"BACKSLIDERS"--MO November, 1971 NO.140--LTA

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MY PRECIOUS CHILDREN:

GREETINGS IN JESUS' DEAR NAME! Thank you again for all your good reports, letters, tapes, etc. We wish we could answer every one individually, but this is physically impossible with our small staff. However, as aforesaid, if you'll study each MO Letter prayerfully, particularly as the new ones come, you'll probably find your answer right there, as we try to deal with your most recent letters and their questions in our most recent Letters.

1. IN THIS LETTER WE ARE CONTINUING OUR ANALYSIS OF YOUR STATISTICS in the recent sample News letter No.6 of November 10, 1971. In the preceding Letter on this subject, we discussed the overall statistics which listed 1652 disciples in the 28 Colonies listed. But as I pointed out, since 15 more Colonies were not listed, making a total of 43 Colonies in all, our actual total population is probably more than that.

2. ANYHOW, AS WE MENTIONED, THIS IS EVEN AN OVERALL AVERAGE of too many per Colony, and we must break these larger Colonies up into smaller teams and send them out to evangelise the world! Since we have the use of these properties now, we may still have to retain a fairly sizeable number of Colonists in each, due to a continued shortage of leadership, but we should definitely trim them down by sending out as many teams as possible, at once. THIS IS URGENT for the sake of obedience to the Lord's Commandment to GO into all the world and preach the Gospel, as well as for the sake of His needed blessings therefore, including greater security by means of decentralisation and dispersion

3. EVEN SINCE OUR LAST LETTER WE ARE ENCOURAGED WITH THE PROGRESS SOME COLONIES ARE MAKING along this line by having already sent out new teams to new areas where the Lord has opened new doors, Praise the Lord, Thank you Jesus! Hallelujah! God is answering prayer as we obey! But we have a long way yet to go to trim some of these larger Colonies down to what should be a maximum size of not more than about 100 each, at the most!

4. THIS SHOULD RELEASE ABOUT 200 MORE NEW COLONISTS FOR AROUND ANOTHER TEN NEW COLONIES wherever they are needed, as the Lord opens the doors. This will also trim the major Colonies down from the nightmarish monsters that they are today to at least manageable and workable Colonies of mostly babes, where they can be taught by some of our best teachers, to prepare them to go also, as well as give leadership training to up and coming new leaders in their management.

5. SO I'M ENCOURAGED BY YOUR RESPONSE to our urgent appeal to obey the Lord in sending out new teams and reducing the size of these monstrous Colonies. Also, the recent dramatic restoration of our original policy of encouraging our members to go home for the Holidays to witness to their loved ones while they are all there together enjoying their festivities may help to reduce the size of some of these Colonies by purging from our midst the half-hearted!

6. ON THIS LATTER SCORE, I trust that all of you leaders and leadership trainees received the copy of the emergency communiqué of November 21 to all Colonies advising them to encourage their members to go home for the Holidays. I hope you will study this emergency bulletin very prayerfully and its warnings against high pressure tactics or over-persuasion in either gaining or keeping disciples. This has never been our policy and never should be!

7. WE ARE NOT TRYING TO SEE HOW MANY PEOPLE WE CAN PACK INTO A COLONY! WE ARE LOOKING FOR LEADERS AND WORKERS who are willing to sacrifice their lives to bring the love of Jesus to other young people around the world! We are not trying to form Colonies purely for selfish pleasure or just to prove the point that communal living works! We are banding together and spreading around the world in order to devote our full time and energies to preach the Gospel to every creature and win their souls to Jesus Christ and their bodies to His Service for others!

8. SO AS WE HAVE SAID MANY TIMES BEFORE, we are not looking for Quantity, but Quality of the kind that will make sincere and dedicated leaders and workers to win the youth of the world to Jesus, not fearful, unbelieving and halfhearted semi-followers who can't be trusted to go home to witness to their loved ones and return again and prove that they were not hypnotised, drugged, kidnapped, and held in bondage by anything but the Love of Jesus by the Spirit of God!

