

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

—PART 1

By Peter

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Dear Family,

Mama and I love each of you dearly, and we pray for you daily. We know that there has been a lot on your plates this past year, as we all continue to advance and build, march into the future, and claim our destiny. We're proud of each one of you, for the choices you make each day to love the Lord and follow Him closely, and to love others and reach the lost. We certainly have a wonderful future to look forward to! "The keys of the future are not bound by the present or the past. As you wield them, you will be catapulted forward to claim the land and receive the fulfillment of My promises of fruitfulness. This is your destiny."

2. In recent years, I've had opportunities to travel and interact with a number of Family members, particularly young people, in different regions. It's been very helpful for me to be able to hear their questions, goals, and perspectives. One topic that has come up on a number of occasions, which I feel would be helpful to address with you, dear Family, is the history of our sexual beliefs and practices, and in particular the controversies that arise relating to an earlier period of our history (from 1978 to 1989). Although throughout the years we've addressed different aspects of these controversies, mistakes that were made, and the policies that were subsequently adopted, Mama and I feel

that it will be helpful to revisit these issues with the benefit of the enhanced understanding that time and experience provide in further clarifying issues and answering questions.

3. The period of the Family's history between 1974, when the original Law of Love Letter was published, through the late 1980s, when a number of guidelines regarding sexual interaction were instituted, has raised a lot of questions. Many major changes were instituted within the Family during that time period: FFing began and ended; sexual sharing in the Family began; the RNR (the Re-Organization Nationalization Revolution) occurred, and all leadership above the Home shepherd level were fired from their jobs; the Children of God era came to an end and the Family began—and more. It was a formative period within the Family, one which brought about a multitude of changes.

4. In this series of Letters, Mama and I want to focus on the history of our sexual beliefs, the Law of Love and sexual sharing, as well as occurrences of sexual contact between adults and minors in the early to mid-1980s.

5. While doing so, we will need to talk about the different aspects of the Law of Love and walk through its origins, its intent, and the guidelines put in place over the years for its practice. We'll also look at and outline

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

the steps taken in the mid- to late 1980s to eradicate sexual contact between adults and minors and the development of our policies regarding sexual conduct, which have been in place since the late 1980s, to protect our children from hurt or harm.

6. We feel it's very important for you, our younger SGAs and YAs, many of whom weren't even born during this period, and thus have little understanding of all that transpired, to have a clear picture and understanding of that period, so you will know how to discern between what is true and what is false when you are faced with stories or accusations of the past.

7. It has taken three GNs to address all of these issues. That translates into a lot of reading, but it's important that you read and understand what is being said. In this first GN, we will go over the history of the Family's sexual theology, the origins of the Law of Love, FFing, and the different applications of the Law of Love. Although most of the applications included in this GN were experienced primarily by first generation adults, Mama and I feel it's important that you understand our history, how our beliefs and policies developed, and the many changes that were made over time.

8. In the second GN of this series, we will address issues that specifically relate to second generation members who were minors during this early period of the Family's history. We will focus on these issues in detail in the second GN, so I won't address them in this first GN. In the third GN, we will answer a number of questions that come up regarding that era. I believe this last GN will be very helpful in answering questions that you may have about this time period.

9. In writing these GNs, Mama and I have run into some difficulties in expressing some matters because they will be read through the filter of each person's personal experience.

For example, when a prophecy talks about the Law of Love and what a wonderful gift it is, different people will look at that statement differently. Some will fully agree. Someone else who is experiencing difficult jealousy battles might think differently. Someone who, as a minor, experienced sexual contact with an adult might have questions or negative feelings about the Law of Love. Each person, depending on their experiences and frame of mind, will read the same prophecy and yet react a different way. So please bear in mind, as you read these GNs, that there is not a one-size-fits-all way in which people process the past. Mama and I are attempting to provide a context and explanation for it that will be helpful to all, while bearing in mind the diversity of experiences that different people may have had.

10. Throughout these GNs there are prophecies and new commentary, as well as quotes from past GNs and MO Letters. These multitudes of words are talking about a period 20–30 years ago. Some of the tone or wording is older or expressed in a way that we wouldn't express it if it were being written today. In our earlier years, sometimes the presentation or reactions to situations in the Letters were not so well-rounded or complete. Dad's talks were often informal recordings, and would be followed up by other Letters further clarifying his meaning or intent. Often, it takes piecing together commentary from a number of Letters to get a complete or accurate picture of the full message being conveyed. So please bear that in mind in reading older quotes, that these were often not

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

well rounded or necessarily representative of the full discussion and intent in the matter.

11. Lastly, if you don't understand something at any point in this GN or the ones that follow in this series, or if something you read bothers you in some way, please keep reading. We believe that by the time you finish reading the three GNs in this series you will understand the issues more fully, and hopefully you'll have all your questions answered. Okay? Thanks. So let's start now, shall we?

Why Address the Past Again?

12. You may wonder why we are taking the time to address these issues again, when there are so many other more pressing matters to focus on as our Homes work toward becoming winning teams and strengthening our discipleship in every area, and as we turn our focus outwards toward winning the world with the upcoming offensive. The Lord gave a number of reasons for doing so.

13. (Jesus:) It's important to understand your history and where you're coming from in order to take stock of where you're at, and where you're going in the future. I have entrusted the Family with a number of freedoms and treasures, which are unique to the Family. There are so few Christians who fathom even the basic principles behind the Law of Love, loving Me intimately as your Husband and Lover, and embracing the many gifts of freedom in the Spirit that I have given you.

14. As with every new nation that has come into being, your new nation has pioneered and slowly grown into the full application and understanding of the precepts and truths that were its foundation. You have been through times of growth, and even growing pains, as you have learned to wisely and judiciously apply the freedoms and truths I have given you to your everyday lives.

Learning and growth is a process, and it will continue as long as you are on Earth, and even beyond in Heaven. Although you started out with a relatively elementary understanding of these spiritual truths and freedom, and you've had some growing pains along the way, you have grown into them. You have learned how to wisely apply them to your everyday lives.

15. I am proud of the Family for your radical faith and willingness to taste and prove the New Wine of the Word. It is this radical yieldedness and willingness to grow through drinking in the New Wine that has made the Family of today what it is. You have a history to be proud of, a history of preaching the Gospel, of winning tens of millions for Me, a history that you should cherish and honor. The battles won, the souls brought to Me, and your lives of service for Me are all documented in the Hall of Warriors, and the many victories won glorify Me and are beautiful to dwell on. In living the life of dropped-out disciples, you have proved yourselves worthy to walk into the future that I have prepared for you. You have remained dropped-out, radical, and free from the constraints of the status quo, malleable tools in My hands that are willing to give their lives that others may be saved.

16. Of course, there are also blemishes, lacks, and even failures in your history, and you have made your share of mistakes in building your new nation and learning the judicious application of the truths entrusted to you. Over time, you have learned to correct the mistakes, build safeguards into your freedoms, and protect the integrity of your structure. These are all fruits of maturity and growth. You, My children, have proved worthy of the freedoms entrusted to you by your willingness to change and learn, to admit your mistakes and correct them, and to adapt to the times you live in. I commend you for your yieldedness and the sincere love that constrains you.

17. Remember, in reviewing your past, that every new movement, kingdom, or nation makes its share of mistakes, even grave mistakes. Maturity often comes through the road of experience, which can sometimes be painful. As your Father David taught you, revolutions can be messy; they aren't "surgical," or without their flaws, extremisms or mistakes. Revolutions are powerful, charismatic, and full of drive, enthusiasm and purpose, for that is what it takes to break away from the accepted norms and the status quo, in order to receive radical new truths. Once the movement has become more established, then the process of building, stabilizing and balance comes into play. Of course, it would be ideal that mistakes not occur, but it's important to understand that process in order to truly understand the steps of growth, change and evolution I have brought you through.

18. It will be beneficial to revisit your history, to help those unfamiliar with it to understand how the freedoms I gave you evolved, and how I have led you to structure policies and guidelines for these freedoms. It will be helpful to see clearly where mistakes were made in the past and how these were addressed, and policies that were instituted to keep them from happening again. Although you have heard much of this over the years, scattered throughout various Letters, it will be helpful to have a comprehensive understanding of your history and how this mighty revolution was born and brought to where it is today. It will also be helpful in understanding and putting into context the issues that are often raised in the media, or by your apostates, former member relatives and others. Because some people have had questions and their understanding of the past has been somewhat incomplete, they are at times unsure of how to respond to the issues that are raised, and having this information all in one place will help them to "connect the

dots" of the different periods of your history and give them the foundation that they need.

19. In the past, when the issues of mistakes or wrongdoings regarding your sexual freedoms were addressed, they were often directed toward an older audience. Your older SGAs, particularly those who lived through the early eras of Family history as children, have a different perception of events, and it's important to address some of the issues that are unique to their upbringing. Although these issues are a part of your distant history at this point, they will remain in the public eye, and your apostates will focus on them for some time to come. For this reason, it's important to provide the tools to the Family to effectively and conclusively "give an answer to him that asketh" (1Pet.3:15). It will also be important to provide the tools to the Family to help them to be able to explain these issues to their new members, as they will also need to understand your history and be able to place it in its proper context.

20. As you can see, there are many good reasons for revisiting the past, so that you can fully focus on the present and the future, and be armed and prepared to give answers to any who ask you of the faith that is in you, speaking from the fullness of your heart. (*End of message.*)

21. In summary, here are some of the reasons why we are addressing these issues:

22. —To address questions young people have had regarding this era (1978–1989). Our second generation members have their own unique perspective on that era, which is different from the FGAs' perspective. Some lived through that era as children, some as teens, and some not at all. Some hear about it through the first, second or third-hand accounts of former members, some through the accounts of the personal experiences and memories of friends in the Family. The original Letters and

explanations about this era were written for the most part with a first generation adult audience in mind. As our SGAs have come of age and taken their place in the leadership of our Homes and movement, the Family's perspectives have also matured, growing to encompass their perspectives and how they experienced these early eras of Family history.

23. —Some of our second- and third-generation members have reached their teen or YA years without a comprehensive understanding of the explanations and apologies of the past. When they hear accounts from the past, whether true, false or in between, or quotes from past literature which has long been renounced and removed from circulation, or experiences recounted by others, it's somewhat laborious to read through a number of older publications and attempt to patch together the history of events. Our goal in this series of GNs is to cover the topic from A to Z, similar to how we have done with other important topics, so that this information is easily available and covers the issues in one place.

