Hare Krishna [name redacted] prabhu,
Please accept my obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhu, please forgive me for not replying sooner. It is the end of the school year here [redacted] and I've been busy with students getting assignments finalized and exams completed. It's not over yet.

I was very sad when I read your last communication to me which I received on the 29th of November. It really breaks my heart when I hear how devotees are treated badly by other devotees, who, in their ignorance believe their actions are justified in order to 'protect' ISKCON from bad publicity. This type of thing is hindering the preaching mission to say the least and causing untold harm to devotees who have to endure the abuse from these immature leaders; though such devotees are not actually leaders but obstacles to the furtherance of Srila Prabhupada's mission.
You began your last message by stating "I hope I have not offended you." Please, there is no need to think like that, because you have not offended me, in any way, ever.
Regarding your comment that Bhavananda encouraged KK to … (molest your daughter) I can not say one way or the other, though I doubt it, despite what I now know about him. This is the first time I have heard this.
Let me talk about what I was aware of regarding the attack by KK on your daughter. I was at the Adelaide Temple, the nice old house with attached buildings and grounds out of the city, when I was told that Kripa Kara, the Adelaide Temple President had "indecently touched a young devotee girl." I could not say who told me however it's possible it was one of the Australian TPs as I remember there being a number of older devotees, leaders, there at the time. I was not told the nature of the touching nor if the incident involved sexual penetration nor any other details. Being a somewhat junior TP, I was most often not privy to the conversations or decisions of my senior godbrother managers. However, I do have some memory of there being an attempt to down play the incident at the time though I cannot say with any certainty what gave me that idea. Until you contacted me recently, I did not know anything more about the incident than I have stated including the fact KK was imprisoned for the attack on your daughter, though I became aware at some point that KK had gone to prison for a sexually related crime.
I am very sorry that I do not have anything more to add about this sad incident.
Regarding the young boy who was responsible for burning down the house at New Gaudadesh. I first became involved when Bhavananda rang me at NG and told me he was sending a young boy from Sydney to the farm and that he wanted me to look after him and engage him in some activities. I do not recall at any time having the understanding the boy was coming from the New Govardhana Gurukul. I strongly objected to Bhavananda about the boy coming to NG and spent some time on the telephone defending my reasons why he should not come. Eventually Bhavananda overruled my objections and informed me the boy would arrive at the Mildura train station in a few days.
I met the boy a few days later in Mildura and my first impression of him was that he was an angry boy. He was continually throwing a knife into the earth in front of the train station and responded to my initial approach to him in an aggressive, angry manner. I knew then there was something bothering him but was unable to coax it out of him on the trip back to NG. Though he was not directly troublesome during the time he stayed on the farm I remember his disturbed manner continuing in the background.
Some time later, I don't remember exactly, Bhavananda and other devotees came to NG for a visit. Prior to this visit, the local devotees had spent many months refurbishing and redecorating the main homestead for his use. The house was grand and the work completed to bring it to a usable condition was extensive. Though I don't remember the cost, I can say it was an expensive project. At the end of the visit, I drove Bhavananda and others from NG to Adelaide, the next stop in his Australian tour.
Almost as soon as we arrived at the Adelaide Temple, on Frome Street in the city, we were informed that Bhavananda's house had been totally destroyed in a fire. I do not recall any explanation been given at that time as to the cause of the fire nor was any person mentioned who might have been involved in setting the fire. I do recall very clearly however the reaction of Bhavananda to the news. He was visibly upset, as were all devotees, however it was his comment that surprised me. He made reference the young boy he had sent to New Gaudadesh from Sydney and said something to the effect, "that little demon probably burnt down the house". Almost immediately after that I left the Adelaide temple and drove the 4 ½ hour return trip to New Gaudadesh. The house was still smoldering when I arrived.
Within a day or two a team of insurance assessors from Adelaide arrived at the farm to investigate the cause of the fire. After only five to ten minutes one of them informed me the fire had started in what had been the sauna and took me

