

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES
(From the many in FSMs 352-357)

*** OUR side: In Defense of our Faith, Family, and Lifestyle, FSM 352**

Dear Family,

In light of the bitter accusations leveled at Dad, Mama, Peter and WS that have recently been circulated by various detractors, there was a groundswell amongst those who know Mama and Peter personally to speak up and share their experiences.

Those of us who wrote these would like to make it clear that Mama and Peter did not solicit these testimonies. This idea came from those of us who live and work in WS, many of whom live day in and day out with Mama and Peter.

We felt compelled to take a stand against the lies, mistruths and personal attacks on our shepherds by declaring the truth. So we opened the floor to a variety of people who have lived with Mama and Peter, interacted closely with them, and who know their true nature—giving them the opportunity to share their thoughts and views with you via this open forum. The response we received was overwhelming. Many WS members, CROs, and a few field missionaries who know Dad, Mama and Peter intimately, wrote personal testimonials and firsthand accounts of their experiences.

We let people know that Mama and Peter were in the midst of addressing the most major accusations about WS, Mama and Peter's leadership, the use of prophecy, and other specifics in the GN "None of These Things Move Me," so most people chose to shed light on Mama and Peter, their character, their personal lives, and the way they handle people. We're sure you'll find this interesting. As you'll see, the accounts in these mags strongly contrast with those that certain former members have recently circulated. Read them for yourself and decide who you'll believe.

We pray you'll enjoy these mags and that they will provide you with greater understanding and insight into Mama and Peter's lives and daily mode of operation, from those who know them best.

Love,
Your WS Staff

PS. Please note that we've left the articles in these mags as they were originally written. This is what people had to say about Mama, Peter, WS, and the Family, in the way they had to say it. If this were a regular Family pub, we would have done more editing. The mag editors probably wouldn't have chosen to say some things in the exact way people chose to say them. But this is the "raw truth" as seen through the eyes of these individuals. Let the truth be known!

Speaking up

By Rebecca, 26, Mama's Home

I've lived with Mama and Peter for four-and-a-half years. During that time I've worked with them pretty much on a daily basis—both on a secretarial level, as well as a personal level. I've traveled with Peter, I've stayed in Mama's room when Peter was away and her health was poor. I've typed their tapes, helped them with their messages and correspondence, and helped Mama with her work on the pubs. I've filled in for Rose (their full-time personal helper) when needed, and taken care of their foods and other personal needs like cleaning their room and doing their laundry. I've packed for them during times of travel or moving, and helped take care of them when they were sick.

I'm not telling you these things to be proud or to boast of how helpful I am or how undeservingly privileged I am to live close to Mama and Peter and have this level of interaction. I know without a shadow of a doubt that it's not by any goodness of my own that I'm here. But I'm explaining what I do because I believe that during this time that I've lived with them, I've gotten to know them fairly well—both on a work level as well as a personal level.

Hearing of the accusations against them that are currently being circulated, my response is that I only wish every Family member could have the chance to come and see for themselves what our king and queen are like. But since that's not possible, I want to share my personal experience of what I've found in working with them. This is my personal testimony—you can choose to believe it or not. But there is no doubt in my mind that your hearts would be comforted and the lies put to rest if you were able to see for yourself. I'm not going to try to say that I've found either Mama or Peter to be perfect—because that's not the case. But I have found them to be two of the most loving and unselfish people I've ever met.

One of the accusations that upsets me the most personally is the insinuation that Mama and Peter have selfish motives for leading the Family in the way that they are, that they are egotistical and self-glorifying. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mama and Peter both live to serve the Family. If they were living for themselves, their lives would be so different they would be unrecognizable. If they were living selfishly, they might be able to put on a good front to people who didn't live with them, but not to those of us who come in and out of their room bringing tapes and messages, beeping them at all hours to ask questions pertaining to work, and working with them on projects that require lots of prayer, hard work, concentration, and urgent attention.

I have never met anyone who works longer hours than Mama. When she's not on the intercom, counseling or praying about something with someone, or in a meeting, she's working on a GN or listening to tapes—tapes from you, her beloved Family, or messages from the Lord about problems that have come up, or approving a pub—a *Kidland* or *Eve* or *Grapevine* or *Zine* etc. It requires a tremendous amount of concentration to put together a GN, or approve a pub, or edit a Letter by just hearing the material!—You should try it sometime! You can't see it, you can't skip back two pages to see where that point was covered before. It's a huge amount of work, because she can't use her eyes.

She's often tired. She often doesn't feel well. She often asks for prayer that she's able to get more work done. She uses every spare minute. She listens to her tapes when she's exercising on the exercise bike or treadmill, and even when she's washing her face or brushing her teeth. How she manages, I don't know—but I do know that she is motivated to do it because of her love for the Family and her desire to make their job as easy as possible. If there's something that she can do, or that WS can do to help, to make someone's life easier, to give the Family what they need in some way, she endeavors to get it done no matter what the cost to her personally.

Another way she manifests her love for the Family is by her faithfulness to pray. She is personally involved in making sure we have a comprehensive list of the important current prayer requests for each prayer morning, which we have every two weeks, and she makes sure that we keep up with our prayer times at meals and vigils, that we cover all the requests for prayer that have been sent in. She is faithful to remind us that many of the requests for prayer that come in are confidential or personal prayer requests, which don't go to anywhere else, and so the responsibility lies with us to uphold those situations in our prayers. She and Peter take time every morning to pray together for the various requests. And any time when you talk to her on the beeper about anything, she prays for that situation and the people involved. You can't tell me that those heartfelt intercessory prayers come from selfish motives.

The same is true of Peter. Those of you who have met him on trips have probably seen a glimpse of how much he gives. It doesn't matter how tired he is, how little sleep he got the night before, or the fact that once he gets back to his room he has to read tons of messages and answer timely matters that have come up—he will still take time with each person who needs to see him, and does what he can to help them with their problems or at least pray for them. When he gets back to his room, he'll dictate a tape of prayer requests that people asked him to pray for, will request prophecies for those who needed additional counsel, and will follow-up on any urgent situations that needed attention. When he finally gets home he has meetings about things that need to change, and they try to remedy those situations. His loving concern for each person isn't just a show—it's genuine. And when he's not traveling, it's the same—all day his work involves reading about problems, and praying about how to solve them.

Mama and Peter are faithful to remind those of us in WS that we are servants of the Family. They live that sample on a daily basis. What more can I say?

One of the rumors going around about Mama is that through the prophecies she publishes in the GNs, she tries to control the Family. In order to do this, she slants the prophecies whichever way she wants them to go. One of my jobs is helping Mama with her work on the GNs and other pubs, by typing her tapes of dictation or corrections, incorporating the changes into the file, and praying about wording changes at her request, etc. When I originally started doing this, I wondered if it would make me lose my respect for the Word, because I was getting a close-up look at what went into the pubs, how they came about, etc. But the opposite is true—my respect for the Lord's words that Mama publishes has only increased, because I've seen the very great amount of prayer that she puts into each GN that she prepares and each publication that she approves.

Mama is so prayerful. When she hears a prophecy that she thinks would be helpful for the Family to hear, she asks someone to pray about which pub it could go in, or if it should go in a GN. When she listens to the prophecies that she has compiled for a GN, if anything's not clear, she'll ask the Lord about it. She asks the Lord about the order, she asks the Lord about the presentation, she asks the Lord about the general direction several times. If a certain wording could have a double meaning or is unclear, she'll ask the Lord how He wants to reword it.

Mama doesn't like to use the term “editing” when referring to prophecy—because even the smallest wording change in a prophecy is taken back to the Lord. If something is repetitious, she'll ask the Lord what He wants to delete. If something doesn't cover a certain aspect of the subject that she feels would come up, she goes back to the Lord for more. She carefully prays about everything—and asks a variety of her channels to pray about these things. So it's obvious to me that it's not like one person's opinion influences the direction. To say that Mama slants the prophecies in a certain direction according to what she personally wants must definitely be coming from someone who doesn't know Mama very well.

Another accusation being leveled against them is that they bully people into submission with prophecy. I have received quite a number of personal prophecies from them during the years I've lived with them—some prophecies of encouragement, others instructional, even some pretty strong correction. But every one was given with a great deal of love, a tremendous amount of understanding and even benefit of the doubt.

There have been times that something in one of the prophecies went down sideways. There was one time that I even felt unjustly accused of something that I didn't think I was guilty of, and wondered whether the person receiving the prophecy had really gotten it right. I expressed these feelings to Mama, and instead of telling me that, “Well, that's what the Lord said, so you'd better believe it and receive it,” she suggested that I could ask the Lord further about it personally, as He might have an explanation that would help make it easier. Sure enough, when I asked the Lord, He explained how I was meant to apply the lesson—which was very different from the way I had originally taken it—and it made perfect sense and was easy to receive. Mama was very enthusiastic about the message I got, and supportive of the way the Lord had explained it.

If I had not asked the Lord about it, I might have continued feeling bad and misunderstood. But when I asked the Lord, He explained it all so that it made perfect sense. I can see how someone might have a negative reaction to a prophecy—it's happened

to me, too. But you can't just leave it at that or it will fester and become a negative experience. You have to ask the Lord about it further so that you can see the complete picture. That is something Mama always advocates and encourages. She doesn't expect you to take only what she has given you and leave it there, but to always ask the Lord more about it so that you can get the full picture.

Mama and Peter are very open to suggestions, ideas, even contrary ideas and opinions. Rumors are going around that they're closed-minded, they want people out of the Family who don't think like they do, and they don't listen when contrary ideas are presented. My personal experience is exactly the opposite. I'm a sensitive person by nature (a.k.a. proud—yes, I'm working on it), and if I say something and it's shot down or I receive a negative reaction, I don't often go there again. But I am very free to speak my mind with both Mama and Peter.—That in itself is proof that they respond positively to contrary opinions!

They don't just take all those opinions and act on them—thank God! But they do consider them seriously, they take them to the Lord, they bounce them around with others, and they make their decisions in accordance with what the Lord shows them. I've had some of my suggestions taken, others not. Some have been taken in part, and used to modify the original idea. Others have simply precipitated more prayer and counsel on the topic, but the original idea still stood. But I know for a fact that they welcome ideas and opinions, and they take them seriously. I've never felt brushed off, or worse yet, any kind of negative reaction or bad vibes because of something I've brought up.

They believe that personal initiative and each of our personal connections with the Lord and willingness to follow Him makes the Family what it is. They're not worried about holding on to control or keeping the reins. They realize the structure of the Family is essential to our continuing to do an effective job, but they are constantly trying to pass down more responsibility, inspire more initiative, and they certainly encourage direct communication with the Lord for each of us. I know that from personal experience.

Mama and Peter are genuine. They don't put on airs, and they don't try to give one impression while in fact hiding their true motive. When they remind us in WS to be frugal and that we're living off the missionaries' tithes, it's because they live that way themselves. Recently they took a few days away from the Home, and they had Rose and I pack some foods for them, to help cut down on the time they would have to spend on meal prep. We cooked and prepared and then froze some meal-size portions of refried beans, tomato sauce (as a base for spaghetti or whatever), lentils, spinach, etc. When they came home, I was asking them how their food lasted. They said that it lasted perfectly—except that on the last night they were left with two bags of tomato sauce (with Italian seasoning), one bag of refried beans, and one of spinach. So they heated it all up together and made a "goulash." Well, from my point of view, that sounded quite unappetizing, but they said that it was actually quite good. The point is, they don't like to waste.

Since they're sometimes on a different schedule than the rest of the Home, Rose saves their portion of dinner for them to eat when they have their dinner time. When it's time for them to eat, they'll ask what's available, and many times they've chosen to eat leftovers that weren't their favorite, just because they knew they wouldn't keep another day and they didn't want them to be wasted. It's a sample that will always stick with me—that they keep the missionary vision. They could have pretty much anything they want—they sure work hard enough to deserve it, and they are the king and queen—but they live very simply. My understanding is that it's for two reasons: 1, to live frugally so as to save as much of the Lord's money as possible; 2, so that they stay on the same level as our missionaries who are out each day living by faith, abounding and abasing.

Another tiny example of their frugality is in the little box of tissues and pieces of paper towel that Mama keeps by her bed and beside her chair. When she uses one, but it's not quite used, she keeps it to use again. When I was first starting to help clean their room, I used to want to throw them away. But she explained, "Oh no, I'll keep those and use them some more. They're not really used up yet."

Another example of Mama and Peter's sincere love for the Family and the sheep is manifested in their faithfulness to witness. It doesn't matter how busy they are, or how tired after a long day of work and just wanting to relax and take an evening walk—they always witness. Whenever they go anywhere, a major highlight for them is always the people the Lord brings across their path to witness to.

One time Mama and Peter were taking public transport, and there was someone Mama wanted to witness to but she didn't have a tract. Her eyes were very sore, but she was so concerned for this dear man sitting beside them that she got a piece of paper and wrote out a simple salvation prayer and message, and went and gave it to him. She didn't know whether he'd be able to read it in English or not, but she figured he would probably be interested enough to ask someone to read it for him, and that he would have an opportunity to get saved. Her eyes were very, very sore after doing that, but she said it was more than worth it, because she was able to give that person a witness and opportunity to know Jesus.

Another example of their love is in the way that they're never too busy for anyone. Of course, we on the staff try to be respectful of their work time and their rest times and all. We try not to disturb them unnecessarily. But there have been times when some of us younger members (I'm sure the first generation members have stories like this as well) have been really going through it about something, and would beep them or knock on their door for prayer, and they'll stop everything, lay down on the bed with us, hold us and pray with us and cry with us, or try to cheer us up, as the case may be. And they would do that for anyone who needs it.

They were recently on a business trip and they gave a brief witness to a young man who worked at the place they were staying. That young man came by their room the night before they were leaving and wanted to talk—he was hungry and receptive and poured out his heart. Even though they were very tired and they were leaving early the next morning, Peter listened and witnessed to him for four hours, till midnight. That's the kind of love they have. There is no doubt in my mind that we couldn't have more loving and personally concerned shepherds.

One other very small point about Mama and Peter is that they are so appreciative. They're the king and queen, after all, and so could come to sort of expect that people would take care of them, cook for them, type their tapes, or whatever. But they never take

those things for granted. Sometimes it's almost embarrassing, because you'll do something that is so small by comparison, and they express such thankfulness and tell you how much they appreciate you and couldn't do without you, etc. It's just so sweet.

They start out their tapes that need to be typed by thanking the typist and whoever will do the work of what is being dictated, and sometimes will say a prayer for you. When they know something isn't your favorite job to do, they take that into consideration and give you extra appreciation and credit. They always try to thank whoever cooked, or pass on their appreciation in some way. They start most Home meetings by thanking everyone for all that they've been doing, and specifically thanking the staff people for the things they've done recently.

They're very appreciative of the staff people, especially those who don't also have pubs ministries—as it would be natural for the hard-working staff to feel that their jobs are not as important. But they always emphasize that it's just the opposite—that without the staff people, we wouldn't be able to function. Seeing their sample of genuine appreciation, to me shows that they're humble and they don't take people for granted; they have sincere love and concern for their helpers.—And it's constant. It doesn't wear off after a while, and they're not sweeter when they need you to do something for them. They're just generally thankful and appreciative of even the littlest things.

I'm sorry about the negative allegations being spread around about Mama and Peter by someone who used to live with them long ago. These stories could cause serious doubt in someone's mind who has never lived with them or met them personally. But since I've lived with them for these years, I haven't found anything similar to what they're being described as in these twisted accusations. I wish everyone could have the chance to meet them and live with them. To me, they are an example of what the Lord wants all of us, His representatives, to be. Because they give so cheerfully and humbly, I think we don't often realize how very much they give, and how little they take. I just pray I can be more like that.

51 Months!

By Jenna, 25, Mama's Home

I've been living at Mama and Peter's Home for over four years. I've found my WS niche in editing and working on a variety of pubs such as the *Grapevine*, *linkUP*, *Heaven's Library*, etc., and an assortment of secretarial work.

