

Homophobia, adoption, Christianity topics of student letters

Abortion ignorance must be corrected

I am responding to Fran Thompson's letter to the DN April 18. I thought ignorance such as Miss Thompson's was corrected ages ago.

To start off with, adoption is not a "crime against nature." A crime against nature is a view such as yours. It's ignorant views like yours that keep babies from being put up for adoption by young mothers who feel abortion isn't an alternative and motherhood isn't either.

Obviously, Fran, you haven't the vaguest idea what adoption is and how it works. Adoptive parents do not "take her baby away from her;" it is her choice to give her baby to them to raise and love. Many of these people are unable to conceive a child. They are not trying to harm anyone, least of all the birthmother.

Good example comparing a living, breathing human being to the Mona Lisa. Ah, yes, I see the correlation! Canvas and a baby. Babies aren't sold like a painting, Fran. They are given to a good family who will love and care for them. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure that it's illegal to sell a baby. Selling isn't adopting.

Coming from a home where I was the adopted child, I can speak from experience. My parents, who are good Christian people, were unable to have another child which they desperately wanted. They adopted me when I was a week old and have loved and cared for me for 21 years of existence, and they will continue to do so as the good Lord allows. Obviously, I 1) am still alive, 2) don't have leprosy or AIDS and 3) am not addicted to drugs or anything else your twisted little mind can conjure up.

My birthmother did the best thing when she realized that she couldn't care for me, and put me up for adoption. I shudder to think of what could have happened to me if she tried to "get back on her feet" with a baby -- abuse, neglect, homelessness, just to name a few. Obviously she didn't feel that I was "the most important thing in her life," and I thank God every day that my parents were there to help her out.

My parents are not wealthy, but they made sure that I had everything I needed and most everything I wanted even when it meant they had to do without. I do not consider that to be selfish, Fran.

They sat with me through all my illnesses, cried with me through my bad times and laughed with me through all the good times. I couldn't have

asked for better or more loving parents. Now, are you going to say that that is being "bloodsuckers, scavengers or vultures?" I think not.

As my mother always told me, I didn't come from her womb, but I came from her heart and both of my parents mean more to me than anything in this world. Thank God my birthmother wasn't as ignorant as you are.

Denise Lowery
senior
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Student's opinion 'homophobic tripe'

Concerning Lieutenant Shonka's letter (DN, April 18):

In your letter, you give three reasons for excluding homosexuals from the military. When you boil them down, they look like this, (and feel free to correct me if I've misinterpreted you): First, gays are susceptible to blackmail. Second, straight men in the military aren't mature enough to handle working alongside gays. And third, as far as you're concerned, homosexuals are just plain icky.

Your last two arguments were nothing but homophobic tripe. Sure, I saw you wave your hands about and claim that you're not homophobic, but I say you lied through your teeth. You're as bigoted as they come, Shonka, but you have to claim not to be if you want your letter to carry weight.

Your first argument was the only one with any substance, but if you had paid attention, you would have noticed that it has been effectively refuted in the past. If you court-martial everyone who could be blackmailed, you'd have an awfully small fighting force. All of the military's rhetoric on this issue is just a load of rationalizing so that they can keep from changing their little boys' club.

And as for your criticism of ASUN, Lieutenant, you seem to think that only the military can criticize the military. That sounds dangerously close to totalitarianism to me. You better watch yourself, Lieutenant. This country that you serve was established with a very deliberate set of checks and balances so that all branches of government can monitor the behavior of all others. Freedom of expression is just one of the things that you are "fighting" for.

Finally, you close your letter by speaking as if the American military was commissioned by God himself.

Lighten up. You're a branch of the government like any other, and your purpose is to serve the people of this country. Don't let your ego get the better of you, Lieutenant. Hopefully, in the future, you'll think just a little bit before tossing out your bigoted attitudes.

Lawrence Jones
sophomore
psychology

Christians should look at New Age

I wish to write in response to James McIntyre's letter about the New Age movement (DN, April 17). While I agree with him that the New Age does not contain a universally applicable or even desirable philosophy, I hardly think that Christianity could claim any better. Even Christian philosophers have noticed the decay in the vision of unity shared by Christ and Paul in their writings. I don't know that Christianity, as a religion, can find a cure from within itself for what ails it.

One of the problems is that fundamentalism, something that exists throughout all sects of both Christian and non-Christian religions, at least in Christianity attempts a sort of scientific method approach to the Bible. It is divorced from any sort of cultural context and placed in a light of totally objective, absolute truth on a spiritual level, much the same way that Newton's law of gravity was thought to be objective and absolute. This changed when Einstein came up with his theory of relativity. I'm not going to draw any sort of parallel here because we are dealing with spirituality on one hand and physics on the other.

At the time the Bible was put together under Charlemagne, Christianity was being established as a state religion in most of Europe. The clergy that assembled the Bible were part of the governmental structure. They weren't stupid so they included spiritual ideas that appealed to the masses of people being Christianized, but they also used the letters that assured them a divinely designated authority to interpret scripture for people. This also assured them of their positions in government. This seems perfectly reasonable to me. I do recognize the need for some type of structure, and I would be a fool to deny Christianity's contributions to western society.