24. —As is the case with many aspects of our beliefs, policies, rules and modus operandi, aspects of how we currently view and address issues have matured and become more defined over time. Some of our beliefs, policies, rules and way of operating have not only undergone further definition or clarification, but they have changed. This is to be expected in a growing, changing, maturing movement such as ours. Dad taught us a lot about prophecy, for example, but our understanding of prophecy in the '80s was quite limited as compared to our knowledge of prophecy today. We are a movement, which means that we are in motion—changing, evolving and growing. So it's important to be open to the new perspectives or clearer understanding and definition on issues that the Lord provides as we grow and mature.

25. —The Lord has promised to expand the Family and bring in many new members. Those members will want—and deserve to have—an understanding of the history and doctrine of the Family that they are becoming a part of. Therefore we will need to have a good foundation regarding the history of past controversies, how these were addressed, and current policies, so that we can respond to questions when they arise. Having a solid foundation and understanding of our history will enable us to respond knowledgeably, accurately, and with faith.

26. In these GNs, we will be covering some new information and addressing questions and issues that are important for you to read, understand, and assimilate. So please do read these GNs carefully and take the time to study and absorb them. It's important to understand the issues, as well as the explanations, so you can be well grounded in the Word and our faith. In order to help you do that, we're going to review aspects of our history, focusing in particular on the development of our sexual doctrines and the subsequent development of policies and guidelines. As the Lord said, addressing this era in more detail will strengthen our faith and enable us to fully focus on the present and the future.

Back to the Beginning

27. The Family's early history is colorful, radical, and exciting. If you haven't already done so, I recommend that you watch the video series, "Acts of the Revolution," as well as read through the Books of Remembrance and the many Letters that outline our history. We have been blessed with a rich heritage—the launching of the Revolution for Jesus that has been heard around the world—a soul- and disciple-winning and world-changing revolution! Many secular textbooks today describe the Family and its origins, and the Family is considered one of the most noteworthy NRMs (new religious movements) to have arisen in the past 40 years.

Academic perspectives on the Family:

Scientifically, the Family is a mystery. Strewn across dozens of nations, in tiny autonomous communes, it nonetheless sustains a unified subculture. Twenty years ago, social scientists were already asserting that it had begun to reduce its tension with the surrounding socio-cultural environment, yet it seems to be just as high in tension today as it ever was. In the years after second generation members reached adulthood, and the charismatic founder passed away, we would expect The Family to have settled into a static culture, yet it continues to innovate at a rapid pace.

In bureaucratic terms, the Family is a policy challenge. It demands the right to educate its children within the movement, yet it is active in many nations that forbid home schooling. Although it maintains a very effective public relations campaign, it does not fit into the categories and interfaith organizations that governments are used to dealing with. When disgruntled former members or relatives of members bring cases to the courts, officials seem perplexed by the group's freedom from bureaucratic formalities.

If we approach the Family without a strict scientific or policy agenda, we see that it is an extremely fascinating part of the contemporary religious world. In an era when business and government leaders urge themselves to "think outside the box," here is a group that lives its entire life outside the formal structures that constrain most people. Yet it has found a coherent and apparently satisfying way of life for its members. More than a mere counter culture, the Family is an alternative society. Even if we are unprepared to embrace the faith of the Family, we can be inspired by it. (*From the book "The Endtime Family—Children of God" by Dr. William Bainbridge, 2002.*)

The Family has, by most reasonable definitions, emerged as a very successful new religious movement through adroit adaptation to a number of challenges over the course of its 34-year career. Like other successful religious movements, The Family's capacity for flexible, innovative change has been due in part to its ability to attract and cultivate the abilities of talented, capable individuals who subsequently have exercised and developed significant leadership skills.

But, of course, innovative leadership never develops in a social vacuum, removed from the conflicts of daily life. It emerges as an adaptive response to a group's collective problems. In responding to the kinds of internal and external problems that commonly confront new religious movements, The Family's leadership increasingly has become more rational, corporate, and democratic in the way it operates. (*From "The Family in Transition: The Moral Career of a Religious Movement," by Drs. Gary and Gordon Shepherd, 2002.*)

Family history reading list:

- Some Letters that provide information on important eras of Family history:
 "Colonization," ML #C
 "Reformation or Revolution," ML #1
 "Not a Sermon, but a Sample," ML #J
 "God's Little Miracles, Part 1," ML #1
 "I Gotta Split, Part 2," ML #29
 "The Call of David," ML #79
 "A Wonderful Wave of Worldwide Witnessing," ML #154:1–8
 "The Great Escape," ML #160
 "Survival," ML #172
 "Wonder Working Words," ML #207
 "The Birthday Warning," ML #215
 "Our Shepherd, Moses David," ML #351
 "Millions of Miles of Miracles," ML #897

28. When the Family first began on the beaches of California, the focus was on witnessing to the counterculture youth of the 1960s, the dropouts of their day, many of whom were sexually liberal and rebelling from society's mores. The message the Lord gave the Family through Dad was unconventional, and radical from the very beginning.—And the counterculture youth loved it! As Dad said, the early members experienced a powerful infilling of the Spirit, which was needed to jumpstart the revolution.

(Dad:) **It was a real outpouring of the Spirit of God!** Scores and scores of kids were getting saved and filled with the Holy Ghost and were almost instantly manifesting gifts of the Spirit, talking in tongues and prophesying—one of the greatest outpourings of the Spirit I've ever personally witnessed, really amazing! It was just like the early days of Pentecost! (Acts 2:17,18). And those kids knew more about the Lord than the people who'd been sitting in church all their lives—they were experiencing the Lord!

Just imagine!—All of those hippies fresh off the streets, raw hippies, most of them hardly ever having seen the inside of a church and had been anti-religious and everything, and here they were being filled with the Spirit of God and manifesting all these marvelous gifts of the Spirit—visions, messages, prophecies and revelations!

And the things that the Lord showed us were just almost unbelievable! God said that our little pebble would roll and gather momentum until it snowballed into a mountain!—That our little flame would be fanned into a forest fire that would sweep the nations!—That our wave would wash the shores of the world!—Visions and messages about the things that we were going to do that

were, at that time, really hard to believe! But that's what encouraged us to obey the Lord and step out! . . . And as we obeyed, God did His part and blessed and multiplied and used us to reach the whole country with His message! (ML #1962:20–22,24, DB 8; 1984.)

29. From its earliest days the Family was considered radical and unconventional because of our communal lifestyle, our dedication to witnessing, living by faith, and our stance against the evils of the System, amongst other things. Being a member of the Family has always meant being dropped-out, unconventional, and revolutionary, and flying in the face of System traditions and the status quo. Thank the Lord that He continues to give us His radical, unconventional New Wine that keeps us separate and dropped out!

(Mama:) **The Family was originally a dropped-out, radical, iconoclastic, full-time discipleship revolution!** We hated the System, because it enslaves men's souls. We were separate from the System, living according to the Bible. Those teachings of Jesus that are against the System are still just as much our code of ethics and behavior as ever (ML #3363:17, GN 959; 2001).

Our Sexual Attitudes and Practices in the Early Days

30. Although the early Family was unconventional and radical in many ways, it still retained the attitudes toward sexuality held by most of the churches. In other words, it was quite conservative and restrictive as far as sexual interaction between members who weren't married. "The Revolutionary Rules" (ML #S), which outlined the basic requirements for discipleship, made it very clear that no dating, kissing, or sexual involvement of any kind was allowed without leadership's

permission. Marriage was subject to a trial period and approval of leadership, and most of our members were single at that point. Life was tightly scheduled and most people lived in cramped quarters, conditions which were not very conducive to any kind of intimacy.

(*Dad:*) The rules of the Revolution are strict: Attend all classes and meetings, study and go witnessing, do your duties faithfully, arise when wakened and retire at lights out. "Study to be quiet" and "to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." "Preach the Word, be instant in season and out," and "always ready to give an answer to him that asketh thee." "Let everything be done decently and in order, for God is not the author of confusion!" Keep your quarters neat and tidy, and yourself clean—"Defile not the temple of the Holy Ghost"—no smoking or smooching other than "greeting one another with a holy kiss"—and absolutely no dating without permission. Betrothals only for staff members after months of service and ready to go on their own with Team approval. Do not leave anywhere without permission, and absence from Bible study, duties, or witnessing must be only for emergencies by direct permission of the officer in charge. Absence without leave will be considered desertion of your post. You will only be given one warning, after which your place will be given to someone more deserving. "He sent them out two by two"—you will never go alone, but a veteran with a trainee (ML #S:9–10, Vol. 1; 1972).

31. Despite the fact that many of our early Family members came straight out of the "free love" hippie counterculture and had liberal perspectives on sexuality, they were willing to forgo sex to serve Jesus and to fulfill their calling as revolutionary disciples. Many of our early disciples went for years without sex, doing their best to "deny [them]selves and take up their cross daily." In fact, for years most of our Homes worldwide had their fair share of folks who were virtually "eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake" (Mat. 19:12).—People who had joined the Family in their late teens and had passed into their mid-twenties—or even late twenties—without having any sexual relationships whatsoever. It's very strange today to think that many folks went five or six years in the Family without any sex whatsoever.—And on top of that, until the Letter "Revolutionary Sex" was published in 1973, five years after the Family started, most of us thought that masturbation was wrong. (See ML #2718:46–53, Vol.20; 1991.)

Challenging Traditions

32. In the early 1970s, Dad began to question the attitudes toward sex that were so prevalent in the churches. He was concerned about the natural sexual needs of his newfound flock, and spent some time studying the Bible and seeking a godly perspective on sex, based on God's Word and not on the traditions of the churches. In 1973 Dad published a number of Letters in which he challenged the restrictive attitudes toward sex fostered by the churches. He contended that it was hypocritical, unnatural and unscriptural to condemn all sexual feelings or attractions as sinful or evil, or to assume that sex should be limited to married couples. Some of the first Letters he published along these lines were "The Art of Oh," "Mountin' Maid," "One Wife," "Revolutionary Women," "Revolutionary Sex," and "Revolutionary

Lovemaking.” (MLs 236, 240, 249, 250, 258, 259.) These were all published within a few months of each other, as Dad was striving to teach the Family that sexuality was natural and God-created, and not something inherently evil or sinful.

