

Different Spokes for Different Folks

"There is a yellow one, who won't accept the black one, who won't accept the red one, who won't accept the white one ... there is the long hair, who doesn't like the short hair, for being such a rich one, that will not help the poor one; different strokes for different folks, and so on and so on ..."

These words are from the song, *Everyday People*, by Sly and the Family Stone. I really liked that song when it was released in 1968. It put across the message loud and clear that we should not reject other people because of their outward appearance or other differences of that nature. I agreed with the song then, and I still do now. What could be dumber than to stick to "our own kind," when there is such a big, wonderful, colorful world of differences to make life interesting and enjoyable?

The '60's, for all that was wrong with the era — and there was plenty wrong with it — was a time when we, as a people, examined many of our prejudices toward people of other races and ethnic backgrounds and found them undesirable. We also began examining our attitudes toward differences in outward appearance, such as hair length, clothing style, etc. and seeing these as nothing more than harmless personal preferences: "Different strokes for different folks."

There were many positive changes in our society as a result, but, in my opinion, it didn't take long to go way too far. We began to idolize "tolerance" as virtue #1, and we trashed our society in the process. We threw morality to the wind, and, frankly, we now are reaping the whirlwind. As I contemplate the vastly negative changes that have occurred in our society during the last 25-30 years, I wonder what the next 25 years will bring. For example, our national consensus today is that sexual abuse of children, involuntary euthanasia, and infanticide are wrong. Will they still be *wrong* in 2021? Or will only fundamentalist "bigots" think so?

Objective truth is another casualty of the times in which we live. TRUTH is now seen as just another personal preference. You have yours, and I have mine. And so, a bigot today is not someone who prejudices another person based upon skin color or outward appearance; a bigot these days is anyone who will not validate another person's belief system. It is one thing, in a free country, to

have the right to believe anything you wish to believe. But, just because everyone has the right to believe whatever he or she chooses, it does not mean every belief is equally true and valid.

I would say the majority of people today — in our country, at least — believe that all religions are basically the same, just as good and valid as any other, and that it is bigoted or intolerant to hold that there is only one religious truth. This was the theme of the Parliament of the World's Religions, which we attended here in

Chicago in 1993. The Parliament likened all religion to a big wheel with many spokes, the spokes representing the differences between individual religious groups. Although the spokes are separated at the rim, they all join at the hub, meaning that, although there are outward differences between all faith systems, all are the same at their core. It's just different spokes for different folks, and it really is not very important which spiritual path you choose (as long as, I gather, you are sincere), since all paths lead ultimately to the same place. Oh, how tolerant and nonjudgemental and, oh, what a *big, fat fib!*

The world's religions are not at all the same at the core! Muslims are monotheists who are unipersonal. Allah is their God, and to them it is anathema for anyone to say Allah has a Son. Christians are tripersonal monotheists; God's name is Yahweh, and He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Pagans and Hindus are pantheists. Their God is impersonal and exists in all matter. As the great theologian Yoda taught Luke Skywalker in the *Star Wars* movies, "The force is all around you; it's in the rocks; it's in the trees." The force for good and evil is the *same force*; what matters is that you get on its good side.

There is one sense in which the world's religions are the same at the hub; and it is that core similarity that unites them, but separates *all of them* from biblical Christianity. Religion is a system of good works designed to make you acceptable to God; however, these works may be defined by your particular religious spoke. Christianity teaches there is *nothing* a person can do to earn his or her acceptance by God; that salvation is a free gift, pure and simple. Jesus was asked by the people of His day, "What works must we

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do to do the works God requires?" He answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (John 6:28-29).

The "Global Ethic" signed by most of the participants of the Parliament says, "We are women and men who have embraced the precepts and practices of the world's religions ... Opening our hearts to one another, we must sink our narrow differences for the cause of world community ..." Christians cannot "*embrace the precepts and practices of the world's religions,*" which include idolatry, Spiritism, etc., and are unwilling to *sink our differences* for any cause, no matter how high minded it sounds. Our *difference*, salvation by faith in Christ alone, is the core of our faith. This difference not only sets us apart from the other faiths, but makes real *unity* with them impossible. Since unity at all costs is the goal of such events as the Parliament, this *difference* makes us highly unpopular, to say the least.

In fact, the only religion *not tolerated* at the conference, and the only one openly vilified there, was biblical Christianity, whose adherents cannot and will not agree that Jesus is *just one of those spokes* on that great wheel and that all paths are valid ways of getting to God. Why are we the bad guys? Why is it wrong for us to say Jesus is the only way and the only truth, as He claimed to be (John 14:6)? I'll tell you. You see, if Jesus is the only true path to the Father, that has to mean the other religions are false paths, and false "truths." We are labeled *wrong* for saying others are wrong, but they do not consider themselves wrong for saying we're wrong when we claim others are wrong. They feel right in judging us as judgmental, because our view that we are right is (in their eyes) wrong. Confused yet? There's more. We believe other paths are false, which, of course, makes our path false in their eyes, since they believe all paths are true. We think our beliefs are ultimately and absolutely true, which makes our view false, according to the Parliament, since they proposed there is no true truth and, in fact, really no false! Except ours, of course, since we believe ours is true. Get it? We're considered basically intolerant, and that cannot be tolerated!!!

Let me say that real religious tolerance (freedom of religion and conscience) is a very good thing. There are more Christians being killed and fiercely persecuted for their faith today than ever before in history. Other faiths are being cruelly persecuted, as well, in various locations around the globe. *Genuine* religious tolerance and any resultant peace would

be wonderful.

But, with all the talk of peace that was bandied about the conference, was the conference itself a peaceful one? In a word, no. At one of the plenary sessions, the Chicago police had to be called in to restore order after a shouting match broke out between the Hindus and the Muslims of India. The Greek Orthodox Church pulled out of the conference when it became apparent to them the conference was not merely non-Christian, but anti-Christian and they would be expected to share the dais (stage) with Wiccans and goddess worshipers, and pretend they were all praying to the same God. The Jewish delegation pulled out because Louis Farrakhan, anti-Semitic (anti-Christian also, I might add) leader of the Nation of Islam, had been invited to address one of the plenary sessions.