However, a relatively recent discovery in the 1940s unearthed the Gnostic texts. This is a whole set of scriptures, some of which were under authorship of some of the original

twelve disciples of Christ, that were decried as heretical by the early Christian church. They placed a great stress on gathering your own wisdom through contemplation and creativity. Despite the fact that they were denounced, some of the same contemplative practices were what sustained the church hierarchy in the monasteries, and it was the orthodox Christian monks who buried the documents in the first place when they were instructed to destroy them. Gnosticism was a very deep division that took place right away in early Christianity.

Studies, summaries of which can be found at the beginning of every letter in the New Testament in any American Catholic Bible, show that some of the letters were not even authored by the disciples whose names are on them. Rather, they were put together by scribes working in schools established under the names of these people.

Sadly, western culture does have a very rich, distinct spiritual heritage, which, unfortunately, one has to all but leave the orthodox churches entirely to find. Individuals like Martin Luther are well known, but there is also Meister Eckhart, a Christian scholar who wrote 400 years ago. He is thought by some Zen scholars to have the best grasp of Zen of anyone in the west. Soren Kierkegaard, a Protestant, through his writings in the 1800s founded the philosophy of existentialism. Thomas Merton, a Catholic monk who wrote in this century, studied and practiced Zen Buddhism for several years. He and the Buddhist religion were very celebrated 20 years ago. In his book, "Mystics and Zen Masters," he wrote that he often felt he had more in common with the contemplatives of the East than he did people in the west. A Catholic priest, Fr. J.K. Kadowaki, wrote a book entitled "Zen and The Bible," comparing the writings of these two different religions. Matthew Fox, a contemporary Christian scholar, has devoted a good deal of praise and practice to the spirituality of the Native Americans.

While Mr. McIntyre seems to feel that the self search is unique to the New Age and psychology, it was the Christian St. Clement of Alexandria who said, "He who knows himself knows God."

While certain New Age folk may not have it entirely together, Fox does not wholly condemn the New Age, nor do other Christian scholars, and he respects Native American spiritualism almost more so than his own Christian traditions. The authors I listed above are worth looking into if you are a Christian, and they certainly

don't offer the frightened language that I hear coming from a good many Fundamentalists.

All of the authors I listed have works that can be found in the Bennett Martin Public Library and Love Library.

Chuck Fries
junior
psychology

Thompson speech hurt by 'sidekick'

I attended the Hunter S. Thompson program on April 20th and would like to comment on the letter from James A. Roberts (DN, April 23).


Although Dr. Thompson's late arrival was no surprise, the poor handling of the written questions by "that woman in black," or Dr. Thompson's sidekick as Mr. Roberts called her, was truly astounding. It was hard for me to believe that she was a part of his entourage, so I assumed that she must have been connected with UNL in some way. It seemed even more obvious that this was the case because Dr. Thompson appeared to be as surprised and disappointed as the rest of us when she abruptly announced the ending of the program.

I stayed there until Dr. Thompson left and during that time I spoke with his editorial assistant. She was very upset about this turn of events, for, as she said, the program had been going well. Referring to the few people who got a chance to direct questions to Dr. Thompson via an on-floor microphone, she commented how polite and articulate this audience was. She told me that they had just been to Columbia University and that the audience there was rude and obnoxious.

Dr. Thompson's response and his editorial assistant's comments have convinced me that the quality of this program was greatly diminished by the presence of "that woman in black." Yes, she had better remain anonymous for her own good, as Mr. Roberts recommends, or I would suggest people seeking a refund approach her. I believe that had Dr. Thompson been left to his own devices, he would have made the delay worthwhile.

Amy Turek
UNL staff





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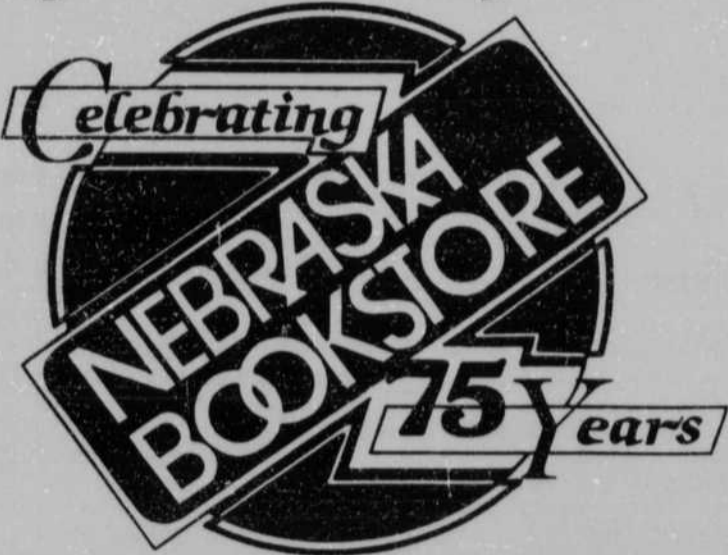
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