33. These Letters were not only given for the benefit of the Family, but many were also distributed to the public. Needless to say, they were received gladly by some, while others found it shocking that a Christian group would be proclaiming a liberal message about sex. Thus the Family quickly became even more controversial than it already was. If you consider that the public had already found it controversial that Family members dropped out of conventional society, lived communally, devoted their lives to the Lord, and preached against the war-mongering politics of America, a doctrine of sexual liberality from a fundamentalist* Christian group was bound to make even more of a splash! And, as Dad later said, it drew the line forever between us and Christians caught up in churchianity.

*Fundamentalism is defined as a movement in American Protestantism that arose in the early part of the 20th century in reaction to modernism and that stresses the infallibility of the Bible not only in matters of faith and morals but also as a literal historical record, holding as essential to Christian faith belief in such doctrines as the creation of the world, the virgin birth, physical resurrection, atonement by the sacrificial death of Christ, and the Second Coming. (*Encarta Encyclopedia.*)

(Dad:) We just don't fit churchianity and we never will! God called us for a different purpose, ministry, message and

method to reach a different people, and we've done it outside of the churches and without their help and even against their opposition, as Jesus did against the church of His day. So thank God for our doctrines and beliefs and practices which make us totally distinct and separate from the churches and unacceptable to the churches, which keeps us separate and pure and holy unto the Lord and in truth and our way and His way for us, which will never suit the churches and never please church Christians. It's too utterly radical, fanatical and revolutionary for Churchianity! Thank God! (ML #1592:44, GN Book 13; 1983.)

34. Ironically, however, despite the fact that some of the literature our early Family members were passing out on the streets preached a liberal approach to sex, the in-house attitude and behavior in our colonies concerning sex was still restrictive and prohibitive. This was due to the repressive attitudes of the leadership of the time, who didn't allow these freedoms to be practiced in the Homes. Dad was unaware that Family members were not being permitted to put these freedoms into practice. He was driving the “revolutionary racer” of the Family up a pretty steep hill of traditions and norms and religious taboos, and assumed that the leadership structure of the time was helping the Homes to follow the Lord's direction and revelation.

“One Wife”

35. As Dad reached the conclusion that sex was God-created, and that as such, it was a natural and beautiful part of life, the Lord also began to reveal some more radical truths to him regarding what Jesus' Church is and what our relationship to Him and each other should be. He published these milestone concepts in the Letter “One Wife”

(ML #249) in 1972. This Letter explained that as “members one of another” (Eph.4:25), we unitedly form the collective Body of Christ. In presenting this, Dad broadened the traditional understanding of marriage, which is characterized by an overemphasis on private marital ties, to encompass a larger vision of marriage to the Family as a whole, where members would be bonded to one another in a deeper way than just as fellow members of a church.

(Dad:) We do not minimise the marriage ties, as such. We just consider our ties to the Lord and the larger Family greater and more important.—And when the private marriage ties interfere with our Family and God ties, they can be readily abandoned for the glory of God and the good of The Family! We are not forsaking the marital unit.—We are adopting a greater and more important and far larger concept of marriage: The totality of the Bride and her marriage to the Bridegroom is The Family! We are adopting the larger Family as The Family unit: The Family of God and His Bride and Children!

The history of communes shows that the most successful communes either abolished all private relationships entirely and required total celibacy, or abandoned the private marriage unit for group marriage!—Because they found that the private family group was always a threat to the Larger Family unit as a whole! Most churches forsook the Church Family communes altogether for private marriages in private homes and only a once-a-week marriage with God at His House!—Ha!—This is marriage to His Bride?

They say the Bible doesn't teach plural marriage, but one of the greatest examples of all is the marriage of God Himself to His plural Bride composed of

many members, all of whom are nevertheless One Bride! (ML #249:3,12,16, Vol. 2; 1972.)

36. The “One Wife” Letter was all about expanding and broadening our vision as Family members to encompass our greater marriage to the overall Family. It was about encouraging couples and singles alike to enlarge their scope of love to include other families, single parents and singles, and consider their needs as their own. It wasn't about doing away with traditional family units and ties, but rather building beyond them to include others in the Family in a closer and more intimate way.

37. This Letter was monumental in setting the spiritual foundation for the soon to be revealed principles of the Law of Love and the freedom to share sexually, regardless of marital status. Although this Letter particularly focused on the importance of being married to Jesus and His Family first, more so than to our private family units within the Family, it also served as the building block for the bedrock principle of our communal society—that we are all one family, married to one another in spirit.

What It Means to Put the Greater Family First!

(Dad:) Putting the greater marriage first doesn't mean you need to minimize your ties to your personal family, but it means giving the greater marriage the proper importance. It does not mean you must forsake the marital unit, but you are to embrace the far greater concept of marriage. It means that instead of drawing a circle around your own little family that will shut others out, you are to

draw a circle that brings others in. For example, it doesn't mean loving your own children less, but it means taking the children of others into your arms, your heart, your lives, and trying to love them as much as you love your own. It means bringing others up to the level of your personal marriage relationship and your personal individual family—bringing them up to the level of love, understanding, sympathy, concern, and all the things you naturally feel for your personal family.

This is a complicated concept, because the Lord wants us to love others as we love ourselves. He wants us to be considerate of their needs, to give of our time, strength, love, and prayer, to do what we can to make sure all our mates are well cared for, happy and complete, as much as possible. On the other hand, He purposely, distinctly, and within His will gives you greater natural feelings for your personal family, for your one wife or mate, and also for your own children. He does that because He knows we all need some personal touch in our lives. Children need personal attention and personal love, to feel like they belong to somebody, that they have a place. They need to feel the security, comfort and warmth of the family unit.

So there's a place for both—the personal, individual family and the greater family. Each has its purpose, and you can love one without neglecting the other (ML #3211:49–51, Vol. 25; 1998).

The Law of Love

38. In 1974, Dad published the original “Law of Love” Letter (ML #302C). Prior to this, he had published the “All Things Tree” (ML #302A), which was a compilation of a number of Bible verses that serve as the scriptural foundation on which the Law of Love was built. In a nutshell, the original revelation of the Law of Love granted Family members the freedom to share sexually with others outside of marriage, without sin, provided the conditions outlined in the Letter were met. At this point in our history, our movement consisted almost exclusively of young adults, and this is the audience Dad was addressing.

39. Although it was a rather out-of-the-box revelation at the time, the Lord confirmed its truth and validity with many Scriptures, such as, “To the pure all things are pure,” “The fruit of the Spirit is love . . . against such, there is no law,” “All that believed were together and had all things common,” etc. (For the full listing of “All Things” verses, see “The ‘All Things’ Tree,” ML #302A. And for a full explanation on the foundation of the Law of Love, see “Living the Lord’s Law of Love!—Part 1,” ML #3201.)

40. In fact, you’ll find that if you present the verses that the Lord gave Dad in building this cornerstone of our theology to the uninitiated, it’s pretty hard for even Christian theologians to deny that there is a scriptural foundation for the Law of Love, even if most of them do not agree with the way we practice it. They of course are not likely to have the faith to live the sort of “extreme faith” the Lord has challenged us to live in the Family. If you’re not so familiar with the scriptural basis of the Law of Love, you may want to brush up on it, and even mark it in your Bible, so that you’re prepared to teach others and to “show them the reason for your faith” (1Pet.3:15). (See “Biblical Foundation on the Law of Love,” <http://www.familymembers.com/pubs/group/Aids%20for%20Articulating%20Our%20Beliefs%20and%20History/pub.media.3>)

Family presentations at university classes, by Marc and Claire

Some students know the Bible quite well, and as we discuss the Law of Love, Word “swords” are raised and battle is waged. At the end of the discussion, we have to agree to disagree, as the students concede that we do have a Biblical foundation for our belief. And some are wondering how they can partake of all that freedom, ha!

Professor K.'s class is no little league. We're talking about a theological seminary now, and students that are studying to be preachers or missionaries—definitely chaste ones at that. Seems like we're worlds apart with our radical beliefs and their ultra-conservative ones. But Professor K. wants his class to learn, as future pastors and missionaries, that there are people with deeply held religious beliefs, who love the Lord and serve Him and witness.

Our presentation begins with our introducing ourselves, presenting our basic beliefs as per the Statement of Faith, and talking briefly about the different ministries and work the Family is involved in around the world. After this we open the floor for questions and answers. The first questions are about our communal lifestyle, how it works, schedules, and so forth. Then we move into more theological questions about the Endtime, our beliefs on salvation, etc.

But it doesn't take long for one of the Web-savvy students to raise his hand and ask the question, “What are your beliefs regarding sexual conduct and marriage?” This opens that door

for a full Scriptural explanation of the Law of Love. As we are explaining the spiritual as well as practical side to the Law of Love, you can see that it's causing no small stir in the minds of the students who are trying to understand this particular aspect of our theology. This leads to other questions such as, “Let me see if I'm understanding what you're saying. Are you saying... ?”

We answer yes. What ensues is an even more in-depth and Scriptural discussion regarding the Law of Love. After a lively, animated discussion of this controversial topic and the Scriptures about it, Professor K. chimes in and says, “Maybe we should change the subject and move on to other aspects of the Family's lifestyle.” We then move on to other topics.

After the presentation, we are able to discuss some of the issues further with several of the students and one of them says, “I understand your theology now, and although I don't agree with your interpretation of the Scriptures, I can see that you do have a Scriptural foundation for your beliefs.” (*From FSM #398, 2003*)

An academic explanation of the Law of Love

When a Pharisee lawyer tempted Jesus by asking Him to state the most fundamental commandments, according to Matthew 22:34–40, Jesus replied: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great

and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets.” This is the Law of Love.

The Love Charter urges all members to “live by the principles of the Law of Love: To love and care for, and interact lovingly and harmoniously with all members of the Home in which they reside and with Family members at large.” This Golden Rule should govern all aspects of members’ lives, and it is not merely the principle of sharing sexual love. By living the Law of Love, members believe they become free of all other biblical laws. Thus, there is no longer a specific prohibition against adultery. However, if sexual relations between a married person and someone other than the spouse would hurt the spouse, then it violates the Law of Love and is wrong.

