

## CHAPTER 5

## GULLIBLE AND SKEPTICAL

I thank many people for their skepticism about the Dr. Laura letter. Some of that skepticism has been evident in some of the messages I've included in previous chapters.

Here's a clear example:

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May 26, 2005

I've received an email that is "an open letter to Dr. Laura Schlessinger" and begins:

"Dear Dr. Laura:

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show, and try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind them that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate. I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the other specific laws and how to follow them: "

The letter is signed:

Your Adoring fan,

James M. Kauffman, Ed.D.

Professor Emeritus

University of Virginia

[jmk9t@virginia.edu](mailto:jmk9t@virginia.edu)

Will you kindly verify if you are the author of this clever piece, and if it

circulates with your authorization to print your name? Thanks!

Xxx

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Unfortunately, not all of those who contact me about the letter are reasonably skeptical about the letter's authorship. They proceed as if I actually wrote the letter, as illustrated by the following and by many communications included in previous chapters. Here's another example of that lack of essential doubt.

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March 28, 2006

Dear Sir,

My name is Xxx and I recently read a rebuttal of yours that was emailed to me in regards to a comment the Dr. Laura made about homosexuality being wrong. I was extremely impressed by your knowledge and wit on the matter. These days there are many fundamentalist Judea-christian folks who make these blunt statements and have claimed to have read the bible, but yet tend to ignore many other things in the bible. A friend of mine called in Christina a la carte.

I am currently in the video production and documentary field and I have been trying to come up with an idea that is based on such things as your

retort on Dr. Laura's comment. I personally feel that attempting to educate the faithfully blind to be quite a interesting job, but I feel that it is important. I have been trying to find someone that may assist me in a project in which the "truths" of the bible are revealed (i.e. the 10 commandments being smashed and the Cultic Decalogue being intact and no one ever pays attention to).

I think little biblical facts like this and what was in you email are important, but can also be funny, especially in your case.

I don't know how you feel about such a project as this, but is people like you that I would love to hear your opinion on the matter. I know that this issue is touchy these days and your position at a prestigious university may become under fire for affiliations with such projects.

How ever you feel about the project is not a problem, but it certainly was a joy to read your commentary to Dr. Laura's remarks.

Sincerely,

Xxx

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I'm floored by some of the communications I receive. I'm always glad to learn new things, but I'd prefer to learn things based on realities, not based on presumption. Generally, I think skepticism serves people well. Lack of it often leads people to false conclusions.

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May 9, 2006

Hi,

You probably already know that Gary Wills, the author of What Jesus Meant asked in his book who wrote the email in which you responded to Dr. Laura. I don't know how to contact him and imagine it has already been cleared up.

I have kept the email and deeply appreciate it.

As emails go around they get shortened and I guess your name was deleted at some point.

I hope the two of you have talked and he gives you due credit.

Thanks,

Xxx

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In response to this message, I must say in all candor that no, actually, I wasn't aware that Gary Wills asked about the Dr. Laura letter's authorship. Good that he did. Good for anyone who did or does. No, Gary and I haven't talked about this, and if he does give me credit for writing the letter he'll be doing me a disservice.

Some people make the quite reasonable assumption that I must be getting a lot of

correspondence about the letter and that I must also be getting rather weary of it, as the writer of the following email did.

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May 10, 2010

Mr. Kauffman

You might be getting tired of this by now, but...

Was this really you?

Did you really write and send this? If so, what was your response?

Thank you,

Xxx

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If truth be told, yes, I'm a little tired of it, and sometimes I become annoyed to the point of expressing my displeasure, as in my following reply to someone who wrote me "If you were using humor to make a serious point, it would be scary to think that a "distinguished" professor would make statements in complete ignorance. As an observant Jew I was offended by your mocking of the Jewish Torah, especially since your mockery was based upon a genuine lack of understanding of its contents. I hope you are more careful and prepared when taking on G-d's law in the future." And so on.

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[On June 23, 2010, I replied as follows]

I have no relatives who are Jewish, which, I suppose, means I'm not a Jew.

Bummer.

Actually, I was raised in a Mennonite family, although I claim no religion now.

I've heard from hundreds of people from all over the world, and most see the letter as humorous, not offensive.