Since the Parliament was so openly anti-Christian, why were *we* there? We were not there to participate, but to dialog with the participants and to interview some of them for a radio program. We found many sincere, nice, lovely people there. We wanted to find out if they fully understood the implications of *unity at any cost* that was being pushed by the leadership of the Parliament. Some understood and embraced it fully; some did not.

Don and I conducted an interview with the executive coordinator for one of the Muslim delegations. I'll call her the "spokesperson" for the Muslim spoke, I guess. We asked her what was her motivation in attending the conference. Her motivation was an honorable one, and I was touched by her answer. She said she hoped the conference would turn out to be "a unifying force to bring together all the religions so we could overcome our differences and make this world a better place to live." Her heartfelt desire was for peace and an end to religious warfare. Who would not wish for such a thing? But, agreeing to disagree *peacefully* is a far cry from saying all religions teach basically the same thing, and we must, therefore, accept that all religions are essentially *right*.

As we talked with her further, we could see she had not given any thought to this difference. We asked her if she really embraced the concept of the oneness (and the basic "rightness") of all religions that were attending the Parliament. "Yes, I do," she said. "Down through the ages, all the prophets have brought the same message

at different times to different people in their own languages so they could understand better ... as far as Islam is concerned, our faith is not complete until we believe in all the prophets that came down to 'his earth.'

We then pointed out to her that Mormons (who were also participants in the Parliament) believe in the prophet Joseph Smith, who taught them in their own language that there is not one God, but many Gods and that men can become gods, if they follow the path handed down by the prophet Joseph Smith and the other Mormon prophets. "Is Joseph Smith a true prophet from God?" Don asked her. She answered that God sent 144,000 prophets to the world, and since we do not know all of their names, we cannot deny others' beliefs or their prophets. I pressed the issue (you knew I would!) by asking her how Mohammed, who taught belief in one God, and Joseph Smith, who taught belief in many gods, could *both* be true prophets from God. She was very uncomfortable with the question. Her voice began to rise as she replied, "All the prophets of God said there was only one God; none of the prophets ever said there were more gods or goddesses or deities."

Her position was, of course, illogical:

- All religions are true and valid.
- Mormonism is, therefore, true and valid.
- We cannot deny Mormon prophets or Mormon beliefs.
- Mormon prophets teach that there are many gods.
- All true prophets teach that there is only one God.
- No prophet ever said that there were more gods or goddesses.

Huh??? You really have to be able to follow the pea in these discussions folks, or you're going to pick the wrong shell every me!

We then interviewed a "spokesperson" for a pagan spoke of the great wheel. We had an extremely interesting and enlightening discussion with the founder of the Fellowship of Isis, the Rev. Honorable Lady Olivia Robertson. Does Lady Olivia truly believe that her view of the gods and goddesses is no more true than say, the Christian view of God? The very first thing she confided to us was that she and her brother (an Episcopalian minister) founded the Fellowship in 1976. This was because, in her own words, "[We] felt that half the human race was disenfranchised spiritually [since] God is always called 'He'; there are no 'she' gods. My brother and I decided to redress this matter."

Redress means to "set right" or to "correct." It is decidedly not a term expressing acceptance; rather, it is an expression of *judgment*. You must pass judgment upon something as *incorrect*, before you can determine to *correct* it. Something must be *wrong* in order to set it *right*. You see, then, that Lady O. rejects the Christian view of God as inferior and in need of correction. Yet, we would find ourselves accused of *intolerance* and judgmentalism in a heartbeat if we were openly critical of the pagan concept of a

mother/father god.

Nevertheless, Lady Olivia considers herself to be the epitome of open-minded tolerance. She assured us, "every single member has total freedom to believe what he or she wants ... All you do when you join is to read our manifesto, which says the goddess manifests love, beauty, and truth. You can be a Catholic, a Protestant, a Buddhist ..." Sure, you can be a Catholic or a Protestant, as long as you leave your sexist, politically-incorrect, bigoted, jealous old God behind and embrace the goddess. The pretended *tolerance* touted by the Fellowship of Isis, and other pagan groups, is nothing but a smokescreen. A "Christian" will be tolerated by the Lady O. and her ilk (kind) as long as he or she does not hold to Christian views or respect the Christian God, who has told us we must never involve ourselves in pagan, goddess worship.

Deuteronomy 13:6 states, "If your own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you saying, 'Let us go and worship other gods' (gods that neither you nor your father have known, gods of the peoples around you ...) do not yield to him or listen to him." The claim that paganism is compatible with Christianity is completely untrue and merely an attempt, often successful, to disengage your alarm system until your house is burned down. It was an ugly house, anyway — they might console you — built on patriarchy, walled off with prejudice, with skeletons in the closet ... Come on over to our house ... We're tolerant and non-judgmental.

We asked another pagan spokesperson from the Fellowship of Isis how the group views sexuality. She said, "Sex is a very wonderful thing when it's done in 'sacred space'," whatever that means. (Here's a "Joyism" for you: Humbug is malarkey expressed vaguely.) She said she viewed sex as sacred and spiritual, and she only engaged in it within the context of a "meaningful" relationship. But, she was quick to add, "There are some who are loose," which she accepts, she said, since "it's an individual preference," and "everyone has their own way of thinking" and "everyone is at a different level of being." I guess sacred space can be either a *meaningful relationship* or *anything goes*. You know, different spokes for different folks.

She then said a very interesting thing. She said, "Sexual immorality is sexual abuse." So there *is* a moral judgment regarding sex. Sex should not involve abuse. But why shouldn't it? Who drew that line? For that matter, who decides what *abuse* is and what it is not? After all, there are no absolutes. She told us she had been sexually abused as a child, which is why this cause is very dear to her. She obviously thinks that sexual abuse is *wrong*. She feels very strongly about it, in fact.