A book-length treatise on the Law of Love, published as eleven issues of the Family’s internal publication Good News, gives the fundamental justification for sexual sharing: “Helping those in need is part of love, and when one is in need of sexual love, supplying that need is fulfilling the Lord’s commandment to love. We believe in sacrificial love for the sake of our brothers and sisters, and part of that love is sharing sexually, opening our arms of love to each other. If for no other reason, we should share out of obedience to the Lord, and His Word, and a desire to please the Lord. ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me’ (Mat.25:40).” (*Dr. William Bainbridge, 2002.*)

41. In presenting the Law of Love, Dad emphasized from the very beginning that this freedom was being granted to meet a definite need, to be used in maturity and unselfish love. The Lord’s plan and vision in teaching and giving us His Law of Love was to enable us to meet the needs of others, often at great personal cost and sacrifice. (See ML #2718:16–18, 40.)

42. Dad’s introduction of sexual sharing in the Family was a move of the Spirit that was based on love for others, sacrifice, and compassion. He recognized that the need for loving companionship and sex is a genuine, natural, God-given need. Dad’s teaching us about the Law of Love was not just related to FFing and our witness to the world; he was also concerned that everyone in the Family had their needs met. Dad had a heart for the many faithful missionaries in the Family who had given their all to serve the Lord, and he wanted to be sure they had everything they needed to be happy and fulfilled, as much as possible. (ML #3202:32, Vol. 25; 1998.)

43. The Law of Love introduced the concept of sexual sharing between adults, regardless of marital status, providing these relations had the willing consent of all parties concerned, and caused harm to no one. (At that time, the Colony’s leadership also had to give its approval.) In presenting this, Dad also gave a number of conditions that were to be fulfilled in order to fully partake of these freedoms within the Lord’s Spirit.

(Dad:) Can you be trusted with total life, love, liberty and the freedom of the Spirit, or do you have to be kept in the cage of the law for the transgressors who are ruled only by their own carnal lusts and lack of love? The answer depends on you and whether you can keep the rules of love to enjoy such liberty that brings such life!

As in marriage and all other social relationships with each other, God's laws of love are still the same:

1) Is it good for God's work?

2) Is it good for His Body?

3) Is it good for you? Does it glorify God, His Body and edify your own soul? Does it help someone and harm no one? Does it help you or someone else to do a better job for the Lord? Do you even need it for your own good?

These are questions you will have to answer yourself and before God and others, and you may need counsel in answering them.

Any variation from the norm of personal relationships, any substantial change in marital relationships, any projected sexual associations should have the willing consent of all parties concerned or affected, including the approval of leadership and permission of the Body. If this is lacking in any quarter and anyone is going to be harmed or unduly offended, then your action is not in love nor according to God's Law of Love!

"Love doeth thy neighbour no harm," for "thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself": this is God's law of love! "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." "Against such love there is no law." This is the Lord's law of love. Obey it and you can have total love, life and liberty in the Lord. These are God's conditions.

"Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends." "Therefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Are you willing to lay down your life—or even your wife—for a starving brother or a sister? (ML #302C:12–15,18, Vol. 3; 1974.)

44. Dad's intention was clearly that we could put these freedoms into practice, and learn how to use them to benefit ourselves and others within the boundaries given in this Letter. However, despite Dad's intentions in revealing the liberating freedoms the Lord was granting the Family, the publishing of this Letter didn't bring about an immediate change in the Family's conservative attitudes toward sex. Sexual sharing did not become widespread among members, and in actual practice, caught on very slowly. This was due in great part to the fact that the leadership structure of that time period (1975–1978), known as the "Chain of Cooperation," or simply "the Chain," did not wholly endorse or promote this freedom. In fact, most of the top leaders of that time did not allow any sexual sharing outside the small circle of their fellow leaders. So, even though Dad's intent was clear in publishing this series of Letters, for the most part it produced very little change in the lives of the average Family member, as evidenced by the following quote from Dad, written in 1978, after he became aware that Family members were still not able to freely fellowship sexually with one another.

(Dad:) Family members were forbidden to supply each other's sexual needs, FFing was in many instances prohibited or at least discouraged, permission to even help out Family members sexually had to come from leaders far up the Chain, and decision-making and obedience to the FF Letters was frowned upon (ML #650:6, Vol. 5; 1978).

45. By late 1977, Dad and Mama learned of widespread abuse of authority being perpetrated by some of the existing "Chain" leadership, especially at the highest levels, not only in their restrictive and hypocritical sexual policies, but also in their imposition of

unsanctioned and excessive literature distribution quotas and exorbitant tithes or taxes, and generally far too much control over the communities and members. After receiving numerous confirmations of the unjust state of affairs in most Homes, the Lord led Dad to entirely dismantle the “Chain” leadership structure and fire all of its leaders. This revolution is known as the “RNR,” because it was initiated by a Letter called “The Re-Organisation Nationalisation Revolution!—The RNR” (ML #650). This took effect in February 1978. The declaration of the RNR marked the end of the Children of God era, and we became known as “The Family of Love,” and eventually just “The Family” (and since 2004, “The Family International”).

46. The immediate impact of the RNR and the dismantling of the entire former leadership structure was the liberation of the Family from all the previous Chain-imposed controls. The Family worldwide rejoiced to be relieved from the “Chain’s” unnecessary control and authoritarianism. Everyone was free to serve and follow the Lord according to their own faith, in obedience to the Letters.

47. On the sexual front, the RNR freed all adult members to share sexually and practice FFing if they so chose, and approval from leadership was no longer necessary. Although FFing had been introduced to the Family from 1976 to 1978, few Family members were permitted by leadership to put this new witnessing method into practice. After the RNR, consenting adult members who desired to have a sexual relationship with one another no longer needed permission from leadership.

(Dad:) No permission needed for sex!—If legal and with mutual consent. No Servants [Home Shepherds] need to be consulted. Fire away! Praise God! (ML #663:XI 1, Vol. 5; 1978.)

48. Needless to say, a period of sexual liberation ensued. Singles, most of whom had abstained from sex since joining months or years earlier, were relieved to finally be able to enjoy sexual fellowship with one another and have their sexual needs met. Many married couples were also happy to be able to share with others. FFing took root and many Family members engaged in it regularly as a witnessing ministry

49. As Dad explored the theological boundaries of the Law of Love, he published a number of Letters that further challenged the sexual mores and taboos of modern-day society on a number of sexually related issues. It was during this period of our history, from around 1978 throughout the mid-1980s, that most of the Letters and pubs that were later renounced and purged were published. I’ll address these issues in the next GN in this series, as well as the impact that exploration had on the Family.

Flirty Fishing

50. In early 1974, Dad received the “Little Flirty Fishy” revelation (ML #293) while living in England, and he and Mama began experimenting with what came to be known as “Flirty Fishing” (or FFing). In a nutshell, FFing opened the door to availing ourselves of the natural sexual attraction between men and women to draw people to the Lord, even to the point of having sex with people when necessary, to show them a tangible sample and proof of God’s love. Dad wrote a number of Letters presenting the theological foundation for this witnessing method, and we continue to stand by those principles today, even though we no longer practice FFing.

(Dad:) From pretty young shop girls and waitresses and secretaries to elderly widows and rich old dowagers; from handsome young clerks, bookkeepers, technicians, white collar workers and engineers

to wealthy businessmen, retired widowers, single shopkeepers and even bachelor farmers, we found them all the same:

Hungry, lonely, empty, unhappy, dissatisfied and spiritually destitute—all longing for love of all kinds, but especially for a love they had never known before, true love, sincere love, genuine love, the truly great love of their life, the Love of all loves, of the Lover of all lovers, Who alone can satisfy that deepest yearning of every human soul for total love and complete understanding.

Some were finding momentary relief in a night of affectionate dancing closely together in each other's arms with an occasional tender caress and gentle kiss. Others carried it further—from the floor to the bed afterward each night in a casual sexual relationship which temporarily satisfied their bodies but left leanness in their souls, wondering why no one and no love ever truly satisfied or brought that lasting happiness of which they dreamed and is so deceptively and romantically portrayed by the media and tellers of tales.

Why could they never find this happiness for themselves? Why did even a prolonged physically satisfying sexual relationship still leave them feeling empty, incomplete and unfulfilled? Even those with seemingly naturally well-rounded physically full lives of plenty, security, families, mates and children were still feeling so dissatisfied and unhappy and discontented that under the cover of darkness and the dimly lit ballrooms of the big city they clandestinely sought new relationships outside the usual circle of their family and friends, always seeking something new.

As God's Word says, "The people seek a new thing" (Acts 17:21), having found the last grown old and boring. So they

go from haunt to haunt and club to club and dance to dance and love to love and bed to bed and body to body until they are sick of it all, finding nothing that ever satisfies, no love that ever lasts, no happiness that is forever theirs.

They are miserable, brokenhearted, wounded, bound, captives of their own passions and prisoners of their own shattered hopes, desires and limited human frailties. For although the body is of this Earth and is satisfied with the things of this Earth, the human spirit, that intangible personality of the real you that dwells in that body, can never be completely satisfied with anything but utter union with the great and loving Spirit that created it.

He's pictured in His Son Christ Jesus, a Man Who loved everybody, even the poorest and the worst of all, even His self-righteous, hypocritical religious enemies. He was a Man Who went about all His life trying to do good and help others, even the drunks and the harlots, the publicans and the sinners, and sometimes even the Scribes and the Pharisees who finally crucified Him for His dangerous doctrine of love. But His death brings life, forgiveness, and eternal joy to those who love Him in return.

He is the Lover of all lovers, who came for love and lived in love, and died for love that we might live and love forever! He even loves the unlovely and the least likely to be lovable, brute beasts who blossom into beauty at His loving touch!

But He has no hands but your hands and He has no lips but yours and He has no eyes but your eyes and no body but your own, for you are His body, His Bride for whom He died that you might live and love others as He did with your hands, your lips, your mouth, your tongue, your eyes and your body broken for them as He was for

you, your blood shed for them as His was for you, your life given for them as His was for you, to even die for them as He did for you!

Are you willing to be sent like Jesus into the deepest and darkest places of this Earth amongst the lowest of the low, not to condemn them as the churches have but to love them into His Kingdom of Love—God's Kingdom, God's love? Then, “Because He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren!” (1John 3:16).

We found out we could not enter these places for purely personal selfish recreation, exercise and entertainment. We could not come face to face and body to body with those who clung so desperately to us with such a yearning for us to meet their needs. We could not withhold bread from the hungry—the Bread of Life, Christ Jesus, nor drink from the thirsty—the water of His Word, which satisfies the most ultimate longings of the human soul.