Reading the recent accusations and twisted accounts of Mama and Peter's personalities, their modus operandi, sinister motives and cruel treatment of people is a mind bender, I have to admit. But it's even more so for me, since I *live* with Mama and Peter. I feel that in the past four years, I should have seen at least *some* of that heartless and manipulative stuff that a few individuals are ranting about.

I'll simply tell you what I've seen and experienced over the last 51 months, and how my perspective of Mama and Peter has changed.

Avoiding Mama

I've got to admit that when I first arrived, I was nervous about meeting Mama. I had met Peter at Summit '96 and I knew he was down to earth—kingly, but normal. The house that Mama and Peter were living in at the time had an intercom system in each room, and Mama's telltale beep was the single one. Everyone else beeped twice; that way you had a little warning when it was Mama calling you (one of our staff tricks!).

I'd been in the Home for about two days, and I was in my room when I heard my first lone beep. It's embarrassing to say that I quickly left the room so that I wouldn't have to answer it! Believe it or not, my purposeful bolting took place two more times during the following 24 hours! Eeek. Finally Amy bumped into me in the hallway and said, "You know, Mama's been trying to beep you to say hello for two days now, but she never seems to be able to catch you. So she asked me to find you and bring you to her room." Oh dear, out of the frying pan and into the fire.

Into Mama's room I went, and she was lying on the bed. She was quite weak at this time, and kept the room very dark because of her eyes. She sat up and held out her arms to me, motioning for me to come lie down next to her. I did—knees shaking—and put my head on her shoulder. Her first words to me were, "Now, how's my girl doing?" I burst into tears for two reasons—one, I wasn't doing very good, and two, because she was so down-home and loving. I felt at ease. There was nothing ultra spiritual or complicated about her. She wiped away my tears, talked with me and prayed for me. She took me in just like the mother that I had left behind, and her love toward me has always been unconditional.

The thoughtful "control freak"

During the first year or two, I didn't have much personal contact with Mama or Peter, as I didn't work closely with them on many projects. The extent of my pubs interaction with them was the *Grapevine*, an occasional tape from Mama or a conversation on the intercom every now and then, but I didn't know her or Peter, as individuals, very well. Still, they both made me feel at home and loved. I confided in them as much as I felt comfortable, and as time went on, I became more and more honest with them, because they handled my personal life with great care.

Mama loves to know what's going on in people's lives. She's generally curious about everything; she's even interested in our SGA "girl things," latest trips or kicks. I can't think of many things she *wouldn't* be interested in hearing about, especially if it has to do with you, your work, or something you're going through. But that's a far cry from being a "control freak," as some have called her. Yes, she'll ask how things are going, or will call you on the intercom to ask what you're working on, checking on

whether you can take on another project, etc. She keeps her finger in many pies because she is responsible for the overall Family and the pubs that go out. That's her job. And she wants and needs to know what's happening in our personal lives so that she can help to shepherd and encourage us.

I can't count how many times I've made a personal tape or written a note to Mama about a battle I was going through. I didn't expect her to *do* anything about it; I was just letting her know what I was going through and what the Lord was doing in my life. Often though, within the next few days, or sometimes even the same day, I would find a prophecy of encouragement printed out on nice paper outside my door, courtesy of Mama's thoughtfulness.

Someone has said that "control is in Mama's blood." From the countless hours that I've spent talking with her, I'll tell you what's in her blood: Love for the Lord like you have never seen, an interest to know everything that goes on in the Family and everyone's personal situations and difficulties, love and encouragement, a desire to hear from the Lord and receive His Words and truth, and a burning, burning conviction to get out tracts and witness.

My tract tale

Speaking of Mama's conviction when it comes to tract-giving, I had a very unique and unforgettable experience some time ago, which changed my perception of Mama, and which I remember vividly to this day.

We were in the middle of a move, and we had less than a week to close our house down. Over half of our team had already moved on, and we had organized a huge Sunday moving sale in our garage and driveway, in the hopes of selling our remaining stuff/junk/furniture, etc. Since I was leaving within the following day, I wasn't involved in the moving sale. I was in the midst of packing, finishing up my work, etc.

On Sunday morning, after the sale had been in swing for a few hours, I had to go to the folks' quarters to change a setting on Peter's computer. Peter wasn't there at the time, but he said I could go on ahead and do the work I needed to.

I headed up their stairs, and knowing that Peter wasn't there, I knocked softly and then entered. Mama was in the adjoining room, and hearing my knock, she poked her head out the door into the living room and Peter's office area. I've greeted Mama many times in this fashion, since I frequent their room rather regularly. However, this was no ordinary time.

Mama stuck her head through the door, looked at me and said, "Jenna, I am so upset!" I froze in my tracks and was speechless. Quickly she qualified herself, "I'm not upset at *you*, but I am so upset!" This was the first time I had ever seen Mama visibly upset. I'd talked to her on the intercom before, or even in person when she was a bit peeved or bothered by some bad situation, or upset at the Enemy, emphatic about something, enthused about a prophecy, etc., but I had never heard her raise her voice or seem physically riled up.

She went on. "I just got off the phone with Keif, and I gave him a piece of my mind, even though it wasn't his fault! I was asking someone how many people have come to our moving sale so far, and they said about 30 people. Then I asked if they had been giving out tracts—which I reminded them to do last night—and they haven't been. Nobody got the tracts together, so all these people have been coming here to our house and not getting any witness!

"What do we think is most important?—Going to all this trouble to put so much time and work into setting up this moving sale, just to sell hundreds of dollars worth of stuff, or giving these people who the Lord has brought to *our* very door the message through a tract? The money is not the goal! We could have just given it all away!

"The Lord brought each of these people here for a reason, and we've failed the Lord by not giving them the message. Sure, a tract may not be very much message or very meaty, but it's the most important message and gift they could ever get in their entire life! Who knows? Some of these people might never hear the message again in their lives! The Lord is *not* going to bless us for failing to have tracts on hand, and for being more concerned about the money or the setup, or whatever else! Somebody had better get those tracts together right now, and not miss giving them to a single person!"

Mama continued her speech for about three minutes along these lines, while I was shaking in my boots! I just nodded with watery eyes. The spirit of Dad had come upon her, and I remember thinking, "This must be just like when Dad gave his 'You are Your Own Worst Enemy' talk!" I mean, it was heavy. Mama was righteously angry that we were failing the Lord by not being a witness to these people. Instead, we put so much time and prep into the moving sale just to make money and clear out our junk, but our priorities were wrong.

Then just as quickly as it had begun, Mama said, "Well, Honey, I know you had nothing to do with it, and I'm sorry you had to be here, but I had to tell *someone* about it. Now you'd better get back to your work on Peter's computer. I love you, Honey!" She smiled and popped back into her room. And I sat down pensively and went about my business.

I didn't forget that. It was such a sobering experience in the spirit, and the more I thought about it, the more glad I was to have had that chance encounter with Mama. Sure, it was a bit scary because I was just going to plop myself down at a computer; I wasn't prepared for a righteous blast, so it came as a total surprise. A thousand and one thoughts ran through my head of the latest evil deeds I had done when she said her first words, "Jenna! I am so upset!" Ha!

It was so convicting for me to see how concerned Mama was about these people getting the witness via tracts. Of course, Mama has always been a great promoter of tracts, but she had also been behind our moving sale, and encouraged us all to pitch in and get the house cleared out. But when it came down to the bottom line, Mama had her priorities straight; it wasn't the money that mattered, it was the sheep.

It was comforting to me to see Mama get so riled up about our failure to witness in the little way we could. I realized that since I've lived with Mama for four years now, I've become familiar with her in some ways, and am used to most of our conversation centering around prophecy, work-related matters, new pubs projects, etc. Since our job in WS is not directly witnessing, we don't focus on that daily, other than through producing GP tools and helping the Family do their job. I realized that I had gotten the

subconscious impression that Mama was more concerned about prophecy and things of a spiritual nature than the Family's fundamental job of witnessing and fulfilling the Great Commission.

All throughout Dad's Letters, you got the grassroots perspective of him getting involved in every practical detail of Family living. He would blast Homes for not feeding the sheep, for being unfaithful with their follow-up ministry, etc. You knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Dad cared about the little people and the little sheep, and witnessing was high on his list.

This encounter with Mama showed me how Mama feels just the same as Dad did. Yes, most of the time she focuses on her primary job of feeding the Family, receiving spiritual direction from the Lord, etc., but she is certainly not lacking that grassroots love for the sheep. If anything, she's one of the Family's most on-fire members when it comes to witnessing at every opportunity, passing out tracts, and never being too busy to give a witness, even though she's one of the world's busiest people! She recently got out her first *Activated* subscription!

So, out of a three-minute hot talk from Mama, I got a slew of lessons, a renewed appreciation of Mama, and a conviction that will remain with me for years to come of the need to put the sheep first.

Needless to say, every person who came to our moving sale after that got a tract and a solid witness. And we came out of the day with the Lord's blessing and a fruitful day as well.

My unloyal, off-board state

When I hear allegations of Mama and Peter "treating people badly, especially those who aren't totally loyal or on board," two things come to mind. One, those people don't live with Mama and Peter (and haven't for years and years), so how can they be experts on what Mama and Peter are really like? I live with Mama and Peter, and these debasing accounts just don't fit the Mama and Peter I'm living with. Second, as a barely-turned-21-year-old who came from the field straight to Mama's house, I believe I gave poor Mama and Peter, not to mention Gabe and Amy, a decent run for their money when it came to my questions, problems, doubts about the Family, the Word, prophecy, and yes, even Mama and Peter themselves. I didn't hold back in sharing what I thought. I didn't hide my attitudes or perceptions, even though today I can tell you that many were wrong and inaccurate.

Gabe and Amy, as well as Mama and Peter, were patient, loving, and did not get on my case for not being totally loyal or fully on board. They worked with me at a reasonable pace. They were not harsh or cruel. There was no bullying or coercion. And believe me, I was neither loyal or fully on board for quite some time—though I was trying, I had a long ways to go. I pray that I am right in there now 100%, but some of my "lacking loyalties" and procrastination in living the new weapons, being fully on board, etc., hung on for three years. So from my own experience, I could never agree with someone who says that Mama and Peter are intent on "ditching people" or "throwing off the bandwagon" those who aren't right there 100%, hanging on their every word, utterly and totally devoted to them, saying "hail Maria" or worshipping their guruness. That's just not them. And do you think a bunch of young people would stick around if they were like that?

People have said that Mama and Peter or WS kick people out who aren't there wholeheartedly, who disagree with how they handle things, or who show any measure of dissenting opinion. That's not true. I know because I've been and done all those things over the last four years, and I'm still here. Granted, I love the Lord, the Family, and I'm trying to do my best. Still, my major battle during the past four years has been being in WS itself! I've seriously struggled with living behind the scenes. It's not because WS is a bad place or because I don't like the people here that I've struggled; it's because it's not my personal nature to be *selah*. I'm an action person. I love being out and about, witnessing, meeting people and having lots of fellowship. It's taken me about three years to accept that being behind the scenes is my "daily sacrifice" in order to do what the Lord wants me to. I love my work, but this ongoing nagging "I can't live behind the scenes" crisis certainly wasn't going along with the "I-totally-and-blindly-love-WS" picture that unhappy former WS members are trying to paint as being the enforced standard.

If Mama and Peter really were the heartless and cruel generals that some make them out to be, I know they would have thrown me off the wagon long ago (after shooting me, naturally). How come they didn't, when I was, in short, a time-consuming young problem!? I went through months of intense battles; actually, the first three months of my stay here were real hell. I was fighting the Devil, the Lord, and anyone else in the vicinity. But as long as I was making progress, however small, they hung in there with me. They loved me, prayed for me, and were every inch the anointed and caring shepherds that the Lord has confirmed they are.

A few months after I had gotten here, Mama was talking to me on the intercom. I was miserable about something and my attitude was, "I'm just going to tell Mama how I feel about everything, and it'll probably wig her out completely." So Mama asked me about how I was doing and I told her something lousy. I was then quiet and thought to myself, "Oops, poor Mama! Since she hasn't lived around many young people, she probably doesn't realize that we can be rather dramatic exaggerators at times." I felt a little bad, because I figured she'd get pretty worried or concerned about my dismal state. But it didn't faze her. She said, "You know, I've learned some things about you young people. It's important to be able to interpret what you *really* mean when you say things like that. For example, when you tell me that you're bummed out about something, I know you'll be okay and with time it will pass. If you say that you're just losing it and you're weeping, then I spend some time praying for you. And when you say you're about to backslide or "jump off the roof," then I beep Gabe or Amy and tell them to go talk to you, pray with you, and make sure you're okay!"

I was speechless. Mama had pegged me. She had me figured out, and wasn't in the least bit worried about my inflammatory comments, because the Lord had shown her the interpretation of them. Since then, I don't worry about Mama misunderstanding me. On the rare occasion that she has, she's been willing to listen to my retake on things, and accepts it.

Confessions don't kill

A lot has been said about how much Mama values honesty, and Peter does also. I remember one time just a few weeks after

coming, I was walking by someone's room and happened to glance at a paper on their desk. It was a prayer request for someone, and I thought it was about me. I wasn't trying to snoop around, but my eyes just fell on this piece of paper, and I felt horrible. This is one of those famed and classic WS blow-its that I read about in the pubs before coming, and I couldn't believe I had done it! To add to that, I felt hurt that my shepherds hadn't told me about it, because if there was something that I had done wrong, I wanted to know about it. A few days later, I got up the courage to write my shepherds a little note about it. They explained that it wasn't about me, it was about someone else. That took care of the problem, and I had just jumped to conclusions.—Whew!

But just a week later, us young people were having a work meeting with Peter, Gabe and Amy, and as I walked in the room, my eyes swept over Gabe's computer screen, and of all things, the one line I saw read: "personal prophecy about Jenna"—and it was from my roommate! I felt sick. But I couldn't bring myself to tell Gabe, since the same thing had just happened less than a week ago! I figured this would be the confirmation to them that I've been going around peeking at people's work, and trying to find out things that I wasn't supposed to know. I lasted about 5-6 days, and then wrote Gabe and Amy a little note about it, which was sweetly answered. They said I was "passing the test of honesty."

That evening just as I was about to go to dinner, Mama beeped. She said, "I know once I tell you this you're going to think that everything you write goes *everywhere*, but it really doesn't.—Only this time it did, ha!" Mama then explained that she had just listened to my little confession note about looking at Gabe's computer screen, and she said, "You know, I'm *so happy* that you're so honest. That's just wonderful! That's the most important thing. It doesn't really matter to me *what* you write, as long as you're *honest!*"

I thought, "Boy, that's strange." But it's true. Mama didn't mean that it doesn't matter at all *what* you write, but that you don't have to weigh your words, or try to predict how they're going to be taken or understood.

Our "fun" king and queen

There are some self-appointed "Mama and Peter bashers" who are trying to convince people that Mama and Peter are evil, cruel, harsh, abusive—your general ogres swinging balls and chains scenario. That's the tabloid version. It makes headlines, but it's about as true as the "child-sucking-vacuum-cleaner" discovery or "Elvis-mates-with-octopus, has-child-with-eight-arms" stories that grown and presumably intelligent people make a living off of dramatizing for other people.

Reality would show that Mama and Peter are fun-loving, terrific people. I love being around them. They are intelligent, clever, and funny. They recently took all us young people out for a two-day outing, and it was great. It was no small feat. They took their precious time to plan and prepare so that we could have fun. They drove us around, showed us the sights, made sure we had what we needed, and were our chauffeurs.

None of us young people feel intimidated around them, like we can't be ourselves or have fun, really do "young people" things, because they understand us and know what we like. Yes, they uphold a high standard and don't let us throw all caution to the wind. But from my experience, if you are hearing from the Lord, confirming what you do with Him, and being prayerful, Mama and Peter are not legalistic, and they cut us young people slack when we needed it. They have a good balance, and that's more than I can say for a lot of people.