Yet, as a pagan, it is inconsistent to label anything as *wrong*, since there really is no absolute standard by which to judge beliefs or actions. Something can be terribly wrong for one person and just

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and God spoke!



And Along Came A Spider...

by Dave Moore

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon) emphasizes that they place the person of Jesus Christ first in importance, as their church name indicates. Recently, the LDS church updated their logo, enlarging the name **Jesus Christ**. LDS members are eager to testify they believe in Jesus, believe Jesus died for their sins, and believe Jesus saved them by grace. On the surface, this sounds very orthodox and biblical. But is it really? Does the LDS church believe in the same Jesus taught in the Bible — the same Bible they now are giving away in their latest TV commercials?

To understand who the LDS say Jesus really is, one must go to the LDS' own documents and teachings. In the last Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. *Journal*, we examined whether the LDS view of God is the same as the biblical view of God. What we found was that the LDS believe:

1. God once was a man, but became a god.
2. There are many gods who exist, all of whom were once men.
3. Before humans were born, they came into existence as 'spirit children,' or spirit beings, born by procreation of the gods.

The LDS worldview is polytheistic, the belief that more than one god exist. The LDS say the father God (Elohim) is the **ONLY** god for this particular world, and that he reproduced "spirit children" through his goddess wives to populate it. Elohim is the only god the LDS have anything to do with.

What are the ramifications of a polytheistic worldview? The polytheistic beliefs of the LDS church lead to a much different view of Jesus Christ than what the Bible describes. Let's look at the teachings of the LDS church and their leaders to see if their view of Jesus is similar to the biblical view.

LDS ONTOLOGY

Ontology means the "nature of being." Milton R. Hunter, one of the LDS general authorities, makes this statement about the nature of Jesus:

"The appointment of Jesus to be the Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called Lucifer, ... this spirit-brother of Jesus deliberately tried to become the Savior of mankind" (*The Gospel Through the Ages*, 1945, p. 15).

According to LDS teaching, Jesus had a beginning and was born as a spirit being from the procreation of Elohim and one of his goddess wives. Another one of their spirit children was Lucifer. Thus, we find that the LDS Jesus *has the same ontology as Lucifer*, that is to say, *Jesus and Lucifer are both of the same nature and*

substance, and they *both* have a beginning. The LDS teach that Lucifer submitted a plan to be the savior of the world, which was rejected in favor of Jesus' plan.

However, the biblical ontology of Jesus teaches that Jesus has **ALWAYS** existed as God and created all things, including Lucifer. Nowhere does the Bible indicate the existence of a "Heavenly Mother" or that Lucifer submitted a plan to become savior of the world. The Bible says of Jesus:

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:15-18).

SON OF GOD, OR A 'GOD'

In LDS polytheistic theology, the spirit being Jesus became a man, who then progressed to become a god, as did his father Elohim. LDS leaders say:

"Jesus became a God and reached His great state of understanding through consistent effort and continuous obedience to all the Gospel truths and universal laws" (Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages*, p. 51).

"... Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — comprise the Godhead ... To us, speaking in the proper finite sense, these are the only Gods we worship" (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 576, 577).

However, the Bible does not teach that Jesus progressed to become a god, but teaches Jesus was God from the very beginning of all creation and has always existed as God:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2).

LDS VIRGIN BIRTH

According to LDS teaching, 'spirit children' receive their human bodies on earth when human beings reproduce. Because the LDS believe Jesus was also a spirit being, he too would receive a human body as well. However, the *reproduction* that gave Jesus his human body was, according to the LDS, different from usual human reproduction. The second president and living prophet of the LDS church, Brigham Young — the direct successor of LDS prophet Joseph Smith Jr. — taught the following:

"The birth of the Savior was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of normal ac-

tion. He partook of flesh and blood — was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 8, p. 115).

"The man Joseph, the husband of Mary, did not, that we know of, have more than one wife, but Mary the wife of Joseph had another husband" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, p. 268).

"When the time came that His first-born, the Savior, should come into the world and take a tabernacle (body), the father came Himself and favored that spirit with a tabernacle instead of letting any other man do it" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 4, p. 218).

that Elohim has many wives. Additionally, LDS leaders have continually taught over the years that Jesus was also a polygamist. For example, LDS apostle Orson Pratt said:

"... the great Messiah who was the founder of the Christian religion, was a polygamist" (*The Seer*, p. 172).

Other LDS leaders say:

"Jesus Christ was married at Cana of Galilee, that Mary, Martha, and others were his wives, and that he begat children" (LDS Apostle Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, p. 210).

The Mormons and God: Who is Jesus?

"When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 50, emphasis in the original).

Other LDS apostles say:

"The fleshly body of Jesus required a Mother as well as a Father. Therefore, the Father and Mother of Jesus, according to the flesh, must have been associated together in the capacity of Husband and Wife; hence the Virgin Mary must have been, for the time being, the lawful wife of God the Father ..." (Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, p. 158).

"Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers" (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 546-547).

Thus, we see various LDS leaders teaching that Jesus was not conceived by the Holy Ghost, but through natural relations between Elohim and Mary who was, apparently, only a virgin until she was Elohim's lawful wife. Some Mormons will deny this teaching, but in doing so they are in disagreement with the authoritative teaching of their own leaders. The LDS leaders mentioned possess far greater authority than the average Mormon, and clearly teach something that has never been officially corrected by the LDS church. This verifies the acceptance of the teaching by the church, regardless of individual claims.

Compare this with the biblical teaching on Jesus' virgin birth, which teaches that Jesus' conception was a completely supernatural event and contradicts what LDS leaders say:

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:18, emphasis ours).