9. WHEN I FIRST HEARD SOME OF THESE CHARGES AGAINST US BY OUR ENEMIES, particularly the one that we keep our members in bondage through fear, I was infuriated that they should lie so about us because I was sure this was not true of any of you. However, I have been amazed to discover recently through the confessions of some of your leaders that some of you have been using pretty persuasive tactics in trying to frighten

some of your disciples into staying, when they want to go home!

10. THIS HAS NEVER BEEN OUR PERSONAL POLICY FROM THE VERY BEGINNING TO THE PRESENT, and if any of you are truly guilty of using such foolish fear to keep disciples, we insist that you cease and desist in these ridiculous methods at once! And as stated in our emergency communiqué, any leaders, officers, personnel, or any members using such unauthorised arguments to keep disciples must be reported immediately to their superiors, relieved of their responsibilities, and put back for further training!

11. WE PERSONALLY HAVE NEVER EVEN APPROVED OF TRYING TO PERSUADE ANYONE TO STAY IN ANY WAY who expressed the slightest desire to leave or return home! Anyone who has joined our group should already know enough reasons why he should stay, which were the same reasons for which he joined, so he should not have to be told any more why he shouldn't leave! It's always been our personal policy, when we found someone wanted to leave, to simply ask them why, maybe answer any questions they might have or correct any misunderstandings which may be responsible, apologise for any of our mistakes which might have caused them to want to leave, but not to discourage them from leaving if they still want to.

12. WE PERSONALLY HAVE NEVER THREATENED, BADGERED, SCOLDED, OR BEATEN THEM OVER THE HEAD WITH SCRIPTURES TO TRY TO SCARE THEM INTO STAYING. They already know why they ought to stay, or they wouldn't be here. I've always kept sweet, loving, gentle, kind, sympathetic, and tried to be understanding with these weak ones who want to go home. I have only tried to make sure that the fault was not ours through some misunderstanding and apologise if it were, so that we would not be to blame, and they would have no one but themselves to blame if they left.

13. I USUALLY JUST ASKED THEM A FEW QUESTIONS, LISTENED TO THEIR ANSWERS, TRIED TO CORRECT any misunderstandings, apologised for any mistakes, explained any difficulties, rebuked any officer who might have offended them, and told them we were sincerely sorry if it had been anything that was our fault, and tried to be as understanding as possible of their reasons for wanting to go back.

14. IF THIS GENTLE CLARIFICATION OF THE ISSUES AT STAKE did not clear up the matter or change their minds, we would usually have sweet prayer together, kiss, embrace--sometimes cheerfully--and offer to help them call home for the funds to return, and take them to the airport or station with a genuinely loving farewell, sometimes even giving some of the boys a little money so they could hitchhike home, assuring them they would be welcome to return if they ever felt led to do so!

15. THIS GENTLE, LOVING, AND UNDERSTANDING TREATMENT OF THOSE WHO WANT TO LEAVE HAS OFTEN PAID OFF, NOT ONLY IN KEEPING THEM AS A FRIEND instead of antagonising them so that you send them away as an enemy, but it has frequently encouraged them later to return, after having again found out that the pit was not where it's at, and Home is not what it used to be, and that they have really become a different person who can no longer enjoy it, but knows they must serve the Lord! But from the tactics I hear that some of you have been using, it's no wonder that they even became all the more convinced that they were right in leaving, and have even been so turned against us by your lack of wisdom that they've been willing to publicly testify against us!

16. BRETHREN, THESE THINGS OUGHT NOT SO TO BE! Not only this, but sometimes, by a little friendly and understanding farewell discussion we have found that their reasons for going home were not necessarily all excuses, but sometimes a genuine desire to witness to their unsaved loved ones in real concern or straighten out their affairs, or make some restitution, so they would feel free to return again having delivered their soul, paid their debt, served their sentence, etc.

17. WHERE THESE HARD-LINE, GET-TOUGH TACTICS BEGAN, I DON'T KNOW, BUT THEY CERTAINLY DIDN'T BEGIN WITH ME! I certainly never taught you so, nor set you any such unloving example. Some of you leaders have been with me and even in on these calm farewell conferences, and you know that I have never used such rough-shod scare tactics in dealing with backsliders, much less people who had good reasons for going home. Where did you learn this kind of a hard attitude and method of dealing with such cases! It certainly wasn't from me!