Most of the Jews I've heard from, including Rabbis, see the humor in the letter and don't see it as offensive (in fact, some gay Jews and the parents of gay Jews-- as well as nonJewish people who are gay or have gay relatives--have thanked the writer of the letter). A small minority of people, Jewish or not, see the letter as offensive (most who find the letter offensive are Christian fundamentalists).

As I understand the letter, it was making fun of Dr. Laura's statement about homosexuality, not Jewish religious laws in general (although it used Jewish law stated in Leviticus to send up Dr. Laura's comments on homosexuality). Observe the religious laws you wish as you will.

I find your assumption that I wrote the letter offensive. Many people who write me about it are reasonably skeptical of my authorship. This includes Jews and nonJews.

My name is spelled with a double f and a single n, which might be taken as a clue (though not a clincher) of my ethnicity. You got one right and one wrong (your response to Joe). Scary has no e. Pay attention.

Here is my standard reply:

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Having received my standard reply and other comments, this person wrote me yet again on June 24, 2010:

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I do not necessarily agree with your assessment that Dr. Laura knows her

scripture. The Torah (old testament as it is called by the gentiles) is cryptic and can only be decoded through the Mishna and Talmud--i.e. the oral law reduced to writing about 1800 years ago. For instance, the Torah prohibits work on the sabbath, but does not define work. Moving a piano in your house is not work, but lifting a feather in public is. The popular "eye for an eye" is also explained as monetary damages. "Thou shall not steal" in the ten commandments refers to kidnapping. Stealing is prohibited in Leviticus.

It is comical and sad when people recite verses in the Torah without any clue. I ask that you be careful as well.

Thank you for your letter. I doubt that I will ever get the the University of Virginia because the lewdness and immorality found on that campus. However, our paths may cross in the world to come. Maybe I should come to the University in order to bring G-dliness as that is the job of the Jew in this world.

=====

Oh, my! How did I survive in that den of iniquity known as the University of Virginia for more than 30 years? Well, by being iniquitous myself, I suppose.

But, if truth be told, I've also enjoyed the humor of many of my writers. If it were all to stop completely, I'd miss getting things like these:

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May 22, 2010

Dear Sir:

I don't know for sure if these were your remarks. (internet buzz not always reliable...) If so, please accept my compliments for your wit.

Xxx

6th-gen. Texas (where ideology trumps intellect...)

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[later, May 22, 2010, after reading my standard reply]

Ideology often trumps truth...

Cheers - Xxx

p.s. buy BP

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Although I find people's willingness to assume that I wrote the letter to Dr. Laura a bit naive, I don't find it creepy. So the person who wrote the following needn't worry that I'll be creeped out.

=====  
June 9, 2010

Hello Dr. Kauffman,

My name is Xxx, and I am a student at Ball State University.

I am writing to tell you I really enjoyed your response to Dr. Schlesinger's segment regarding God's Law and homosexuality. My cheeks hurt by the time I finished reading it.

I remember my grandpa sending my family a letter with funny rules from the old testament when I was little. After I read your response, I immediately thought of him. I (of course) sent your response to many friends and family members as I know they will thoroughly enjoy it.

I hope this message does not come off as creepy. I just want you to know your



humor does not go unappreciated.

Best regards,

Xxx

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Even personal acquaintances of mine have wondered whether I wrote the letter. Some of my colleagues have gotten it from other acquaintances or colleagues of mine. At least the colleagues I've heard from also see the humor in the letter, and most are reasonably skeptical of my authorship. Some seem to assume it's really my work. I admit to having written and said things tongue in cheek, but the Dr. Laura letter isn't my work.

=====

May 20, 2010

Hi Jim,

Got this email, below, from my wife's Uncle in Florida... It's very funny but I'm curious as to when you wrote it.. Is this one of those emails that goes around and around...Hope all is well.

Xxx

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November 16, 2009

Hey Jim -

A friend of mine just sent me this.... Did you REALLY write this??? If so, even more so, you're not only my FRIEND but my HERO!!!! :>X Xxx

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May 28, 2010

Dear Jim,

I just received a copy of your response to Dr. Laura (from Xxx, who got it from Xxx). That's fantastic! Where on the internet is it posted?