POLYGAMY

The LDS church officially ended the practice of polygamy in 1890. However, polygamy is still taught in LDS scriptures. The acceptance (if not practice) of polygamy has its roots in LDS theology, especially as it relates to God. LDS theology teaches

"The grand reason of the burst of public sentiment in a n a t h e m a s upon Christ and his disciples, causing his crucifixion, was evidently based on polygamy ... A belief in the doctrine of a plurality of wives caused the persecution of Jesus, and his followers. We might also think they were 'Mormons'" (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 346).

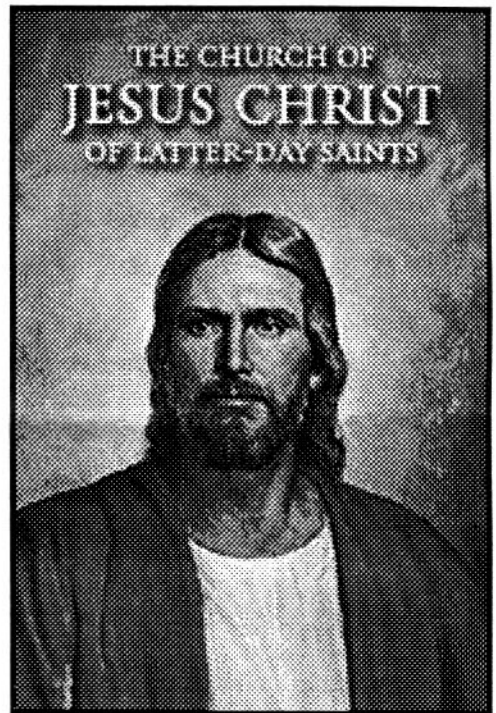
Again, the LDS view of Jesus as a polygamist husband with children contradicts the Bible, where we find that God clearly condemns polygamy. Nowhere does the Bible indicate that Jesus was ever married. Jesus could not have been a polygamist without breaking the commandment of God and the example He gave to leaders in the Church:

"Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away ..." (Deuteronomy 17:17a).

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2).

JESUS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

The *Book of Mormon* (BoM) tells us that, when Jesus was crucified, some terrible things occurred as a testimony to Jesus' death on the cross. First, many major cities, allegedly located in the western hemisphere populated by descendants of Israel called



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BILL GOTHARD'S Evangelical Talmud

by L. L. (Don) Veinot Jr. and Ron Henzel

In 1991, Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. began receiving phone calls from some residents in Oak Brook, IL. They were concerned about a group in their upscale community who, they said, were holding young people against their wills in "some kind of commune." The callers were sure this was a cult and wanted to know what the community needed to do. When we asked the name of the group, we were told it was called "The Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts" (IBYC). At the time, we assured the callers that, although Bill Gothard (the founder and president of IBYC) was very legalistic, to our knowledge, the group was not a cult.

My wife, Joy, and I had attended one of the basic seminars in the mid '70s at the urging of some church members. There were many things we did not agree with, particularly the legalism, which came about as a result of using Scripture out of context, and either not realizing or disregarding the grace of God as a result of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We didn't attend any further seminars or recommend them to anyone else. In fact, we didn't think much more about it until Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. began receiving calls in '91.

About two years ago, we began receiving more calls about Bill Gothard and what he now calls his "Institute in Basic Life Principles" (IBLP). Since Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. is a research and education ministry, we decided to look into the Institute's teachings to see if they had changed, and if the reported abuses were, in fact, true.

We are aware of a number of people who feel the Institute has helped them turn their lives around. We do not want to invalidate any real benefits, but rather point out that God is able, and often does, use people with bad motives and/or teachings for His good purposes - even (Philippians 1:15-18). On the other hand, error begets error, which also begets heartache.

As we have read Bill Gothard's material and continue to re-

ceive more calls for help, we are compelled to share the findings with our readers. This is not meant as a personal attack on Bill Gothard, but rather as a look at the history and teachings of an organization that has affected the lives of more than two-and-a-half-million people.

We will present a four-part series that will:

- Review Gothard's teachings that ignore the grace of God and favor putting believers under a Galatian-type of legalism.
- Inspect Gothard's "Umbrella of Authority," which Gothard does not seem to be under himself, though he insists everyone else should be.
- Evaluate Gothard's anti-biblical teachings about ancestral demons and redefining of terminologies.

IN THE BEGINNING

The 1950's were an ideal time to begin a career in the fledgling youth ministries movement. World War II had resulted in millions of absentee fathers, and society watched with alarm as the violence of youth gangs began to rival the tales of Al Capone and John Dillinger. In response to this problem, youth ministries went forth and multiplied. "Youth For Christ" (YFC) was founded by Torrey Johnson in 1944 (who hired Billy Graham as YFC's first full-time employee that same year). Bill and Vonette Bright started "Campus Crusade For Christ" at UCLA in 1950 and developed *The Four Spiritual Laws* tract as an evangelistic tool in 1952.

Youth ministry was not a new concept. The late 19th century had brought forth "InterVarsity Christian Fellowship" and the "Young Men's Christian Association" (YMCA). But what made the second half of the 20th century so unique was a phenomenon unparalleled in American history: the fabled "Baby Boom." Following World War II, the rate of live births in the U.S. accelerated sharply until, between 1954 (just after the Korean War) and 1964, it exceeded 10-million annually. (This is the period officially designated by the U.S. Census Bureau as the "Baby Boom," although

most people use that phrase to roughly denote the two decades following World War II, 1946-1965.)

Along with a skyrocketing birthrate came mounting fears about a generation that was being raised in a "permissive society" and that seemed to be getting out of control. By 1967, fully one-half of the U.S. population was less than 21-years old, and by 1968, it had become frighteningly obvious just how much damage these youths could do! Aside from the Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy assassinations and the subsequent riots — none of which could be blamed on Baby-Boomers — 1968 also witnessed the Manson murders and mounting campus unrest about the Viet-Nam War. These would eventually produce major explosions, both literal and figurative.

