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## Saunders Reply to Loyd Smith Letter Regarding Young Man

Landon Brady Saunders

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HERALD OF TRUTH  
Radio and Television Programs

3046-Cr.  
Lloyd L. Smith f criticisms

July 26, 1974

Mr. Lloyd L. Smith  
403 Watson Street  
Allen, Texas 75002

Dear Brother Smith:

I just opened your letter and read your concern about one of my letters. Brother Art Haddox had received a letter from you which he had just handed me, and I was in the process of answering. I have been on the road for five weeks and am just now getting caught up on mail. My mail load is so heavy that it is very difficult sometimes for me to stay completely current--especially when I'm caught away from my desk for such an unexpectedly long period as the last few weeks.

Thank you for writing and calling this matter to my attention. Here is the setting for the letter and the background of the incident described.

First of all, this letter is one in a series of letters that were written for people who no longer believe in God, people who have come to feel that God is a hateful, selfish, unconcerned Being--if He exists at all. On this program we are trying to reach people who are not religious; they have rejected God and the Bible as being serious concerns in their lives. Hence, they must be carefully and slowly worked with until they come to a place of confidence and trust.

This letter really was designed to make only one point: That God is a loving God.

Now, this letter was not intended to convey the whole range of biblical truth. It's purpose was not to present the plan of salvation or even all that God requires of the sinner. No, it's purpose was to show something about God: namely, that God loves people.

Now, second, concerning the incident of the boy. This portion of the incident was simply inserted as an illustration of God's love, and this is the way my readers have accepted it. It was

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not designed to show how God accepts sinners. Nothing in the responses from my readers has indicated that any of them so understood it. Rather, it touched them and prepared them to hear more about this God.

Brother Smith, I am deeply sorry for what you concluded about me. I am sorry you felt I was teaching universalism which, of course, would mean I didn't teach and preach repentance and baptism, the necessity of being a member of the Lord's church and the rest of the teaching of the Bible. But, that just couldn't be farther from the facts. I am not involved in some kind of ministry where I teach one thing privately and something different publicly. I am not a deceiver.

The facts are these: This boy was a Christian, a member of the church of Christ at the time I visited with him. The events described had occurred, as I recall, some two years before. At the time of our visit he had heard some talking about God and how He condemned people. He knew he had done things that were wrong; yet, he knew he was not really aware of sin and its consequences at the early age in which all of this was going on. I was simply saying to a young man who was a Christian that, had he died as a child, God would have scooped him into His arms. Isn't that what we've always said about those who are not at an accountable age? Of course, I had discussed with him the question of his accountability. He understood what I was saying. After hearing his full story, after hearing how he was led off at such a young age by people who were older than he, after hearing the circumstances of his background (a foster child), I felt he was worrying about a question that existed more in his mind than in actual fact and that was the basis of my response to him. Which, incidentally, got through to him so that he was able to continue as a Christian without the fears that had plagued him. I understand that that is what we all do as Gospel preachers. When we talk to a person who is very young, we just bring the best judgement we can to the situation and then so encourage the young person. That is all I was doing in this case.

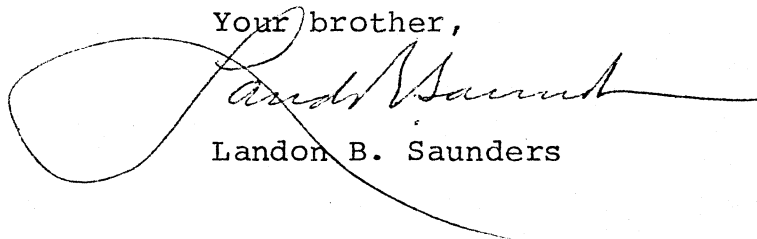
Now, I cited only the pertinent point of love in that incident as I related it in my letter because that is the point I was establishing. It is important for unbelievers to see the power of the message of God's love. The aim of this letter, as above stated, is to keep the door open to people who are seeking answers for their lives. Following letters carry them through the need for repentance, etc. We also supply other teaching materials as people respond and as we have more information concerning their needs. (For example, see enclosed materials.)

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Again, let me say that I appreciate your writing. I only wish I had had contact with you earlier. I deeply regret the feelings that have resulted and pray that all can be reconciled.

God bless you in your work. May we all be faithful to the message of God as we endeavor to bring souls to Him.

Your brother,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Landon B. Saunders". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Landon B. Saunders

LBS:af

P.S. I salute you for your long years of preaching. I would love to visit with you sometime. I could profit.