Love to Patty [my wife]--and you, too, of course,

Xxx

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Some of my correspondents seem to be urging me to take credit for the letter even if I didn't write it. Believe me, I wish I'd had the wit to write it! But I think it would be unprofessional, not to mention immoral, for me to take credit for work that's not mine. By the way, those who think of morality as somehow mostly about sexual matters seem, to me, hung up on sex rather than morality. And those who think I have no moral standards because I'm a nontheist have, in my opinion, a very warped view of the origins of morality. The skeptical might have at least as clear a view of morality as the gullible.

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February 15, 2010

I don't know if you really wrote this, but we had the biggest laugh we've had in a long time! If you in fact did NOT write it, take credit anyway!!

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Sorry. No can do. I try my best to avoid taking credit for what I did not do, good as well as bad. But, of course, this doesn't stop people from making the assumption that I did or do, as illustrated by the following:

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June 10, 2010

If you are the same James M. Kaufman who sent a letter to Dr. Laura re homosexuality and other sins of the bible, e.g. keeping slaves, selling your daughter, etc., your letter is nearly word for word from an episode of The West Wing, entitled, "In This White House." This particular episode appeared in rerun just yesterday. Here is President Bartlett's speech:

Bartlet: I like your show. I like how you call homosexuality an abomination.

Dr. Jenna Jacobs: I don't say homosexuality is an abomination, Mr. President. The Bible does.

President Josiah Bartlet: Yes it does. Leviticus.... See More

Dr. Jenna Jacobs: 18:22.

President Josiah Bartlet: Chapter and verse. I wanted to ask you a couple of questions while I have you here. I'm interested in selling my youngest daughter into slavery as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. She's a Georgetown sophomore, speaks fluent Italian, always cleared the table when it was her turn. What would a good price for her be? While thinking about that, can I ask another? My Chief of Staff Leo McGarry insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly says he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself or is it okay to call the police? Here's one that's really important because we've got a lot of sports fans in this town: touching the skin of a dead pig makes one unclean. Leviticus 11:7. If they promise to wear gloves, can the Washington Redskins still play football? Can Notre Dame? Can West Point? Does the whole town really have to be together to stone my brother John for planting different crops side by side? Can I burn my mother in a small family gathering for wearing garments made from

two different threads? Think about those questions, would you? One last thing: while you may be mistaking this for your monthly meeting of the Ignorant Tight-Ass Club, in this building, when the President stands, nobody sits. You shouldn't quote other people's works and call them your own.

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This person expressed regret at having assumed that I take credit for the letter or for that TV episode (which I've heard about but never seen).

Skepticism seems to serve people well when they confront many statements and questions, not just about the authorship of "my" letter. If the Dr. Laura letter has any meaning, I suppose it's that we'd better be very careful what we take literally in Scripture. And if people aren't sufficiently skeptical of my authorship of the letter, at least I'm happy that they're skeptical about Scripture.

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June 9, 2010

James Kauffman,

Thank you, thank you, thank you. I am 60 years old and this the first time I have ever written an email to someone I did not know because of an email I received.

I loved reading you letter to Dr. Laura Schlesinger. I hope millions of people get a chance to read your email.

Your letter, so simple, put the bible quoting fanatics into perspective.

Thank you, thank you, thank you again and again

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June 9, 2010

Dear Professor Kauffman,

I am writing to thank you for your letter to Dr Laura Schlesinger. Your rebuttle to her attack on homosexuality as an abomination based on orthodox jewish readings is both pointed and entertaining.

I wont belabor the point you made, but I will say that I appreciate the time you took to research and craft your reply. It is always nice to see people fed their own bitter pills.

If you are not familiar with the Flying Spaghetti Monster, you may find the following website entertaining: <http://www.venganza.org/>

I am Canadian, but I am not for sale. I would, however, very much like to sell you my Prime Minister and perhaps Preston Manning. And Celine Dion.

Cheers!