18. ARE YOU DOING IT BECAUSE OF A GENUINE CONCERN FOR THE DEPARTING DISCIPLE, or are you yourself simply afraid you're going to lose a member, and another statistic, which might not look so good on your report. Are you high-pressuring them into the Colony for the sake of their forsake-all or for their own sake, and are you trying to keep them for their sake or for yours? If your motive is selfish, I guarantee God will not bless it! Let the guilty beware!

19. IF THEN SOME OF THESE STORIES I HAVE HEARD ABOUT YOU ARE TRUE, IT'S NO WONDER THEIR PARENTS ARE UP IN ARMS AGAINST YOU! GOD HIMSELF WILL BE AGAINST YOU and will chastise you for this wickedness and hypocrisy of yours, this self-righteous judging and holier-than-thou condemning and this unwarranted and harsh pronouncement of warnings, curses and judgements upon the poor,

frightened, retreating little departee or even deserter! God Himself will curse you for your lack of wisdom!

20. IN THE EARLIEST DAYS OF OUR MOVEMENT, EVEN ABNER WANTED TO GO BACK TO HIS FORMER COLLEGE before that year's term was over in order to witness and deliver his soul to some of his friends before they graduated, when his chance might be gone forever! When we saw he was genuinely sincere in his concern for them and deeply burdened in his desire to do this, we encouraged him to go, but to return as soon as he could. And he went, witnessed, won, and came back rejoicing, and even a stronger disciple than ever before for having stood this test of discipleship on his own!

21. PHINNEAS, AFTER A FEW WEEKS WITH US, said he had to go home and straighten out some things and affairs there and see his folks, especially his aged grandfather who he was afraid might pass away before he had a chance to witness to him. So we sent him home with our love and prayers, when we saw he really meant it, and we believed God would bring him back if it were His Will! And he did, and God did, and he came back stronger than ever from the experience!

22. AS THANKSGIVING APPROACHED AT OUR FIRST LITTLE CLUB, I EVEN URGED ITS MEMBERS TO ACCEPT THE INVITATIONS OF LOVED ONES TO RETURN HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS IN ORDER TO WITNESS TO THE GATHERING of family, friends, and relatives, and testify of their new found faith at this ideal opportunity to reach most of them together. Those who were afraid to go home alone, or wanted or felt they needed help, we sent another disciple with them who couldn't go home or had no home to go to, so they could stand strong together, two by two, and they came back with reports of glorious victories!

23. SO IF OUR COLONIES HAVE BECOME LIKE PRISONS WHERE THEY'RE AFRAID TO LEAVE BECAUSE OF FEAR OF PUNISHMENT, WE ARE MISSING THE WHOLE POINT! If our disciples are not here truly as volunteers and because they do not want to go home--if they only stay in fear and trembling because of some psychological phobia or compulsion or threats of punishment, then we're missing the whole reason for them being here, and it's no wonder that the quality of our disciples has deteriorated! Especially if these same disciples were similarly pressured, bullied, and badgered into joining in the first place, and for the wrong motive on both their part and your part! God help us!

24. LET ME HEAR NO MORE OF THIS, AND LET IT NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN IN ANY OF OUR COLONIES!--Or in their witnessing or dealing with disciples! This has never been our policy, and may God forbid that it ever should be! I never did it, I never taught it, I never practiced it, and you never learned it from me--so you must have gotten it from the Devil and your own proud, arrogant, self-righteous, covetous, hypocritical selfish, unloving, hateful spirit! The Lord rebuke thee!

25. WELL, AGAIN WE MISNAMED THIS EPISTLE WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENTITLED "BACKSLIDERS" and not "Statistics", which was the subject we had intended to deal with. But let me warn you right now: If you don't heed this counsel and change your ways if you have been guilty of some of the things mentioned herein, you yourself are going to become a statistic, or a casualty, and a bad one at that!

26. WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THAT EUROPE HASN'T GOT?--I'll tell you what: you've got some mighty weak disciples if they can't stand a little trip home! In fact, in Europe where family ties and traditions are even stronger than in America, they have found it necessary in some cases to permit their disciples to go home for frequent weekend visits! And it has resulted in excellent parental and public relations and good publicity, instead of the terrible reputation you American Colonies are getting! May God deliver us from such disrepute!

27. AS YOU MAY HAVE READ IN ONE OF EUROPE'S RECENT REPORTS, one Dutch mother was so furious at her daughter joining the Amsterdam Colony that she came to the Square and literally dragged her away by the hair of her head! But the wise leader there went to the home and explained us to the Mother, satisfied her questions, and made an agreement to permit her daughter to come home for a visit every other weekend! And now this mother is one of their best friends!

28. HOW DIFFERENT FROM THE REPUTATION SOME OF OUR AMERICAN COLONIES ARE GETTING! In England, the leadership there discovered that it eliminated almost entirely most of their 10:36 problems by having a new disciple immediately call home, and then within the next day or two taking him home for a personal visit with his parents and wise leaders to explain what he was doing in joining and why, even sometimes at the same time picking up his forsake all! All this has actually satisfied most of these parents, particularly when promising that the would be free to come home for an occasional visit!

29. WHAT ARE YOU AMERICAN COLONIES AFRAID OF? Are you a little insecure in your own convictions about the righteousness of your Cause, or are you afraid your disciple is not really a disciple and therefore can't be trusted, or is your faith in God so weak that you're not sure the Lord is able to keep them? May God have mercy on you and them, and may the Lord help you to either get some genuine disciples or give you a little more faith that God is able to keep them!

30. SOME OF YOU REMIND ME of the poor old Coloured lady who, when she saw the sun was setting,

scurried around fearfully to catch her chickens and put then in the hen house and lock the door before dark. One of her friends, seeing her do this, exclaimed in amazement, "Why Liza, don't you know dat chickens allus goes home to roost?" To which Liza honestly replied, "Yez maam, dats jus whad Ahm afraid of! Dats why Ah's gotta geddem in ma chicken coops sos dey can't go home where dey came from!" In other words, she wasn't too sure they were all her's so she wanted to make sure she locked them up so they couldn't go back home where they came from! Is that your problem? Are you afraid they might not be really the Lord's disciple, but the Devil's instead, and that their heart is still back in the System! Well, for God's sake, if they're the Devil's disciple and they belong in the System, please let them go! We don't want them! Otherwise you might be guilty of stealing his sheep! Jesus said, My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me!--And a stranger they will not follow! So what are you afraid of! Let them go! If they're Jesus' sheep they'll return to the Good Shepherd! If they're not, you certainly don't want them! Good riddance!

31. SOME OF YOU GUYS REMIND ME of the time somebody came rushing up to the world-famous evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, and said "Dr. Moody!--I just saw one of your disciples staggering down the street drunk!" Said Dr. Moody somewhat sadly amused: "Yes, I guess that must have been one of my disciples!--It certainly wasn't the Lord's! "Is that what you're afraid of--that you're going to lose one of your disciples--a blow to your pride? The Lord doesn't lose His!

32. THEY MAY GO BACK FOR AWHILE, BUT THEY'LL ALWAYS RETURN!--When they have found through the Lord's wise chastening and sometimes bitter experience that the Pit is just not where it's at. Or the Lord may even want them to go back, either to teach them a lesson or to witness to their relatives, or both! I know the Lord had to let me backslide sometimes and get out of His Will just to show me what was not the Will of God by sad, personal experience!

33. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY SOME PEOPLE LEARN--THE HARD WAY! EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER, but a tough one! If you're not sure you're in the Will of God, that's one rough way to find out! Like another old Coloured lady said when she asked what "unction" was: "Ah don' know what it am, but I sho' know when it ain't!" Maybe that's just the only way they'll ever learn where He is or isn't! PTL!