A few months ago, Mama had given me a project to work on, and it was taking longer than I had expected. I ended up working through a movie night in order to get it done. I sent it to her late that evening. The following morning she beeped, thanked me for the project, and asked me to come outside to her little window. I went out there and chatted with Mama through her little window for a minute. Then she said, "I'm sorry you ended up working through your movie. Peter and I just wanted to give you a little token of our appreciation—your favorite chocolate bar."

Oh yes, what a queen and king, ha! No, actually, I was a little surprised: first that they knew what my favorite chocolate bar was (I'm a confirmed chocoholic!), and second, that *Mama* was giving it to me! I just hadn't pictured that sort of exchange before. As I walked to my room with my much loved snack, I realized that though chocolate-giving is certainly not the norm for Mama, it's that very Spirit-led balance that makes life fun.

Prophecy rules

Oh yes, Mama is a firm believer in prophecy. However, she doesn't use prophecy to control, force or coerce people into toeing the line, obeying what *she* wants them to do, or to bully you into submission, meekness or yieldedness. I know that because I've been a recipient of I-can't-count-how-many personal prophecies that she's given me, and I haven't been coerced into a state of submission or meekness through it. And, although I'm working on it, I'm still not always-100%-yielded!—Who is? Mama gives people prophecies because she believes that the Lord's Words, counsel and direction is the most precious thing she could give anyone, so she does!

I used to wonder in the back of my mind whether prophecies were "pre-planned" or their direction predetermined. From personal experience, I know they're not. Sometimes, of course, the Lord has shown Mama what to do, or the answer to a problem. So when someone asks the Lord about it, He confirms what Mama has been feeling. At other times, the Lord gives a new direction, answer or idea—something that is news to Mama and Peter—and they get right behind it. Mama has asked me to hear from the Lord, and on occasion, I know I've gotten something different or unexpected from what she thought the Lord might say. But she's thankful, happy, and believes the Lord. Mama and Peter are the best samples I've seen of following and obeying the Lord and what He says. Believe me, prophecies are not "rigged."

Some people have the idea that Mama uses prophecy to correct or rebuke people, letting the Lord do the "dirty work," so to speak. Since being here, I have received a few prophecies that I would label "heavy correction." Of course, most prophecies have spiritual guidance, instruction, lessons, nudges back to the straight and narrow, etc., but I'm talking about a wrong action or

attitude being pointed out via prophecy in no uncertain terms.

In one instance, I was getting critical of some people in the Home, and it was affecting my work and its quality. She sent me a few prophecies, in which the Lord clearly and lovingly explained the situation and where I was letting the Enemy in. As soon as I'd gotten the prophecies, she beeped me to tell me that she was praying for me. A few hours later, she beeped again to check on me, making sure that I wasn't discouraged, encouraging me to ask the Lord for more details if I had questions, etc.

The correction was just what I needed. Mama had every right—and was responsible—to correct me in order to ensure that my work was hitting the mark. Even though I was certainly at fault, she was very loving, gave me the benefit of the doubt, and made it easy for me to get back up again. And I've seen her consistently treat others in the same way.

Prophecy is not used to beat people down, indoctrinate or manipulate. It's a beautiful gift from the Lord, which Mama loves to share with others. I believe your perspective has a great deal to do with how you look at prophecy. If you're freaked about letting go of the reins of your life, and aren't willing to let the Lord play your little chess piece on His board, then yes, every prophecy that gives direction or nudges you in this direction or that is going to be a threat to your own control. But if you value the Lord's involvement in your life, then you can thank Mama for having had the faith to delve into prophecy, and for encouraging every single Family member to get the gift themselves.

If Mama really wanted to retain control over everyone in the Family, why in the world would she have pressed for everyone to hear from the Lord themselves? That doesn't make sense. In doing that, she placed responsibility, faith, trust, and ultimate control over each individual's life right where it belongs—smack between them and the Lord.

Switching roles

During the last two years, my ministry has changed. I now help to coordinate the pubs by helping them flow through the pipelines. If there's a glitch or need in a pubs department, I help to get it sorted out or the need filled. Along with others, I also help Peter with some of his secretarial work—correspondence, transcriptions, and anything else—girl Friday style. I also do a bit of secretarial work for Mama, and I continue to edit the *Grapevine*.

Since taking on these new responsibilities, I have worked much more closely with Mama and Peter. Over the last two years, I've spent a good deal of time with them. I've gotten to know them personally, not just as shepherds, but as close friends who I love, trust and confide in. I have regular meetings with both Mama and Peter about the pubs and new projects, and as Peter's secretary, I meet regularly with him.

As such, I've been privileged to see a side of Mama and Peter that I hadn't seen in the previous two years of living with them. I've seen the behind-the-scenes thought, prayer, counsel and work that goes into a GN. I've been part of some discussions and meetings that have led to a new pub, a change or shift in policy, or a new vision being born. I've heard Mama and Peter counsel together and discuss problems, solutions, the Family's burdens, and I've seen both their joy and sorrow in the heavy loads they carry.

When I was on the field, all I saw of Mama and Peter was the GNs and other pubs—printed, finalized and in my hands. I didn't realize all the love, prayer, tears, toil and sweat that made up those Letters, or that went into a personal message of encouragement from Mama to someone who is struggling. I didn't know what Mama and Peter thought about the problems of the Family, or how their conversations went when just the two of them were together. Now I've had a glimpse into that, and my assessment is that I'm more confident than ever in Mama and Peter's shepherding of the Family. If you could see their love for you, if you could see how their priority is the Family and making things as easy as possible for you, and how every decision they make manifests this foremost desire of theirs, coupled with getting the Lord's will and direction for the Family, you would never doubt.

I'm not trying to set them on a pedestal or say that they are holy prophets. Sure, they make mistakes and are human. They have personal preferences and ways they like to do things, just like you and me. They have their own unique personality traits and oddities, just like you ... and maybe me, ha. But when it comes to something that affects the Family, the Word, or someone's life and service for the Lord, they go to the nth degree to lay aside their own thoughts and feelings, hear from the Lord repeatedly and get counsel from others. They are desperate to hit the mark, and they rely on the Lord to do so.

They are shepherds who lay down their lives for you. When Peter had his recent heart attack, he was very, very weak. He couldn't even open a folding chair or step up one step without having more heart pains. Reading about the problems of the Family would also hurt his heart. But still, he chaired the daily *Activated* meetings that were being held at our Home at the time, with a few visiting CROs in attendance. He rested when he could, but his priority remained the Family. Mama is the same. She'll have a cold, a headache, be sick or weak, but still, she plows through her tapes, approves the pubs for you, sends off messages of counsel and encouragement. She and Peter don't stop serving you.

Even when they're resting or taking needed time off, what do they talk about? I've rarely seen them *not* talking about the Family. They have a lot on their minds, and they're always a few years ahead—planning for how *Activated* is going to work in the future, the needs of our children and their education, our FGAs getting older and their need for more physical care and support. They're constantly immersed in the big picture of the Family and its needs, even though they don't broadcast all that they're doing, thinking and praying about. But they are always on the job!

Inside Peter's mind

Peter is, of course, different than Mama. He's in tune with the Lord and anointed to be king—that's for sure. He's also practical, has a mind for business and details, and thinks a lot about the future, our long-term vision as a Family, and its repercussions and results.

Since working more closely with Peter, I've come to admire him a lot more. I didn't realize before how much he shouldered,

and how much he thinks, prays, and seeks the Lord about the Family, its direction and vision. Some of the things that have stood out to me through working closely with Peter, and seeing him both in-cathedra/ex-cathedra, so to speak, are the following:

He is loving, thoughtful and encouraging. He always has a good word to say to you—the kind of comments that make you feel like standing up a little straighter, smiling a bit more, and doing your work with more gusto because you know it is appreciated.

He is careful, prayerful, and thorough. He doesn't jump to conclusions. He takes time to make decisions, because he wants to make the right one. He doesn't sacrifice quality or accuracy for speed or staying on top of things, yet doing a haphazard job.

Me ... well, I'm your typical SGA "now" sort of person, fast-moving. I like to do things *now*. I don't like projects sitting around on my desk. When things come in to Peter's mail or desk, my happy job is to try to help however I can to get them taken care of, if it's something I can help with. I remind Peter of various points that need answering, if he and Mama need to talk and pray together about a matter, etc. My general day-to-day small mentality is: "It would be great if this could get taken care of, or so-and-so could be answered." One morning, not too long ago, my mentality was enlarged, courtesy of Peter.

I was in Peter's office, and he was giving me some projects. I rattled off some idea about how to provide a certain service to the Family, with each Family Home paying five dollars for it. While the idea may have been good, and would have worked for some areas, Peter was thinking big picture. He asked me, "What about the single moms? What about the children? What about the guys in Russia that don't have five bucks to pay for what we say everybody can pay for?!" Hmm, readjustment time. Forget that idea, or seriously rework it. I'm 25 and still working on taking off my blinders, but thank God Peter and Mama have the global Family vision.

Odd way to cover up

An accusation that rather inflames me about Mama and Peter is one that accuses them of being "shepherds unwilling to take responsibility for their actions" and "who hoodwink the sheep." That someone would say that Mama and Peter "deliberately mislead the Family, make terrible mistakes and cover up their sins" shows clearly that the accuser does not know Mama and Peter. They've obviously got an agenda and are intent on throwing misplaced blame and fault.

Mama and Peter *could* make terrible mistakes and then cover them up, hoodwinking the sheep and the Family in the process. But they don't, and if they did, we who live closest to them would know about it. To the contrary, they admit their mistakes and are quite (you *would* be surprised) open when it comes to showing fault, mistake, or human weakness.

I've been on the phone with Mama more than once when she's lamented to me about some mistake she just made, how she went too fast or wasn't humble enough, etc. She's humble enough to volunteer her mistakes and lessons, and share them with you. Peter is the same; not too proud to admit that he blew it by not taking care of something sooner, or that perhaps he made someone feel bad by not stopping to talk with them when he was on his way somewhere, etc.

Case in point: A few months ago I was having a pub meeting with Mama and Peter. Mama was explaining an idea she had gotten from the Lord for a new GP children's book series. When she mentioned that she had already beeped someone and asked them to pray about receiving the stories, I cringed. It didn't sound like Mama had talked with Francis, who manages the GP department, and coordinates all its projects. With so many projects already in the works, I felt this posed a potential problem.

I gingerly asked Mama if she'd run her idea by Francis, and she realized that she hadn't. As it turned out, over a lunch meeting with other members of the GP team, this project had been discussed, and with everyone excited about it and the Lord's confirmation received, Mama hadn't realized that Francis hadn't been present.

Right away she said, "Oh dear, I really blew it! I'd better call him on the intercom right now and apologize, and let him know why I overlooked telling him. That's very bad of me."

Well, hey, it's not *that* bad. I mean, she is Mama and does have the final say on all the pubs, including GP stuff, so what's the big deal? Well, the big deal is that Mama has given others authority and jurisdiction over certain departments, and it's *real* authority. She likes to go through the proper channels, and doesn't want to make people feel left out or overlooked. She values counseling with people. Considering her position, I thought her reaction was very admirable, especially since I—a 25-year-old little "sheep"—had pointed this possible error out to her.

Both Mama and Peter take the blame for things that they've done or said that cause confusion or misunderstanding. They've apologized to me, and others also. I've seen this consistently. Why would they confess their faults, admit their mistakes, apologize and show themselves weak before us if they really were trying to hide so much abuse and deceit? They wouldn't.

Grow a brain yourself!

I think all young people in the Family should be outraged by James Penn's derogatory comments directed toward us. He makes himself sound like such a sympathetic guy who's concerned about us, but with his next breath cuts us and our choices and much-loved beliefs, loved ones and Family down. That's no friend.

His snide remarks about us "children" possibly deciding to "grow a brain" if we were let out of the "tenacious control" inflicted on us by the "wacky and abusive leaders of our lives" are entirely offensive. I don't know him personally, but if he cared to talk to me or any of my other friends—and we'd gladly give him a piece of our minds—he would see that our brains are just fine. We are not stunted, manipulated or controlled. We have thoughts of our own, and plenty of opposition and self-determination in us. He may not want to discover that for himself, however. Seems to me he was looking for something startling and cool-sounding to add to his allegation list. Maybe startling (though untrue) but certainly not cool. Sorry, James.

And those of us who understand what the Family is *really* about don't feel the Family has become a "weird place." I think the weirdest thing involving the Family is the fact that some people can't seem to make a simple choice to leave the group they proclaim to hate so much. What's wrong with *them*? If it takes a grown man years and years to make the simple, "I'm going to

leave” statement, he should work on growing *his* brain, and not accuse happy, content and intelligent SGAs of lacking in any area. Don’t foist your embarrassment and shame on us. The second I’m done with the Family, I’m outta here. It’s not going to take me years of misery to figure out I want a different life. I just don’t get it. And I have plenty of SGA friends who have left the Family plenty quickly; and they didn’t miserate (courtesy of Alana, in the terrific “new wine laced novel,” *Blood and Freedom*) the rest of us with their pitiful diatribes once they had done so.

One of the more valid accusations, in my opinion, is that of young people and others leaving the Family without much support, or others still in the Family feeling that the “judgments of God” may fall on them. That has truth to it. When I was growing up, that was generally the impression I had. But times have changed over the last year or two. Family policy on this issue has taken a turn, and love, support, physical help and all those other good and needed things are very much encouraged and promoted, which renders that as an allegation of the past now.

I’m personally glad for that change of attitude. Yet I also have enough sense to realize that while our past stance was not the best, hurt people and made some feel ostracized and cut off—everyone makes mistakes. The important thing is being willing to change and rectify them, which the Family has now done. So you can get hung up on that and cry “old abuse!” or you can choose to appreciate the fact that yes, we are a fallible human movement, but that we’ve just improved our Family by a leap and a bound. That’s my take.

Wrapping things up

I pray my story has shown you what Mama and Peter are actually like. The lives they live day in and day out can’t be compared to the horrible things some accuse them of.

Don’t let a well-written letter or a clever speaker convince you of things he or she knows precious little about. We who live with Mama and Peter are the ones who really know what they’re like, how they live, what they do from day to day, how they view the Family, and what their motivations are. Most everything else is supposition, old and twisted stories (pretzel style), and largely hype.

Choose who you’ll believe.

*** OUR side: In Defense of our Faith, Family, and Lifestyle, FSM 354**

My Years in the King and Queen’s House

By Amy (of Gabe), Mama’s Home

“How is it that My Word brings such great joy and uplifting to some, and to others it brings heaviness? Is it not the same water? Is it not the same truth? But in one it is received and in the other it is rejected. It is a battle of the heart and it is a battle of the mind.” (Prophecies on Doubts, ML #3041)

I must say I had to laugh at some of the things James Penn wove into his letter. If it were not such a serious attack on my Family and my life, it would be absolutely absurd! But the sad thing is, he is dead serious in what he feels and what he has presented to so many in this vicious attack. Why am I so surprised? Even Jesus said the time will come that some will kill us, thinking they do God service, so a little slander and lying shouldn’t come as such a shock to me.

I guess the reason it’s such a shock is that I remember James as my friend, as someone I used to fellowship with, live with, work with, and yes, love with. For all his talk of the horrible practices in our Family, he was perfectly happy and content during the years that I knew and lived with him. I don’t know what happened and I can’t judge and won’t, but I can say, I was in the same place at the same time as he was and saw the same things he did. We lived with Dad and Mama and Peter for many years together and I have to say that I certainly don’t review history as he does. It’s pretty amazing to me that he can turn around and stab in the back people he loved and knew and people who loved him dearly and who never failed to give him all that they could, in love and care, and who were his very personal family at the time.

