

April 20, 2000

FAC has been informed that Dean Tong, author of "Ashes to Ashes, Families to Dust" is a scheduled guest on "Focus on the Family" (<http://www.fotf.org>) with Dr. James Dobson. The issue being discussed involves parental discipline, including spanking. The show is being taped today with a broadcast date to be announced.

Tong is outspoken against what he calls 'religious mongering' in the family rights movement. As he stated to Suzanne Shell in an e-mail (In a message dated 98-01-20 23:54:20 EST) "Get off the religious bunk, Shell. I've been told your book is filled with it."

Tong has also exhibited extreme hostility towards women in general, and has alienated many of the female leaders in this movement with his very vocal woman-hating sentiments. While he proclaims, albeit feebly, to be for 'parental rights,' he admitted at a public meeting last night in Colorado Springs that he actually advocates for father's rights. His area of consultation focuses primarily on false allegations in divorce. By his own admission, he has little experience in false allegations which occur outside of divorce or custody disputes.

It is the position of FAC that any person or organization who allows, endorses, advocates or promotes the splintering of individual rights within the family unit to the detriment of the family unit facilitates the activities of the state in destroying the American family. Even in divorce situations, the child is still bonded to both parents and sees them as 'his family', regardless of the marital status of his parents. Fighting over which parent's individual rights take precedence is specious in view of the fact that children need both parents. It is self-defeating to the entire family rights movement. In our opinion, Tong is engaged in practices that undermine the rights of the family. His efforts over the past several years - while arguably well-intentioned - may have actually encouraged and promoted some of the devastating outcomes that we are seeing today.

FAC is outraged that 'Focus on the Family' would endorse the self-proclaimed 'expertise' of a person such as Tong, who is documentably outspoken against Christianity in this movement and against women in general, by including him as a guest on this very important show. We have notified 'Focus' of Tong's stated position and forwarded his anti-Christian e-mails to them at their request. We have also provided them with the contact information of other reputable activists nationwide who have documented Tong's incompetence and self-serving motives, and have received word that 'Focus' has contacted some of them.

According to our latest information, 'Focus' is proceeding with the taping of the show today, with Tong as a guest. This show promises to be less of a Focus on the FAMILY and more a Focus on Fathers Rights and Dean Tong.

BACKGROUND

FAC had contacted Dr. Dobson two years ago about the devastating issue of false allegations of child abuse, and included a copy of Shell's book "Profane Justice." We never received a response back. It is our position that 'Focus on the Family' has a powerful forum to address the issue of false allegations of child abuse and the destructive activities of over-zealous child savers. Since many Christian families are actually targeted to have their children removed, their failure to substantively address this issue has resulted in the continued victimization of many innocent families.

Last year, a representative of 'Focus,' Amy Stevens, was appointed to the Governor's Task Force to investigate child welfare in Colorado. Shell published a biting editorial exposing the biases and incompetence of some of the appointees and accurately predicted the outcome of the Task Force investigation. Stevens obtained a copy of that editorial and expressed her outrage at Shell's characterization of 'Focus on the Family's' inclusion on the Task Force as a 'wolf in sheep's clothing' due to their previous failure to address or request information about this devastating family issue.

Many Christian parents still contact FAC expressing their disappointment that 'Focus' won't help them or even acknowledge the scope and validity of this problem.

TONG'S PUBLIC COMMENTS April 19, 2000 - AT AN ACLU-SPONSORED PUBLIC MEETING IN COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO by Suzanne Shell

I was invited by Colorado Springs 'notable,' Charles E. Corry Ph.D. to attend the ACLU-sponsored presentation by Dean Tong. (NOTE: Corry, a kindred spirit with Tong, was clearly offended when he commented at a meeting the previous week that a person's religious beliefs were not appropriate to bring up when discussing false allegations of child abuse - presumably because I had made the comment "God is on our side" when referring to family rights. I interpreted his comments as an insultingly arrogant restriction on free speech and the free exercise of my religion - Dear Dr. Corry and others, if you find religious comments offensive, be mature, demonstrate some tolerance, and ignore them - IF you truly believe in the first amendment. BTW -You can see Corry's viewpoints at <http://www.dvmen.org> and <http://boulder.earthnet.net/~ccorry>)

Tong opened by commenting that he had no prepared presentation and would ad lib. Perhaps he should have stuck to reading a prepared speech like he did for the Father's Rights rally in Washington D.C. last fall. After all, there is some security in not having to think on your feet. As it was, Tong's stage presence rapidly deteriorated to swaying, sweaty stutterings and speaking to the floor.

Not unexpectedly, he spent a great deal of time bashing women. I will not dispute that there are some malicious gals (and don't forget the guys) out there selfishly grabbing all they can for themselves in a divorce or custody dispute, and clearly Tong is a victim of that. But his continued blanket negative portrayals of women in general sat badly with several observers, including one male I spoke with. His platform clearly lacks balance.

He made several assertions that were incorrect, including the statement that "Under the eleventh amendment, you cannot sue a caseworker in their official capacity. If you do file such a lawsuit, you will be sanctioned by the court." I turned to my associate and commented, "Perhaps I should inform John H. in Jefferson County about that. He sued DHS and won, however I doubt he'll give the money back." Admittedly, it is probably easier to assert something can't be done rather than admitting you don't know how to do it.

My previous experience with Tong indicates he has a deficiency in reading comprehension; he often misinterprets what he reads. I suggest he read the eleventh amendment again, and that he consult with a dictionary to help with the big words. The problem is that he is presenting himself as an 'expert' and this demonstrates he is giving erroneous legal advice to desperate parents.