The vast majority of these young people were among "the best and the brightest" of their time and would have been so in any generation before or since. But, if tomorrow's leaders were brawling with the local "fuzz" in the streets of Chicago, blowing up college buildings, burning draft cards, inciting to riot, taking drugs, challenging traditional sexual morality, listening to raucous music, and making a general nuisance of themselves, what hope was there for the future?

Poised at the brink of this social tidal wave was a man who promised order in the midst of chaos, peace in the midst of conflict, sanity in the midst of psychedelia. To the cynical, politically-correct unbelievers of today, he would have been considered merely a spiritual pied-piper who offered to bring the children back from darkness, only to lead them there. But, to the churchgoing, God-fearing parents and grandparents of the '60s and '70s, he was a Godsend armed with overheads and three-ring binders. His name was Bill Gothard.

WHERE DID WE GO WRONG?

A symbol of what seemed to have gone wrong in many people's minds was the arrest of "The Baby Book" doctor, Dr. Spock, for assisting in the destruction of draft cards. Millions of mothers in the '50s and '60s had raised their children on the instruction Dr. Spock had given — which included the advice that children should not be spanked. Now here was that same baby doctor aiding and abetting many of those same children in breaking the law. Could it be the whole essence of the '60s youth problem was that an entire generation had been turned into a bunch of spoiled, narcissistic brats because their parents listened to the wrong "experts"? Maybe we needed new experts! Bill Gothard was more than happy to present himself and his teachings as the solution to the problems of youth conflict.

Now, it would be unfair to caricature the '60s as one, long, Yippie love-in. In the early '60s, youth rebellion had pretty much been limited to the occasional street and motorcycle gang. With a president who mirrored their own youthful idealism, the Howdy Doodly generation exchanged their Mickey Mouse ears for membership in the Peace Corps, and the future was full of hope. Young people were able to isolate American political demons and send Freedom Riders to exorcise them. But, with the JFK assassination, youthful idealism began to fade, and with the troop buildup in Viet-Nam, it seemed ready to disappear altogether.

It helps to remember that the discovery of the German concentration camps and the Jewish Holocaust was only about 20-years old back then — about as recent as Viet-Nam is for us today. And the post-World War II, Nuremberg, war-crimes trials had left the world to ponder the haunting refrain that was used to justify

six-million, savage murders: "We were only following orders." In light of this monumental horror, it was only natural that the next generation should recoil from the dangers of unquestioned authority.

Added to this was the rediscovery of America's own heritage of civil disobedience for the cause of liberty and justice — which re-established a place of honor for protest and the confrontation of abusive authority in American life. By all accounts, the "Free Speech Movement" on the campus of Berkeley University in 1964 (a symbol of student protest in the '60s) was almost a religious experience for those in attendance. The violence that later came to characterize the '60s can be seen as youthful idealism turned angry.

And yet, in the middle of it all, there Gothard stood — holding out one, simple word as the center of his world view: *authority*. It was not a message designed to appeal to those youths who were at the forefront of society's problems at that time, but that, in itself, did not make Gothard's message wrong.

One of the more popular youth slogans in the '60s was, "Never trust anyone over 30." For the first time anyone could remember, kids stood right in the face of their elders and shouted "Hell, no! We won't go!" And yet, there Gothard stood: a thirty-something (born November 2, 1934), ordained, evangelical, Christian minister (when he founded the IBYC) who dared to tell young people their basic problem was a failure to submit to authority. (Note: It's difficult to pin down exactly when Gothard's organization was "founded"; today it prefers to date itself back to Gothard's first seminar in 1964.)

Thanks to Cold-War politics, not only were we losing thousands of young people in Southeast Asia, but we were also spending billions to beat the Soviets to the moon in order to demonstrate our technical superiority. America was on the cutting edge in space, the economy was buzzing along smoothly, and it seemed as if science had discovered just about everything short of the meaning of life. So millions left the church in search of answers elsewhere. And yet, there Gothard stood, quoting verses from a Bible that predated the scientific method in order to prove something many people were actively rejecting: that authority was their friend.

FROM OUT OF NOWHERE

Gothard had graduated from Wheaton College with a B.A. in 1957 and an M.A. in 1961. His Master's thesis was entitled, "A Proposed Youth Program for Hi-Crusader Clubs." According to those who remember him from those days, he was reclusive throughout his college career, seeming to shun the limelight; his picture appearing in only one college yearbook, atypical of students at that time. Some were impressed by the amount of time he spent in solitary prayer. At one point, he devoted 35 hours per week to youth work with a Chicago missionary society while still a full-time student at Wheaton, 25 miles away.

Gothard also seemed to have a tender conscience. One day some of his fellow youth workers confronted him, saying they detected "spiritual pride" in him, perhaps due to his success in youth ministry. Gothard became convicted this was true and confessed it to one of his fellow workers. That person dealt harshly with him and advised him to confess the sin to several others, including the head of the missionary society for whom Gothard worked. Gothard's boss fired him shortly after he made the confession.

Many people have been discouraged right out of the ministry by incidents such as this. But, despite this negative experience,

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"Gothard" (Continued from Page 7)

Gothard kept pressing on. He would also later counsel thousands of young people to follow his example and confess such sins to others.

It is difficult to gauge just how "successful" Gothard was in the early '60s. We were able to interview only one person who had been a teenager in a church where Gothard had served as a youth pastor. This woman remains convinced that Gothard was not very effective at dealing with young people on a one-to-one basis, and not very capable of seeing real problems in a young person's home life when they existed. If this is true, it may help to explain why Gothard began gravitating toward larger audiences, where individual problems are more easily painted over with the broad brushstrokes of general "principles."

Sometime around 1964, Gothard was invited to teach a course on youth ministry at his alma mater, Wheaton College. Forty-five students attended, including pastors, youth workers, and educators. The materials he presented at that time became the foundation for his seminars.

In 1966, Gothard presented a seminar for 1,000 people in the Chicago area. He repeated the performance in 1967 and held his first out-of-town seminar in Seattle for 42 people in 1968. Gothard's new organization, the IBYC, was born.

