

CHILD ABUSE?!

—An Official Statement from the Founders of the Children of God!

"We do not approve of sex with minors, & hereby renounce any writings of anyone in our Family which may seem to do so! We absolutely forbid it!"—Moses David, 12/88.

- We consider our children God's gift of love to us, whom we dearly love & would gladly lay down our lives to protect.—And we would certainly do nothing to harm them!
- Professional educators have recognised & acclaimed our teaching methods & care of our children as far superior to the average!
- We have never condoned nor tolerated child abuse within our ranks, & have explicitly forbidden it.
- Exhaustive in-depth analysis of our children by prominent psychologists revealed "no sexual improprieties whatsoever!"

In the twenty years that have now passed since our first community was founded, the Lord has miraculously helped us to fulfill His commission to "Go ye into all the World & preach the Gospel to every creature!"—Mark 16:15. Our tiny group has personally brought the Gospel of God's Love—as well as a real purpose & meaning in life—to tens of millions of people around the World. And, as has been the case with all of God's messengers, pioneers, leaders & teachers through the ages, our message & methods have been frequently questioned, criticised & even condemned by those who cannot understand them.

Thankfully, we are usually so busy in our work of bringing the light of God's Love & Salvation to others, we have little time to worry about—much less try to answer—the many false accusations that our misguided & misinformed opponents may level at us. However, their charges have recently taken an ugly new twist, & a very serious criminal claim has been raised against us—an accusation we find so odious & repulsive that we feel compelled to give an answer to those of you who may have been tainted by it!

The absolutely false accusation that is currently being trumped up & circulated against us is that we cruelly subject our own children to all kinds of "child abuse" & "sexual molestation!" This is a preposterous lie which we vehemently deny & challenge anyone to try to prove!—In or out of a court of law!

We love & cherish & thank God for our dear children, & would never even think about, much less condone, any abuse or mistreatment of them whatsoever!

The founding father of our group, Moses David, has consistently emphasised through the years the importance of our children & their welfare. He has repeatedly stressed to our communities the God-given responsibility of every parent to faithfully, lovingly & sacrificially care for, protect & "train up their children in the way they should go."—Proverbs 22:5. The following quotations taken directly from his writings make this apparent:

"The Bible says, 'Children are an heritage of the Lord.'—Psalm 127:3. Your children are a gift of God, & they are also the work of God, you've got to work hard to take good care of them!"

"Children are some of the most wonderful gifts that God gives us, & the most vital part of our Work is our own children. As the twig is bent, so the tree is grown, & the present is built on the foundations of the past. If we fail or neglect our children, we will have failed to preserve the future!—They are our greatest task!"

"When God gives you children, then your first duty to God is to those children! And though raising children can be one of the toughest & most trying & difficult jobs, it is also one of the most rewarding. Caring for your children is a very serious & sobering responsibility, for which God will hold you responsible if you don't take care of them properly.

"Your own children should be one of the greatest influences in your life, perhaps second only to the Lord. They should help you to be serious & inspire you to be a good example & to train them up in the way that they should go, to do your best to do what's right. As a parent, you should realise the serious, sober responsibility of a little child's life in your hands, & that they're going to be what you make them.

"We put children first in our Family!—We put our children's education & training & knowledge of God's Word first! We are concerned not only for their physical welfare, but for their spiritual welfare as well."

Most of our members are married couples with children of their own, therefore our children & their care are a major ministry & emphasis within our communities. Most of our children receive their basic education either within our communities or within our own schools which we have established in many different countries around the globe.

We have highly-qualified & dedicated teachers in our schools, & we give our children the best education possible. In the highly-personalised atmosphere of our small Home classes & within our schools, our children benefit from individualised instruction. Most of them begin to read by the age of two or three, & many become fluent adult-level readers by the time they are five!

We have developed our own Bible-based textbooks & curriculum, designed by our own fully-accredited educators & editors. We've also published our own teachers' manuals, ensuring that each of our children receive the same education, & that the same high standards are upheld throughout our communities worldwide.

The following are a few of many reactions, comments & impressions given by different professionals—educators, doctors, lawyers—after having visited our schools:

"The thing that impressed me the most was the teachers' outgoing concern & love towards the children.—To be frank, it really overwhelmed me! This kind of atmosphere is ideal for learning, & your students are very advanced for their age levels.—More

teachers should see us, & more schools should be like this!"

"I thought I'd been doing a good job teaching, giving my students the education they need. But after observing your classes, your teachers with their pupils, I am ashamed. I realise for the first time that I have really been lacking love.—You have taught me that love is the key to train & teach children."