34. BUT FROM WHAT I HEAR OF SOME OF YOU, you're being so hard on people before they leave that you make them think that you hate them and that they wouldn't be welcome to come back even if they wanted to come back!--Or you make them so mad that you turn them totally against you so that you send them away a bitter enemy who wants to fight you and is sorry they ever joined you, instead of parting friends and assuring them that a warm welcome awaits them if they want to return!

35. LIKE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, MURMURING IS THE FIRST SIGN OF WANTING TO TURN BACK. It's usually a sign that they are already looking back, the murmuring is the expression of this desire to go back, and the next step is to go back. So whenever I heard that someone was murmuring and unhappy, I would usually go straight to them in love and sympathy and tell them I was sorry they were not satisfied, and ask them if they would like to go back, and if so, we would gladly help them to do so!

36. THIS FORTHRIGHT APPROACH TO GET THE MATTER HONESTLY OUT IN THE OPEN, USUALLY DOES ONE OF TWO THINGS:

(1) Either shocks them and wakes them up and shows them how serious their murmuring is and how far away it's leading them and causes them to repent if they really don't want to go back; or

(2) It proves that that is really their desire, that they really do want to go home and it's been their desire to do so all along.

This direct approach with the question kindly asked: "Do you want to go home?" precipitates a crisis and forces them to a decision, puts them to the test.

37. I EVEN GOT SO MAD AT SHAD AND JEREMIAH FOR MURMURING once in the early days that I told them if they didn't like it here to pack their bags and get out, that I didn't like them either! But when they were actually faced with this serious consequence of their murmuring, that they were actually going to have to go, they flatly refused, told me they couldn't leave the Lord's Work no matter what and have been with us ever since--two of our top leaders! God bless them!

38. IN MY OLD DENOMINATION, my District Superintendent told me that when trouble came in the church: "Never precipitate the crisis"--Just try to smooth it over, ignore it, and maybe it'll go away! But when a body has a bullet or a cancer in it, the doctor tries to cut it out, a painful process that might even kill the patient, but also, it might save him from a slow and painful death! Otherwise, you'll be like the doctor who, to spare the husband any bad news, kept telling him his wife was improving, so that when she died, the husband said, "I guess she died of improvements!"

39. IT DOESN'T PAY TO TRY TO GLOSS THE TROUBLE OVER, or just turn your back on it and ignore it and hope it'll go away or they'll just get over it! You must deal with the disease of murmuring, have it out, lovingly

but firmly, as well as the disease of nostalgia, which is looking back. It may be just a temporary attack which you can sweetly help them overcome with love and sympathy and kind words, or it may be a permanent disease because they're not worthy of Him!

40. IN EITHER CASE, YOU, THE LEADER, ARE THE SOUL DOCTOR and you must find out what the real trouble is, whether curable or incurable. If incurable, like the leper with an incurable case of leprosy which might also infect and destroy others if you don't act quickly, you must get them gently but firmly out of the camp as soon as possible before their critical, negative and half-hearted rebellious attitude spreads to others who are weak. You may do more damage to the whole body by trying to keep the gangrenous member, than if you cut off the hopeless case!

41. SOME COMPLAINING DEVILS DON'T EVEN WANT TO LEAVE YOUR MIDST, because then they couldn't cause you as much trouble. They just want to stay and be a problem child and take hours and hours of leadership time wasted on them, while they're only trying to get attention and cause you trouble. Others who really want to go, you waste hours trying to dissuade, and then, when all is said and done, they still go, so all your high-powered persuasion was in vain!

42. FOR GOD'S SAKE, IF THEY WANT TO GO HOME, LET THEM GO! Don't try to hang on to them, or you'll be sorry! We don't want that kind of disciple. Martha wanted to go home once, so I told her, "Sure, go ahead--but you may be sorry!" But when she found out I was so willing to let her go, that scared her more than if I had fought it! So she decided she wasn't so anxious to leave. And when Ralph wanted to go home, I sent him away with love, a hug, and five dollars to hitchhike--and we parted friends!--And now he's back with us doing better than ever! Hallelujah!