there to see the evidence. He showed me how the concrete floor, which had been covered by timber slats previously, was pitted as though it had exploded from within. It was explained to me that such an effect was caused by extreme heat, probably caused by a liquid accelerant such as petrol being poured onto the former floor slats and adjacent timber seating and then being ignited. It was made clear to me that the opinion of the investigators was that the fire had started in the sauna area and that a highly inflammable substance had been used to start it. The investigator directly told me the fire was a clear case of arson. It had been deliberately lit. He then asked me to my face "who did it?"
I was surprised and intimidated by the question regarding who had lit the fire, though I had some idea from others on the farm that the young boy from Sydney had been seen hanging around our petrol storage shed and that he was most likely the person who had lit the fire. I told the investigator I had no clear idea who had lit the fire and that I was happy to vouch for the innocence ever person on the farm except for the young boy who had come from Sydney, because I had only known him a short time. I offered to make inquiries about who might have lit the fire and relay my findings to them as soon as I had some information. The investigators agreed to my proposal and told me I had 24 hours to get back to them at which time they would inform the police who would come to the farm and investigate the matter themselves.
After the investigators had left, Kabamba Kanana das, now swami, who was residing on the farm at the time, offered to interview the young boy about the matter. A short time later he reported to me that the boy had confessed to lighting the fire though no explanation as to his reason was given. The insurance people were informed about the boy's admission and sometime after that the police arrived and took the boy to Wentworth, the nearest town.
After some time, probably a few days I received a phone call from a detective from the Wentworth police station who wanted to come to the farm and talk with me about a serious matter concerning a statement the boy had made in relation to the fire at NG. I met the police detective a couple of hours later at the farm and had a conversation with him. He began by telling me the boy was really disturbed and that he had been changing his story about what his involvement with the fire was and his motive. I was informed by the detective the boy had admitted lighting the fire and given a reason and then soon after denied lighting the fire. This had happened a number of times. Admitting and then denying being responsible for the fire that had destroyed the house. The detective then told me the boy had admitted to being responsible for the fire and said he had done it because "your guru had molested him" (the words the detective used). I was shocked at what I'd just heard and asked the detective to repeat what he had said, which he did.
The detective then asked me what I thought about the statement of the young boy. Let me preface my reply by saying that at that point in time I was, as were practically every devotee in the Australian yatra, unaware of the sexual orientation of Bhavananda or his sexual activities. It was later, I'm not sure how much later, that the devotee community in Australia became aware of the homosexual tendencies of Bhavananda. So, naturally, I responded to the direct query of the detective as to the possibility of Bhavananda molesting the young boy with honest disbelief. I didn't know what to say or think except that this was probably just another of the boy's stories to avoid the consequences of his actions.
My answer to the detective was simply that I could not believe such a story. To my mind at the time, it was just ludicrous to suggest Bhavananda had molested the boy and that the boy had retaliate by burning down the house. I restated my opinion to the detective after elaborating who Bhavananda actually was and what his worldwide status as a guru in ISKCON was. Of course, I now know differently but at the time the idea Bhavananda had sexually molested a young boy was as foreign to me as would be the idea aliens had lit the fire.
Sadly, in ignorance of the very real possibility the young boy had actually been molested by Bhavananda, I testified against him at his arson trial in Wentworth. I told the judge the history of the boy coming to NG, that he was agitated and angry though not uncooperative and that prior to the fire beginning he had been seen by a number of devotees at the petrol storage shed and that one devotee has seen him with a bottle of petrol close to the house prior to the fire beginning (the boy explained this by saying he was taking petrol to the boat we had on the river which he liked to use from time to time, with permission, to explore along the river). I believe the boy was sentenced to some time of detention in a facility for young people. I have been told on more than one occasion that later the boy suicided though I have no evidence to say he did or did not take his own life.
In my opinion, did the young boy light the fire that destroyed a very expensive house? Probably, almost certainly. Did he do it as retaliation to being molested by Bhavananda? Probably, almost certainly, now that I know something of the nature of Bhavananda, that at the time I was unaware of. Has there been a gross travesty of justice in this case? Yes, I believe so. And finally, do I share any of the blame for this? Not directly, though I could have made my suspicions known earlier. I did approach the police some years later but was informed I would have to make inquiries at Wentworth where the case was prosecuted because I had only a vague memory of details such as the year of the case

or the name of the young boy involved.

[name redacted]