Maybe others have experienced this when friendships have ended. It’s amazing how love can turn to hate, and I will never understand how this happens, but it saddens me very deeply to have this attack on my Family spread to whoever will listen. I would encourage anyone who has heard his rendition of history to please keep your minds open. I’ve lived through 16 or 17 years of “history” with Dad, Mama and Peter, and I have a very different tale to tell. When I first came to live with the folks in 1982, I cooked Dad and Mama’s meals and had lots of sweet contact with them. How can people so cruel be so kind? They never ever failed to thank me, to hug me, and to ask me about myself personally for years and years. Did they do this because I was so “in there” and being so “good”?

Believe me, there were many, many times that I had my battles and that I was certainly no saint, but rather a weak human being, simply trying to do my best, but do I remember them ostracizing me for the times I was not “in there”? Of course not! What I recall was having dear friends in Peter, Mama, and yes, Dad. They cared for me as a member of their personal family, just as you would your flesh children. If your kids are bad or good, you love them unconditionally, and that is certainly the treatment I’ve received from the folks for all the years I’ve known them.

If your mom or dad had to correct you, it probably was never nice and you didn’t want it to happen, but they were your parents and loved you, and what they did, they did for your good. If Dad, Mama or Peter have had to correct anyone over the years, that is

always the way I've seen them operate. They've had love and mercy over and over and over again. I should know. After helping in the kitchen for years, I became part of the teamwork of their Home. Do you think I didn't hear from them the "inside scoop" of how they felt about people who had problems? Of course I did. And let me tell you, the mercy that Mama and Peter have had on people, consistently, is truly a reflection of the Lord's mercy. I have learned so much about love and mercy and the care of the sheep through their sample.

What happens when someone in our Home has problems? What happens when someone isn't "in there"? I can tell you, because I've experienced this for years now. It really offends me that James would say the folks don't care about people, when I would say that one of their greatest strengths is their love for the sheep. Why on earth would they sacrifice every day of their personal lives to serve others? Why would they spend countless hours in prayer and working on the Words for our Family if they were selfish and only wanted power and control? Why would they spend hours and hours of counseling and prayer in trying to help someone overcome their problems, often at the expense of time spent getting out the Word, if they weren't trying to help people? Don't you think they'd find some method that was a little more lucrative in order to have their "control and power"? What do they get in return for their laboring to help others? They are not lavish nor do they live in riches as so many accused Dad of doing. They have everything they need, but when you compare them to any head of any organization or company, they look like paupers.

If they wanted control of people, then they'd go about things completely differently, believe me. They certainly wouldn't live with a bunch of people communally, sharing what they have with everyone and being a dear father and mother to their personal little flock. Why would they waste time trying to get control of people? What does control profit them? What do they manipulate our Family to do? Preach the Gospel? Do CTPs? Love one another? Good grief! Anyone with a brain can read the Letters and see that the constant overwhelming theme is to reach the lost, follow up on the sheep, get out the Words, care for the sheep, love people. Are Peter and Mama writing the Family and telling them they have to give them more money, more control, more what? Of course not! Letter after Letter is encouraging people to use their own talents and gifts to do as much as they can for the Lord. They're encouraging us over and over and over again to use our connection with the Lord to hear from Him and get His instructions for our own lives.

Where is the truth to these accusations raised against Mama and Peter? I live with them, I know them intimately—certainly much better than almost anybody does. I just can't fathom such far-fetched stories and tales. And we're accused of getting weird tales from our other-worldly friends? This letter from James is a great stab at historical fiction, well written, interesting, full of great details, but SO fictionalized and colored by the tainted views of the author. Yes, history did happen, but the fiction woven into it is really outlandish.

To say Dad manipulated the Family for his own purposes is just the wildest thing I've heard! Dad, whose every breath given was for others, for reaching the lost, for spreading the Word. James must have seen the hours Dad spent in giving of himself for the good of others, not for his own gain, nor for his own purposes. Where was James when Dad was praying for the lost and getting out the Word to encourage us in the Family to do the same? Go back and read the Letters. Was Dad trying to get more control over people? Look at how many Letters Dad wrote to try to get people to connect with the Lord, to be indigenous, to reach the lost, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. Is his fruit an example of someone who was trying to keep control, or someone who was constantly trying to get us to look to the Lord and to do something for Jesus?

I really am disgusted at people who try to tear down others who are doing their best to do good. That's what I don't understand fully about some of those who leave the Family. If they go on in another branch of the Lord's service, or if they get a job and do whatever they want to do, I don't go maligning them or speaking badly about them. Why do they have to do so to us?

I see Mama and Peter every morning taking quiet time, I hear them praising the Lord, looking to Him in yieldedness to His will, seeking for His strength to do what they can to help me and the Family be all we can be for Jesus. Is this their crime? Is it a weirdness that they want to follow Jesus closely? Is it so strange that they would encourage all of us around them to do the same?

Now if I saw Mama and Peter doing some of the things James says they do, I too would be very upset. But the fact is, I am here, and I see Mama and Peter, I talk to them, I debate issues with them. Do they tell me to be quiet and give me a prophecy telling me that I should think like them? Of course not! I talk to them regularly about people's needs, trials and victories, but I don't hear them telling me to get prophecies to manipulate people's lives. If this is in reality what they are like, why wouldn't I be privy to this since I am so close to them? The only conclusion I can come to is: That's not how they operate!

What I do hear them give is counsel on how to help people get their answers from the Lord. I do hear them say to seek the Lord about the most loving and best way to help someone. I do not hear them spending their time talking about people who have left our ranks, and railing on and on about them. That's not what Mama and Peter are like, and if people don't know that by now, they must not be reading the Letters.

The Letters are a reflection of the love Mama and Peter have for our dearest Love, Jesus. I truly see daily that they deeply love the Lord, and that is their motivation in life, to do all they can to love, help, and heal. Why are people whose purpose is the opposite of this so intent on hindering us in what we want to do? I love the Family. I love Mama and Peter more than I could ever express, because they're my friends. We've been together for years and years—through good times, bad times, and all times. Their love for me has been unconditional, as was Dad's. I just don't get it. Why do people slander and libel them and us? Personally, I don't want to spend any more time thinking about it. We've got a job to do and we're going to keep on doing it, regardless of the fiery darts of persecution or smears from anyone. We've got too much to do to spend our precious time giving heed to these fables and tales.

One thing I'd like to mention also is the subject of pressure or manipulation to be "in there" doing the right thing. I'll tell you—I feel pressured, I feel used—and do you know Who pressures me, Who uses me?—The Lord! Of course I feel pressure to live a Godly life, to live my life for others, to give as He has given to me. Jesus and His Holy Spirit manipulate me and my life. He tells

me what to do. Imagine that?! That was my choice when I decided to live for Jesus. Did you get that? FOR Jesus? I don't want to live for myself, I want to live for Jesus.

Now can I blame Mama and Peter if they would happen to tell me something that is in God's Word and that is the truth, if it pressures me? Well, that would be the easy way out, to blame them for trying to make me do something I didn't want to do. But the fact is, it's the Lord that wants me to do something, not Peter, not Mama, not my mate, not my friends. The pressure I feel at times is His conviction in my heart to be the best I can for Him. Just because my friend gives me their opinion and it's the same as what the Lord shows me, should I blame them for trying to run my life, to control it, to manipulate me?

Sometimes I don't want to do what the Lord tells me to do, and I'm sorry about that, I'm not perfect. But I've never been judged by Mama, nor by Peter, nor by Dad for getting off track, and I've certainly not been manipulated, coerced, or forced by them to do anything. If you know me at all, you know how hard it is to force me to do something I don't want to do or that I don't personally feel is what the Lord wants me to do. I'm a very stubborn person and I even put up a fight with the Lord sometimes. But this has not changed the folks' unconditional love for me, nor their respect for me, nor their trust in me. Yes, they've shot straight with me and told me what they felt, but they've done so as my friends, as those who love me and care about my soul, not as hirelings!

There have been times I've disagreed with them and even argued with them and vented my frustration about things, but they have never retaliated. They are some of the most open-minded people I know, who listen to not only me, but to everyone's opinion that wants to share it with them. Why would they want to hear from you and give you an address to write them if they didn't care about what you thought? They don't only take counsel from those who agree with them. I certainly don't always agree, and when I bring up the other side of a matter, I don't get shot down. They may be human and have their weaknesses, but their strengths far, far outweigh those times when they may not be perfect. But I have to honestly say, those times are few and far between.

Look around you. Is the Family really a place where people have to do what they're told even if they don't want to? I think we should give our brethren more credit than that. They have wonderful works for the Lord, and families and Homes that are really doing something for Jesus. Do you really think that is the fruit of people having to do what they're told even if they don't agree? I think there's a lot more leeway in our Family to do what you have the faith for than in most businesses or jobs in the System. If you don't get with the program at your job in the System, for the most part, you just lose your job. In the Family we have all sorts of individuality in serving the Lord. People are free to follow Him as their faith runs.

Who is forcing anyone to do what Mama and Peter want them to do? Lots of people have stepped out of the Family and are perfectly happy. Lots of people are in the Family and are perfectly happy. So what is the problem here? There are a lot of wonderful young people who are challenged and really doing something for the Lord. There are others who have left, and we certainly are learning how to make things easier for them as well. Why would Mama and Peter make up some story telling our Family to show unconditional love to them if they didn't mean it? Really. What good would it do them and why would they spend time on something like this unless they meant it and really loved folks?

Do you think it's easy to be behind the scenes day after day publishing Letters? Do you think the hours and hours Mama spends listening to her tapes and hearing from the Family is an easy job? Do people even realize how little recreation Mama has, simply because she loves her work, she loves to hear what's happening in the Family, she loves to ask the Lord for help for them, she loves to seek the Lord and find solutions for them? How much time do you think she spends on herself? Or Peter, for that matter?

Why would he keep up his work if he didn't feel it made a difference in this world for Jesus? Don't you think he'd much rather be on some sunny isle drinking piña colodas, rather than working so hard to "manipulate and control" the Family so that he can have what?—His basic needs? Anyone who has a brain can see and tell that the folks put their time into truly helping the Family out of love for them, love for the lost, and love for our dearest and most precious Love, Jesus. This is truth.

Just today, I chanced upon a Letter during my personal Word time, and I think this challenge from Jesus is a challenging end to my rambling thoughts:

More Thoughts from the Lord on Doubts!

(Prophecy:) Be not buffeted about by the Enemy. It is the Enemy's tempestuous winds and foul breeze of doubts and stench of lies trying to cloud your mind, trying to besmirch the purity of My Word. As My Word says, I am not the Author of confusion, so know these troubles come from Satan. Therefore, raise up a standard, block out his lies with the windshield of My Holy Spirit. You can of yourself do nothing, but run to Me, your strong Tower, to shield you and keep you safe. Rest in Me, and I will overcome the Wicked One and quell his blustery lies that buffet you and trouble you. I will calm you and stay you through this time of stormy trial. *(End of prophecy.)*

I Should Know

By Keana (Techi), 21, Mama's Home

I've lived in WS all of my life, and almost all of that time with Mom and Peter. So I know what it's like around here, and what it used to be like. Of course it's changed a lot, just as the Family's changed a lot from what it used to be. And thank God it has! There were times for everything, and mistakes were made, I'm sure, but I do know that Mom and Peter are in touch with the Lord. They're desperate to know the answers and do the right thing, and as a result, the Family has progressed and grown and is getting better and better all the time.

What I'm trying to say is, James hasn't lived with Mom and Peter for a long time, so I don't think he has any right to bill

himself as some sort of expert on what they're like and what WS is like now. WS as a whole used to have a lot more little rules and regulations that we had to adhere to. I moved from Mom's Home into the unit where James was living when I was 16. He says she's a control freak, but in that unit that I moved to, he was in charge of security, and he was one of the most hard-line, heavy-duty rule fanatics I can think of! He would come up with all manner of extreme, unnecessary rules, and then become paranoid if people didn't follow them exactly. Talk about a control freak! But things are different now. It's like the day of choices; people are free to choose of their own accord if they want to be here, and as long as we're trying to make progress and to go forward with the Lord and in the direction He's leading, there's a lot of patience for people to progress at their own rate, to get in touch with the Lord themselves and let Him shepherd us.

That's what I think is funny about saying that she controls people through prophecy. Because most of the emphasis is put on personal use of prophecy and hearing from the Lord—to go to the Lord ourselves and get His direction personally. We have to work it out with the Lord and our faith. If she was so into trying to make the Family do what she wants through printing prophecies in the GNs, I'm sure she wouldn't be encouraging us all to get our own.

I haven't been what you would call a spiritual role model. I question things. I have my doubts. I'm not the first to jump into new things with both feet. It usually takes me a while to come around. At times I push the edge of the envelope, trying to get away with whatever I feel like. But I've never felt unloved or like they would give up on me. They know that I'm in the Family because I believe the Lord wants me here and I want to do the right thing.

Mom and Peter are the only ones I can think of that I'd want to be running our Family. I've been around them enough to know how much they love each one of us, and how our problems become their problems; they're happy when we're happy; they're sad when we're sad. Their whole lives are lived in service to the Lord and all of us.

*** OUR side: In Defense of our Faith, Family, and Lifestyle, FSM 355**

If That Isn't Love?

From Bethy, 27, WS

The accusation that Mama and Peter treat badly those who are not totally “on board” or “loyal” upsets me, because I have personally witnessed the exact opposite. Not just on one occasion, but repeatedly over the years. A few instances immediately come to mind.

One was during the first two years of the Zine. As a Zine team, we had a ways to go in being fully united with each other, as well as on board with the way the Family was going. Although we were living in a different unit than the Folks at the time, we communicated with Mama frequently due to the nature of our work.

Mama would approve the work we did, and there were occasions when she would make a change that some did not agree with or had a question about. Sometimes the letters written back to Mama explaining the reasons someone did not agree with her were less than positive and could easily be termed as disrespectful, doubtful or accusing. This type of thing happened on many different occasions, and it never ceased to amaze me how loving and sweetly-presented Mama's replies were. She always encouraged us to ask her if we had any questions or didn't understand why she was making the change she did. On some occasions Mama conceded on our point, and other times she felt led otherwise and stood by her point.

But she was always ready to hear us out, and if she didn't agree with us, she would explain it thoroughly and very lovingly.

I found out later just how hard all this was for Mama. It came to a point where she felt obligated to defend every change to us, and spent a lot of her time doing so. However, despite continued questions and disagreement with the direction she chose to go, she was always encouraging and loving and kind in her presentation, and took her time to explain things to us even when faced with personal criticisms and questions on her decisions. The fact that some chose not to accept the answers or the explanations was not Mama's fault or the fault of her presentation.

I have on file forty different long letters Mama wrote to us over the period of a year and a half. These are not just, “Oh, could you change this word to say that” kind of letters, but these are all letters of explanation as to why she felt led to make a certain change, or they are responses to different ones' letters to her.

Here is a quote from one of those letters that gives you an example of the way she treated these differing opinions and questions that were posed to her.

“I appreciated your bringing up the points that you did, and I understand your thoughts and how you could feel that way. I'm always glad to hear from you, and I appreciate your taking the time to write. It doesn't worry me when I hear ideas or opinions contrary to my own.—I freely admit that I need lots of help, and I'll always pray about it if something comes up that I haven't already considered. So don't hold back on telling me something just because you're worried about bringing up a different opinion, because I appreciate it.

“I'm really thankful that you wrote me. I didn't consider your letter out of it.—Quite to the contrary, as you'll see in the message below, Dad commends you for asking honestly, he really loves you and is proud of you!—And I agree. Thanks for being such a blessing and big help to us through all that you do there.”

No one can tell me that Mama and Peter treat badly those who do not agree with them on everything. All I have seen is continued patience, love, understanding and kindness, even when they might have been personally hurt or disappointed by what people who disagree with them say or do.

