Dear Ellie,

I write this letter to Mandy Boggs in response to her statement in the Cardinal & Cream of March 2, 2001.

I read today in the recent issue of Cardinal & Cream, your comment on the new no smoking policy at Union. According to the paper, you said, “I think people need to be given room to make their own decision. Be it bad ones or good, we are all young adults now.” I am not writing to you about smoking, but rather about the issue of authority and the basis on which we make decisions.

Your words in the Cardinal & Cream imply not only that we are our own masters, but also that it is good that we are. You picture an area of freedom that rests around every person, an area in which he or she can exercise the will, and wait for the results or consequences that will only affect the one who makes that decision.

It is a characteristic of modern thought and culture (especially among people our age, just as in every young generation) to oppose authority and tradition. Your words reveal a shining reflection of this characteristic. Of course, you are only speaking of smoking, but you betray an ideology in which the self, the individual, is all that is considered according to the, to use your words, “room” they had been given (or that they had taken): Achan and the items he stole (Joshua 7), David’s adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband (2 Samuel 11-12), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), and we can certainly say that they were neither looked on favorably by God or man for their actions nor fared well themselves in the end. In this connection we also note Proverbs 14:12: “There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.” According to the Cardinal & Cream, your major is youth ministry. Hopefully you will not simply “give room for the decisions” of young people, but rather put before them the word of God as the definite and true authority, an authority to take over and completely direct our own high-minded decisions often so focused on our individual selves alone. Human depravity is not so weak a foe that it retreats without a constant and diligent war against it in the Holy Spirit.

I welcome your response to this letter and thank you for your time in reading it. May God give you the wisdom to know what He wants and give you the strength to live according to His will.

Adam Carter McCollum
Biblical Languages major

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