

## **FAMILY UPDATE NEWS! — FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS! — JUNE, 1994.**

*"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people!" (Psa.126:3; 1Chr.16:8.)*

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Dear Family and Friends,

God bless you! We pray that this finds you and your family well.

Welcome to the premier edition of the **Family Update News**. This is the first of an ongoing series of news updates to keep you abreast of the latest projects and news of *The Family* worldwide.

Many of you help support Family members with your prayers, gifts and good will. The Lord has promised that you will have a share in the rewards for all that *The Family* is accomplishing, for we couldn't do it without you. (See 1Sa.30:24 and Psa.68:12.)—And part of your reward here and now is seeing the results of your prayers and investment in His Work, so here you are!

God bless and keep you.

Love and prayers,

The Family

### **AUSTRALIA**

#### **Legal Victory in Melbourne!**

On Friday, April 22nd, the Supreme Court of Victoria ratified a mediation agreement between The Family, and Health and Community Services (H&CS, formerly the Department of Community Services of Victoria), effectively bringing to an end that two-year legal battle.

*(Background: This case goes back to May, 1992, when authorities in Melbourne, Victoria, and Sydney, New South Wales, snatched 142 Family children from their beds in controversial pre-dawn raids on Family residences. The raids drew worldwide media attention.*

*(Community Services officials in both states claimed that the children were at risk of emotional, physical and psychological harm by virtue of being raised in Family communities. As there was no evidence of this abuse, within a few days the children were returned to their parents. Nevertheless, Community Services departments in both states pursued the matter in court.*

*(Five months after the raids, an out-of-court settlement was reached by the New South Wales authorities and The Family in December 1992. That case has since been closed.*

*(However, the legal battle in the state of Victoria dragged on for another 18 months because of Community Services' claim that protection applications were needed for The Family's children.*

*(Documents obtained from the Department revealed their collusion with the so-called Anti-"Cult" Movement. They intended to bring the "big guns" of the American-based Cult Awareness Network [CAN] such as Margaret Singer, Jolly West, Steve Hassan, etc., to Australia to testify as "expert witnesses" against The Family. It is interesting to note that not one of these individuals has to our knowledge ever visited a Family Home and have no personal knowledge of the children or parents in Melbourne. Their charges of "brainwashing" and "mind control" levelled at religious groups such as The Family have been rejected by the American Psychological Association and by most of the world's leading social scientists.*

*(Twenty-three months after the raids, the Department still had no conclusive evidence to show for its efforts and expense. With pressure mounting from the state government to end what was becoming an embarrassment, the Department finally agreed to a mediation on terms almost identical to those originally suggested by The Family 18 months earlier.*

*(The Family members agreed to the mediation solely to bring the extremely time-consuming and physically taxing litigation to a close. It is stated in the agreement that the Family members involved maintain their stand that there were no grounds for the protection applications on their children.)*

#### **Mediation on Our Terms**

The terms of the final mediation are:

1. The Department of Health and Community Services (H&CS) is to have no further form of supervision or contact with our children.
2. The children may continue to be "home schooled" in Family residences.
3. The children's educational progress will be assessed by the Education Department using the same criteria as is applied to other home schoolers.

4. Outside activities for the children, including horse riding, crafts, sports and music lessons, will be organized by local councils and paid for by H&CS. These activities will be for three hours each week and continue for 15 months.

5. A panel of eminent members of the local community whom The Family nominated will visit the four Melbourne Homes once a month.

6. At the end of 15 months, these conditions will be dropped and the case will be permanently closed.

### **Victory Proclaimed Far and Wide**

The Family's victory was reported on most of the nationwide evening news broadcasts. The Family has since done many interviews for radio, newspapers and television. Virtually all of the press coverage has been favourable.