Flesh can satisfy flesh, but only spirit can satisfy spirit, and we soon found that we had to give of both to satisfy “all their needs according to His riches in glory” (Phil.4:19). We could not withhold any need from the love-starved as long as we had it by us and within our power to meet it and to give our all for their healing and His glory.

We sometimes passed through the agonies of Gethsemane, but once having begun the life of love, we found there was no stopping place, no limit and no end. We had to give and to give and to give again until it hurt.

It hurt our pride, crucified our flesh, killed our selfishness and ruined our reputation or made us “of no reputation” like Jesus Himself (Phil.2:7). They called

Him a devil, a winebibber, a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners, drunks and harlots, but He kept on giving and giving and giving again until the day He died for love, to give us His eternal love and life and happiness for ever after.

Are you willing to give that much to satisfy the needs of others and bring them eternal joy and happiness through the salvation of their immortal spirit by the power of the love of the God of love Himself? We did!

We soon found there was no stopping place, no limit to which God would not go to save a poor lost soul with His infinite love and unlimited mercy! We soon found our hearts irresistibly drawn into the vacuum of their hearts to satisfy their spirits, even as our bodies were irresistibly drawn together to satisfy their flesh!

There was nowhere to draw the line between the two, flesh and spirit. There was no halfway, there was no “almost.” It had to be “all or nothing at all” or they could not believe it was real love. They could not understand how you could offer to fill their heart but not their body, to satisfy their soul but not their hungry flesh.

The two were inseparable. The one could not go without the other, and we had to feed them both together. As the Apostle James so clearly states: “If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food (a necessary physical need like sex) and one of you say unto them, ‘Depart in peace! Be ye warmed and filled!’—Notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body—what doth it profit?

“**Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead!**” (Jam.2:15–17). In other words, if in the faith of God you really love them, they cannot understand it or believe it unless you really show them by some visible

tangible work or action that puts your words into action and puts your faith into effect and makes it fact and not fiction, a sample, not just a sermon! (ML #502:2–22, DB 13; 1976.)

51. In 1974 Dad and Mama moved to Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, where they continued to pioneer the FFing ministry. For two years they carried on their experiment with a handful of Family members from their Home, testing and trying various methods and approaches before presenting Flirty Fishing as an outreach method for the Family. Throughout this time, they recorded their experiences, lessons, successes and failures, which were published from mid-1976 onwards.

52. Although a number of Letters had previously been published which hinted about using sex appeal as a new and intimate form of witnessing, the “King Arthur series” presented the first detailed account of how Dad and Mama had pioneered this radical new witnessing method. (If you haven't already read these, don't miss 'em! They're published in Daily Bread 13, MLs 501–522.)

53. Eventually, a whole volume of Letters was published that focused mostly on FFing. The FF Letters were essentially a training manual on how to use sex appeal and sexual relations as a means of winning others to the Lord. These Letters also served to further distance the Family from church traditions and hang-ups regarding sex. The cover illustrations for a number of the Letters were quite graphic sexually, and the titles were also often chosen for their shock value.

54. Due to increasing concerns about guarding our children, it was decided that this volume should be expunged from our body of literature in 1991, because of the sexually graphic nature of parts of this volume. Furthermore, FFing was discontinued in 1987,

and these Letters were no longer applicable. (A number of Letters from the FFing volume, which explain the basic principles behind FFing, have been republished in DB 13 and are available on Infostore.)

55. By 1977, Dad and Mama's FFing exploits in Tenerife hit the headlines. Since Tenerife was a popular resort island, frequented by Europeans on vacation, many of the people Dad and Mama and their staff witnessed to and led to the Lord were from a number of European countries. It wasn't long before the attention of the media in Western Europe was drawn to Tenerife, and they began publishing accounts of what quickly became considered a controversial practice. This eventually led to widespread international publicity. Needless to say, linking the spiritual love of God with the physical manifestation of that love in the form of sex, in such an intimate form of personal witnessing, was, to put it mildly, not very well received by mainstream Christianity, where sex and God are seldom, if ever, associated. The Lord certainly used FFing to catapult the Family into the public eye, and the news of missionaries who were willing to step outside the bounds of tradition to win souls circled the globe.

56. As a ministry, FFing was tremendously fruitful, resulting in nearly 100,000 people won to Jesus, many of whom would not have been won by traditional methods. These salvations were made possible because of the Family's sacrificial love for the lost and willingness to lay down our lives for those we were trying to reach with the Lord's love and message. The Lord also raised up many friends, supporters, and disciples for the Family through the witness given in FFing, a number of whom have remained close to the Family up until today.

57. Dr. James Chancellor, an academic and theologian, interviewed a number of

Family women about their FFing experiences and published his findings in 2000. His conclusions regarding this controversial ministry are quite interesting, as they reflect the fruitfulness of this method, and how most Family members who obeyed the call to participate in this ministry look back on their experiences. He wrote:

Virtually all [adult female disciples] involved in FFing share a positive appreciation of this unique witnessing technique, and feel strongly that their ministry was the work of the Holy Spirit. They are equally convinced that Flirty Fishing afforded them the opportunity to bear witness to persons who would have no other possible chance of hearing about the love of Jesus.

58. In 1987, the Lord showed Dad and Mama that the time had come to discontinue FFing for a number of reasons. The main reason was that the Lord wanted us to put more of an emphasis on follow-up and grounding our converts in the Word. FFing could be quite time-consuming, and had generated some problems and pitfalls as well—and of course we experienced a learning curve as we grew into this ministry through trial and error. In order to fully focus on the new challenges the Lord had for the Family in witnessing and follow-up, the Lord said it was time to change methods altogether. (See MLs 2313, 2345 and 2346.) The plague of AIDS had begun its rampage throughout the world at that time as well, so it was the Lord's perfect timing to close the book on the FFing era. But there was nothing wrong with FFing, and it's certainly nothing to be ashamed of. To the contrary, we should be proud of it!—God's proud of us for doing it! Although we have discontinued FFing, the Letters and the spiritual principles behind FFing remain sound. (See ML #2858:24,25.)

(Dad:) Let me ask you a question: What does the Family [name] stand for? It's short for the Family of Love, a Family that was born in the white-hot fires of the FF Revolution! That's another revolution that changed tens of thousands of lives around the world and spread our message—God's message—further than we could have ever imagined! We don't FF anymore, but that's the revolution that gave us our present name, won multitudes of souls, and made God's love news in hundreds of news articles around the world! (ML #3364:89, Vol. 29; 2001.)

59. (Question:) Some of our former members allege that they were "forced" to FF. Is that true?

60. Clearly, Dad's hope and intent when he presented the FFing revelation was that the Family would be supportive of this new witnessing method and would pioneer it in their Homes and ministries. He and Mama had found it to be a tremendously fruitful witnessing method, and the Lord had shown Dad that much fruit would be borne throughout the Family as they followed in the direction the Lord was leading. However, there were never policies or guidelines in place that forced anyone to FF, though Dad did present very compelling arguments as to why we should have the faith to FF, and it certainly weighted the scale in the direction of having the faith to follow where God was leading the Family. Ultimately, though, people had to make personal choices in the matter, and not all Family members FFed regularly, or at all for that matter. Dad wrote in the Letters on several occasions about the importance of operating according to our personal faith on a number of issues, including FFing and sharing, and even at one point on using contraceptives. (See ML

#792:14,23, Vol. 6.) Although he would give a pretty strong and convicting presentation as to why the Lord wanted us to do certain things, he would also point out that we had to operate according to our own faith. Dad didn't expect that most Family members would FF:

(Dad:) I've said time and again, FFing is not for everybody. It's only for special people who really have got the guts and the time and the talent and so on. It is not for everybody! Everybody can do it sometime or other, but it's not a full-time job for everybody.

There are only a few people that can devote their full time to it. There are only a few that can devote their part time to it! We are getting more and more now to where we've got families with two or three children—it's getting almost to be the average! Now when you get that far along, you most likely can't FF much at all anymore. I don't see how you can! Well, some of you do.

I don't recall ever saying that everybody's got to get out and FF.—Never! I said that everybody that can, ought to get out and FF, everybody that's got the burden, everybody that's got what it takes to do it. But I also said, it's not for everybody! I've said that plainly in several Letters, in the FF series, it's just not for everybody!

There are some girls who just have a real talent for it. And they don't have any husband or any children or anything.—They are free. There are a few wives who have a good talent for it even, and who happen to have an understanding husband, which is rare. (Maria: That can stay home and take care of the kids at night.) But that is rare! That is very rare! (ML #793:18,19,21,22, Vol. 6; 1978.)

61. Dad knew that it could be difficult to get Family members to move out of ruts or certain ways of doing things, and he would often present the Lord's new leadings in colorful, charismatic and emphatic terms. While doing so, he also understood that not all Family members would have the faith to follow in the new directions the Lord was leading. He tended to present things initially in a more impassioned way, in the hopes that he could bring the Family to a medium point, so to speak. It's important to understand that principle, as Dad could present arguments about the same topic that seemed contradictory, but actually provided balance to each other.

(Dad:) We're like a pendulum, and in a sense, every revolution is this way.

As I used to say, I'm an extremist, a radical fanatic, and in order to pull some people halfway, you've got to go all the way in the opposite direction! Then you pull some of the people too far and you've got to go to the opposite extreme, the other way, to try to get some of the extremists back on center again! Till finally, like a pendulum, you sort of get to where you're more in the middle and more on center rather than the opposite extremes (ML #1083:13, Vol. 9; 1982).

62. (Question:) Did minors participate in FFing? Did Dad encourage or allow minors to FF?

63. FFing was not for minors, and they were never allowed or encouraged by Dad to practice FFing. On this issue, in 1978 shortly after the Homes began FFing in earnest, Dad said, "[M]ust be of legal age for sexual involvement, usually at least 21 to 23, depending on the state or country. Watch out!" (ML #663:X 2, Vol. 5, 1978.)

64. “Heaven’s Girl,” a storybook written for teens in the early 1980s about a young woman in the time of the End, did present scenarios of Heaven’s Girl, the protagonist, using FFing to witness in dire circumstances. The story itself never indicated that minors in the Family were permitted to FF—it was clearly a fictional storybook about the Endtime. In fact, when Dad gave instructions to the artists working on the book, he said, “I’d say she looks like she’s about 20, somewhere around there. The teenagers could even identify with her—she could be a teenager or in her 20s” (ML #1632:22, GN Book 17; 1983).