One time I was present with my dad [Peter] when a young person explained to him the kinds of difficulties and harsh treatment they had received in a “Victor” type program gone-wrong. It was pretty heartbreaking to hear. I looked over at him at one point, curious as to what his reaction would be, and he was crying. It touched my heart so much. Of course, it was sad to hear of the harsh correction that this dear one had undergone, but I was so touched to see my dad so personally affected by it as to bring him to tears. I could see he felt responsible in some way and was very saddened that things had reached such a point. With tears in his eyes, he very humbly asked forgiveness of this young person. Even though my dad had nothing to do, in my opinion, with the treatment the young person had gone through, I was so impressed by the fact that he felt personally bad and asked forgiveness. He didn’t have to, but he did. It’s something I’ll never forget.



It’s been a great joy for me to be able to see Mama and my dad together. They love each other so much and they are so sweet and personable with each other. It has been a great blessing to have had more contact with them in recent years. And to see them with Trevor and Olivia, their grandchildren, is such a joy! They are typical grandparents—which means of course, the children behave much differently around them than they do around their parents, ahem! Well, not to worry, the Folks just enjoy the children so much. The first time they had the opportunity to be with both of them together, they wanted to take them “solo,” assuring Keana and I that they would be fine, that we should take a break and come back to pick up the kids in a few hours.

After about an hour, Keana and I, knowing our kids rather well, and being especially acquainted with the energy they contain, thought we might consider “checking in” to see how they were getting on. As we got close to the door, peals of laughter were ringing out, and when we came in, the kids were doing...well, you know...the things three-year-olds do, and highly entertaining Mama and Peter.

It was just hilarious to listen to Mama’s account of their time with the children later, and to witness Mama’s amusement at how much energy they contain. “Do they ever sit still for more than a few minutes?” was her question. She and my dad had planned ahead of time what they would do with the children—a plan involving lunch, story, coloring, etc. All of which was completed in about 45 minutes, much to their surprise.

As a mother, knowing your kid is going to be spending a few hours of “quality time” with Queen Maria and King Peter without you around can be a little unnerving. You wonder what on earth they will think about your less-than-perfect three-year-old afterwards. So it was quite a relief to find they were just delighted with the children and with the chance to spend time with them, despite the food that had spilled on the table, the marks that had been accidentally drawn on the couch and the fact that the kids couldn’t sit still for longer than two minutes for a story. Mama commented, “I need to brush up on my pre-school skills, I can see.” But they immediately began fashioning great plans for an outing—although they wisely decided to bring the mothers and perhaps a “support staff” along next time, ha!

Although we don’t live in the same unit as the Folks, when we were nearby and whenever possible they’ve always tried to make special times to see and fellowship with the kids. Even when they were busy or had to take care of other things, they would schedule some special time to spend with them. Once we had a big meeting, and of course the children didn’t attend; however, they had dinner with just the kids afterwards in their bedroom. They gave them little plastic flowered “leis” as a gift, which they promptly donned and started their own little “Hawaiian dance school” in the room. The kids insisted that Grandpa Peter do a “Hawaiian prayer” for the meal, which he did, much to their delight, actions, dancing and all. After the meal, they played hide and seek. The kids took turns hiding and then it was Grandma and Grandpa’s turn. It was so fun for me to watch Mama scurrying around the room, trying to find a suitable hiding place while the kids counted from the bathroom. She settled on standing behind the curtain. Grandpa Peter was found easily, but Mama had to stay hidden for quite a while as the kids “searched” for her. Finally, this stifled giggle came from behind the curtain, giving her away, and everyone was laughing when the kids finally pulled the curtain away. It was so wonderful for me to watch.

Mama and Peter are so natural and normal, and to see them interact with their grandchildren is such joy and so fun. They always love to hear any funny stories we have about the kids.

Yes, I’m Proud of Our Family!

By Francis Fisherman, 31, Mama’s Home

Hi! I’m Francis Fisherman. I’ve been living in Mama and Peter’s Home for about five years now, and was in another WS unit for a year before that. I work closely with Mama and Peter, and with Peter in particular since I assist them with matters that concern the administration of the Family. I also oversee the production of our GP materials, the *Activated* program, marketing of our tools, and related projects.

I wasn’t born in the Family, but my parents joined when I was three, so I was raised in the Family almost my whole life. I’m 31 now, so I don’t know whether I still qualify as a “young person,” but I still feel like one, and I still think like one in many ways. I can certainly relate to and identify with the SGAs who may be younger than me, but who share the same common background and heritage.

I’m writing this in response to the letter that James Penn (Phil) wrote with his thoughts on the Family, our doctrine, leadership, WS, and Mama and Peter. I lived with James for a year prior to coming to Mama and Peter’s Home, and communicated with him a fair bit after that on work-related issues, until his decision to leave the Family a year or so ago. I got along well with James, or Ray as he went by at the time, and he was fun and interesting to talk with. So knowing James, it saddened me to read the accusations that he put in his letter, especially those against Mama and Peter. It was just hard to believe that this was the same person that I

knew and lived with. He's very logical and a good debater, but the bitterness was just too obvious in his writings. People change, I guess.

I can understand James' and other former members doctrinal differences with the Family. A lot of people disagree with Loving Jesus, the use of so much prophecy in the Family, the Law of Love, etc., and that's just fine with me. I don't really care what other people think about those things and whether they think these or other Family doctrines are right or wrong. The way I look at it, if I'm going to believe in something, I believe in it not because other people agree with me or not—but because I believe it to be so, because examination of the facts, and what I feel in my heart, convince me that it is so. Those who disagree are entitled to believe what they want. We'll find out in the afterlife who was right and who was wrong, and we can sort it out then. I don't care for theological debates that much actually (other than for the purpose of witnessing and getting people saved)—I'm mainly concerned with whether I'm doing the best thing that I can do with my life here on Earth. The belief stuff we can sort out when we get to Heaven.

Don't get me wrong, here. I'm not saying that I don't care about the Family's beliefs and doctrines, and that I don't believe them. I do believe in them strongly. But I don't like debating doctrine, because faith is a personal conviction, not something that can be resolved through debate and logic. If it was always logical, then it wouldn't be faith, "for hope that is seen is not hope" (Romans 8:24). All that to say, I'm not going to get into that here.

But the things James and others have said about Mama and Peter really upset me, because I live with them, and have lived and worked very closely with them for the past five years. James hasn't lived with them for many years (I don't know exactly how many, but at least eight or nine), nor even worked that closely with them via mail for the five years that I've been in this Home, so I don't know how he can pass himself off as an authority on what they're like. If anyone's an authority on Mama and Peter's character, it's those of us who have lived and worked with them every day in recent years.

So I feel compelled to write up some of the *true* "inside scoop" of what life is really like here and what Mama and Peter are really like and what their leadership is like. I not only live in this Home, but I teamwork with Peter closely. (I don't interact with Mama as much as I do Peter, but still a fair bit—and I did more so a couple of years ago when helping her with various pubs projects.) As such, I'm privy to a lot of information about how the Family is run, what decisions are reached by Mama and Peter, how those decisions are reached and the prayer and reasoning behind them, the communications that go out of here, etc. I'm not trying to boast, but I think it's helpful to explain that I'm pretty in the know about what goes on here, unlike some people who claim to be, but aren't!

Let me explain a few things about myself. I don't consider myself to be a very spiritual person. I love the Lord, I believe in the Word and the Family, but I'm a very pragmatic, down-to-earth type of person. I like to deal in facts and figures, not feelings. I'm a lot like a number of other SGAs I know, in that I'm quite analytical and I like to look at things as logically as possible. I like to be convinced about things in my heart, and I don't just accept things at face value. I'm a far cry from the "unquestioning believer and obeyer" WS stereotype that James tried very hard to portray in his letter. C'mon, James, I thought you knew me better than that.

In fact, I'm a bit of a tough nut, and if you thought that Mama and Peter only live with people who are blindly yielded to anything they say, and ready to do anything just because they say so, then if you knew me you'd probably wonder what in God's Earth am I doing in their Home, much less working closely with them? I wonder that myself sometimes, ha! For one, it's because Mama and Peter don't care to surround themselves with "yes men" who are just going to unquestioningly follow their every word without raising a peep! And I'm living proof to that. (Oops, there went another of James' theories.)

At the same time, as I mentioned before, I have learned that there comes a time when I just have to make a decision whether or not to believe and accept something even if I don't understand it and can't reason it out. That's called faith. I'm faced with that sort of decision from time to time. Some of the things that the Lord has shown Mama and Peter, like the Loving Jesus revelation, or so much use of prophecy, have not always been easy for me to understand or accept. Some of these things I couldn't reason out in my mind completely. So I've had to make a choice to accept those things by faith because I believe that Mama and Peter are being led of the Lord and they're hearing from Him, or else believe that they're either making this stuff up or being duped by the Devil. That's really what it comes down to.

Fortunately for me, I have an advantage in that I know Mama and Peter very well. So when it comes down to that decision, it's not a difficult one. I logically examine each of the possible options:

1. "They're just making the Lord's Words up as part of their master strategy plan to get us to follow their delusions:" For that to happen, they'd have to be pulling the wool over my eyes and the eyes of a lot of other people in our Home. Pretty impossible, if I might say so. I live with some folks who I consider pretty intelligent and sharp, both FGAs and SGAs. I have a real hard time picturing them as mindless. If you don't mind, I have a hard time picturing myself as mindless too, ha! Also, Mama and Peter would have to be somehow sending me subliminal messages so that when I pray and hear from the Lord myself, unsolicited by them, and ask the Lord about things in the GNs, what I get from the Lord confirms what they got. Sorry, I don't believe in magic mind manipulation, at least not my mind—not to mention everyone else's here.

2. "They're being duped by the Devil into leading the Family astray:" If there is anyone who I know loves Jesus with all their heart, it's Mama, and Peter too. I never met Dad personally, but from reading the nearly 3,000 Letters that he wrote, regardless of what people accuse him of or what mistakes he made, I could feel an unquestionable love for and devotion to Jesus. And I feel the same from Mama and Peter. I've seen it day after day in countless examples. They're always praising Jesus, thanking Jesus, talking about Jesus, pointing me to Jesus—their lives are full of Jesus. I don't even think our bitterest enemies could accuse Dad and Mama of not lifting up Jesus. So how could the Devil be promoting so much Jesus in my life? It doesn't make sense. So I can very easily eliminate this option.

3. So that leaves me with option 3, which is that they are being led by the Lord and His Spirit. It's the only explanation left. So I believe it, and I trust them. I'm reminded of the verse, "Beware lest ye be found to fight against God." If it is the truth and I resist it and find out I'm wrong later on when I get to Heaven, then I'll be sorry in the end.

One thing I know for sure is that I don't have the same love and devotion for Jesus that Dad did, and that Mama and Peter do. I love the Lord with all my heart and try my best to serve Him, but if I'm honest with myself I know it doesn't match theirs. So who should I trust to be right about whether something is from the Lord or not? Should I trust myself, or should I trust Mama and Peter? I'd much rather trust them, because I know they're closer to Jesus than I am. I see it in their daily lives. (I'm certainly not going to trust James and what he says, because I don't know much about his love and dedication for the Lord, nor have I seen the fruits of it recently; rather to the contrary, sadly.)

And if I'm having a real hard time with something, like I did with so much emphasis on prophecy at the beginning, or even with certain specific prophecies, here's how I look at it: I trust Mama and Peter because of the sample that I've seen in them of dedication to Jesus and lifting up Jesus—not themselves, but Jesus. But even if—worst case scenario—we get to Heaven and I find out that Mama and Peter were wrong, and that it was all made up or a delusion, and that the Lord never told them to hear so much from Him in prophecy, and that the Loving Jesus revelation was just their own imagination, that the Law of Love didn't originate from Heaven either, that the prophecies in the GNs were false, what is Jesus going to do? Is He going to punish me for trying to hear from Him more? Is He going to be upset at me for trying to love Him more with all my heart and mind and even body? Is He going to berate and cast me out for trying to be a sample of His love to others by sharing sexually with them? C'mon, let's be real here! If He would, He's not the Jesus I read about in the Bible, so I might as well throw the whole thing out and become an atheist!

So as you can see, even when looking at things in a totally logical analytical way, I figure it's a win-win situation! Not that we should be looking at things analytically, but occasionally when my faith has been tested and tried, it has helped me to break things down like this and find that indeed I am doing the right thing by placing my trust in Dad, Mama and Peter.

So in writing about Mama and Peter, and the accusations that James (and others) make against them, my comments are built on the foundation that I trust Mama and Peter. That's really what it comes down to in the end, doesn't it? Now James might say that I'm just following blindly, but trust is not blind acceptance. Rather, trust is something that is built up over time as a result of events or interaction in which you know the person to be truthful, honest, loving, and worthy of that trust. My experiences in the Family for years, and then living and working with Mama and Peter, have resulted in that trust being built up. It was not an overnight thing, but rather came about as I saw firsthand their sample of love for Jesus, and became convinced of their love and concern for the Family and for the lost.

I think it's that last point that has made the biggest impression on me. I have had a lot of discussions with Peter about Family policy, or certain situations, and he always shows a great deal of concern for each Family member, and how such and such a policy is going to affect them. He makes it clear that our job as leaders in the Family is to serve the folks in each Home, to help them fulfill their calling of serving the Lord. Yes, I am a servant. But I'm not a servant to Mama and Peter, even though I work for them. Ultimately I'm a servant to Jesus and the Family, and that's what Mama and Peter are too. You know the Letter, "Without Love It's Nothing"? Well, the love and concern that Dad shows for the Family in that Letter expresses very well how I've seen Peter operate.—And Mama too, of course. I'm just talking more about Peter because I work with him more closely than I do Mama. His sample is very convicting in that regard.

It's very evident in the regular counsel meetings that Peter and Matthew and I have together that Peter carries the responsibility of co-leading the Family with Mama very seriously, and it's a heavy weight on his shoulders. He and Mama do it because the Lord has given them this job and they love Him and don't want to fail Him, and because they really care about each Family member. I know from talking with them that their goal is to give their lives so that we all can serve the Lord better. As a result of their sample, that has become my goal as well.

But I know for a fact that they would not want the job if it was just for their own benefit or gratification. I see what they do, I know what their job entails, and believe me, as young and ambitious a person as I am, I would not want the job. It's a horrible weight! Just the knowledge that about 13,000 people around the world are looking to you for direction and the Lord's Words, plus the practical side of running such a multi-faceted organization such as we have in the Family with the needs of so many different people to consider—children, parents, singles, single parents, teens, outside sheep, catacombers, etc.—is frightening! And then on top of it to have people attacking you for it and persecuting you! I'm amazed that they don't have a nervous breakdown! I guess it's just their faith in the Lord that He's in control.

Speaking of Mama, I have never in my life seen someone work as hard as she does. She is a living example of a shepherd laying down her life for the sheep (despite James' claims to the contrary). I consider myself to be a hard worker, but I don't hold a candle to Mama. Her life is her work, and her work is 100% devoted to helping the Family, answering people's questions, going over the pubs, praying about and for situations that need help. I like to take days off, have fun, play games, watch movies, etc., but she doesn't do any of that—well, hardly ever. I wish she would take more time off! I have to admit that at times it's even bothered me that she works so hard, because in my pride I've felt that I have to match that, and I can't. It would be interesting to calculate exactly what her daily average of work hours is, but my estimate from living with her is around 14-15 hours a day, 7 days a week. No matter what she's doing, she's almost always got a tape recorder going and is listening to some work.

So what's my point? My point is, why in the world would anyone work as hard as Mama with so little in return? She and Peter are well established as the leaders of the Family, just like Dad was before them. She could work less than half as much as she does now, and the Family would keep on going and serving the Lord without hardly a hiccup. So why do it? For money? I happen to know a bit about the Family finances from working with Peter, and I know that what comes in goes back out in services to the

Family. So no money. Even our enemies know that. For power? Just to feel in control? Just to get people's adoration? People in the System do push themselves very hard to get that sort of thing. But in Mama's case that logic doesn't fit, because she could have all that with much less effort on her part. If her motives were selfish, she wouldn't push herself to the limit for the Family like she does. Besides, she's always pointing me to Jesus, trying to get me to hear from Jesus personally, not to go to her for the answers to things, but to go to Jesus. That's not a "cult of the personality," it's a "Jesus cult," ha! I am therefore convinced, both from her words and her deeds, that what motivates her is Jesus, pure and simple. Love for Jesus, obedience to Jesus. "The love of Christ constraineth her."