Initial media coverage of the settlement focused on these points: 1) the millions of dollars of taxpayers' money which H&CS squandered pursuing a case for which they had no evidence; 2) the fact that the terms of the final mediation were virtually identical to those suggested by The Family 18 months ago; and 3) the fact that the settlement came about just as lawyers for The Family were about to ask the Children's Court to permanently stop the case on the grounds that H&CS had abused legal process and brought the case against The Family for improper purposes. (*Editor's note: For more details, be sure to read the Family press release and various news reprints available on this subject.*)

### **Family Homes Listed as "Places of Worship"**

From the Melbourne Family: "Our local mayor's office phoned to let us know they are including us in the information pamphlet they are preparing about our town, under the heading 'Places of Worship.' We are encouraged that they are so interested in integrating us into their community. One of our teens also met the mayor during a picnic in a local park, at which time she encouraged us to take a more active part in civic activities."

## **SOUTH AMERICA**

### **Argentina Update**

Judge Roberto Marquevich signed an official document returning custody of the last 97 Family children involved in the Buenos Aires court case to their parents.

*(Background: On September 1, 1993, police in Buenos Aires, Argentina, raided several residences of The Family. Twenty-one Family members were jailed, and nearly 140 children were institutionalized. The authorities charged that Family members were guilty of child abuse, illegal association, etc. For several days, news of the raids and the false accusations made headlines around the world--all this in spite of the fact that 11 previous official investigations into The Family in Argentina, dating back to 1982, had found that all charges brought against The Family were unfounded. This latest incident was also not the first time that Family members' religious and human rights were violated by elements in the Argentine police and judicial system--nor has The Family been the only target for such treatment. Argentina has a long documented history of oppressing religious and political minorities.*

*(Lawyers representing the imprisoned Family members filed an appeal. On December 13, 1993, the Federal Appeals Court of San Martin ruled that the investigatory judge, Roberto Marquevich, had no jurisdiction over the case and that there was no evidence to warrant detention of Family members or protective custody of their children. All those detained were released. They had spent three and one-half difficult and dangerous months in Argentine prisons and institutions.*

*(After the Dec. 13th verdict, some Family members and their children were able to leave the country immediately, but about 100 others--mostly children--were required to remain until new psychological evaluations could be conducted. Previous examinations carried out while the children were in custody had declared some of the children to be psychologically disturbed or harmed. These results were later found to be forged or otherwise fraudulent. The examining psychologists conducting the new tests were all unanimous in declaring the children psychologically sound, and agreed that there were no signs of abuse.*

*(The Family has since launched six lawsuits in Argentine federal courts against those involved in the raids, including the police commissioner, the head of the anti-"cult" group SPES, the psychologists who falsified test results, and the authorities who were responsible for the looting of Family properties under their jurisdiction during the Family members' incarceration.)*

This is an outstanding miracle, as the final papers needed to be signed by the instigator of the entire debacle, Judge Marquevich. The Argentine Family reports:

"What a portrayal of the Lord's Love, mercy and power!--The fulfilment of all that He promised us. You can't imagine how much all of us are rejoicing for this final victory. The Lord is so good to us and always there to hear and answer our prayers."

*(Editor's note: For more details, be sure to read "Falsely Accused and Jailed in Argentina," the account of Claire Borowick, one of the imprisoned Family missionaries, featured in the 3rd and 4th issues of the "Persecution Endtime News" [PEN], as well as Family press releases and various news reprints available on this subject.)*

### **Family Highlighted at Children's Rights Conference**

Five Family members were guest speakers at Argentina's first "National Conference on Children's Rights". They were able to give accounts of the abuses Family members suffered at the hands of the authorities, both during the initial raids and the subsequent months they spent in prisons and institutions. Many delegates told our representatives that this was the high point of the two-day conference. Family members were also able to give information packets to all the other speakers and participants, many of whom are activists for children's rights both nationally and abroad.

### **News Article Debunks Our Detractors**

*La Maga*, a weekly magazine read by Argentina's "intellectual elite," recounted in detail the recent judicial fiasco involving The Family. In addition, the article decried prejudice against socially divergent groups, questioned the supposed danger which new religious movements (NRMs) pose to society, and debunked the accusation of "brainwashing" from a scientific viewpoint.