From such meager beginnings, it was difficult to see where things would eventually head. His combined attendance for all his seminars in 1968 was actually around 2,000. But then, things really took off! As Wilfred Bockelman later would report in his book *Gothard - The Man And His Ministry: An Evaluation* (Quill Publications, 1976), "In 1969 there were 4,000; 1971, 12,000; 1972 over 128,000, including 13,000 in the Seattle Coliseum; in 1973 more than 200,000" (p. 35). Before you could say "post-Watergate, social malaise," Gothard's public career had outlasted that of most major rock-and-roll stars, including the Beatles (as a group at least), and

his live audiences were at least as huge as those at rock concerts. Churches in every city, town, and hamlet in America were sending their young people to his seminars by the busload. Little bands of three-ring-binder-touting, Gothard disciples sprang up on college and university campuses across the country.

In the early '70s, toga parties began to replace campus sit-ins. In the shadow of the Kent State University Massacre, the Woodstock generation woke up to the fact that radicalism could cost some of them their lives. And seeing as how the prospect of being killed was a big reason why they were protesting Viet-Nam in the first place, getting shot on campus seemed to defeat the purpose. When the war finally ended, there seemed little left worth caring about for many young people, aside from where to take their next toke on a joint, or where to have their next sexual encounter. So, while the older generation was relieved its children were no longer about the business of tearing down "the Establishment," new fears dawned of a directionless generation with declining scholastic aptitude, addicted to instant gratification.

In this environment, Gothard could be assured that hundreds of thousands of parents would continue to send their kids to his seminars, and IBYC soon grew into a multi-million-dollar organization. In 1976 alone, Gothard held 32 seminars at \$45 per attendee (\$35 if part of a church group; \$55 per married couple). It was not unusual for Gothard to pack out auditoriums with capacities of 8,000 to 20,000 people. Society's continuing problems with its youth virtually assured IBYC's growth for the foreseeable future.

JUST WHAT WAS IN THOSE THREE-RING BINDERS?

When your home is on fire, you don't ask the fireman to what denomination he belongs. During the '60s and '70s, many Americans thought their home was on fire, and it was their children who were burning. So, maybe that's why so many parents and pastors

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"Gothard" (Continued from Page 8)

did not get overly critical, or exercise a great deal of discernment, with respect to the actual content of Gothard's seminars. They seemed satisfied knowing he professed to be an evangelical Christian, and he had the confidence, and even the endorsement, of Christian leaders whom they knew. Besides, what they did hear sounded good! Obey the authority figures God has ordained! Follow biblical principles in making every decision! Why should they worry about Gothard when the Timothy Learys and Abbie Hoffmans of the world were advising their kids to "turn on, tune in, drop out," get high and enjoy "free love"?

But, some people were paying attention, including people who study and teach the Scriptures for a living. One of them was Ronald B. Allen, Th.D. As Professor of Hebrew Scripture at Western Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon. He committed his thoughts to writing in a 1984 paper entitled, "Issues of Concern — Bill Gothard and the Bible," which begins as follows:

"The week that I spent at Basic Youth Conflicts in 1973 (Portland) was one of the most difficult of my life. In this seminar I was regularly assaulted by a misuse of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, on a level that I have never experienced in a public ministry before that time (or since). All speakers, myself included, fail to interpret and apply the Bible rightly from time to time. But in the Gothard lectures, Old Testament passages were used time after time to argue points that they did not prove. I was as troubled by the errors

made from the lectern as by the seeming acceptance of these errors as true and factual by the many thousands of people in attendance."

It would be tempting to think of this description as an exaggeration based on misunderstanding; but, if that was the case, then Gothard had every opportunity to correct the misunderstanding. When Dr. Allen attempted to arrange a meeting with Gothard through his seminary president, Dr. Earl D. Radmacher, in order to discuss these problems, Gothard told Radmacher that "he had no interest in meeting with me [Allen] to discuss these issues."

This unwillingness to be confronted biblically — apparent resistance to being under authority and lack of consistent biblical hermeneutic — has given birth to some very strange and, in some cases, harmful teachings. As we move through this four-part series, we will be dealing with the specific areas of concern raised by Allen, Bockelman, and others with respect to Gothard's doctrinal teachings and his method of handling the Bible. Ω

*The Talmud is the body of oral traditions that were written down in the 2nd century A.D., considered authoritative by Jews. These were the same oral traditions that Jesus opposed in his rebuke of the Pharisees (e.g., Matthew 23).

Our evaluation of Gothard's teachings shows they consist largely of Christian oral traditions, which, like the oral traditions of the Pharisees, have been given a level of authority equal to that of Scripture. Just as Jesus condemned the Pharisees for elevating oral tradition to the level of Scripture, so would He condemn evangelicals for practicing the same thing today. We will provide concrete examples of how Gothard does this as this series unfolds.

"Mormons" (Continued from Page 5)

Nephites, were supposedly destroyed. As documented in the BoM (3 Nephi 8-9), hundreds of thousands of people were estimated to have been killed by various terrible events, such as earthquakes, whirlwinds, lightning, tempests, etc. Additionally, the BoM indicates this destruction was worldwide. Who was responsible for this wholesale slaughter and destruction as a testimony to Jesus' death on Calvary? Third Nephi 9:15 identifies the responsible one as none other than Jesus Himself.

Further, the BoM indicates that, after the crucifixion and the destruction Jesus wrought around the world, the entire Nephite lands, in addition to the entire world, were covered by a thick "vapor of darkness" that lasted for three days, preventing ANY light of ANY kind to be seen or made (3 Nephi 8:20). Finally, the BoM tells us that Jesus Himself appeared to the people left alive after the death, destruction, and total darkness. Jesus instructed the survivors to feel the wounds in His hands and feet, and to thrust their hands into His side as proof of His resurrection. After probably hundreds of thousands of people came forward to do as instructed, the vast multitudes acknowledged Jesus as the Lord (3 Nephi 11: 8-17).