65. The intention of this book was to present the miracles God’s children will be able to perform in the Tribulation, to inspire faith and courage, that despite the trials of the Tribulation, we will be victorious and the Lord will perform miracles for us (see MLs #1623, 1679). However, in keeping with the sexually liberal tone in the Family of the time period when the book was written (1983–1985), there were sexual references and FFing accounts in the book, which were later deemed inappropriate for minors. For this reason, this book was removed from circulation in 1990, and has been renounced.

Nudity

66. As Dad continued to seek to liberate us from societal taboos and ungodly perspectives about sexuality, he also introduced the concept that there was nothing wrong with the human body, or inherently shameful with nudity (in the privacy of our Homes or Family fellowships).

(Dad:) **Contrary to the false doctrines of most of the churches, there’s not one single place in the entire Bible that states or proves that nudity is evil or sex is wrong!** In fact in the original Creation,

God intended for people to run around stark naked in the open air, in the Garden, with no houses, no bedrooms and no privacy, and to make love on the grass under the trees, right out in the open! Nudity and sex in the Garden were the first order of the day, and therefore, having been created by God in the nude and never having known clothing or any kind of bodily covering, they didn’t even know they were naked!

Adam and Eve ... only became ashamed of their God-created bodies after they fell and had sin in their hearts—the wrong sinful view of things! Before that, with pure sinless hearts and a Heavenly outlook, they weren’t even conscious of being naked because they’d never been anything else!

All was beautiful until Satan lied to them, undermining their faith in God’s Word regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so that they disobeyed and sinned against the Lord. And when they took of the fruit of that tree of the knowledge of good and evil, suddenly they thought nudity was bad!

Then the Lord came along and called them, saying, “Where art thou?” to which Adam replied, “I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself” (Gen.3:9,10). Now remember, they’d been naked ever since they were created, and when all they knew was the knowledge of good, they weren’t even aware of it! They saw each other and each other’s bodies and never thought anything of it!—Except that they were very beautiful and they liked to make love to each other! But they never thought or saw anything wrong with it, because there was nothing wrong with it!

The Lord then asked them, “Who told thee that thou wast naked?”

(Gen.3:11.) Where did they get the idea that they were naked and that it was wrong to be naked?—The Devil told them they were naked! Instantly, as soon as they disobeyed, the Devil polluted their minds with the lie that nudity was evil and that the sexual parts were evil and should be hidden.—A lie of the Devil!—Part of the knowledge of evil that came into man's heart through sin and disobedience!

There is nothing wrong with our bodies and nothing evil about sex and nothing catastrophic about masturbation! All are perfectly normal, necessary, natural and God-given physical functions. The only evil or wrongdoing would be if our bodies were abused or misused or overused.—Or exposed or used in such a way as to offend or hurt others. (ML #1969:8–12,32, DB 8; 1984.)

67. As Dad presented these concepts, a more natural attitude towards nudity or semi-nudity became somewhat common in a number of Homes, depending on what sort of ministries the Homes conducted, the climate, the comfort zone of individuals, etc. Homes that were very involved in witnessing, with visitors regularly frequenting their Homes, or located in repressive or ultraconservative countries, wouldn't have had much allowance for nudity around the public places of the Home, if at all. Other Homes that operated as office or Selah Homes with little or no contact with outsiders may have been very liberal. Dad's Home for the most part was located in warm climates during that period of our history, and though nudity was only occasional, semi-nudity (meaning men in boxer shorts and women in panties or sarongs with no tops) was common and natural within the privacy of his household. Or when there was a swimming pool in the Home, there was nude swimming at times.

68. This concept of Family members having the freedom to carry out their daily lives with little clothing or partial nudity probably seems quite foreign at this stage of our history. Society overall gradually became much more conservative starting in the late '70s, and throughout the '80s. In the '60s and the '70s, nudism was much more common, and nudist colonies* were quite popular. Overall attitudes toward sex were more liberal during this era, and sexual experimentation and the challenging of traditional taboos was not uncommon. Even today in Europe, a number of beaches and resorts exist that are "clothing optional" or where semi-nudity is not an issue—including beaches, parks and entire coastlines which are frequented by families with children, where nudity or semi-nudity is considered just a natural part of life.

**Nudist colony: A group of nudists who choose to live together on a permanent basis for the purpose of eschewing clothing. Similar terms include nudist/naturalist resort, camp, park, or club. The term nudist colony was once a common term for nudist communities, especially among non-nudists, but is eschewed by most nudists/naturalists due to negative connotations that became associated with the term.*

Nudism is a movement that advocates the practice of living without clothes. Advocates of nudism practice for the physical benefit derived from exposure of the body to what they consider to be healthful qualities of sunlight and fresh air; in a wider sense, however, nudism is a philosophy and a way of life. The shame customarily

associated with nakedness in modern civilized society results, according to nudists, from centuries of cultural conditioning against complete exposure of the body in public. Nudism, by correcting in its practitioners this false sense of shame, enhances their self-assurance and furnishes them with a new appreciation of the essential beauty and dignity of the human body. Critics attack the nudist philosophy as being indecent and the publications put out by the movement as obscene.

Some people believe that the naked human body is to be accepted, respected, cherished, and enjoyed. They believe it is not inherently shameful, corrupting, degrading, or dangerous. Many of them enjoy clothes-free activities. They reject views that being naked with other people is morally wrong or indecent, or sexual per se. They argue that nakedness is a healthy, natural state, that being nude is to be in your purest form, since everyone was born nude. They generally find that they quickly become so accustomed to being nude among nudes that it no longer seems very remarkable. It is, rather, simply one part of their lifestyle. Some clothing-optional communities do exist for those who wish to live in a supportive environment. In fact, there are communities under development that even cater specifically to Christians that desire to practice Christian naturism.

Archaeological evidence indicates that nudism, in the form of sunbathing, was practiced in antiquity [*ancient times, preceding the Middle Ages*] by the Babylonians, Assyrians, Greeks, and Romans. Ancient cultures (the

Greeks and the Romans, for example) sometimes had quite different attitudes toward the unclothed human body than are common today. In fact, the word "gymnasium" comes from the Greek word "gymnos," meaning "nude," because athletics in Greece were routinely practiced naked by its participants. Nudity taboos may have developed simply because people got accustomed to wearing clothes for practical reasons, as in temperate or desert climates. Perhaps it became a habit, was culturally ingrained, and was elevated to a requirement.

Objections to being nude are often religiously motivated, even when that idea started as a cultural taboo. Many peoples around the world started wearing clothes only after missionaries argued that it is more civilized. However, there are many religiously devout nudists who attend worship services regularly. They argue that they do not need to shed their morals with their clothes.

As a social and philosophical movement, nudism began in Germany in the early 20th century and spread throughout Europe between the two World Wars. It originated as a protest against strict Victorian codes of behavior and sought to alleviate the ignorance and shame caused by hiding the human body. The basic position that the human body, in and of itself, was neither sinful nor obscene was combined with a new philosophy to create the modern Western nudist movement. Nudism also represented a challenge to the traditional dichotomy [split] that celebrates nudity in artistic represen-

tation but condemns it as a practice in everyday life. Stressing nudism's supposed benefits to physical health and mental well-being, contemporary adherents of the movement maintain that its practice aids both exercise and relaxation while promoting stress relief, positive body image, and increased self-esteem.

Nudist organizations and societies are maintained in most European countries, including Norway, Sweden, and Finland. In the United States, the first organized nudist movement was the American League of Physical Culture, established in 1929. Since World War II ended in 1945, interest in nudism has made some advances in the United States and Canada. (Excerpted from articles published in *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* and *Columbia Online Encyclopedia*)

69. Although it would not be appropriate to adopt nudity into our everyday lives in public spheres of our Homes, both for the sake of our children and our ministry to the public, Dad's teachings on this subject still hold true today, and we don't believe that there is anything inherently wrong or shameful about the human body. God created it and saw that it was good; in fact, one of His most marvelous and wonderful creations! But due to the fact that in much of society today, it could be construed as inappropriate or negligent to expose children to nudism in our communal households, and many countries have laws against it, the Lord has led us to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1Thes.5:22). (For more on this subject, please see "Shooting Straight, Part 3," ML #3501:90-105, GN 1088; 2004.)

The "Story of Davidito"

70. During this period of our history, when Dad was exploring the boundaries of the Law of Love, he speculated as to whether nudity and sexuality should be hidden from children, considering that these are a natural, God-created part of life. He reasoned that in many cultures in past eras, a much more natural attitude had prevailed about the "facts of life," and many psychologists have argued over time that this is a healthier approach. Around this time, in 1975, Davidito was born. Dad's hope was that Davidito could be brought up in a natural environment, free from society's taboos that Dad had come to see as promoted by the traditions of man, and not necessarily of God. Davidito's early upbringing reflected this approach.

In a *Washington Post* interview, Rev. Richard D. Dobbins, an Ohio psychologist and pastoral counselor points out that the unhealthy suppression of sexual drive easily leads to deviant sexual behavior, and adds:

While the Bible takes a healthy view toward the body and sexuality, institutional religion tends to see those things as wicked and evil. Children are not taught how to think of their body. It is a dark, secret side of themselves (cited by Session Steps, 1988: 3, Section A). (See "Christianity and Sex, Part 1," Christian Digest 21.)

71. Davidito's early life and upbringing was recorded and published in installments for the Family between 1977 and 1981 (during this time period he was two to six years old). These were written by Sara, his primary caregiver, based on her daily logs, and they

also provided a firsthand glimpse into Dad's household. The primary purpose of these accounts was to relay practical lessons on child-rearing, child development, early schooling, etc., to the many new parents in the Family at that time.

72. In 1982 the "Dito" chapters were compiled and republished in a 780-page book, "The Story of Davidito." The vast bulk of the book addressed an array of topics related to childcare, including pre-school education, discipline, safety, diet, health, childhood diseases, etc. Approximately 20 pages of the original book focused on Davidito's early exploration of his sexuality. The book also had a number of references throughout that reflected the sexually liberal environment existing at Dad's house at that time. There were also a number of photos published where Davidito and members of Dad's household were scantily dressed or nude.

73. In his book "The Children of God—the Family," Dr. J. Gordon Melton offered an academic perspective of "The Story of Davidito":

The Story of Davidito was written by Sara, the woman primarily responsible for the rearing of the son born to Maria and adopted by David Berg. Seven hundred and fifty pages long and filled with photographs, it was part family album, biography, and baby book chronicling Davidito's formative years in a communal environment. Part of a much larger body of literature produced during this period on such practical matters as establishing a home and raising children, most of the content was innocuous. But some of it made for profoundly unsettling reading for people who held traditional views about acceptable behavior in adult-child relationships. About twenty pages of the text focused on the young boy's development in an environment of near-total

sexual freedom in which Davidito witnesses intercourse and appears to have sexual access to the women of the group.