Xxx

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I do know people who think Scriptures about various things are to be taken literally, but I don't know any snake handlers personally. But, if you want to know about it, we read in Mark 16:17-18, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Yes, this does provide the Biblical grounding that some people use for religious services in which they handle poisonous snakes, and it's also no doubt the basis for belief in exorcism (casting out demons or devils), glossolalia (speaking in tongues), and faith healing. I don't know about a religion requiring

practitioners to drink deadly poisons, but I'd suppose that we'd see a greater percentage of deaths in that religion than in a religion requiring only snake-handling. The Jonestown mass suicide by drinking poison sort of puts the lie to any proposition that the passage from the Gospel According to Mark quoted above should be taken literally. But, of course, one could always assert that the reason the people who took the poison in Jonestown died is that they weren't quite right in their religious beliefs. Had they truly believed the Gospel, the poison wouldn't have hurt them.

And, of course, there's the commandment of god, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13), which really doesn't leave a lot of wiggle room for the military or those who support capital punishment or even those who use pesticides, antibiotics, or herbicides if you take it just as it is, no interpretation required. But, maybe, "other innocent human beings" should have been appended to the commandment?

Trying to live one's life by taking every scripture literally, no interpretation, no historical context, no allowing for "wiggle room" is surely a fool's proposition and certain to drive whoever tries it to madness. And it will lead a person to wholly horrible conclusions.

Just consider the inconsistencies and contradictions of scripture. A lot of people would like to believe that Jesus Christ was a god-man of peace. But Matthew 10:34-36 reads, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household." Well, sure, this is the King James version, but whatever translation of the Bible you like says pretty much the same thing.

Which made me wince a bit when I got this from an Israeli correspondent:

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June 8, 2010

Dear Sir,

I don't know if you really wrote the comments to Dr. Laura Schlesinger regarding her views (based on the Bible) on homosexuality.

I read what you allegedly wrote and according to your views everything that is written in the book Vayikra (Leviticus) is sheer nonsense.

If I understand you correctly, according to you also the Ten Commandments are bullshit and therefore, we are allowed to murder, still, fornicate etc.

In your words you act as if you are ignorant but I believe that if you reached the rank of Professor in a prominent university, a fool or naïve you are not. It seems that you see everything in black and white. You know very well that things have "slightly" changed since the era of Moses, so I would expect you not to be so cynical unless you believe in the Koran.

Personally, I have nothing against homosexuals as long as they do whatever they do in their home. I don't think they have to waive their tendencies in public. I don't care what people are or do but I don't think one has to waive his tendencies in the presence of the entire world.

Sincerely,

Xxx

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My reply included this: “I suppose that, really, none of us needs to wave any tendency we may have in public—except when our rights or freedoms are involved.” Yes, there are people who wave their “tendencies” or beliefs (religious or political or otherwise ideological, which would include TEA party demonstrators and Fred Phelps) needlessly, pompously, or threateningly, but probably some public demonstrations, including those of gay people, teachers, atheists, government workers, or Republicans, are warranted (please note that these groups are not mutually exclusive).

My pique at the previous email was diminished somewhat by the response I received to my comment and my standard reply. The response helped to restore my feeling that most people in this world are basically good and don’t intentionally do evil to others.

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June 11, 2010 [responding to my standard reply]

Dear Sir,

To be honest, I did not expect a reply so, thank you for replying.

I love your sense of humor. Believe me, there are times I wish the law of the Torah would be applied with regard to crimes committed here.

As for Dr. Schlesinger I don’t know who she is so I can’t comment on what she does or does not with her life.

As you understand, I live here in Israel and know very little about leading persons in the USA academy world. I am a bit more familiar with Berkeley and Princeton where one of my sons did his Post Doc. in math.

Wishing you a pleasant weekend. Can I say to you Shabbat Shalom?



Xxx

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I'm happy when people send the blessings of peace to me, regardless of the language they use or the day of the week they wish it for me.

Then there are the apparently gullible who would like me to understand not only what the Bible really means but also that the humor in the letter (which they assume is mine) is... well, just nastiness under the guise of humor. Here's an example:

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June 14, 2010

To: James M. Kauffman, Ed.D. Professor Emeritus,

Dept. Of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education University of Virginia

I would refer you to a book that might help you grasp the concept of the scriptures that you pointed to in your response to Dr. Laura Schlesinger. Please refer to "Life Application Study Bible" it will explain to you in everyday language those concepts that seemed to have confused and eluded you. When studying the Bible it is important to study the entire work and not take a verse or verses out of context. if you were to read on past Leviticus 25:44 to Leviticus 25:54 "If any Israelites have not been bought back by the time the Year of Jubilee arrives, they and their children must be set free at that time." As far as your friend goes about wanting to own Canadians, I would refer him to Leviticus 25:54, this clearly states you can't own anyone, Mexican or Canadian.

