



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 24, 2017

In a Potty-mouthed Time, a Clean College Comedy Group Is All the Rage

It's a modern comedy troupe that doesn't  curse, engage in scatological humor, or use sexual innuendo — and that has more than one billion YouTube hits. It's called Studio C, and for those with ears to hear and eyes to see, it's evidence that the Hollywood sewer pipe isn't quite as popular as people think.

Studio C is a sketch comedy show out of Brigham Young University, run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons). The *Wall Street Journal* [reports](#) on the group, telling us that it

has achieved sizable popularity on the internet, despite — or perhaps because of — its super-scrubbed brand of clean humor, such as a skit about a soccer goalie named Scott Sterling who accidentally, and agonizingly, blocks shots with his face.

Working blue is out of the question for this comedy troupe. BYU, run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has ranked as the nation's most "Stone Cold Sober" place of higher learning for 20 straight years, according to the *Princeton Review*.

The performers are employees of the Provo, Utah, school and must adhere to its honor code, which includes following church principles such as eschewing smoking and avoiding coffee. Male cast members must obtain university permission to grow facial hair — dubbed a "beard card" by students.

Writers at Studio C, which launched in 2012 and began its new season this month, must avoid innuendo, cursing, politics — even the word "gosh," because it sounds too much like "God." Flatulence jokes don't stand a prayer of getting past the BYU television censors. But bits like the appearance of curmudgeonly Harry Potter character Severus Snape on a "Bachelorette"-like reality show — that works.

The result: a burgeoning pop-culture phenomenon that has racked up more than 1 billion views on YouTube — about a third of the number of "Saturday Night Live" [which has been around far longer].

(Note: It's not just that "gosh" sounds too much like "God." In point of fact, the Online Etymology Dictionary [informs](#) that it originated as an "altered pronunciation of God. Probably via by gosse (mid-16c.)").

Studio C's popularity is no surprise, if the well-crafted parody below of game show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* is any indication.

What does surprise many is that a comedy show could be clean and popular. But it shouldn't. After all, vulgar comedy's prevalence is a phenomenon of the last 50 years; in contrast, Studio C reflects what had long been mainstream comedy's norm.

Just consider legends of laughter such as Laurel & Hardy, Charlie Chaplin, Abbott & Costello, Jackie Gleason, and Art Carney in the '50s, and Bob Hope; it was taken for granted they'd be "clean," and they



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and so many other old-time comedians managed to entertain generations.

In reality, being vulgar and lewd is to be reliant on cheap thrills; like a sideshow geek biting the heads off live chickens, it's a freak-show version of entertainment. It's not something the truly talented need do, and insofar as low-character comedians are remembered at all, I suspect they'll ultimately be viewed as bottom feeders who gorged themselves on the decaying morality of a bottoming-out society.

Of course, many today will roll their eyes and view complaints about lewdness and vulgarity as Church Lady concerns. This tragic perspective is also a phenomenon of recent times, however; it would have been alien to our ancestors.

C.S. Lewis once observed that sex "is not messed up because it was put in the closet. It was put in the closet because it was messed up." And what's the result of throwing man's closet wide open? For one thing, the illegitimacy rate has exploded from four percent in the 1940s to 40 percent today. Thank you, [Hollywood pedophile cartel](#).

As for vulgarity, critics will say "They're only words," forgetting that we're called to hurt no one in deed, thought, or word (which means words can do damage). Our first president, George Washington, certainly grasped this, [writing](#) in a 1776 general order that the "General is sorry to be informed that the foolish, and wicked practice, of profane cursing and swearing (a Vice heretofore little known in an American Army) is growing into fashion.... [For] it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense, and character, detests and despises it."

(I address the matter of vulgarity in-depth in the July essay "Cussing & Cultural Decay," found [here](#).)

The problem with cultural decay isn't that it threatens "church types," but that it threatens something far greater — our virtue (the set of good moral habits). And virtue, as our second president, John Adams, [noted](#), is the *only* foundation of "republics" and a "free constitution." To quote British philosopher Edmund Burke, "It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

Much as how a lady friend once said to me, "Years ago you knew who the bad girls were; now you know who the good girls are," Studio C's purity, once the norm, makes it stand out. Is this good? Is today's entertainment helping to breed citizens of temperate minds? Or is it forging our fetters?

Too often the modern attitude is "Anything for a laugh." "Anything," however, would include our Republic, freedom, and future. And there's nothing funny about that.



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