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July 14, 1993

By fax to (202) 456-6298 and mail

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Bernard Arons
Office of Tipper Gore in the
Office of the Vice President
Room 200
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Bernie:

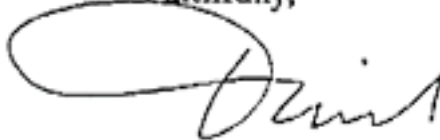
I look forward to our meeting on July 30, 1993, at 10:00 a.m. (perhaps, you indicated, with Susan Blumenthal joining in).

As background, I promised to fax the enclosed correspondence between Chairman Henry Waxman and the NIMH as to federal research concerning destructive cults (or totalist groups as they are sometimes termed) conducted since the Jonestown, Guyana massacre in 1978. You will note the NIMH conclusion that "there remain serious questions ... that are amenable to research for which the NIMH would be an appropriate focus." These questions concern, among other things, "process by which cult leaders recruit, manipulate and hold their followers."

It is interesting that intervention by the Office of the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), in 1979, abruptly interrupted a careful plan by the NIMH to review prior research, identify research needs and assess mental health implications, if any, specifically eschewing then (as we would want to now) issues of religion or belief. That was almost 15 years ago. Much water has flowed over public policy dams while NIMH continued to abstain from enlarging our understanding of cult/mental health phenomena, and, as I mentioned on the phone, more evidence has accumulated, but much remains undone. Unplugging policy blockage is now in order.

I look forward to our meeting.

Faithfully,



David J. Bardin
Counsel for the American Family Foundation (AFF)
and the Cult Awareness Network (CAN)

Enclosures:

Chairman Waxman's letter dated May 14, 1993
Director Goodwin's letter dated June 23, 1993

cc: Herbert L. Rosedale, president, AFF
Patricia E. Ryan, president, CAN
Cynthia Kisser, executive director, CAN ✓
Michael D. Langone, Ph.D., executive director, AFF

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