By your email response it was clear you were trying for humor, unfortunately the humorous side of this fell far short when you consider your delivery was

intentionally deceptive. I looked up your background and instantly understood why you felt compelled to attack Dr. Laura Schlesinger and biblical teachings. You stated that your background is in the education field. I find it interesting that a long time educator would be intentionally misleading. Why you would use the bible and your ignorance of it to spread venom and foster such nastiness on the public under the guise of humor? Questions only you can answer and I believe with your wit, wisdom and longevity it won't be long before you'll get a chance to question God about those queries of yours. I am certain He will be much more compassionate than you are to people you disagree with.

Respectfully submitted,

Xxx

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Some of my correspondents receive my standard reply and seem to accept it as honest communication. For that, I'm grateful.

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May 19, 2010

Is this true?

[to which I responded]:

May 19, 2010

Well, I'm not sure what the antecedent of your "this" is, but I didn't write the letter. There is, indeed, that "open letter" to Dr. Laura, but I wrote only my "standard" reply:

.....

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Some of my correspondents have not only been skeptical but have shared my standard response with others, which is very helpful. Although I must admit that I've been amused by the correspondence I've gotten and have mixed feelings about its stopping (I doubt very much that it will entirely), I also want to set the record straight—to inform as many people as I can that I did not write the letter. The following is an example of how some of my correspondents are helping. I sent this person my standard reply, and this person kindly sent it along to others (my final comment follows the ++++++).

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May 19, 2010

[The following message was sent to 11 recipients by the person who asked whether I wrote the letter and subsequently received my standard reply]

Recently I was sent a joke that had an assigned author an controversial subject. Being a Doubting Thomas I inquired. Here is the correspondence in its entirety.

[Here the person included my standard reply.]

+++++

Thanks for being careful. Feel free to forward my reply with the Snopes address.

JK

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I don't find reasonable skepticism to be peculiar to any particular nationality or ethnic, religious, or professional group. I'm just glad for it when I see it.

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May 19, 2010

Subject: Verification of an internet posting

Dear Sir,

I received the following internet posting that has been attributed to you as its author. I am curious to learn if you are in fact the author, or if this is another email hoax that floats around the internet. I actually find the posting amusing.

Sincerely,

Xxx

Jakarta International School

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When they receive my standard reply, some of my correspondents seem to understand what's happened. The following correspondent asks when I forwarded the Dr. Laura to my friends without removing my signature. I don't remember when it was, but it was probably relatively soon after the letter began circulation, probably about 2001 or 2002. I got it from a Jewish friend who lives in California.

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May 20, 2010

Thank you for your reply. I have sent your response to my friend that loves to clog up my in-box by "copying and pasting" every article and urban legend that he runs across. Hopefully he will soon learn that not everything he reads on the internet is true, and that there are people in the world that do not adhere to Exodus 23:1.

Out of curiosity, when you say that you forwarded this to friends, was this something that you have done since my query, or is it something that you did

earlier? With the speed of communications and the social networking power of the internet I have wondered how long it would take for a "chain letter" of sorts to travel out into the ether and back to the author. But I'm sure someone has conducted research on the question.

Thank you again for your reply.

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Two other things I don't understand about some of the correspondence I've gotten: (1) why some people say they can't find the letter on the Snopes site and (2) why anyone would question whether the Snopes item on the Dr. Laura letter denies my authorship of the letter. Perhaps some people just don't believe anything other than a direct statement, like "James M. Kauffman did not write the Dr. Laura letter," constitutes denial. What can I say about communications such as the following, which I received in response to my standard reply?

=====

February 15, 2010

snopes didn't confirm or deny your writing. But by your response, it does look like you wrote it. Like your humor with Dr. Laura. As you know, with the destruction of the Temple, the sacrifices can no longer take place, but one day soon, G-d Willing and they will.

Chodesh Sameach!

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May 18, 2010

Hmm, Dr. Kauffman, I would say this constitutes a P.S. by the original writer of

that marvelous comedic satire.

