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### Criticism Letter to Highland Church Regarding Young Man

Loyd L. Smith

Landon Brady Saunders

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#### Recommended Citation

Criticism Letter to Highland Church Regarding Young Man, Box 2, folder Herald of Truth--Criticism Administration: (1 of 2), Landon Brady Saunders Papers. Center for Restoration Studies MS #575. Abilene Christian University Special Collections and Archives, Brown Library. Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX.

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*Loyd L. Smith*

403 Watson St. • Box 372  
ALLEN, TEXAS 75002  
214/727-5371

June 11, 1974

Mr. Art HAddox  
Highland church of Christ  
Abilene, Texas 79602


Dear Brother HAddox:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter a gospel preacher in this area recently received from Landon Saunders and his "heartbeat" program.  
(The one who made the copies did the underlinging.)

I believe there is not one word in this whole letter about repentance. Please note especially paragraph number four. I firmly believe that this is false teaching. What do you and the rest of the brethren in charge of these things believe about it?

MAy He continue to bless all of you.

In Him,

  
Loyd L. Smith



# heartbeat

LONDON SAUNDERS · BOX 7101 · CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60680

May 27, 1974

Dear Mr.

I was talking recently to a young man in a southeastern part of the United States who was having many problems. At his request, we were alone for a couple of hours, and he poured out his story. He had become disgruntled with a foster home, had entered the drug scene, travelled around the United States with his girl, had been in and out of jail on various charges. Following his journey, he had identified with a group who had dropped out of society, lived freely among those going from one sex experience to another, and then had over-dosed on some dangerous drugs. For seven hours he had lain in the hospital, his life in the balance. He recovered, went through a rehabilitation program and at the time of our talk was trying to find himself once again.

I listened as he told his story. He talked very softly. Suddenly, he asked, "How old do you think I am?" Judging from the experiences he had related, I felt he must be at least 18. His reply: "I'm fourteen."

Barely fourteen! And had lived a lifetime already. Yet, at this point he was unable to feel love. He kept returning to that seven hour period. "What if I had died?" Would he have been lost? What about hell? Would it have been fair? After all, "I'm barely fourteen."

Seeing his dilemma, I called him by name and said: "If you had died, do you know what God would have done? He would have scooped you into his arms and would have held you forever."

Tears began to stream. Love had gotten through!

And this is why I said in my last letter that the perspective of my life is summed up in one word, Jesus. Here's why.

Many have difficulty understanding some of the arguments given for the existence of God. But, my major reason for believing is love. Love is basic to persons.

A child must have love to live. Isolate the child from persons, and he shrivels and dies. Our self-love is insufficient; we must be loved. Or, our personality, our whole life is affected, twisted.

A prisoner of war, locked in isolation, emerges with enormous personal difficulties. We need persons, we need love.

A child must be loved. A man must be loved if he grows properly. And the human race, as a race, must be loved. By

Someone other than ourselves. We need to hear a friendly Voice in our universe. It hurts to feel that we're alone on this planet.

Perhaps this helps to account for our search for life on other planets. Some almost desperately reach out to find life somewhere else. But, if it's not absurd to look for life out on other planets, why does it seem so absurd to believe that Life, the very source of life, could exist somewhere? And that that Life could be personal--could be loving?

A beautiful and powerful line that destroys, that shatters many illusions men hold about God is this: "God is love." (I John 4:6) God IS love! When a person reaches for love, he is reaching for God. Because that's what God is! The young man had come to doubt that he was loved by God. I fear that as a people we have come to doubt that we, as men, are loved. And it's causing us to lose heart...and hope. We're losing the reason to live. To rejoice. We think no one cares. No one loves us.

But, Jesus says that Someone cares. That Someone knows us. And loves us. And He Himself was the expression of that Someone in human terms. He came in love. Two things emerge.

First, we are loved by God first. "We love, because He first loved us." He loves you--even when you don't know it, or deserve it. He took the initiative.

Second, His love is forgiving love. Nothing greater can happen to a human being than that he is forgiven. Forgiveness means that we're brought together, united, accepted. We can only really love when we are forgiven, and the deeper the forgiveness, the greater the love. So, how can a person have love for God, if he feels rejected by Him? On the other hand, if God is forgiving, if He forgives you, does this not open the way for real love?

This is why my life has new meaning every day. I know I'm loved, forgiven, accepted. That makes me able to accept life, to love life, to really live. In spite of surrounding circumstances.

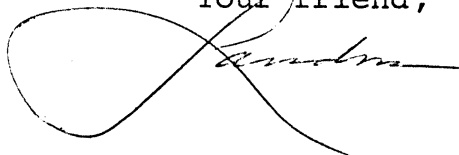
Knowing this, I can now feel right about myself. I feel good about me!

In my next letter, I will tell you what it was about Jesus' teaching that brought about this feeling in me.

Meanwhile, I don't expect what I said this time to solve all the world's problems! I do believe that love is the key to human life, and Jesus said it was the key to God. So, perhaps it's the key to me. And you. At least in our age it's a good warm place to begin.

Let's keep going....

Your friend,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda", written in black ink.