Although sex was not the overriding preoccupation of the members' existence, the new sexual openness created a different atmosphere than had existed previously in the homes, now filled with a number of children. While members, as indeed much of the rest of society at the time, enjoyed a sense of freedom, they did not view children as objects of sexual attraction. Berg's letters were mostly interpreted as simple advice against becoming unduly alarmed if children showed a natural curiosity about their bodies and against taking too seriously the intrusion of a child into an intimate adult situation. (*From "The Children of God—The Family" by Dr. J. Gordon Melton, 1997.*)

74. Due to the inappropriate sexual references contained in these pages, the book was removed from circulation and all Homes destroyed their copies of the book in early 1990. An edited version, from which any sexually inappropriate material was removed, was republished in 1997, entitled, "Dito: His Early Years."

75. At this point in time of our history, 25 years later, it can be difficult to relate to the publishing of sexual references in a child-rearing manual. Clearly, references of this nature should never have been included in this publication, and Dad officially renounced the purged portions of the book. We will address this in further detail in Part 2 of this GN series, but suffice it to say that we have since developed strong policies in the mid to late 1980s to protect children from being exposed to a sexually inappropriate environment, or anything potentially harmful to them or that could be construed as negligent or abusive.

"Dance" Videos

76. As a further extension of the exploration of the Law of Love, in 1981 Dad published the Letter "Nudes Can Be Beautiful," where he presented the idea of Family women doing artistic nude dances. At that point in time, most of the FGAs were the age of our SGAs of today, in their twenties and early thirties.

(Dad:) **Maybe some of you folks who have video [recorders] can give it a try.** I think it would make a beautiful musical background for a video dance tape [in] which our beautiful girls could dance in a very artistic and soft and loving way, what the world might call "soft porn." Not the hard stuff with all the gory gruesome mechanical details, but beautiful, artistic nudity and beautiful artistic dancing with this beautiful artistic music in the background. (ML #1006:1,2, Vol. 9; 1981.)

77. Dad also suggested that some portions of romantic and loving interaction between adults could be filmed, as "Love videos." However, in a few instances, these developed into explicit sex scenes, and not too long afterwards, in April 1984, Dad concluded that these should be discontinued, and the tapes destroyed, both because he felt they were not edifying and because they placed the Family at risk in conservative countries.

We do not circulate this type of video [with explicit sex scenes] in the Family and frankly feel that it's dangerous even in your own private tape collection... Therefore, we wanted to ask anyone who has such tapes to please erase them as soon as possible. We must ask for your cooperation in this so that other Family tapes can continue to circulate without being stopped by the authorities or causing

a danger to the Work! There are so many other good Family videos which you can enjoy in their place! PTL! Happy viewing! WLY! (LNF 47, April 1984)

78. Within the context of all that Dad taught us about sexuality and nudity being God-created, pure and natural, for women to dance nude or semi-nude was not considered inappropriate or anything to be ashamed of. In some cases—in particular, at Music with Meaning (MWM)—some underage girls were filmed, imitating the older women and their dances. Although this was not generally viewed as an expression of sexuality, the filming of such dances was inappropriate and should not have been permitted or encouraged. In January 1985, a notice was circulated to the Family (LNF 57), clarifying that such filming of minors should not be allowed (though at that time, there was not a clear definition of what would be considered a minor and in some cases teens may have filmed dances after 1985, before these were discontinued altogether in 1988).

79. In 1990, it was determined that the filming of adult dance videos should be discontinued altogether, and Family members were required to erase all existing videos. At the time, the reason the Lord led us to destroy the dance videos was not because they were harmful or even in poor taste, but rather because of the changing cultural climate and to protect the security of our Family members.

80. Some of these videos, however, had been overlooked and left in a storage facility in the Philippines, among archival material. In 1992, two former members (one of whom had been excommunicated many years earlier), infiltrated a Home in the Philippines. By subterfuge, they got access to this storage facility and stole 13 trunks of audio masters of Family music recordings, amongst which

there were a number of old videos that should have been destroyed a few years earlier when the Family erased all such videos. A warrant was subsequently issued for the arrest of these former members in the Philippines for grand theft. They fled the Philippines and shipped the stolen materials to a former member in the U.S.A., who has subsequently sold them to media sources over the years. (For the full story, see FSM 227, "Victory in Manila.")

81. These videos are aired from time to time by the media for shock value, to attempt to cast the Family in a negative light and reinforce the stereotypical "sex cult" label. Meanwhile, as is typical of the hypocrisy of the System, the world is flooded with hard-core porn videos and magazines, which denigrate sex, and as Dad said, are often "perverted and animalistic and mechanical and ugly and unclean and masochistic and cruel ... It's the Devil's own doing to take God's beautiful creation and contaminate it and pervert it and debase it and drag it down through the gutter and the sewer! That's what I'd call nasty sex, dirty sex, unclean sex..." (ML #935:9,15, Vol. 8; 1980).

82. Although some of our apostates and the media have attempted, and continue to attempt, to use these videos to further their campaigns to discredit or harm the Family, there was nothing wrong with the beautiful dances and artistic expression of our love for the Lord and others expressed by adult members in these videos. These were withdrawn from circulation because the Lord indicated that with tightening world conditions, and with society becoming more and more sexually conservative, it was time to erase these videos and curtail this liberty. And as I said before, minors should not have been permitted to participate in dance videos, and in 1985 a notice went out to the Family disallowing their participation.

Growing Pains

83. The initial implementation of the Law of Love and its actual practice in the Homes was, needless to say, not without problems and mistakes.

84. In his original explanation of the Law of Love, Dad gave two fundamental guidelines for sexual sharing: It must be done in unselfish love, and it must not hurt anyone. With the oppressive "Chain" removed and all restrictions lifted, many members went overboard and the pendulum of sexual behavior swung to the opposite extreme, and sad to say, these basic tenets were widely ignored.

Unfortunately, the teachings of the Letters and the principles of the Law of Love were not always carried out perfectly by every Family Member. Many of us were young and immature when we were first learning to apply the Law of Love, so there were cases where the Word was misinterpreted or misunderstood, and these freedoms were used "as an occasion to the flesh" (Gal.5:13) and not applied lovingly and unselfishly as the Lord and Dad had intended. When Dad wrote those Letters, he expected us to be loving, unselfish, considerate and mature enough in spirit that we wouldn't do anything that would hurt anyone else. He expected us to be yielded to the Lord and closely following His Spirit in our practice of these freedoms. As Dad brought out in the original Letter entitled "The Law of Love":

"It depends on your spiritual strength and maturity, trustworthiness, and especially the ultimate in total unselfish and sacrificial love—the true Love of God! Can you be trusted with it, or will you abuse it and use your liberty as license to do wrongfully and lustfully instead of rightfully and lovingly? Will you use it to heal and help, or harm and hinder? The answer is up to you.

“If you are strong enough in Spirit and filled with His Love, you can be trusted with His liberty as a useful tool to help others. But if you are weak in the flesh, full of selfish lust and play with it foolishly like a dangerous toy, it will only harm you and others and hinder the Work of God!” (ML #302C:5–8.) (From “Our Beliefs Concerning the Lord’s Law of Love,” by Peter and Apollos. ML #2858:17, Vol. 21; 1993.)

85. Many FGAs experienced the emotional turmoil resulting from unrestrained personal relationships. When the liberties of the Law of Love were used with the wrong motives or without the counsel and consent of all concerned, a lot of us found ourselves caught up in a maelstrom of romantic and sexual feelings, emotions and relationships that were overpowering because we let them occupy so much of our minds and hearts and time. This, of course, resulted in quite a few serious problems, causing our work and fruitfulness for the Lord to suffer greatly. (See ML #2718:6–8, Vol. 20; 1991.)

The Lord gave us those freedoms so we could sacrificially and unselfishly help others. But many of us simply weren’t mature enough to handle them wisely and responsibly, thus we wound up using—or misusing—them selfishly and getting way off the track. So for our own well-being and for His work’s sake, the Lord had to restrict or severely limit many of those freedoms (ML #2718:7, Vol. 20; 1991).

86. Over the years, Mama and I have published a number of apologies to current and former members who may have been hurt in any way due to the actions of others, or the lack of restrictions and guidelines for the Law of Love in the earliest period of its implementation. We sincerely meant and stand

by those apologies. (See *the 1992 Statement on Child Abuse*; “*Our Beliefs Concerning the Lord’s Law of Love*,” ML #2858:50–51, published in 6/93; “*An Answer to Him That Asketh Us*,” ML #3016:18–20, 52–56, published in 9/95; *Mama’s Letter to Former Members in “Bridging the Gap*,” ML #3068:101–108, published in 8/96; “*An Open Letter to All Current and Former Family Members*,” ML #3091:3,10h,15–22, published in 12/96.)

(Peter:) We are truly sorry if any of our Members were hurt or offended in any way by someone who misapplied or in some way strayed from the strict guidelines of the Law of Love. We are sorry if anyone was stumbled or confused or embittered by any such actions in the past. The people who misused their freedoms—either intentionally or unintentionally—were literally breaking the Law, the Law of Love. (ML #2858:51, Vol. 21. Published in June 1993.)

(Mama:) 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. (ML #3016:53, Vol. 22. Published in September 1995.) (See also ML #3091, Vol. 23. Published in December 1996.)

87. As we explained in the Letter “Our Beliefs Concerning the Lord’s Law of Love” (ML #2858), although we are very sorry that any Family members were hurt in any way during that initial era of the implementation of the Law of love, when few guidelines were in place to help us to truly live it in love and to protect people from hurt, this does not negate

the scriptural truth and godly principles behind the Law of Love.

to grow into the fullness of His love for others, through living His Law of Love.

(Peter:) Unloving actions by some did not invalidate the Lord's Law of Love or mean that we no longer believe its scriptural truth. It simply means that there were cases where some people were not loving enough or spiritually strong enough to properly adhere to it. This is why Dad and Mama felt it necessary to enact what are now the current restrictions on such freedoms and liberties—to ensure that no one was being hurt or offended by others who may have misapplied or misused the Law of Love principles, and to make sure that such freedoms were not distracting the Family from our main goal of preaching the Gospel and reaching others for the Lord.