Xxx

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I suppose the previous two communications were written by the kind of person who, if I were to say, “No, I’m not now, nor have I ever been married to Michael Salahi,” would likely retort, “Well, of course you deny it, but how else would you know how to spell her name?”

Thank goodness for healthy skepticism, as illustrated by the following:

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March 1, 2010

Dear Sir

Was the email that is currently touring the world written by you?

Best regards and enjoy your retirement.

Xxx

Cape Town

South Africa

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February 11, 2010

Dear Professor Kaufmann,

Did you in fact author this email to Dr. Laura Schlesinger? It is truly witty and quite funny. Thank you for a much needed laugh.

Best regards,

Xxx

University of Virginia

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September 24, 2006

Dear Dr. Kauffman,

I am dying to know if you did indeed pen the wonderfully poignant "open letter to Dr. Laura" in response to her assertion that homosexuality is an abomination per Leviticus 18:22.... (that is attributed to you) or if I'll be disappointed to learn this is yet another crafty urban legend. I haven't been able to shake my own heterosexuality yet, but I often steadfastly defend our countrymen and womens' civil rights. This letter truly struck a chord with me years ago, and continues to delight and unnerve me.

In the event that you did write this, I just want to thank you for articulating, so intelligibly, the "bewilderment" that so many of us feel in this day and age. I've re-read the "letter" dozens of times over the last several years, continue to howl out loud, and have forwarded it on to many friends of all preferences and denominations. I just ran across a dog-eared copy today, and felt obliged to write and send my gratitude.

Just curious, if you did pen this... did you ever receive a thoughtful response?!

Best regards,

Xxx

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I also greatly appreciate people's kind responses to my standard reply. Many seem to understand the pressure for immediate responses because we have rapid

communication. The following is from a very understanding skeptic who got my standard reply.

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September 27, 2006

Dr. Kauffman,

My goodness, thank you so much for your personally prefaced and thoughtful response. (And timely, by the way! It's inhumane, in my book, to expect immediate responses to everything, just because our increasingly fast paced gadgets can make "all things possible" 24/7.) I was genuinely moved to investigate the 'Dr Laura Letter' and your alleged authorship, but was skeptical that I'd ever receive a response. Or, worse, as you have unfortunately experienced, that some 'maligned' individual would blast me with damnation or just plain bloomin' craziness (note the advanced psychotherapy jargon).

Many years ago some college friends and I made up some "No Onan" lapel buttons. ("Onan" with the international "No" diagonal line symbol). I don't even recall the ridiculous circumstances that led to our creation of the buttons and our mock 'Anti-Onanism campaign' but reading "Onan" in your reply dusted a funny old memory off a dusty mental shelf. Perhaps some wacky offshoot to the "Just Say No" (oh-so-successful) efforts. Cheers to the irreverent, I say.

I admire your grace in handling the whole "Letter" affair, and am impressed by your thoughtful and clever "standard response" to the legions of inquirers, such as myself. Lessons for us all, in "how to be" in this interesting world of urban legends, "Dr" evangelizers, and poor good schmoes like us just trying to make



sense of it all. May the pen be forever mightier than the sword.

Many thanks for your time & response,

Xxx

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Frankly, I'd like to see a little more skepticism here:

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December 15, 2006

Hello sir.

We are strangers - I want to get that immediately out of the way in case you're afraid I'm an old student you may have forgotten or something. But quite nice to "meet" you.

Anyways, my purpose for writing you is to thank you profusely for a letter you allegedly wrote to Dr. Laura Schlesinger concerning Old Testament Law (the word "allegedly" is being used due to my distaste for blindly believing what I read on the internet). A friend of mine forwarded me this letter you wrote, in which you sarcastically ask Schlesinger for advice concerning the applications of some of the Law in the Torah in an (exquisite!) effort to show the hypocrisy of finding homosexuality detestable while ignoring other Old Testament Law.

Thank. You. Sincerely.

I'm not sure if you actually wrote the letter to begin with, or if you're aware of it's adventures on the internet. But if you did write it, you deserve to know how much not only I, but many friends and coworkers appreciate not only how beautifully the letter was written, but that someone with your talents would stand

up against the Leviticus defense of homophobia.