43. FOR GOD'S SAKE AND THEIR SAKE AND YOUR OWN SAKE, LET MY PEOPLE GO! If they're really His People, they'll come back or serve the Lord somewhere else that fits them better! The Children of God are not the only Christians in the world, and this is not the only place they can serve God! We may feel we're the best Christians and this is the best place to serve the Lord, but they certainly shouldn't be here unless they feel that way, too! Otherwise, let them go! Thou hast not sinned! It is better to bury than to burn! If you insist on keeping them around, they'll only cause you trouble! Why don't you give them their choice! This is not the draft!--We're volunteers! Let them make their own decision! Don't try to make it for them! Otherwise, you'll have a weak sister on your hands that'll always be dependent on you and can never make a decision on their own, because you won't let them! No wonder you have such weak disciples!

44. JOEY GOT DISCOURAGED AND WANTED TO LEAVE just before we were ready to make a teacher out of him, but you got so mad at him for it and cursed him out so and humiliated him so by making a public spectacle of him and a dandy bad example that you made him so ashamed and embarrassed, he never wanted to see us again--and we lost a real good man who'd been with us a long time through many hard tests--and we lost his good wife also! May God forgive us!

45. PLEASE DON'T TRY TO TALK PEOPLE OUT OF LEAVING!--Maybe it's the only way they'll ever learn! I ran away from my job for the Lord many times, but that's the only way I was able to find out where I really belonged, and I always came back. Give them a chance to find out! And to tell people, "You can't leave because you know too much!" sounds like the Mafia! My God!--No wonder parents have had to come and kidnap their kids!

46. AND THEN AGAIN, YOU CAN STICK OUT YOUR NECK FOR SOME PEOPLE FOR NOTHING, like that blind boy you tried to protect from his parents, when all the time he really wanted to go home anyhow, and you were just wasting your time and getting a lot of bad publicity, because the whole case backfired on you! On the other hand, you recently, wisely, let an FBI girl go home to forsake all only because she insisted, even though accused of backsliding; but she stood firm, went, and came back like she promised--and you were the one who was wrong!

47. IN FACT, WE HEARD RECENTLY THAT THE FBI HAS HAD SEVERAL PERSONS INFILTRATE OUR RANKS, but after several months they stopped sending in reports because they got converted, resigned, and joined our ranks!--This report came from an official source of a law enforcement agent! Hallelujah! Praise God! Maybe one of them was that girl. It's a good thing you let her go, or she might have called the FBI on you!

48. AND AS FOR GETTING PARANOID AND PANICKING JUST BECAUSE TWO FBI AGENTS are on your roof tapping your telephone: You should have rejoiced, thanked them, invited them in for a cup of coffee, and said you're sure glad and thankful that they're here to protect you and getting the drop on all these parents who are making all these threatening calls against you! In fact, you should have asked them if they couldn't please help you to keep these parents from kidnapping their kids! Show them you've nothing to hide and that you appreciate their help and protection! Show them Romans Chapter 13, how that they are the ministers of God to thee for good and you're really glad to have them taking care of you and protecting you from these terrible parents! Praise God?

49. SOME OF OUR LEADERS HAVE EVEN FOUND THAT IT PAYS TO GO AROUND AND CALL

ON THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES and take the initiative in establishing good public relations. Invite them out to your place to talk to your kids, to show you have nothing to hide, that you're not hypnotising, drugging, kidnapping, or keeping people prisoners! Prove how ridiculous these charges are. Go to them and invite them to come see for themselves, and they'll appreciate your straightforwardness, openness, frankness, and desire to cooperate and be a blessing to the community and its young people rather than some kind of endangering threat! Get acquainted. Fear of the unknown is the worst.

50. FINALLY, DISCIPLES WHO WANT TO GO HOME AND STAY HOME SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN RECRUITED in the first place! Make it tough to join! Ruth had to beg Naomi to take her! Tell them of the hardships! "It's come and die for Jesus!" Hitchhiking is a good test! Going home is a corker! In Europe babes slept in the park with no buddies! Buddies aren't guards!--They're spiritual brothers! Are you looking for numbers and forsake all, or real disciples who'll win the world! Trust God and test them!

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