### **Love Never Fails!**

The once-antagonistic director of the women's jail where our women were incarcerated has arranged for The Family to do a visitation program to minister to the needy inmates.

### **Sociologist Says The Family Sets the Best Christian Example**

An Argentine sociologist spent a few days living in a Family Home while doing a study on The Family. She was so favourably impressed with our way of life that she said it was difficult to leave. She was especially impressed by our very outgoing and sociable children. But her major discovery, she said, was that in her opinion The Family sets the best example of any Christians she has met.

### **Peru Ministry to Flood Victims**

When whole sections of the port area of Lima, Peru, were virtually destroyed during recent flooding, the Catholic Church and government appealed to organizations throughout the country for help. The Family offered their services, and a team was soon busy helping to distribute food and clothing at the relief shelter. They also sang for the flood victims, and prayed with many of them to receive the Lord.

## **NORTH AMERICA**

### **Teens Sing at Community Meeting**

Family teens in the Midwest U.S. sang at a community meeting where four schools were represented. The sponsor of the meeting, a senior law enforcement official, said that he and his officers are very thankful to have us in their community.

The Family's representatives also attended the "Youth and Family Committee" part of the meeting. The guest speaker, a television newscaster, spoke on the topic of crime prevention. Our teens contributed much to the discussion, answering the moderator's questions and bringing out important points which he expounded upon. The teens also met a pastor active in the city's crime prevention program, who invited them to sing at his church.

### **Puerto Rico TV Program Highlights Family**

A Home in Puerto Rico reports: "One nationwide TV station does a local travelogue, each week visiting a different town to show special attractions of the respective communities. Our town has been selected for an upcoming feature, and the mayor has invited us to be filmed as one of the highlights of the town. Our kids will perform, and we'll summarize our activities in the community."



### **Words of Life Bring Hope To the Mountains of Chiapas**

From The Family in Mexico: "We went to the beaches of Oaxaca for Easter witnessing. Personal witnessing was tremendous, as there were hippies from all over the world. One teen met a former Family member who is a Mayan Indian from the mountains of Chiapas (where the Zapatista rebels have their headquarters). He and his wife and three children pass out tracts. All of them are quite sweet.

"He was in The Family in '74, but left and lost contact. He explained that he felt called to reach his own people in the mountains with the Gospel, since he speaks their language and knows how they live. They have a community up in the mountains, where they read from the few Family publications they have.

"They also reproduce and distribute some of our tracts, and win disciples. Presently they have 15 or 20 people living with them in their community. They seem very sincere about serving the Lord and witnessing, and asked if they could be put on a mailing list for new Family publications. It's amazing to see the impact our literature and training have even in remote corners of the globe. The Lord's Word never returns void."

### **EUROPE**

#### **Open-Door Policy Bears Good Fruit**

A Home in Poland reports that since they moved into their new house, they have won many local friends. Previously, The Family in Poland had experienced quite a bit of negative publicity, but the opening of their doors to the media has resulted in a wave of favourable coverage which is reaching the whole country.

Many neighbours are now coming for Bible and *Daily Food* classes, and some have even asked how they can join The Family. Groups of as many as 20-30 students have come from a nearby university dormitory. Soldiers from a local army camp come for classes. The parents of many of our Polish members have also visited, and were delighted with the experience.

Radio and television stations have visited for interviews, and their neighbours have staunchly defended The Family to reporters. One reporter, who was particularly antagonistic when she arrived, changed her point of view completely after hearing good reports from neighbours. As a result, she wrote a positive article.

#### **Update on Family's Efforts to Get Food Aid to Needy Russians**

The Family in Russia is currently involved in a 600-ton humanitarian food aid project. Arranging the donation and distribution of this food has been a monumental undertaking, involving dealings with the Russian government and several foreign aid agencies. Arrangements are being made for a train of 29 cars filled with the food to be shipped to Siberia.

This project is very complicated. Many steps must be completed and enormous bureaucratic barriers must be overcome. For example, the Family now faces an unexpected \$25,000 in warehouse fees for storing part of the 600-ton shipment in a port city until the rest of the promised goods arrive from the U.S. (Under the transport agreement, the shipment cannot be sent to Siberia in instalments.)