So again, thank you.

With all respect,

Xxx

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I'm flattered that anyone would think that I wrote the letter to Dr. Laura or that I'd have an opinion about it that would count. But I've gotten some correspondence suggesting that if I really did write it, I'm a superhero of sorts. Damn! I just don't have the cape!

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February 11, 2008

Prof. Kauffman,

I write a blog for the Washington Post on the ways that people live religion. [blog address deleted] I'd like to write a short piece about this letter that you wrote to Dr. Laura (or maybe President Bush) but I wanted to check with you about a few things. First of all, is this real? Did you really write it? Who did you address it to? How many people did you send it out to? I'm guessing this has been all over the web and I wanted to write about the letter as a phenomenon and reflecting people's frustration with fundamentalism in America. You know? Would you mind telling me the story? If you'd rather do it over the phone my cell is xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Thanks in advance for your help,

Xxx

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Well, I'm a lot older than the guy who wrote the following email, but I'll take fans wherever I can get them!

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May 30, 2010

Professor James Kauffman

Dear Professor Kauffman

I am 54 years of age and I have never written fan mail before.

I teach at the University of Xxx, Australia and for many years, my colleagues and I have used your texts in subjects such as Managing Complex Behaviours and Behaviour Documentation. Your text, Characteristics of EBD of Children and Youth (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) is a thoroughly worthwhile resource.

Some months ago, my colleague Professor Xxx Xxx sent me an open email, authorship attributed to you, re God's Law, which you sent to a Dr Schlesinger. I am not sure if you actually wrote this or when you wrote this, but I found it highly satisfying, entertaining and informative.

Apologies for the intrusion, but sincere best wishes and thanks from 'down under'.

A big fan,

Xxx

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Some of the correspondence I've gotten has contained web addresses for really interesting sites. I wasn't even aware of the existence of many of these sites until somebody told me about them. To them I say "Thanks!"

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May 31, 2010

Dear Mr. Kaufman..

I truly enjoyed an article you had previously written, concerning the subject of this e-mail, "Why can't we own a Canadian", I thought you might appreciate reading a similar article.

A group calling itself Protestants for the Common Good has released a fascinating document that indicates what the 'Biblical Principles' of marriage are, based on a reading of the Holy Bible. This group says that a proposed Constitutional Amendment codifying marriage entirely on biblical principles would say the following:

**[http://www.thecommongood.org/CGN/3\\_3/biblicalmarriage.html](http://www.thecommongood.org/CGN/3_3/biblicalmarriage.html)**

Xxx

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I sound like a lot of fun? Well, maybe to the person who wrote the following, but certainly not to those convinced that homosexuality is an abomination!

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June 1, 2010

Dear Dr. Kauffman

Your reply to Dr. Laura Schlesinger concerning matters covered

in the old testament has just come to my attention. (We Canadians are a little slow I know , but we usually get there in time, sometimes even ahead of Americans. ( WW I, WW II, )

I loved your wit and the truths therein. I cannot listen to Stephen Hawking without thinking there might be some kind of magnificent overall plan, but have never been arrogant enough to believe that the planner had any interest whatsoever in me, my species, or even the world I inhabit. It would be SO much more comfortable if one did.

Alas - this Canadian must soldier on sans Dr.Schlesinger's certainties, hoping that if I should ever go on the auction block yours is the highest bid. You sound like a lot of fun.

Xxx

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Finally, I've just gotta say that... well, yes, even though I wish the writer of the following had been more skeptical about my writing the letter, I do think we need an equivalent group in special education (SPED) that sends up silly propositions with tongue-in-cheek questions and commentary. Actually, I know some people who'd be really good at that.

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June 2, 2010

Hey Jim,

Thought I'd drop you a line to let you know that your response to Dr. L. Schlesinger about homosexuality being an abomination has not only become an

internet sensation (Why can't I own a Canadian?), it's making its round on Facebook too as a note entitled "Biblical Contrasts". A friend of mine from Alaska just posted it and has comments from all her virtual friends. I opened it, laughed as I read it, then saw it was signed off by you. You're having way too much fun; you're probably getting bored with the postmodernists who're hijacking special education and have re-focused your attention on the ultra-orthodox (is there an equivalent group in SPED?).