The aforementioned descriptions stand in stark contrast to how Jesus is described in the Bible and to the events documented therein that surrounded Jesus' crucifixion. First, Jesus is described as the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36) who was sacrificed for the sins of the world, the lamb who opened not his mouth (Isaiah 53:7). So we see that Jesus is said to be a *lamb* — NOT a lion that was sacrificed, taking hundreds of thousands of people to their deaths with Him.

Furthermore, Scriptures show that Jesus was non-combative and gentle — He did not answer those accusing Him at His trial, nor did He use his supernatural power against them. Rather, Jesus healed the ear of one of the soldiers who arrested Him and asked the Father

to forgive those who executed Him. The Bible describes the events surrounding Calvary, telling us there was an earthquake and a period of darkness for three hours. However, no mention is made of loss of life or widespread destruction, only that the temple veil was torn in two. After His resurrection, Jesus showed Himself to certain select followers, but He did not compel anyone to touch Him to prove who He was. Even Thomas did not touch Him, though Jesus offered Himself to Thomas' touch.

JESUS AND JOSEPH SMITH

LDS leaders make interesting comparisons between Jesus and Joseph Smith. Though the LDS church claims it is the "church of Jesus Christ," Joseph Smith is held as a higher authority than Jesus. Joseph Smith himself said:

"I have more to boast than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from him; but the Latter Day Saints never ran away from me yet ... When they can get rid of me, the devil will also go" (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, p.408, 409).

Additionally, the 10th prophet of the LDS Church, Joseph Fielding Smith, said:

"No salvation Without Accepting Joseph Smith. If Joseph Smith was verily a prophet, and if he told the truth ... No man can reject that testimony without incurring the most dreadful consequences, for he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 190).

LDS prophet Brigham Young said:

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"Spokes" (Continued From Page 3)

fine and dandy for another. In other words, the most she could say is that abusing children sexually would be wrong *for her*. It may be perfectly *right* for a pedophile. No one can deny it is his personal preference. One person's perversion or violation is merely another person's sacred space. We all have *our own way of thinking* and *our own level of being*. The pedophile is simply on a different spoke. Without a standard for right and wrong, there is no honest basis for refuting his claim or denying the validity of his view.

The postmodernist ideal of relative truth, championed at the Parliament, seems to be widely accepted in our culture, but I doubt that most who espouse the view have really given it deep thought. It sounds so fair and so right and so open-minded to say all views are equally valid. But, when serious consideration is given to all the various views that must, therefore, be validated, it becomes much less appealing, even, I dare say, to pagans. And so, while they reject the *shalts* and the *shalt nots* of the Bible, they turn around and make up some *shalts* and *shalt nots* of their own. Thou shalt be tolerant; Thou shalt not sexually abuse children; and Thou shalt not believe that anything is absolutely true; except, of course, that nothing is absolutely true — that you shalt believe.

My friendships span the religious spectrum. I have never found *anyone* who believes that tolerance is always a good thing; that everything should be tolerated in society or within the family structure, although there may very well be disagreement over what should be tolerated and what should not be. Should racial discrimination be tolerated? How about murder or rape? If we buy into the postmodern definition of tolerance (there is no ultimate truth), though, the rapist and the racist, the murderer and the child molester, all have their truths that must be respected and their actions permitted.

I am not against tolerance, rightly defined. True tolerance is called for in much of life. I want Portillos; you want Burger King. I'll tolerate Burger King and go to Portillos next time. I want to see movie A. You want to see movie B. I may very well tolerate sitting through movie B for your sake or, perhaps, you'll tolerate movie A for me. Life involves a lot of sacrifices and much forbearance of the faults and foibles of others. We also need to be tolerant of those who disagree with us spiritually. The word tolerate means to permit, to put up with, to endure. It does not mean to approve of or to accept as good or right.

Christians, if we love the people around us, cannot sanguinely accept and give tacit approval to actions or beliefs that are destroying people's lives and souls on a daily basis. If that makes us appear *intolerant and judgmental*, I guess that's the price we must pay. We love the people who are looking for love in all the wrong *sacred spaces* — men and women, created in the image of God, who are debasing themselves and others in various forms of sexual promiscuity or perversion. We also care deeply about the people who have been deceived by false prophets, and lying spirits, or their own "inner knowledge." Their eternal life is at stake. And we know, *just like ourselves*, they are sinners in need of forgiveness and reconciliation to God. But, unless they realize the helpless condition they are in, and just how lost they are, they will never find the true path, because they won't be looking for it.

As you probably have gathered by now, I don't really hold to the different spokes for different folks theory of religion. I think there is only one spoke that matters for this life and the life hereafter, and it is that GOD SPOKE. God spoke through the prophets of

the Old Testament and told us what is right and what is wrong. He let us know that sex outside of marriage is wrong. Murder is wrong. Loving God is right. The worship of other gods is wrong. The law was given for a standard, so we would know right from wrong. But why? WHY is it of paramount importance that we recognize right from wrong? Is it so we can point self-righteous, "church lady" fingers at the sinners we see around us? God forbid.

The law, the *shalts* and the *shalt nots*, were given specifically by God to show us that we (all of us) are transgressors in need of forgiveness and reconciliation. If this were the end of the story, the outlook would, indeed, be very bleak, since the penalty for sin is death. But that's not the end of the story, because GOD SPOKE again. The Bible tells us in the first chapter of the book of Hebrews (v. 1) that, while GOD SPOKE through the prophets of the Old Testament in the past, in these last days GOD SPOKE through His Son.