Here's an example of this: There have been a couple of times over the past few years when I've asked Mama about cutting down on the number of GNs that we send out to the Family. Not because I feel there's anything wrong with the GNs, but it's a heck of a lot of work to get them all out! It takes a real toll on Mama, as well as on a few other very dedicated souls in our Home who help her. Plus it costs money, is more work for the NPCs, etc. What do you think Mama's answer was each time we discussed it? "What about the folks who are having battles about such-and-such and need some counsel on that subject?" "What about the parents whose kids have left the Family and are in need of encouragement and are desperate to know what the Lord has to say about it?" "What about the young people who are faced with questions on what to do about such-and-such?" "What about the bad samples in our Homes that need to be addressed and corrected so that they can reflect more the spirit of Jesus?" And so on. My thoughts were, "They'll get by on a little less—let's slow it down." (Now aren't you glad that Mama doesn't listen to everything her counselors tell her? Ha!) But her response was along the lines of, "But if it will help them, shouldn't we give it to them while we have it beside us to give? Why wait if they need the help now?"

There are so many different people in the Family and each has different needs, and Mama tries as hard as she can to receive (through Peter and her channels in our Home) and pass on the Lord's counsel on those issues. And sure enough, we get back responses to each of those GNs from someone, saying how much it helped them and came at just the right time. And as far as Mama is concerned, if it's even just for that one person, then it's worth it. And there's no one making her do it except the conviction of the Holy Spirit in her heart. To me that is unquestionable proof of her love and devotion to all of us, and the purity of her motives.

James says that Mama and Peter are, and I quote, "abusive, controlling, manipulative, self-centered, deceitful, and callous leaders who were willing to do just about anything to save their reputations and preserve their image." He says that he reached this conclusion after years of living and working with them years ago. I didn't live with them years ago, so I can't speak for then. So maybe five years ago, when I moved into their Home, Mama and Peter had a miraculous conversion from being horrible people to the very loving and concerned people that I've known—and continue to know—them to be. Likely? I think not.

As far as being willing to do anything to preserve their own image, that's an easy one to disprove. If there was anything that risked destroying Mama and Peter's image, it was the Loving Jesus revelation. If they were selfish and concerned about keeping the Family under tight control, being of good reputation, etc., then publishing that revelation was the stupidest move they could have ever made. And they're far from stupid—even those who disagree with them can attest to that. I was with them when they published the Loving Jesus revelation and talked with them extensively about it (unlike James, who was not living with them at the time). I even argued in favor of postponing publishing it for the Family because I didn't think that people could handle it. I have to confess that I was more worried about their reputation than they were. But they were convinced it was from the Lord, and therefore chose to "obey God rather than man," regardless of the consequences to their leadership or reputation. I personally don't know anyone else who would have had that kind of courage. That's why I'm proud of serving Jesus with them. They don't compromise for personal gain, no matter what the cost.

And the result? Sure, some people left the Family over the Loving Jesus revelation, but our stats show that the Family's population is still growing. 1204 disciples, not counting babies born, have joined the CM Family since the LJ revelation was published. Interestingly enough, that's a 25% increase over the 5 years prior to the LJ revelation, when only 964 new disciples joined the CM Family. (I use CM stats in this example because people joining the FM Family wouldn't even necessarily know much about the LJ revelation.) James, on the other hand, affirms that "no adult in his right mind joins the Family anymore these days." So in case you didn't know it, all of you who have joined the CM Family in the last few years are not in your right mind. So maybe you were brainwashed into joining the Family. Oh yes, I forgot, sociologists have disproved brainwashing. Uh, let's see, maybe you were love-bombed? Oh, right, we don't allow sex with new disciples anymore, so scratch that one. Let me see, could it be that you joined the Family to serve Jesus? No, certainly not. No one in their right mind would want to serve Jesus, right?

Back to LJ. Despite the fact that some have left, I've read hundreds of responses from Family members around the world saying how much it has helped them. Last year we conducted an anonymous survey of 600 Family members (16 and up) in South America, and 98.4% said that they accept or believe in the LJ revelation. And 79.9% said that they practice it personally in some form. In addition, 88% said that the LJ revelation has had either a "great" (55.7%) or "some" (31.5%) improvement in their relationship with the Lord. So, were 600 people lying? To claim that a few might have fudged their anonymous questionnaire I would accept, but 600? To what purpose?

So the numbers prove that the LJ revelation has had a positive influence on the Family. Sure it's radical. I don't understand it all myself. But who cares? Do I want to be closer to Jesus? Yes! If loving Jesus intimately will help me reach that goal, then so be it! And like I said earlier, if it turns out when I get to Heaven that I was deluded, I know the Lord will give me credit for trying anyway!

James says that "Maria and Peter have debased the wonderful gift of prophecy. They have twisted and manipulated prophecy to serve their own ends and control the Family, so that it is difficult to believe any of their prophecies ... destroying its value by printing too much so that it becomes worthless." He uses the analogy of a currency losing its value through overprinting. The

problem with that analogy is that the reason a currency devalues when a government prints too much of it is they don't have enough gold or other hard assets to back it up. And unlike gold or precious metals, Jesus never runs out; there's an unlimited supply of Him. Therefore, it's not possible to dilute the value of prophecy, no matter how much of it is used or published. To say that prophecy can be diluted is tantamount to saying that Jesus is limited in His capacity to speak, or that He's not as all-powerful as we believe Him to be. That strikes at the very heart of Christian belief.

As far as manipulation through prophecy, when I first started out hearing from the Lord more, Mama was more involved. I wasn't used to hearing from the Lord about everything, and I needed a lot of prodding and encouragement. I also needed to learn how to hear from the Lord—mostly about really clearing my mind of my own thoughts in order to get the Lord's mind on the matter. Mama was a good teacher. But she didn't dictate what I should be getting from the Lord. In time I became more used to hearing from the Lord about things without her having to remind me. Now, when a work question comes up that I'm responsible for, I go to the Lord and ask Him for His answer. Mama doesn't even know about most of those prophecies because they are about minor issues regarding my day-to-day work and decisions. That's a far cry from manipulation. There have been a couple of times when Mama and Peter have given me prophecies that talked pretty straightforwardly about my NWOs. They were difficult for me to receive. But the reason is not because they were untrue, but because I'm a proud guy and it's sometimes hard to admit to myself the areas I need to change and grow in. Were they using prophecy to manipulate me or berate me into submission? No. They could have sat down and told me the same things in their own words, but instead someone had prayed and gotten it from the Lord. What difference does it make? It was true either way.

What about the accusations of the total control that Mama and Peter exercise over those in WS, and by extension, the Family? That they suffer no dissent or difference of opinion? Over the years that I've lived with Mama and Peter, I have had quite a few differences of opinion with them. I've discussed a lot of issues with them—little issues, big issues. I've always found Mama and Peter willing to listen. It's one of the things that amazes me the most about them, their willingness to listen despite being very, very busy. They never blow me off.

Three or four days ago, Peter was getting ready to go on a trip and was very busy with last-minute prep. Despite that, he took about two hours to talk with me about some things. In the course of our conversation I asked him a couple of pretty heavy questions regarding past Family policies. Most people would have been very hesitant to ask those questions. It's no credit to me that I did ask—it's just that I know Peter (and Mama) well enough to know that his response would be prayerful and loving, not defensive or retaliatory, not cutting me down or accusing me of being "disloyal" or "unyielded." He encouraged me to share my heart, answered my questions, we talked about it and discussed it. I made some suggestions that someone who was used to "being kept in line with a great deal of fear" (as per the "Gospel According to St. James"), and who was used to being "manipulated, controlled, bullied and belittled," would not in a million years have dared to make! But Peter took it in stride and was very open to what I had to say, and we talked about it quite openly.

If there's one thing that Peter and Mama have encouraged me in the most, it's to share my heart with them about things that bother me, things that I have questions about or I don't agree with. Just in that conversation Peter and I had a few days ago, he again asked me to please be open with them about anything that's on my heart.

So, far from being closed off to what others have to say and trying to control them and their actions, Peter and Mama are extremely open to others. In fact, they are some of the least sensitive people I know in that regard. I think most people, myself included, would have a hard time with all the suggestions and constructive criticism that they get—not to mention the unconstructive criticism from those who dislike them. I don't think I could take it like they do, much less encourage it. They are shining examples in that area.

That's not to say that they always agree with what everyone says. Like I said, I've had differences of opinion with them, and we discuss things together and pray about them. I (or others, as the case may be) make my proposals of what I believe should be done, but the final decision is theirs. Sometimes they'll go with it but sometimes they don't. And that's their prerogative as the top leaders with the ultimate responsibility for the effects of their decision.

It's the same in any company or organization, and there's nothing evil or sinister about it. A company CEO will consult with his VPs (vice-presidents) and advisors, but when it comes down to it, he has to make the final decision and bear the responsibility for it. And once the decision is made, the VPs' responsibility is to make sure that decision is carried out to the best of their ability. If it's a big decision that they feel is wrong, they can appeal it, and if the CEO stands firm in his decision, they can resign in protest if they choose. It's the same with me. There have been times (though not often), where I didn't agree with the final decision. But I know that I'm not always right, and just because I don't agree with something doesn't mean that it's wrong. I've learned to trust the Lord in these cases.

A perfect example is the LJ revelation—I was worried that the Family wouldn't handle it and it could even cause serious division in the ranks. Time showed the contrary to be true.

James writes, "I sometimes wonder how many Family members are sincerely proud of all the Family's present-day beliefs and practices." Well, I am for one! The Family has its faults, and there are things that I would like to see change, and that are changing. We're learning as we go. Show me something better and I'll go there. But so far no one has shown me anything better. So, yes, I'm proud of what we've done and what we're doing today for Jesus. And to be honest with everyone reading this, no offense intended, but I don't really care whether the other 12,999 members are proud of the Family or not.

I'm not proud of the Family because 12,999 other people are proud of the Family, I'm proud of it because I know for a fact that despite our many faults and mistakes, we are trying to serve the Lord the best we know how, to be a sample of His love, and fulfill His commandment to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." And, if you don't mind, speaking to my peers in the Family, that's why you should be in the Family too. If the accusations of some former member make you ashamed of

being in the Family, then please go do something else with your life.

If as James—the new self-appointed spokesperson for Family SGAs—claims, “Many, especially SGAs, have consciously decided to ignore the doctrinal weirdness and simply use the Family infrastructure to carry out ‘Consider the Poor’ ministries,” then please go use someone else’s infrastructure instead. If all you need is infrastructure, there are a lot better ones than ours out there, with a lot more people and money to help you do what you want to do. (Of course, if James’ claim was true, then why don’t those SGAs who leave the Family and who say they feel this way join some other groups? I haven’t heard of any joining the Peace Corps, Red Cross or some similar outfit.) Sorry, I don’t mean to be harsh, but that’s honestly how I feel about it.

That’s not to say that I’m so super strong and have never thought of leaving the Family. Actually, I have battled with leaving the Family a number of times. But it wasn’t because I thought what the Family was doing was so wrong and that I was going to “escape” and do something better with my life. I might have used that as an excuse, but inside my heart I knew that the reason I was thinking of leaving was because I wanted to live for myself for a while, make some money, do something a little easier than “laying down my life for the brethren,” take a break and see what the System was really like.

I am convinced, however, that despite whatever problems, difficulties, sacrifices or oddities living in the Family may present, the Family is the place for me. And I can’t think of any two people more dedicated, prayerful, in love with the Lord, and concerned for each and every Family member than Mama and Peter. I gladly stand by and support them as the Lord’s appointed Family leadership, and I can testify to seeing this anointing manifested daily in their loving care for both you and me.

*** OUR side: In Defense of our Faith, Family, and Lifestyle, FSM 356**

Interview with a Victim

By Kevin, 27, WS

James Penn’s letter is intriguing and well written. In fact, if I were the editor of a newspaper I might even consider publishing it. Of course, my newspaper would be a tabloid, and his article would reside adjacent to other literary works with titles such as “Woman Gives Birth to Two-Headed Alien” and “Dog Eats Dynamite and Explodes when Hit by Car.” Much like the tabloids, while James’ letter may contain some facts and figures to supposedly back up what he’s expressing, they have unfortunately been twisted, exaggerated, and arranged in such a way as to conjure up evil and sinister images in our minds.

It seems that ever since man has had the ability to put pen to paper (or chisel to stone), the world’s leaders and celebrities have consistently become victims of character assassination. Regardless of their brave acts, triumphant victories, or selfless, world-changing actions, there always seems to be a cynical, hard-boiled detractor who feels it is his duty to wade through the sewers to collect the largest amount possible of hearsay and unfounded accusation. Then, in the name of “truth” and “freedom,” he or she finds it necessary and noble to line us all up and hose us down with the goop, all the while proclaiming that our lives will be all the better for it. How brave.

For example, most Americans will admire Christopher Columbus for putting behind him the scoffs and doubts of the masses, to brave the seas and discover a whole new world of opportunity. In spite of his vision and courage, he is now being accused by a minority of historians of being an evil and depraved person, being directly responsible for the death, rape and torture of thousands of innocent people. Oh, yeah, and he apparently didn’t really discover America.

Most people don’t take that at face value, due to the lack of evidence; nevertheless, due to the nature of rumors you might still wonder what he did with those naked natives. Poor guy.

Mother Teresa, who gave practically every second of her life for the poor of Calcutta, was said to have “earned her halo through relentless self-promotion, abetted by various sinister interests.” I didn’t make that up; that’s an actual quote from one of the aforementioned sewer junkies. I mean, think about it! What sort of “sinister interests” could an old woman have as she lived amongst the disease and squalor of one of the poorest locations on the planet? Maybe it was those naked natives again.

Pope John Paul II is regarded by many to be none other than the Antichrist himself. It must be that fierce countenance. “Worship me! I am God! (Now where did I put my false teeth?)”

Then there’s Moses, who may have been hiding hideous sins, and Jesus was considered a drunk and a devil. What’s next? Was St. Paul a wife-beater?

Sad to say, our small Family of believers has not been exempt from the same sort of attacks on its leadership. So what can one do to stop this? Probably nothing, and that’s very unfortunate. It is therefore up to the reader to be careful not to take such slanderous material at face value. Just because a tabloid says that Brad Pitt has a tail, you don’t have to fall prey to their trickery and begin checking his butt during the Oscars.

Following is a question-and-answer survey that I put together from my personal, real-life experiences. This test is designed to help you measure how affected you are by groundless gossip and slander. Each question has multiple answers, but only one represents a real-life account, so choose your answer carefully.

During a meeting in which Peter discussed the Family’s most pressing problems and needs, his speech consisted of (please choose the correct answer):

- He laid down his and Mama’s solutions to the problems, backed up with reams of confirmatory prophecy received by hand-picked WS prophets who have recently had their brains scooped out and replaced with an electronic device.
- He began railing at WS leadership, placing the blame on them and the rest of the Family while he was at it.

- c. He proclaimed that the only way to overcome these problems is by having more Loving Jesus and Praise Time, and to make it mandatory 12 times a day. This was to apply whether or not you would be evicted if you did not raise your rent that day.
- d. He said that the reason there are problems is that he and Mama do not have enough control over the lives of Family members, and that they planned on investing WS funds into a computerized bar code system and a homing device for each member. (This was accompanied by a sinister “muahahahaha” laugh.)
- e. He chuckled and said, “Aw, it doesn’t matter,” Jesus is coming back in a few years anyway.
- f. We were told that no one person, not even he or Mama, is smart enough to come up with a solution on their own, so they wanted us to put our brains to some serious thinking and praying in order to come up with solutions.

If you chose a, b, c, d or e, you should refrain from reading stories about multi-headed aliens and detonating canines. If you chose answer f, then you are absolutely correct. Congratulations! Not only do you have a correct understanding of how the Folks work, but you probably don’t believe Brad Pitt has a tail.

