

DEAR DR. LAURA:

How a Letter I Didn't Write Brought Me Fame Without Fortune

James M. Kauffman

Preface

This little story is mostly communications (the majority electronic, some paper) that I received in response to a letter that has been circulating in the electronic world for more than a decade. By some electronic glitch, accidental or deliberate, I became designated as the author of the letter. The letter has now gone “viral,” and I will likely always be named as the author of it by some people.

I’ve compiled a sample of the communications I’ve received over the years. Readers may wonder why so many of the communications are dated recently and why so many of the dates are 2010. First, I thought the most recent communications (at the time of my compilation of these things) would be the most interesting, although I’ve gotten paper cards and letters, phone calls, faxes, and emails (including many Facebook messages) over the years, some dating back to the earliest years of the 21st century. Second, I’ve found that the messages come in waves or surges. Just when I think things have quieted down, I get another wave or surge. This is what happens with electronic communications. No doubt I’ll get a wave of emails every time homosexuality becomes a hot political issue, whether it involves a state or federal law.

The “open letter to Dr. Laura” for which I’ve become falsely famous is about homosexuality, specifically about a response to Dr. Laura’s alleged statement some years ago that homosexuality is an abomination, as stated in the Bible book of Leviticus. (I’ve never listened to Dr. Laura myself.) Homosexuality is a very controversial topic in many parts of the world, particularly among those who believe in certain religions or holy writs. The letter, too, has caused quite a stir among both believers and nonbelievers.

My own biases about the topic of homosexuality are probably very clear to anyone who reads all of what I've written. And biases pro and con certainly show through in many of the communications I've compiled. Some writers see the open letter to Dr. Laura as a pearl thrown before swine; others see it as swinish drivel thrown before the pearl of their belief that homosexuality is a sin. As for my authorship, that is a faux pearl that some have thrown before me, some assuming either that I'm one of the swine or someone of great wit. But I am neither the pig (well, that may be questionable, but I think probably not) nor (for certain) the author of the brilliant letter that so many have assumed or suspected I am.

My commentary on various people and ideas, interspersed with my comments on various types of communications I've received about the letter, will no doubt please some and displease others. But that might be expected, and such difference of opinion is entirely consistent with the open letter to Dr. Laura, which delighted many and disgusted some.

In our society, fame typically brings fortune—whether the fame is related to professional sport, the arts, or political office-seeking. In my case, the fame is purely fortuitous (no, not fortunate, just chance) and has brought me no fortune (no wealth, although chance has smiled on me in many ways, including the false but flattering attribution to me of the open letter to Dr. Laura). I feel the pursuit of wealth based on this false fame would be unseemly.

The story of my false fame explains enough about how this came to be and what people's reactions have been. I thank all of those who have communicated with me—all

of them, no exceptions, whether I agree with them or not. As you read, enjoy—if not all of the communications and comments, then at least those you like.

JMK

Charlottesville, Virginia

July, 2010

+++++

Table of Contents

Preface	
Chapter 1. Fame Without Fortune	29 pages
Chapter 2. Love and Hate	36 pages
Chapter 3. Scripture	69 pages
Chapter 4. People	43 pages
Chapter 5. Gullible and Skeptical	30 pages

Note: Any part of this story may be reproduced and distributed in any way, so long as the content is not altered, with the approval of the author.