos, vocational training videos, teacher training and specialised training videos.

Action Taken:

* Two Homes in the USA, located in large urban areas, were given the task of researching educational training videos to be recommended to the Family.

* WS arranged for the most promising titles best suited for use with the new Christian Vocational College programme to be sent to Family Care to view, evaluate and make recommendations to the Family. WS's intention is that this processing of good educational video resource material will be done on a continuing basis. Close to 50 new educational titles are about to be recommended for Family educational use.

* In addition to compiling sources of good instructional video materials available from secular sources, our own Family video studios continue to produce educational videos for the Family. Some of the most recent titles produced or nearing completion include:

Teaching Arithmetic
Performing with Children
How to Set Up a Kitchen
Managing Home Finances
Childbirth
Prenatal Exercises
Vocal Training Classes
Guitar Classes
Piano Classes
Drumming Class

3. Seek ways to ensure that each Home's education centre is equipped with a basic reference library, either in the form of books or computer-accessed materials.

Action Taken:

* The above-mentioned book listing that Family Care is compiling will help the Homes with this.

* WS is researching and working towards providing or recommending CD-ROM-based reference materials to Family Homes.

* The Charter assigns this task to the individual Homes to provide suitable educational resources. Many have already proceeded with researching and purchasing these materials. The Family and Education Department in each CRO area will assist the Homes in obtaining such materials.

4. Regularly publish the Home Educator magazine with informative tips and articles on education to help our parents keep abreast of new developments, methods, and materials in education.

Action Taken:

* WS is producing a series of Home Educator magazines aimed at offering specific help to parent teachers in small Home situations. Themes include: "Home Learning Recipes" (reading, math and social studies activities for children in kindergarten through grade 12); summaries of educational research findings helpful to home school teachers; tips on giving

very young children a head start in education (activities for birth to 5 years old); teaching reading; math teaching activities; science teaching activities; test-taking skills, etc.

* Family Care will continue to research and compile the best articles found in leading home schooling magazines and make these available to Family Homes on a regular basis.

5. Set up training programmes, work shops, conventions, seminars, etc., to help instruct and encourage home schooling parents and teachers. Set a goal of two such seminars or conferences each year.

Action Taken:

* Before the Charter went into effect, special qualified teams in many areas went around visiting the Homes giving educational and child-care seminars. This programme, or a variation of it, will likely be resumed and further developed by the new Family and Education Departments as soon as post-Charter appointments, elections and overall restructuring is complete.

* The Christian Vocational College (CVC) programme provides a teacher training programme.

* The Family has made arrangements with a well-established Mennonite publishing house (Christian Light Publishers [CLP]) in the USA, who are in many respects similar to the Family in belief, organisation and educational outlook, to help provide curriculum materials, training and assistance. The Christian Light Education (CLE) programme provides a training programme for teachers and parents, which has been made available for those who desire to take the course. Reasonable price arrangements, international ordering and administrative details have been worked out; Family Homes have all been informed of this educational facility and some are beginning to try this programme out. Some members have used this programme for a number of years with good results.

6. Better define the role of the teacher in a Home so teaching will be more consistent, and teaching times not interrupted by the need to attend to other responsibilities.

Action Taken:

* The Charter makes certain standards of education within each Family Home a requirement for membership (p.122-124), as well as outlines minimum hours of study (p.122-124), record-keeping requirements (p.33, 51), and Home and parent responsibilities (p.33, 50-51, 123), etc.

* WS is also preparing a series of special educational *Family Specials Magazines* (FSMs) to continue to help guide the Family in their home-based education.

7. Reinforce the practice of local studies of history, language and geography pertaining to the country they live in.

Action Taken:

* This is addressed in the Charter (see p.123-124, number 4, "Scholastic and Schedule Rules", item A5), where guidelines for language learning are given, plus parents are encouraged to, as needed, "use suitable secular study materials available in the local language". Also, the Charter requires parents to be informed of any educational laws or requirements of the country they live in, and to try to satisfy testing or other requirements. (See p.33, number 6, "Responsibility of Parents", commentary to item E.)

8. *Develop a remedial educational programme to help parents better meet the special education needs of children with learning difficulties. Become better informed about new methods and improvements in special education programmes and techniques for teaching children with learning difficulties or disadvantages (the blind, deaf, autistic, those with learning dysfunctions, etc.), as well as remedial courses for children who fall behind in certain areas.*

Action Taken:

* We are aware that we lack the expertise to help in many of these situations. Families who have children with special care or educational needs are encouraged to obtain whatever outside help or professional assistance is necessary to assure the best care and treatment possible be given physically or mentally challenged children, including enrolling those children in special schools. (see Charter, p.51, number 11, item B.)

* WS continues to research and publish, on a case-by-case and as-needed basis, articles helpful to parents caring for challenged children.

9. *That WS, the CROs and each local [Family and Education Department] will encourage the Home Teamworks, Home council and home schooling parents to:*

a) *Facilitate taking local national secondary education exams with a view to obtaining local national secondary education qualifications should either the child or their parents wish it.*

Action Taken:

* The right to receive or obtain a higher education within the Family is addressed affirmatively in the Charter (see p.123). Family teens taking the Christian Vocational College programme have access to two levels of high school diplomas: a general high school diploma, or a vocational high school diploma. Information on how to upgrade CVC high school diplomas to fully recognised university entrance qualifications are provided in the programme.