During a casual conversation, Mama asked me what I think of movies that are considered “foolish” and are not particularly hurtful, but have no real value except for entertainment. She did not seem to like them very much. My answer was that I actually like them; I occasionally enjoy “foolish” movies, as long as they don’t poke fun at the Lord or serious situations. The result of this differing opinion was (please choose the correct answer):

- a. She yelled, “You stupid, worldly idiot! You’d better get back on board or we’re going to take the board to your back!”
- b. Having never heard a differing opinion, her head began to spin and her outer hull cracked.
- c. Six men wearing immaculate black suits and dark sunglasses jumped out of the closet, nabbed me, and began dragging me away, saying, “Looks like we need to put another bug in your bellybutton and take you through another brainwashing session.”
- d. She answered with, “That’s very interesting. Thank you for your opinion.”

Was your answer d? If so, then you are correct again! If not, then you probably have deep suspicions regarding the Pope, Moses, or St. Paul.

My experiences after having first arrived in WS were:

- a. I was placed in a dark cell for three months to cleanse my brain of opposing opinions. The only activity I was permitted to engage in was prophesying.
- b. I was forced to engage in sexual activity with partners chosen by Mama and Peter, and was required to participate in strange sexual rituals involving dozens of people and an assortment of tropical fruits.
- c. I was forcibly placed on a chair in a cold, dank room with a single flickering light bulb, where I was repeatedly read the voluminous and bizarre rules of WS, interspersed with mafia-like threats.
- d. Upon entering my bedroom I found a tastefully decorated appreciation basket complete with goodies and encouraging prophecies. All throughout the next week I was asked by several people, including both Peter and Mama (more than once), whether or not my room was adequate.

The one and only answer here is d. The others, as intriguing as they may sound, are drawn from a variety of movies with traumatic subject matter.

My wife and I were going on an extended trip, which would mean being away from the Home for some time. Before taking this trip, Mama and Peter did the following (please choose the correct answer):

- a. Every day for two weeks prior to our departure we attended a continual stream of meetings with them, in which we were browbeaten and threatened to tell no one the truth of the harrowing experiences while at Mama and Peter’s house.
- b. Trick question! Once a member of the WS cult, always a member of the WS cult. Most people who have been caught attempting to leave WS, even temporarily, met with an “unfortunate accident.”
- c. Mama and Peter invited us to a simple meal in their room, at which we engaged in enjoyable get-to-know-each-other-better conversation.

If you chose answer c, you got it right! If you chose answers a or b, you’ve probably been watching too many B movies.

Now for something truly juicy. Following is a fictional interview with a former member of WS, who, unlike James Penn, has actually lived with Mama and Peter recently and had frequent contact (well at least I, the writer, have). He has now broken out of this WS cult in order to break out of the Family cult, in order to get a job and make lots of money for himself and perfect strangers. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get the inside scoop on what it’s like to be a WS member, and who the Folks really are.

(Interview begins:)

Interviewer: We have here with us in the studio a true former WS Victim. Thanks, Vic, for your participation in this interview. Say hi to all those people out there.

WS Victim: Hail Queen Mari ... Oh, I mean, Hello!

Interviewer: Tell us a bit about yourself. We understand that you were once part of not only a cult called the Family, but a cult within a cult called WS. Tell us a bit about this cult-cult.

WS Victim: WS is an elite group of weirdoes who all have one thing in common: they forgot to grow a brain. Since leaving the WS and Family cults, I have faithfully nurtured this brain by daily doses of “Baywatch,” several cases of Diet Coke, and a computer game called “Granny Squish II.” I’d say my brain is at about 30% now.

Interviewer: Well, that’s really good news, Vic. How do you feel now that you can actually think for yourself?

WS Victim: It’s just wonderful. When the boss tells me I have to “go ahead and come in for work on both Saturday and Sunday,” I can think up for myself all kinds of evil things I want to do to him, and can even tell my friends about it. Before leaving the WS cult, I was constantly told to “ask the Lord if it’s okay” when I had questions or needed some time off. WS leadership must have had some kind of psychological powers, because these “prophecies” would seem to answer my questions and tell me things like “you’ve been working too hard—why don’t you relax and have a beer.” That’s just so strange.

Interviewer: How did you escape? I mean, escaping a cult is one thing, but having to escape from a cult-cult really takes the cake.

WS Victim: Oh, it was just a horrible experience. When I made the decision to leave, everyone acted like they still loved me and stuff.

Interviewer: That’s interesting, but it sounds to me like they were just being friendly, sort of like loved ones saying good-bye.

WS Victim: I knew there had to be some sort of pernicious intention behind those smiles and sweet words of encouragement, etc. I suppose they were trying to brainwash me, but I held out, and now I can eat all the junk food I want.

Interviewer: So tell us a bit about “Mama and Peter.” We’ve heard they are some kind of abusive despots who habitually lie and try to force people into submission. If this is true, then you who lived with them recently should be able to share some stories reminiscent of the Holocaust.

WS Victim: That’s right, it was a living Auschwitz! We engaged in hard labor on a daily basis, and were subject to all kinds of psychological tortures.

Interviewer: Can you give us some examples?

WS Victim: Well ... uh ... for one thing we had to do dishes more than once a week. If we forgot to do the dishes, then someone else would often do it for us, maybe even let us know about it later. Though nothing physical happened as a result, I seem to remember abnormal amounts of psychological vibes from Mama and Peter when that happened, that seemed to say, “If you do that again we’re going to tie you up and throw you into a dark, wet cell full of rats the size of Godzilla.” I seemed to feel these vibes on numerous occasions.

Interviewer: We also heard that Mama and Peter do not tolerate dissenting opinions. How was this manifested?

WS Victim: While it’s true that Mama and Peter spend a great deal of time counseling with other members of WS, and arranging delegates meetings with dozens of Family members on the field, in reality these policies are undermined by bizarre novels laced with the evil intentions of Mama and Peter.

Interviewer: But from what we heard, these novels are written by all types of people within the Family, both in WS and out, and that Mama and Peter have little to do with their content.

WS Victim: Well, I have a feeling that they somehow manage to sneak into the computer files when no one else is looking and place subliminal messages. It’s not immediately apparent, but every time a child reads “Juanito’s Christmas Tree,” vile subliminal messages are being transferred to the innocent young reader’s brain, such as, “You will be run over by a steamroller if you leave the Family when you grow up!” It’s just not right.

Interviewer: Since as you claim, the WS cult is so weird, how do Mama and Peter keep them in line?

WS Victim: Through tactics that cause a great deal of fear. People in WS live in a constant state of fear that if they were to burn down the house or dump all of the computers into a nearby river, they will probably be asked to leave. Proof? On numerous occasions I noticed WS members typing at their computers at 1:00 in the morning, and I can only assess that fear robbed them of

their sleep.

Interviewer: Tell us a little about these cult leaders and some of their supposed high levels of weirdness.

WS Victim: That's easy, because I was faced with it on a daily basis.

1. They both spend an amazing amount of time working, when they could be viewing "Baywatch" or shopping for Pokemon toys.

2. They call themselves a king and queen, yet live as frugally or more than an average Family community. If that's not eccentric, I don't know what is.

3. They try to relate to young people and understand what they're going through, when at their age anyone in their right mind would be spending their precious time watching reruns of "As the World Turns" and yelling at kids who are playing on their lawn.

4. They believe in Jesus way too much. It's just not right that they should be dedicating their lives to the cause of Christ, while encouraging others to do the same, including young people. Once you leave the cult and have the opportunity to step back, you realize that a missionary life is simply ludicrous when there are so many malls, yet so few young people to hang out in them these days.

Interviewer: We're almost out of time. In a few sentences expound upon why you feel Mama and Peter are the selfish, manipulative and egotistical leaders you make them out to be.

WS Victim: From time to time they discuss their own shortcomings and weaknesses with those around them, and act in what appears to be a humble manner, speaking very highly of Family members on the field. They weep for lost sheep or the problems the Family is facing, such as persecution by disgruntled former members. They spend time praying for individuals who they've heard are having battles, and do all they can to help. They appear personable and engage in casual, friendly conversation. However, under all those loving actions, that dedication to the Lord, the immense sacrifices they make on a daily basis, and their desperation to lead the Family in the right direction, there lurks a dark, creepy plot to "earn their halo through relentless self-promotion, abetted by various sinister interests."

(End of interview.)

Seeing that both Mama and Peter are open-minded and dependent upon the Lord and the help of others gives me solid faith in their leadership. I've been in the Family for a long time and have had a lot of shepherds, and from personal experience, can smell a hypocritical, egotistical leader from a mile away. But here's the inside scoop: I have no doubt in my mind that both Mama and Peter are competent, loving, and very sincere leaders. I say this not because of any secret coercing WS force, but because I have been personally convinced through critical observation.

*** OUR side: In Defense of our Faith, Family, and Lifestyle, FSM 357**

From Someone Who Knows!

By Gabe, of Amy, WS

I didn't come to the Folks' house to help write or edit pubs. I came because I had the gift of helps and I loved to serve. I was very happy in my ministry. I cooked Dad's food for seven years. I made his bed for 12 years. I enjoyed my ministry.

Eventually, because of the gifts the Lord had given me, combined with the training I had received from Dad and Mama, the Lord called me to be a shepherd. That is what I have done for the last 12 years.

I would venture to say I spent more time with Dad than anyone else besides Mama. I joined the staff in 1981 and was there in 1994 when Dad took his last breath. The reason I spent so much time with him was because I cooked for him; I brought him his food; I was his handyman, his driver. I even slept in the same room with him at times when he was extremely sick and Mama was exhausted and needed extra rest. I know Dad. I continue to feel his presence in my life every day. When I drive, I hear his voice cautioning me just as he did when he was sitting in the back seat. When I do handyman work, I hear his voice reminding me to pray. His training continues to play a big part in my life, and I'm thankful for that.

Because of all the time I spent with Dad, and knowing him on such an intimate basis, I of course saw him at his good times and bad times. I could tell you many things he did that proved his imperfection, but can also testify that he loved the Lord above all and gave all of himself and his life and strength to serve the Family. I know Dad had a sincere love for the Lord, as well as a fear of failing Him. This is why he passed on every message and revelation that he received. He knew that many of the things that the Lord gave him were going to be difficult for some people, but his love and reverence for the Lord motivated him to do what he had to do.

When I joined the staff back in 1981, in South Africa, there were 10 people on the staff. There was Dad and Mama, Peter, Joy, Sara, Alf, Pearl, Dora, James Penn, and myself. I'm happy to say that all of these people, except for James, are still going strong for the Lord. They're all serving the Lord in some capacity in the Family.

I was saddened when I heard about James leaving the Family. I was very close to him for many years. His and others' decisions to leave the Family have helped me understand what you young people feel when your friends, brothers or sisters leave the Family. Of course, each person has to make his own choice; that is part of the Lord's plan and something Dad and Mama have tried to teach us.

When James decided to write his negative point of view, it saddened me even more. James was at one time a dedicated David's Mighty Man and a big help to Dad and Mama on many occasions. I don't want to argue James' points one by one, but I will tell you what I know to be the truth about Mama and Peter, and the choice is yours as to who you will believe.

Keep Your Eyes on the Lord

Dad was human. He had weaknesses, but he was honest about them. For example, Dad was very honest about his weakness for alcohol, which he confessed to the whole Family in "MY CONFESSION!—I Was an Alcoholic!" (ML #1406). I'm happy to say that the last three years of Dad's life, he didn't drink any alcohol. Anybody who knows anything about alcoholism can recognize that that is a total miracle. Of course, Dad wasn't an alcoholic in the true sense of the word because most alcoholics desire to drink constantly. Dad did not drink during the day and only drank in the evenings, when he woke up in the middle of the night, and when he couldn't sleep or was trying to go to sleep. In my opinion, this isn't a true alcoholic; nevertheless, Dad felt it was a weakness. He also felt it was necessary to be honest with you, his Family, about his weaknesses. The main reason he wanted to share his weaknesses with you is so that you would know he was human and that you wouldn't look to him, but rather you'd look to the Lord. I can't possibly count how many times Dad reminded us around him to look to the Lord and not to him. He did so constantly.

Mama and Peter are also human. They have their personal weaknesses just like you and me, but they're also honest about them. Like Dad, they also have constantly reminded us to look to the Lord.

Many people are thankful to Dad and Mama because of their love for the Lord and the decisions they made to make the Family possible. It's like that verse, "*By one man's obedience many were made righteous.*" Because of Dad's faith and obedience to the Lord, he was used of the Lord to start the Family. Lots of people are very thankful to Dad and Mama, and now Mama and Peter, for their continued love for the Lord. This is natural, but the thing Dad, and now Mama and Peter, have tried over and over to stress to us is to not look to them, but to the Lord.

Way back in 1982 when the Family was sending Dad their videos of their marvelous works around the world, we were sitting with Dad watching a video of our Family. One Family member on this video was expressing his love and appreciation for Dad so exuberantly and enthusiastically that Dad felt he was giving too much credit and glory to Dad rather than the Lord. So Dad paused the video in frustration and explained to us, "You guys have to realize that if anything good gets done, it's the Lord. You have to give credit to the Lord. You can't give credit to me." He said, "What has to happen? Do I have to get sick; do I have to die? If you guys are going to give me the credit, then I'm going to have nothing but problems. You've got to remember to give the credit to the Lord, and this is very, very important. Now, I want you to learn that lesson and I want you to learn it well." Then he released the pause button and we continued to watch the Family video.

He also explained at that time that he had weaknesses and problems and made mistakes, but, he said, "As long as you guys continue to keep your eyes on the Lord, the Lord will not fail you and He won't fail us. We've just got to keep our eyes on the Lord."

The Bible says to desire not to be teachers, because unto you is the greater condemnation. The interpretation of "condemnation" in this verse is "judgment."—There's a greater judgment and more is expected of teachers, shepherds and leaders, so it's important that you pray for them and do your part to keep your eyes on the Lord and not on them.

I think one reason why Mama has promoted prophecy so much is because she wants us to look to the *Lord!* As long as people are looking to the Lord, then they don't look to man. Mama and Peter don't put themselves up on pedestals as being "perfect." Mama and Peter are like us. They're doing their best to be a sample of Jesus, to be more like Him, and that's certainly what is reflected in the Letters, and it's also reflected in the Home, in their daily interactions, decisions, and discussions.

Because of my 14 years of working with Dad and 20 years of working with Mama and Peter, I could tell you lots of stories and anecdotes to illustrate the point that they are weak human beings, they need others, and they are very open to ideas, suggestions and the opinions of others. Anyone that is trying to control or manipulate someone else doesn't confess their own weaknesses. There have been numerous times when Dad, Mama and Peter have confessed their faults before the body and asked for prayer. Some of those talks have been published; many of them haven't. Nevertheless, Mama and Peter continue to come to their teamworkers and sometimes to the whole body when needed to ask for united prayer.

We who live with Mama and Peter see some of the times when maybe they're tired, irritable, or simply "human," but that doesn't make what they publish not true, or of any less value. That doesn't lessen their anointing as queen and king, or take away from the responsibility and anointing the Lord has given them as the leaders of our Endtime Family. They are human and they have human weaknesses—but they're NOT like James says they are and makes them out to be. They are not manipulative, deceitful, cruel, uncaring, selfish or untruthful.

They are learning, as we all are. We all grow, we change, we revolute, and that's what keeps giving us fire and life to keep serving Jesus. When you stop changing, then you die. In order to change things, you have to reassess, re-evaluate and look honestly at things in life. Mama and Peter do this regularly, and they do so with a lot of counsel with other shepherds, and lots of feedback from you, our dear Family. If they didn't, our Family would have died out long ago.