The town that this shipment is destined for is desperately in need of this food, and it is a commitment by The Family and part of their testimony to get it to them. Please pray with us that final details will be resolved and that this project will be completed soon.

#### **Inspector Recognizes Value of Family's Home Schooling**

"You, with your home school and way of life, have found the answers to many of the problems that we are struggling with in the public school system."--So said a Swedish school inspector who was sent to investigate The Family's home schooling. He also said that he was pleased to see we teach Christian faith and values to our children. The public school system, in his opinion, is being weakened by being overly "objective." At the end of his visit he thanked the Home for giving him "valuable new ideas and thoughts to take back to the public school system."

#### **Family Praised by Refugee Camp Official**

The Family received the following thank-you note from the director of a refugee camp in Eastern Europe, where they minister:

"We'd like to thank you in the name of the residents of the receiving station for your enthusiastic

work here. It's a big help for us that you are bringing spiritual help to the refugees. With your programs and donations, you are making their everyday life more colourful--bringing unforgettable experiences to adults and children alike. Your heart-touching programs bring tears of happiness to the people's eyes, and with donated goods you are also helping us to supply their needs. We count on your continued unselfish and helpful work."

#### **Family Appears on Popular Italian TV Program**

Samuele and Lilly's baby, Valentina, was born with a serious heart problem: oxygen-depleted blood mixes with the "fresh" blood as it leaves her heart.

Valentina's condition brought Samuele and Lilly in contact with a support group in Rome, comprised of parents of children with similar handicaps. Recently, a popular TV program invited this organization, and particularly Samuele and Lilly, to take part in a show featuring families who have successfully dealt with such problems. During a pre-broadcast interview, the host of the show was very interested in Samuele and Lilly's explanation of The Family. As a result, Lilly was given time to testify of her faith on the show.

"If we may say so," Lilly told the host and viewing audience, "Valentina is a miracle baby! She is also a blessing in our lives. We are a missionary family dedicated to helping our fellowman, and live in a Christian community called The Family. We were missionaries to India for a few years. This [situation with Valentina], like other difficult times in our lives, has helped us by forcing us to look to the Lord. Valentina's condition has also put us in a position where we can help other parents who face similar problems and need comfort and love.

"Each one of us has our own problems, and we all need help at some time. If we can all help each other to look a bit more to the Lord, we believe that He can change things for us. In fact, our own and others' prayers are what have helped Valentina to live and grow the way she has. Even her doctor says that hers is an amazing case history. Valentina has needed no therapy, and is growing very well--contrary to what is normally the case among children with heart disorders.--But her doctor also knows that half of Italy and friends around the world are praying for her."

The program, which is broadcast live, is Italy's highest-rated afternoon program with about two and one-half million viewers.

### **ASIA**

#### **Reaching Out to Earthquake Victims**

The Family sent several teams to a Muslim area of Asia to assist relief efforts following a major earthquake.

An airline provided round-trip air tickets to the earthquake site, and allowed several hundred kilos of overweight baggage in order for The Family to take all the clothing, school books and school supplies that they had received from local merchants for the earthquake victims. Those on the receiving end were extremely grateful.

While there, The Family not only cared for and comforted the victims but also pitched in with whatever physical work needed to be done. The head of the international relief organization which was overseeing the operation commented, "You are like angels here!"

The quake occurred during Ramadan--the Islamic holy month when Muslims observe a fast from sunrise to sunset--and the Family team was invited by some of their new friends to their evening breaking of the fast. This was a great honour, as Muslims usually only invite their closest friends and families to this special meal.

#### **"Great Was the Company of Them that Published the Word" (Psa.68:11).**

R.K. Karanjia, a newspaper editor, member of parliament and long-time friend of The Family in India, published our article called "The Truth about the First Easter" in his paper (circulation: three million, in three languages), complete with an invitation to the reader to accept Jesus, God's gift of Love. The article, which appeared in the "Hotline to God" section of the paper, closed with the line "Courtesy of The Family."