And this advice doesn't come cheap. As a consultant, Tong confessed that the A-Team's bill to exonerate yourself from false allegations could go upwards of 30 to 50 thousand dollars. He is paid to provide you with his choice of experts who will subject you to 'embarrassing and

humiliating' tests ("but they are necessary") in order to "prove your innocence." He is a "behind the scenes strategist" who evidently coordinates the efforts of the professionals involved in the case; for a fee, of course. (Editor's note: While Tong claims to be a member of the A-Team, I have been contacted by an A-Team member who stated: **"Tong was NEVER part of the A-Team although he continues to this day CLAIM that he is. There is NO relationship with Dean period."** tsk tsk tsk, Dean . . . name dropping to enhance your 'professional' stature? According to my A-Team source, ***"There came a time when Tong's actions brought the price of his referrals just not worth it. His advice is too frequently terrible. He also is a loose cannon who is out of control. He has done things that are shocking."*** Dear reader, be advised, despite Tong's claims to the contrary - he is not and never has been part of the A-Team, and we would not want to disparage the A-Team by associating them with Tong.)

He spoke as if he were a psychologist, and attributed many psychological disorders to women by name and DSM-IV number, advising fathers how to present the mothers of their children as unfit. His presentation was sprinkled haphazardly with legal terms which he defined or pronounced somewhat incorrectly frequently enough to raise doubts as to his competence to be discussing the legal issues. His most common phrase was "in my opinion" as if his opinion was the only source of information that mattered. This reporter would have been much more impressed with verifiable sources that supported his opinions.

He confessed that he was involved in the Elian Gonzales case, and actually had to be escorted away from the Miami relative's home by the police for his own safety. My associate, Hilda found so many of his statements to be implausible that she immediately called her sister in Miami who specifically stated, "Only Cubans were removed under police escort, not any white men." Hilda, noted, "He is so full of himself, he has an ego that doesn't quit." She observed that his presentation was so full of "I this" and "I that" with so much name dropping (many of which were meaningless to the general public) designed to enhance his importance in the eyes of the audience that it was more than she could stomach and left after twenty minutes. But not before asking what was his success rate for the \$50,000 fee.

Tong replied that the A-Team has a 95% or greater success rate in criminal trials where the state's burden of proof is quite high, and greater than 90% in divorce/custody cases. Naturally this is unverifiable (NOTE: Tong has no authority to speak for the A-Team. Dear Reader - please take this commentary in the light it is intended - to point out the discrepancies in Tong's claims and to expose his braggadocio for what it is without casting dispersions on the A-Team. No association between Tong and the A-Team is intended or implied by this writer. Hereafter - the A-Team will not be named even though Tong had named them in his speech.). However, I wonder if he counts the ones who run out of money and get dropped before the case is resolved or who cop a plea under duress? Or does Tong & Co. just outspend the plaintiff or litigate them into insolvency - a tactic which doesn't require competence or expertise? I have received reports from other credible activists that they have had to come behind Tong and clean up the disasters he has made of people's lives before terminating his dubious services.

He kept reiterating the necessity for more and better experts and testing, of which he was evidently the only referral source. It became clear that "Tong's formula," as he called it, was the only way to succeed. And since Tong's formula requires the expenditure of large amounts of money directed towards Tong and his associates, it is only available to those who can afford it. "This isn't a charity," describes Tong's attitude.

Speaking as one who operates a charity, and who provides some of the same services Tong

provides and much more, the ones who need these services the most can afford it the least. The consensus among many credible people in the family rights movement is that Tong is in it for the money and glory, exploiting desperate families for personal gain. Who better to exploit than angry fathers with good jobs? His presentation last night has confirmed that assessment in the eyes of this reporter.

He touted great successes such as being instrumental in increasing the criminal classification of making a false report from a misdemeanor to a felony in his home state of Florida. However this effort was rendered ineffectual since he was forced to admit that not a single case of false reporting has been prosecuted. It is this writer's opinion that insuring the prosecution of false reports of child abuse would be the more significant and meaningful accomplishment.

Tong has all the substance of a cold and mercenary fog; whatever you try to grab is rendered insubstantial on contact. He characterizes himself as a crusader in the area of false allegations of child abuse, but practices selective, profit-motivated, gender-biased activism.

In closing, as a woman who has been the target of Tong's negative comments for the past two years or more, I have to confess that he does bring out the worst in me. I cringe at the satisfaction I feel when I report that I spoke with the manager of the establishment where Tong spoke last night as I was leaving. She has listened to him and agreed with some disgust that he was woman-bashing. She related his comments that he had expected a turnout of over two hundred, with extensive media coverage and picketers outside. As a precautionary measure, she had additional staff on hand - all for a grand total of twenty attendees; including one child, three ACLU sponsoring members and me and Hilda - in substance, fourteen attendees. Three women left before I did. Perhaps I can feel some empathy for his ex-wife who has caused him so much grief - without excusing her tactics - he could possibly have provoked what happened. He simply can't be reasoned with, since everyone else is wrong. Therefore he must be endured. Sigh. He clearly needs psychological help dealing with his obsessively negative attitudes towards women, especially those who have done nothing to harm him or any other man. I suggest perhaps one of his stable of experts could be of benefit to him.

My associate, Hilda, carries a lot of political influence in this community. She has informed me that as a result of the ACLU sponsoring Tong's appearance, that many of her feminine friends intend to withdraw their ACLU memberships. He did not leave many happy campers in Colorado Springs.