The Dangers of Pride

Something that could cause people who know Mama and Peter well and who work closely with them to begin having problems

is if those people fall prey to pride. The reason for this is that the Folks are very encouraging; they listen to people; they constantly solicit ideas and opinions and ask those around them for input. What happens then is that we around them get in the habit of being able to share anything with them, whether we agree or disagree with something. Once Mama and Peter hear our ideas, they may have some personal feelings on the matter, but what they do, pretty much without fail, is pray and take things to the Lord. It's not that they don't listen to people, it's just that at some point they take the matter to the Lord. They obey God rather than man.

If we put forth suggestions—and I think for the most part many of our suggestions are taken, implemented and approved by the Lord—over time it becomes easy for you to expect to be not only listened to, but you expect that your suggestions will be taken, because many of them are. But what happens when they're not? Then it's easy, when you're personally involved, to get a bit resentful and hurt. If this continues to grow and you maybe are not praying enough about your suggestions, a root of bitterness can begin to grow and cause you to blame those around you for what looks to you to be wrong decisions. *Voila*, a problem occurs, and you start labeling Mama and Peter as the “bad guys.” But check out the Word. Read up on bitterness. What is your experience with bitterness? How does it cloud issues? Who's the villain here?

The sad thing is, sometimes little disagreements can fester or grow and cause somebody not just to disagree with Mama and Peter, but to let that disagreement lead them to the path of bitterness, and eventually they not only leave the path of serving the Lord in the Family, but they go down the path of not serving the Lord at all.

Mama and Peter Listen to Others

Some people say that Mama and Peter don't listen, that they make all the decisions and call all the shots. I've heard this before, and from time to time, when things weren't going the way I was hoping they would, I would tend to feel that way myself. When I did, I took it to the Lord and asked Him about it. Here's what the Lord said to me:

“There are certain things that your shepherds, leaders, and prophets are obligated to do for Me. They realize the importance of counseling and they do counsel, as you know, but there are times when they have to do what I have shown them to do. This is their obligation to Me. This is their responsibility to Me. There were times when you even criticized your Father David for not taking your counsel, but he knew the seriousness of following Me and doing what I showed him to do. Now you see the wisdom in the way he operated.

“Even though you didn't understand it at the time, you see now why he operated this way. When it comes down to it, this is what you admired him for. He bucked the System, went against the tide, and didn't conform to convention and the norm. He told you that you could live without the System, and you believed him. He told you that you could forsake all and follow Me by faith, and you followed. He told you I would supply, and you saw miracles and testimonies of supply. This increased your faith to continue to follow and have faith. If you hadn't followed and had faith, you would have missed so much. But you had to follow by faith.”

This little explanation from the Lord, even though short, helped me to understand and have faith.

WS Has Changed

WS has gone through a lot of changes in the last five years, especially with the infusion of a lot of young people. We no longer operate the way we used to. Things have changed. Dad has graduated. We've continued to progress. The dynamics of our WS Homes have changed dramatically over the last four or five years as we brought in more newcomers, and particularly more young people.

It's very difficult for someone like James Penn to speak as an authority about the workings in the Folks' house when he hasn't been here for over 10 years! Believe me, things have changed so much. We've grown, changed, adapted, morphed in so many ways, in my opinion, for the better! Not that the old was wrong, but we've continued to move forward and change and revolute, TTL! Learning to work with the young people that came from the field in many instances, and learning to understand them and how to integrate our generations, now three under one roof, was a challenge, but I believe many of the things we learned in our transitions and mergers have helped our Family worldwide.

Certainly we've learned some things the easy way, and others the hard way, but the lessons we've learned have been shared through the Letters. The growth we've made as a Family is pretty evident, and the growth has not been towards more control by Mama and Peter, but more control over our lives by the Lord. I have experienced this growth in my personal life and in the lives of those in WS, as I've visited the various WS units during the past years and talked with and know each person in WS personally.

I shepherded Mama's Home for 12 years, but a year and a half ago Amy and I were asked to help with the shepherding of another unit. When Amy and I moved to this other unit—which was a fledgling one—Mama trusted us to shepherd and organize the Home without her direct oversight. Not one time that I can remember did Mama get involved in the running of our Home. She could have called, she could have written letters. To me, the fact that she didn't was commendation that we were doing a good job. She let us operate the Home the way we felt led. We as a Home made our own decisions, decided on our own schedule, set our own in-house goals and policies. As long as our Home members fulfilled their WS responsibility to produce the pubs in their court, Mama was content to leave the ins and outs of how we did it up to us and our Home. (I was never so glad for the gift of prophecy and the emphasis on hearing from the Lord for our situation!)

As a shepherd of a Home in WS—and as someone who hates to be poured into a mold—I have operated and worked independently of Mama and Peter. I don't want to say it was independent of their oversight, because they were available for counsel whenever we needed it. But as far as them getting involved in the details of our Home and with the personnel of our Home, they did not get involved, except when we asked for counsel and advice on occasion. They figured we'd had several years of training, we were experienced in the new weapons, and they had faith in our channels and our abilities to shepherd. I've operated

this way for a year and a half now.

Our Home has gone through transitions in the way we operate and do things since our young people came. I have changed, Amy has changed, our shepherding has changed, and our Home has changed. And our Home was Mama's Home at the time these changes started. Mama and Peter were available for counsel and advice, but we made the adjustment and changes—and they were happy to let us. They didn't try to control things or get involved with every facet of our lives.

Sincerity, not Manipulation

One of the accusations against Mama and Peter is that they try to manipulate the Family through prophecy. I can personally testify that Mama's motive in asking the Lord questions and sharing His answers with you is not to manipulate you or to control you, but rather to seek for ways we can serve and love the Lord better.

Mama felt that we needed a closer and more intimate relationship with the Lord and asked Him if there was any way we could love Him more and express our love for Him, which resulted in the Loving Jesus revelation. Mama also asked the Lord if we needed to spend more time praising Him and loving Him, so our prayers wouldn't constantly be petitions asking Him for things, but also thanking Him for our many blessings. As a result, the affection time/praise time revolution was born. She wanted to make sure that we weren't resting on our laurels and coasting on our past training from Dad and the way we used to do things. She wanted to make sure we were operating according to how the Lord wanted us to operate today for our personal situations, hence, the emphasis on hearing from the Lord in prophecy individually.

All these various revolutions and revelations were born purely from the motive of loving the Lord and pleasing Him, not for manipulating our personalities and individual characteristics. Mama just loves the Lord—as Dad did—and she feels it's her responsibility as the shepherdess of the Family to continually ask the Lord if there are any ways that we can love Him more or please Him or do a better job for Him. This is her job and she continues to abide in her calling.

Amy and I recently visited a chiropractor, as Amy sometimes has problems with her back. He was talking to us about the benefits of eating good healthy nutritious food. I explained that we try to do that, but some of the people we live with like white sugar or white flour products. (We don't buy those products but still, there is the temptation for some people to want to eat them.) He explained to us, "Don't buy it. Don't make it available. Just tell them you can't find it." He gave us a stern lecture about the harmful effects of these things on your body. Here was a System person trying to get us to enforce some rules and regulations because he knows of the devastating effects junk food has on one's body. Mama's motive for trying to get us to take care of our bodies through proper get-out and eating right is because she's concerned that we have healthy bodies to serve the Lord for a long period of time.

Mama's motives for asking the Lord questions on various spiritual issues and even practical matters for the Family comes from her desire to love and please the Lord. She is a wise and loving shepherdess who doesn't want us to fail the Lord in any aspect of our lives.

Mama and "Control"

Mama is concerned that we are doing the most we can do for the Lord. She is an efficiency expert and expects quality work out of people. She insists that you get the rest, exercise, and time off that you need, but also is an anointed motivator with an ability to get you to do your best for the Lord. Sometimes that might mean a little "meddling," but it's for the purpose of seeing to it that we're getting the job done for the Lord that we need to do. It's not a matter of her desire to control people personally. She has the interests of the Lord's work at heart, and getting the work done means taking care of the workers.

Mama was very involved with the individuals in her Home at one time, but now those in her Home have largely learned to run and manage themselves, by seeking the Lord more and more. She certainly knows what's going on and the state of her flock, but for the most part, the Home is run by shepherds who counsel with and inform Mama and Peter of how things are going. A lot of informing the Folks is done through the many personal prophecies that the Home members voluntarily send to Mama and Peter, which are evidence that people are seeking the Lord and asking Him how to go about things.

Mama has been like a parent in many ways. She got involved when she needed to, when we were young and "green" and didn't really know what we were doing when it came to our work in WS or even areas in our spiritual lives and relationships. But once she had done her motherly job and knew we had the basics down, she stepped back.

Take other scenarios: Would you say that bosses like to control their employees? Yes, some do. By controlling their work hours, they control their home lives too, to a great extent, and they certainly control how the work is done at the workplace. Does the army like to control its soldiers?—Definitely, there's total control. That's the nature of the military. Any church organization, corporation, business, or army has to have a united goal. To reach their goal they need an overseer, head or leader who points them in the direction that they believe is the right way to go, and if people want to be part of that group, they follow. The point is, what's so unusual about Mama and Peter and the Family? What's the beef? And we in the Family have the security that the leadership of Mama and Peter is sound, wise and according to God's will, because we know they pray and hear from Him each step of the way, and they counsel with others.

People have to choose whether they want to be part of any organization, corporation, group or whatever, knowing its guidelines and standards. Being in the Family or being in WS is much the same. I believe that if people are not here for the Lord and because of their love for Him, then the Family is not the place for them. No one has to be here just because they were born into it. Each person should make a choice.

I can't forget a very important point here, and this might be a bit sensitive for some women! Generally (notice I said generally, as there are exceptions), women are noted for being much more easily labeled as "control freaks." In my experience with women,

such as Mama, Amy, Sara, Dora, and other women who are pushers or like to get things done and are really doing something, it can appear that they are trying to control things. Sometimes they are to a certain extent, and they need to in situations where they are the boss and they are responsible to help people do the right thing, as in Mama's case.

Some women tend to want to know what's going on all the time so they can plan, and that can make them appear to be "control freaks." Mama is an extremely curious cat (Leo) and she loves to know what's going on. That is part of her job, to know the state of her flocks. When it gets into meddling in our personal lives, then the point of "control" comes up. Mama is a bold woman and she is not afraid to tell people what the Lord says. In fact, she often asks the Lord for messages of love, encouragement, instruction, direction, etc, for people when she feels they need it. Sometimes the messages may conflict with our personal feelings or desires.

This is a point at which we can either take something as from the Lord or begin to complain that Mama is trying to so-called "control us through prophecy." The choice is ours. When I shepherd, I face the same dilemma sometimes when I have to pass on a message to someone. It's not easy, and I run the risk of someone feeling like I'm out of line to be trying to "tell them what to do." But really it's not me; I'm just the channel or vessel passing on what the Lord wants to say to the person, and the choice is always theirs as to what they decide to do with the counsel and whether they will receive it. Nobody can "force" someone to do something, at least not through prophecy. It's clear in the Charter that it's our choice to follow a prophecy that is given to us personally, to pray more about it, or to disregard it.

I think the "control" that people struggle with is more often that the Lord tells us what He wants us to do and sometimes it's hard for us to do it. Then we can either come to grips with it by going back to the Lord and asking Him about it, or we can choose the easy way out. The easy way out is often to blame things on the deliverer of the message if it's not one that you received yourself, and say they are pushing you, pressuring you, and that you don't want to be controlled. As a shepherd I have seen person after person who has received hard sayings in a prophecy and has taken them to the Lord personally and asked Him to explain them and has overcome any questions they had that way. I have done that myself as well.

The key is recognizing the cause of the difficulty and dealing with it. Think about it. Why are you having a hard time with a prophecy? Is it because of who received the message? Then ask the Lord about it personally. Is it because of who is talking to you about it? Then ask the Lord about it personally. There is always a solution to the struggles people have, but the individual has to deal with it personally rather than turning around and blaming someone else or some circumstance. That road leads to destruction, not production for the Lord.

We in WS do strive very hard to live the standard in the Letters in our WS Homes. We try very hard to remain united in our goals. Dad explained why we are different than the churches and other religious organizations when he said:

"I'll tell you, brothers and sisters, what makes the difference—this huge, vast, insurmountable, incontrovertible, undeniable difference!—It's our unified leadership and total unity! It's our unified message and total cooperation! It's our unified organization and total coordination! It's your unified obedience and total dedication! We are one Family, one Nation, one Kingdom, one Fold, with one Shepherd!" (ML #189:22)

We have found in our WS Homes that to have this high standard of unity it is necessary that someone with authority can make the final decisions. With so many diverse personalities, so many diverse opinions, someone has to be given the authority to make the final decisions. Of course we try to involve all Home members in Home decisions as much as possible. We have Home Council meetings, and we also ask the Lord about any decisions, but sometimes there is still a need for further counsel and final decision-making. That's where the teamworks of each WS Home, or Mama and Peter in counsel with their teamwork arrive at decisions, taking into consideration the counsel of others and the Lord's counsel in prophecy.

The members of each WS Home love and respect their shepherds and have agreed to make personal sacrifices for the sake of the unity of the Home. It doesn't come up very often where anyone disagrees with the decisions to the point that they get up and leave, although that is their prerogative.

It does make it clear in the Charter that you forgo some of your rights when you come to WS, just like you do in a Service Home. There are good reasons for that. For example, we can't have people working at System jobs when we've invited them to WS for a specific ministry. They can't fellowship with other Homes when we have certain security standards. There are certain requirements we have in WS, which we try to make very clear to people before they come.

The fact of the matter is, yes, we do have some control, but it's not anywhere near the extent that James portrays and it is something that those in WS have agreed to. And we have agreed to those terms because we love you, we love our work for you, we love the Lord and we love our shepherds.

Amy and I work with a wonderful team that operates very much according to their faith in life, yet are committed to sticking to a high standard. Some have said we run a tight ship, but let me ask you a question, since you are the ones who support us through your tithes. I was once in your place. I went to the post office every month and mailed in my tithe. I laid hands on that tithe in the envelope and I prayed, "Lord help our WS Family to use this money wisely." We are shepherds of the representatives that you have sent from the field to serve you in administration, publications, and producing the Word. Would you like me to say that we run a loose ship here, that people work when they feel like it—if they get inspired, they work, and if not, they don't? Or would you rather that people here work hard, put in long hours, and use the money you send in wisely and are frugal?

Human nature is such that it doesn't like to make sacrifices and die to self. So our job as WS shepherds, and Mama's job, has been to get people to be inspired about putting in the hours and working hard for you and making the spiritual progress needed in their personal lives. That is a tough job. Believe me, I know. I almost quit, as you read in the "Spiritual Attacks Intensified" GN (ML #3255, GN 856). Then Dad spoke to me, through the messages that were published in that GN and others. He said, "Son, I trained you, I taught you. You have the anointing, you have the authority. Now use it to accomplish what you know needs to be accomplished." That's where my life changed. Rather than running from my calling, I decided to do the hard pick-and-shovel work

of being a shepherd. One of my friends on the field, who was a really good shepherd but had stopped shepherding, told me, “I didn’t want to continue to go through the breakings it requires to be a loving and understanding shepherd.” By the way, when he told me this, he was explaining how he needed to get back into shepherding and has since abided in his calling.

I decided to fight on and am still fighting. It’s not easy. I sometimes feel like quitting, just like you probably do. But my personal goal is still the same. I live for winning souls and giving the message of love and salvation to the world. I can’t personally go out and do that much, but I believe that the Family is the best place to do it. I live for you who are out there doing the job. I know it takes faith, and our goal is to provide you with the Word, which gives you the faith to fight on.

Besides the GNs, my favorite pubs are the *FAR*, *Grapevine* and other such pubs that show what a tremendous job you are doing. You’d better be doing the job, because we are living to serve you, and if you’re not, I might come out and try to “control” you! Ha! I’m just kidding. I know that’s impossible, as you’re all so different and unique in your special way. We are committed to doing our job here of getting out the Word—which for me means shepherding those who do. I pray we continue to operate in unity here, and with you, so that we can accomplish the Lord’s will for us as a Family.

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