Following the closing prayer, he added, "Having gone through the experience, your editor bears witness to this Truth and to Jesus' miraculous grace and divine power." This was quite a testimony, coming from one of India's most famous and respected journalists, who was raised in an Eastern religion.

#### **"The People Who Sat in Darkness**

### **Saw a Great Light" (Mat.4:16).**

From Prem and Aaron, India: "For the past six months or more, we have been visiting the juvenile section of India's largest top-security prison. We conduct weekly programs for the nearly 400 teenage inmates serving time for crimes ranging from theft to murder. After praying and discussing about how we could penetrate these boys' tough facades, the Lord inspired us to perform for them. Our skits cover themes such as communication, friendship, unity, resolving conflicts, overcoming discouragement, and cleanliness. We are not allowed to talk of our faith openly, but the boys have all now gotten the point that we're Christians. Although it's been a slow process, seeing lives changed through this ministry is rewarding and heart-warming.

"One of the inmates, a Muslim boy, said, 'You people from The Family talk so nicely with us. If everyone from the outside world would treat us like you do, we would gladly lay down our lives for them.'

"Another boy said, 'Ever since The Family started visiting us, the fights here have decreased.'

"Yet another said, 'Since you started coming, we have stopped swearing and cursing.'

"The Lord's Love and concern for the poor and lonely--even criminals and outcasts--has made a definite impact and changed many of these boys' lives for the better."

### **Our Music Has Healing Power**

From Paul, Thailand: "While visiting my family in Europe, I witnessed to a group of university students, and retold the 'Story of Tommy.' (*Editor's note: Tommy was a young bedridden cripple who nevertheless cheered and helped many others by dropping handwritten Gospel tracts from the window of his tenement loft to the busy street below. For a complete account of this story, please read the Mountain Streams article "Tommy."*) One of the students made a special point of thanking me for that story. Then she told me how her own life was changed forever by some unknown 'Tommy.'

"Years ago, she explained, she had a malignant tumour in one of her legs, and was sent to Vienna for an operation. One day a copy of a Family music cassette appeared on her bedside table. She understands very little English, so she didn't even know what the songs were about. But as she listened to that tape as she lay there in the hospital, she felt the Spirit of the Lord come down on her. Beyond anyone's expectations, she was wonderfully healed from the cancer and spared from almost certain death. There was no jacket with the tape, and with no address she had no way of contacting us for more information.

"Five years later, she still remembered the closing prayer at the end of the tape, and asked me to translate it for her. She and her sister were in tears by the time I finished, and both asked Jesus into their lives. Finally she was able to understand what that beautiful voice was saying. I gave her some more tapes and we promised to stay in touch."

### **OUTSTANDING ANSWERS TO PRAYER**

David in South America, who suffers from cerebral palsy, walked unaided for the first time in his life, for a short distance on his fifth birthday, Feb. 17th. Please continue to pray that his walking will improve, and that his bones will straighten into their proper place.

Teen Phil in the U.S. testifies: "I was diagnosed as having burst one of my eardrums and told that I would never get my hearing back in that ear. I asked my Home to pray for me and the Lord is healing me. Now I have started hearing from that ear again."

From Renee in Thailand: "For the past five months, we have been telling a doctor at the hospital where I go to for checkups about Jesus. (*Editor's note: Renee has been undergoing treatment for cancer, and is making good progress in her recovery.*) Some time ago he confided in us that he has an autistic son. At the time he was quite downhearted about this, and it was at that point that he prayed to receive Jesus. We prayed for his son too, specifically that his son would learn to speak. One month later, on one of our visits, he told us that his son had started making sounds, but it was just incoherent babbling, not words. We prayed for his son again, and when we returned a month later, he told us that his son was improving dramatically and had started to say some words. On our last visit he told us that his son's autism was totally healed! He even attends a normal school now. Previously he had been told that it was impossible for a child to be healed from this. 'With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God, all things are possible!' (Mark 10:27)."