"I'm amazed how even your two & three-year-olds get along so well with each other, playing together without fighting.—It must be the result of your teaching them the Bible & Christian principles at an early age."

"I believe most educators would envy what you have here. We never imagined a school with so much spiritual wealth within its walls! The children here in your school are getting a much better education than we offer our youth in normal schools."

Even if you are persuaded that we sincerely love our children & do our best to care for them, you may still have questions regarding the "abuse" issue. After all, we have been labelled by certain sectors of the media as some kind of a notorious "sex cult!"

We do believe that sex is a beautiful God-created gift given to Man for our enjoyment & procreation, but we do not advocate nor practice sex between adults & minors!—And never have!—And certainly not between adults & young children, as some very wrong sources are now accusing us!

In order to try to substantiate these absolutely false charges against us, some of our opponents have begun reproducing & distributing an article which was published within our group over ten years ago. Although the article in question does make reference to an unusually loving relationship between the young woman who wrote it & the child she was caring for, even a quick glance makes it clear that the article is only the writer's account of her own personal experience & opinions.—And is by no means any kind of policy-setting or instructional text.

Such intimate relationships between minors & adults have never been officially encouraged or condoned within our fellowship.

... a very admirable oversight & mistake on our part ten years ago to have allowed such an article to be published. Since then, we have expressly forbidden & condemned any such conduct among our members!.....

Had our critics kept up with our current policies & publications, they would know that we have not only banned any kind of adult/minor sex within our group, but that we have also adopted much more conservative & universally-accepted policies regarding sex between adults as well!

For example, in the '70's, some of our members employed a rather controversial witnessing technique known as "Flirty Fishing." In their efforts to share God's Love & Salvation with others, some of our women members found that some lonely men had such a deep need for companionship—for a sympathetic ear, a comforting touch, an understanding friend—that they could not receive spiritual or theological sermons about God's Love without some tangible proof that Someone up there really did love them. Therefore, to try to prove God's spiritual Love for others, some found it necessary to manifest it physically—sometimes even sacrificially going "all the way!"

Of course, some religious folks were outraged by this method & branded it as "religious prostitution," & condemned us as heretics for going to such radical extremes to try to prove God's Love to others! But it cannot be denied that many souls who would never have darkened the door of a church were reached & came to a solid & lasting faith in the Lord as a result of the sacrifice of women who were willing to give their all to try to show God's Love to others.

However, now—in the late '80's—we have officially discontinued & banned this controversial witnessing technique. Just as the whole World has tightened up on its sexual freedoms—due largely to the AIDS epidemic—so we also have become much more conservative & restrictive along these lines, & we now stick to more conventional means of witnessing & telling others about God's Love.

But despite such liberties & freedoms we may have exercised in the past, our group has never officially promoted or practiced any kind of sex between adults & minors! And since the publication of the above-mentioned questionable article of ten years ago, we have explicitly forbidden & unequivocally banned any such intimate expression of affection bet-

ween minors & adults within our fellowship! In early 1985, when it was called to our attention that some questions had arisen concerning sex between adults & minors, we issued an urgent directive to all of our communities worldwide. In this missive, all of our members were strongly reminded that any such activities are strictly forbidden within our group. The following excerpts are taken verbatim from this directive:

"For the record, we want to say that we do not agree with adults having sex with children! The Family should just not do it. And even though teen sex with adults may be tolerated in some countries, we are against it!"

"Nudity & sex can be wonderful & beautiful, & we have a good, Godly, healthy attitude regarding it, but adults must refrain from practicing it with minors! The best thing we can do is to just not do it at all. Adults should refrain from any sexual involvement with underage minors!"

These are direct quotations from an internal memorandum that was issued to all of our communities over three years ago. We are now releasing these excerpts to the general public to hopefully put to rest this false "child molestation" accusation once & for all!

For a final word on this subject of child abuse, here is a written statement by the founding father of our group when he was recently asked what our official stance was regarding any of our past publications that purportedly condoned adults having sex of any kind with minors:

"We do not approve of sex with minors, & hereby renounce any writings of anyone in our Family which may seem to do so! We absolutely forbid it!"—Moses David.

Some years ago, a bitter & vengeful ex-husband of one of our members in North America fabricated charges of "child abuse" against us in order to try to persuade a judge to grant him custody of a child who remained with his mother within our group. These malicious accusations prompted an official investigation in which government agents raided one of our communities & actually seized a dozen of our children. For three weeks the bewildered, scared & heart-