Jesus said He came to seek and to save that which was lost. People are lost — people who God loves. He said He was *the only way* to the Father (John 14:6). Any other way — Mohammed's way, the Dali Llama's way, Deepak Chopra's way, Lady Olivia's way, Joseph Smith's way, my way or your way — is the path to destruction, and many are choosing that route. There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. (Proverbs 14:12)

People of other faiths are not our enemies, regardless of how they may see us. We have no right to treat them as such. I don't think we should badger or harangue others, or tell them smugly they are headed south. First Peter 3:15 says we should treat others with gentleness and respect. What, Joy??? Are you telling me we should treat *witches* with respect? Yes, that's exactly what I am saying — and Muslims, and liberals, and homosexuals, and Buddhists, and feminists, and Mormons, and every other person who is in opposition to the gospel. And love them. If you have no love in your heart for people on the outside who are in deep spiritual trouble, I respectfully suggest that you have a heart problem, and that you need a love transfusion. We are to *persuade* men, not coerce them. We are not called to be God's warriors, but His ambassadors.

"Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men ... All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:11, 18-20). Ω

Love to all,

Joy

Joy A. Veinot is the Director of Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. and wife of President, L.L. (Don) Veinot, Jr.

"Mormons" (Continued From Page 9)

"... no man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith ... every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith, junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are - I with you and you with me. I cannot go there without his consent" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 7, p. 289).

The Bible indicates that our salvation is *totally* dependent on Jesus *alone* as the sole mediator between God and man, NOT Joseph Smith:

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

SAVIOR AND SACRIFICE

The LDS Jesus is called the savior. However, the LDS savior is an insufficient one because the LDS teach that mankind is also involved in its own salvation. The LDS 3rd Article of Faith says:

"We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

The BoM states:

"... for we know that is by grace that we are saved after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23).

This belief that man is involved in his own salvation makes Jesus' sacrifice insufficient by default. According to the LDS, Jesus' atonement simply *makes it possible* for mankind to obtain salvation through *obedience* to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. The LDS gospel is defined as a set of rules for the seeker to follow in order to obtain salvation. Additionally, the LDS say that Jesus' blood is insufficient to save one from all sins. Rather, one's own blood sacrifice is needed to cleanse one from certain sins. Joseph Fielding Smith said:

"Joseph Smith taught that there were certain sins so grievous that man may commit, that they will place the transgressor beyond the power of the atonement of Christ. If these offenses are committed, then the blood of Christ will not cleanse them from their sins even though they repent. Therefore their only hope is to have their own blood shed to atone as far as possible, in their behalf"

(*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 135).

The implication of the aforementioned teachings is that, what Jesus' shed blood can't save us from, our own shed blood can; thus, we become our own savior by our own sacrifice. This teaching is completely unknown to the Scriptures. The biblical Jesus is the *complete* and *only* savior who saves us from all sins, who has already paid the complete sacrifice for our sins. We can do nothing. The Scriptures say:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ..." (Romans 5:1).

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished:' and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

CONCLUSION

As we have seen from the mentioned comparisons, the LDS Jesus is *completely different* from the biblical Jesus. The LDS Jesus was a created being, who was the spirit brother of Lucifer. The LDS Jesus became a man by natural relations between the Father God and Mary, who became the polygamous father of many offspring. Jesus then became the savior by his sacrifice and death, which was testified to the world by the death and destruction of thousands which enabled him to become a god himself; a god among many gods. The LDS Jesus' sacrifice enabled mankind to have the possibility of salvation in celestial glory, but salvation is not determined by Jesus' sacrifice but rather by man's own deeds and the approval of Joseph Smith Jr. Thus, the LDS Jesus cannot be equated, in any way, to the Jesus in the Bible or historical Christianity.

On the other hand, the biblical Jesus is the only Eternal God who has always existed and who will ever exist, who created all things, including Lucifer. The biblical Jesus is the one who became a man by the Holy Spirit, and lived the completely perfect life that we could not in order to make the one and only perfect sacrifice needed for mankind's salvation. This sacrifice is one that mankind cannot contribute to in any way, due to our hopeless, sinful condition. In making this sacrifice, Jesus did not wreak havoc, death, and destruction on the unbelieving Jews, but gave Himself as the unblemished, sacrificial lamb of the Old Testament. The biblical Jesus is the **ONLY** one who can save us.

The biblical Jesus tells us of the importance of knowing exactly who He is and why knowing who He is has eternal consequences:

"And he said unto them, 'Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.'" (John 8:23-24). Ω

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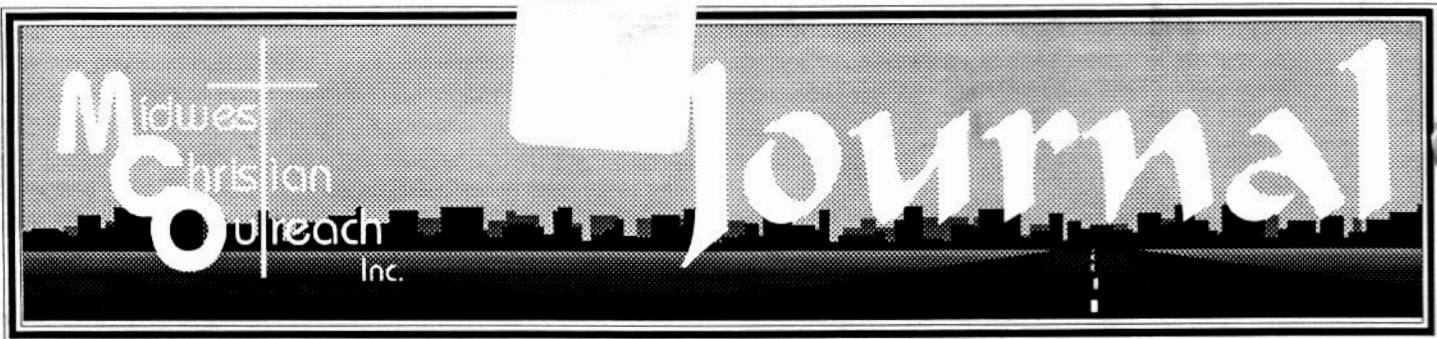
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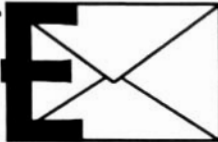
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