* Parents, in agreement with other members of their Home, are free to enroll their children in any school or correspondence course they so desire. If arrangements cannot be worked out with their current Home, they are free to move to another Home or establish their own without prejudice to their status in the Family. Additionally, arrangements have been made with Christian Light Education (USA) for a reduced rate for Family members who wish to use their programme to complete their education through high school graduation.

b) *Facilitate the validation of teens' vocational skills by outside exams, resulting in vocational certification.*

Action Taken:

* The Charter makes broad provision for young people in the Family to take tests and attend needed vocational training classes. (See p.40, number 8, "Rights of the Children", item F, which states that Family children have the right to "seek to obtain official certification of the schooling they receive, if they desire and their parents agree, and/or if the parents desire". Accompanying commentary adds the following: "If the child/teen wants to get local testing, such as the GED test in the US, which is a high school equivalency test, or whatever testing might be available, so that they can get credit for their education, then they have the

right to do so. If it's not possible for the Home to provide the means for the child to get such testing, then the parents are free to move with the child to another Home that can provide it.")

* Christian Light Education (USA) also makes available vocational training courses within their programme. These courses are also available at a reduced rate for the Family.

c) Research the possibility of taking outside training in subjects they need help in.

Action Taken:

* The Charter makes full provision for this on an individual, family, or Home level. With the establishing of Family and Education Departments, availability of information about local educational resources should become more widespread.

* The CVC programme contains many suggestions of supplementary courses and studies available from secular or other Christian sources.

d) "Specialise" in training full time teachers.

Action Taken:

* This will be encouraged by the new Family and Education Departments.

* The CVC Teachers' Training Program is almost ready to go out to the Family.

* Also, Family members now have easy access to the teacher training course made available through Christian Light Education (USA).

e) Take stock of the untapped talents and experience of Home members and provide them with opportunity to pass on to our second generation their knowledge, experiences and trade skills.

Action Taken:

* With the full implementation of the Christian Vocational College programme, we hope this will become a daily reality in Homes, as it is an integral part of the programme.

*The "PER" series of Letters and FSMs very much encourages adults to share their training, knowledge, experience, skills and responsibilities with the younger generation. This is later repeated in FSMs on the CVC course.

f) Use "resource" people from outside our communities to help teach our children specialised skills.

Action Taken:

* This option is provided for in the Charter (see pp.51,123, 132-133). Specifically it is addressed under point 9, "Home Life Rules", item J: "The Home decides, by a two-thirds majority, if any of its children, teens or adults may attend outside schools or engage in outside classes, who may do so, and what schools or classes may be attended" (p.132). Further, "If the parents or the Home cannot supply an adequate education via home schooling, they may need to consider outside schooling, private tutoring, etc. It is not enough for a Home to supply the minimum school time if it does not result in an adequate education for the children" (p.123). Further, "Some of the teens or adults may want to attend a night class on some subject that would be helpful to their ministry. If the Home is in agreement with the plan and the subjects, they can vote to allow it" (p.133).

g) Make greater use of local educational opportunities, excursions and outings, and provide time to take advantage of local learning situations.

Action Taken:

* This option is broadly provided for by the Charter (as mentioned in the previous item), plus it is being addressed in the education FSMs being prepared by WS.

* A reprint of a home school magazine article entitled "Field Trips" is being sent to the Family, encouraging them to make greater use of such educational opportunities.

h) Approach local educational facilities about the possible off-hours use of their existing facilities, such as their computer room, recording studio, band or music room, gym, science lab, classrooms, pools, etc.

Action Taken:

* As mentioned in the previous two items, this is broadly covered by the provisions of the Charter.

* The Charter clearly allows this option, which includes permitting Family children to attend non-Family public or private schools.

i) Give greater attention to the teaching of math, science, and written communication skills.

Action Taken:

* The Charter puts this responsibility on the parents and on the Homes, in that it says that children should have schooling for "enough time each week for them to become competent in a manner appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, practical-life skills, as well as other curricular subjects". It further states, "It is the responsibility of each Home and each parent to make sure that every child is receiving a proper education... If the parents or the Home cannot supply an adequate education via home schooling, they may need to consider outside schooling, private tutoring, etc." (See p.122, item 4. "Scholastic and Schedule Rules.")

* The Christian Vocational College programme offers high school scholastic levels of study, plus the Christian Light Education programme now available to all Family members offers a sequential, self-paced, self-teaching programme for grades one through 12, via workbooks, which Family members may choose to use as a supplement or alternative to our Family home schooling program.

* New *Home Educator* magazines also address these topics.

j) Be as supportive and accommodating as possible of our children's individual desires for special training.

Action Taken:

* The essence of this point has been written directly into the Charter. Each parent or guardian of children in the Family is responsible, on an ongoing basis, to see to it that their children are properly and sufficiently educated scholastically, physically, emotionally and spiritually (see p.33). Further, it is the duty of each Home to provide parents with sufficient assistance and resources to properly educate their children (p.36). Further, all Family children have as a Charter-guaranteed right, "Sufficient time, opportunity and educational

materials to receive an adequate education that allows them to become competent in a manner appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude, in the skills of reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, sciences, and other curricular subjects, including practical-life skills" (p.39).

Also, the Charter adds that "If a child wishes to receive more education in a certain field of study, they may do so if their parents agree. It would be up to the child to explain their desire to the parents, and up to the parents to see if the Home can comply. If not, the parents will have to decide whether they want to move to a Home that can" (p.39).