However, the fact that such restrictions are in place today does not mean that everyone misused the liberties granted under the Law of Love. To the contrary, many people were very loving, mature, wise, considerate and sacrificial in their application of the Law of Love. But just as blanket (all-inclusive) laws have to be imposed in the System (even though many people would not even think about committing the acts which the laws are forbidding), so blanket restrictions had to be imposed on all Family members to make sure that the people who were misusing such freedoms would not continue to do so. (ML #2858:52–53, Vol. 21; 1993.)

88. As Mama and the Lord explained so clearly in the Law of Love series, the Law of Love is a precious gift that the Lord has entrusted to the Family. Despite the mistakes and growing pains of the past, the Lord is continuing to entrust us with this gift, and He is counting on us to wisely and maturely continue

Limitations and Guidelines for the Law of Love

89. Over the years since Dad wrote “The Law of Love” (1974), the Lord led him and Mama and me to institute guidelines and boundaries to the Law of Love, to help us to practice it in ways that would be fruitful for all parties concerned. For example, in 1984 Mama's Letter “Sex for Babes?” (ML #1909) was published, which established the rule that new disciples would be required to abstain from sex with others for six months after joining the Family, in order to give them time to adjust to their new life for the Lord, learn to witness, and get grounded in the Word without the distraction that physical, sexual and emotional relationships can be. In 1987, FFing was discontinued and sex with “outsiders” (non-Family members) was prohibited.

90. In 1986, we established parameters for sexual interaction, in order to protect our children and teens from premature sexual experiences. These parameters developed and changed over the years. At one point, those under 21 were not allowed to have sex, unless they were planning to marry. In 1991, the Lord led us to modify those restrictions in line with the average age at which teens are able to sexually interact with each other in society at large. Our guidelines governing the age that sexual interaction is permissible are outlined in the Charter. Infraction of our policies, particularly in the case of adults interacting with underage minors, was made excommunicable in the late 1980s.

91. In 1995, “Go for the Gold” (ML #2961) was published, in which the Lord addressed the issue of contraception and discussed questions relating to different types of sexual interaction, offering options for sexual shar-

ing that wouldn't result in pregnancy, so as to ensure that people's sexual needs could be satisfied (for more on this topic, please see "Mama's Memos—No. 4," ML #3138). In 1998 and 1999, the 12-part series of "Living the Lord's Law of Love" (ML #3201–3212) was published, teaching us all how to live the sexual aspect of the Law of Love in the Lord's Spirit and love. This series introduced the concept of a man's 20-month minimum responsibility in the case of pregnancy resulting from sex with a single woman. A number of guidelines were put in place to protect the stability of marriages, and to ensure that those engaging in full sex assume responsibility in the case of pregnancy.

(Peter:) **The circumstances that exist today in our Homes regarding practicing the sexual aspect of the Law of Love are very different than they were years ago before the Charter.** With the publishing of the Law of Love series and the many new Charter rules that govern our sexual sharing, there are many safeguards. There is much less chance of people going off the deep end in any way.

If you see any inappropriate activity or interaction between people of any age, you are responsible to report it. There are rules and consequences for breaking those rules (ML #3307:189–190, Vol. 28; 2000).

92. The Charter also published a guideline disallowing sexual contact in the public places of the Home, to avoid hurting or offending others.

(Mama:) **You have one kind of affection openly amongst all your members—anytime, anywhere—and another kind you reserve for behind closed doors.** Your everyday standard of natural, loving affection amongst your Home members

during your normal daily interaction with each other is not supposed to signal or lead to sex, which is what you have behind closed doors (ML #2857:44, Vol. 21; 1993).

93. The Lord has led us to put restrictions in place to protect people from getting hurt, because we are imperfect beings who don't always live up to the principles and ideals put forth in the Law of Love.

(Peter:) **In fact, the different rules and restrictions which we have incorporated over the years do not signify a departure from the principle of the Law of Love, but are actually an affirmation of the Law of Love.** They serve as a safeguard to help ensure that everyone is indeed acting in accordance with the Law of Love. By removing some potential for problems, these rules ensure that no one is hurt or harmed (ML #2858:19, Vol. 21; 1993).

(Mama:) **Dad clearly made the point that we are free from the law through love, and as such, we are free to love one another sexually, without sin, as it is no sin if it is done in love.** We are free to share love one with another without sin because we're living under the fullness of the Law of Love, both the widely accepted interpretation of the Law of Love by Christianity in general and the full freedom as the Lord revealed it to Dad.

You might wonder, if "all things are lawful" and we are free from the law, then why do we need to have the sexual restrictions included in our Love Charter? Why is it that Dad says we're free from the law, yet we still have some laws (the strict rules of the Charter) regarding sexual interaction that we must follow?

It's because we are imperfect beings, who, as much as we might try to fully

live in love, fall short of the mark. Dad recognized this when he first wrote about the sexual aspect of the Law of Love. He proposed guidelines that he felt were sufficient at the time, but which proved not to be, as they were not specific enough (ML #3201:79–81, Vol. 25; 1998).

94. (Question:) Could we have skipped the stages of learning through experience and the resultant mistakes and hurt that ensued at times, if more guidelines for the Law of Love had been in place from the very beginning?

95. There's no question that it would have been helpful and beneficial if more guidelines had been in place when the Law of Love was first instituted.—And, of course, with stricter guidelines, some of the hurt and misuse of the Law of Love that happened could have been avoided. That's easy to see in hindsight, having matured and learned more about the full application of the Law of Love to every area of our lives, and not just to our sexual interactions with one another. But even if there had been more guidelines, that's not to say that learning to live the freedoms of the Law of Love would have been problem-free.

96. We were pioneering an entirely new concept, and there were many unknown factors, circumstances that changed with time, and different levels of maturity and prayerfulness in the thousands of adult Family members of that time period. So while some of the mistakes could have been avoided, it's unrealistic to think that all problems could have been foreseen and avoided. Even today, when there are very detailed rules, guidelines, and requirements, it's not possible to ensure that our practice of the Law of Love will be entirely free of mistakes or problems, because living the Law of Love is a learning and growing process, and people will make mistakes along the way and learn from experience.

97. The Law of Love is practiced by human beings, who are prone to make mistakes and to not fully live up to the standard all the time. No matter how many guidelines are in place, we can expect that people will make mistakes from time to time, and we have to bear that in mind, just as we do in all human relationships. We are imperfect beings, and only by His grace can we meet the standard of ensuring that all our actions are motivated by and carried out in His love.

98. At the time, when the concept of the Law of Love was just being applied, the guidelines Dad gave of operating in love, in mutual consent and harming no one, were good guidelines. Time and experience proved, however, that they were not sufficient, and the boundaries needed to be more clearly defined, which is why we have clear and well-defined guidelines in the Word and the Charter today.

99. (Jesus:) For you, My brides, learning to live the Law of Love in its ultimate fulfillment, is a process. Being able to not only understand but to fully live unselfish sacrificial love is a tall order, and something that you learn through experience and maturity.—And of course that doesn't happen all in a day. The Law of Love is a vibrant and complex principle of the Spirit, and no two people's experiences in practicing it are the same. You, My brides, have had to learn many, many lessons concerning this beautiful tool, and I have helped you to mature and to grow in your understanding and living of the Law of Love. Each person's understanding of the Law of Love grows and changes with time, through studying and living the Word, through their personal experience in applying the Word and living those concepts. And that is the way that it is supposed to be.

100. People's understanding of the Law of Love today is different than it was five, ten, fifteen or twenty years ago. At different times and to different people the learning

process will be manifested in different ways. And undoubtedly, as time goes on, there will be different experiences that will further enhance your understanding and application of the Law of Love, as you learn to be even more loving and sacrificial in practicing it. Very often your understanding of concepts is tempered by your experiences, and as you learn more you are able to apply things in a more complete and well-rounded fashion. It takes time to not only learn things but also to learn to integrate them properly into your lives.

101. The ultimate goal is that My great and all-encompassing love will motivate you in all that you do, as you lay down your life daily for Me and others, with real love that loves others with true impartiality, whether it be by helping them with their kids or extra chores, or by showing them the physical affection that they might need, or by showing them love by being a shoulder to cry on, or someone to listen to them, as the case warrants. True fulfillment of the Law of Love is being what I need you to be for others. Learning these lessons is an ongoing process and one that you will all be learning until you come Home to be with Me. Even then, you will grow and learn new aspects of this powerful weapon. (*End of message.*)

In summary

102. I pray that this journey through this aspect of the Family's history has helped you to better understand how our liberal sexual theology developed into what it is today, why restrictions and guidelines were needed, and how the mistakes and growing pains the Family underwent caused us to mature and learn to more wisely and responsibly live the Lord's Law of Love in every area of our lives.

103. I believe it's important that you are familiar with this background and the different stages and learning curves we went through to reach the point we're at today, in

order to fully understand the points that will be presented in the next GN. I also hope that the explanation for each of these points will help you to understand the background on these issues, so that if you hear about them from ex-member relatives and friends, or through negative media, you'll understand the true purpose and intent.

104. When you don't have a reference point, it can be quite disconcerting and even shocking when you hear about our past freedoms, mistakes, or excesses. Even things that weren't mistakes or wrong, such as allowing nudity in the Homes, adult dance videos, FFing, etc., are often twisted by our apostates and the media to paint them in the blackest possible light.

105. For this reason, it's important to have a good understanding of how the Lord led Dad and the Family, as well as why and where mistakes were made, and how these were corrected. This will help you to see things through the Lord's eyes, and not through the negative twisted perspective our enemies and the sensationalistic media wish to portray. You will also be able to differentiate between the legitimate freedoms that the Lord gave us, which were sanctioned in His eyes, and the parts of our past that were mistakes and shortcomings, which have been apologized for and rectified.

106. The application and resultant fruits of the Law of Love overall have been good, especially in creating a very strong bond of unity and love, forged through our willingness to give, to love, to broaden the borders of our tents to draw others in, and to intimately share our lives with one another. In gaining a better understanding of our history, you'll also be able to better appreciate the beautiful and unique freedoms that the Lord has entrusted to us, as a Family, through the Law of Love, coupled with the responsibility and obligation we also bear to live the Law of Love as the Lord intends for it to be lived—as a beautiful sample of Christians caring for one another, in genuine love.