



THE CROSS

Concerned Christians

February — March 2008



Some of our Concerned Christians teachers: Andy Poland, Duane Strohmeyer, Kristine Nelson, Ted Shaffer. Not pictured, Brian Hughes.



Concerned Christians staff: Bob, Judy, Jim, Cheri. Not pictured, Lloyd Sharp.



LDS Apostle Denounces the Trinity Doctrine by Bob Betts

At the LDS semi-annual conference in October 2007, and printed verbatim in their November *Ensign* magazine (pp. 40-42), LDS apostle, Jeffrey R. Holland, took on those who say members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not Christians, in part because of their doctrinal “view of the Godhead.”

After stating the LDS belief that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are “three divine persons constituting a single Godhead...united in purpose, in manner, in testimony, in mission,” Mr. Holland boldly declared, “a Trinitarian notion [was] never set forth in the scriptures because it is not true,” it makes God “unknowable,” and “those first Christian Saints, many of whom were eyewitnesses of the living Christ, did not hold such a view either.”

The first article of LDS faith is, “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.” That being sufficiently vague, it is helpful that Mr. Holland added, “We believe Them to be filled with the same godly sense of mercy and love, justice and grace, patience, forgiveness, and

redemption. We declare it is self-evident from the scriptures that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are separate persons, three divine beings. I think it is accurate to say we believe They are one in every significant and eternal aspect imaginable *except* believing Them to be three persons combined in one substance.” I find it odd that an LDS apostle would start a sentence, defining the LDS belief about God, with, “I think it is accurate to say...” We won’t find a New Testament Apostle, prefacing any doctrinal teaching, by implying any doubt about the accuracy of what they were about to teach. But, even in Mr. Holland’s additional comments of what LDS believe, he barely scratched the surface of their very controversial doctrine of God.

It was not until well into the middle of his talk, that Mr. Holland attempted to take some of the sting out of his condemnation of the doctrine of the Trinity. “It is not our purpose,” he said, “to demean any person’s belief nor the doctrine of any religion. We extend to all the same respect for their doctrine that we are asking for ours.”

(Continued on page 2)

Weekly Prayer at Concerned Christians

We encourage all of our Metro-Phoenix Area friends to join us in prayer for our LDS neighbors, every Monday, 7:00-8:00 PM, at our Mesa office, 525 East Broadway Road (two blocks east of Mesa Drive, southwest corner of Broadway Road and Pioneer). Hosted by Duane Strohmeyer of Concerned Christians.

Ex-Mormon Support Groups

In Arizona, there are five Concerned Christians support groups: Mesa in the East Valley, Glendale/Peoria in the West Valley, Prescott Valley in North-Central Arizona, Taylor in Northeastern Arizona, and Tucson in Southern Arizona. For times and directions to the location nearest you, call the Mesa office at 480-833-2537.

Please Note: The Mesa meeting starts at 7:00 PM on Thursday evenings.



The series on the tabernacle will continue in the next Cross newsletter.



If you made any donations to Concerned Christians during 2007 and would like us to send you a donation statement, call and leave a message at our office anytime (480-833-2537) or e-mail cheri@concernedchristians.org.

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LDS Apostle Denounces the Trinity Doctrine

(Continued from page 1)

In his introduction to the LDS position on the Godhead, public perception and acceptance as Christians, seemed to be Mr. Holland’s motivational concern. “But even as we invite one and all to examine closely the *marvel* of it, there is one thing we would not like anyone to *wonder* about—that is whether or not we are ‘Christians.’ ...In addressing this we do not need to be apologists for our faith, but we would like not to be misunderstood. So with a desire to increase understanding and unequivocally declare our Christianity, I speak today...” Interestingly, it is the close examination of the LDS doctrine of God, which Mr. Holland invites, which when contrasted with what the *Bible* clearly teaches, has led many LDS to resign from the Mormon religion.

As Mr. Holland began to unpack the LDS version of God, rather than go directly to the *Bible*, or even the *Book of Mormon*, he went on the offensive, using questionable and debatable history regarding fourth- or fifth-century councils, creeds and ecclesiastical contentions. Mormons believe, as they’ve been told, that these are the origins of the Christian’s belief in the Trinity, rather than the *Bible*.

Holland’s opening salvo, from *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, replete with New Testament scriptures, is a one-sentence quote, out of five paragraphs of a definition on the Trinity. “The formal doctrine of the Trinity as it was defined by the great church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries is not to be found in the NT.” With this, Mr. Holland left the impression that the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the New Testament, at all.

Apparently satisfied that his out-of-context, single-sentence definition resoundingly refutes the Christian’s Trinitarian belief, Mr. Holland again defended his church. “So any

criticism that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not hold the contemporary Christian view of God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost is *not* a comment about our commitment to Christ but rather a recognition (accurate, I might add) that our view of the Godhead breaks with post–New Testament Christian history and returns to the doctrine taught by Jesus Himself.” Having read Jesus’ teachings countless times, I have never found Jesus teaching anything that would remotely sound like He is one of three separate Gods. Furthermore, in reading the *Book of Mormon* we find a Godhead that is closer to Trinitarian, and does not fit the current Mormon doctrine at all.

Let’s briefly look at what the LDS religion has taught about God, then look at the *Bible*.

The Worship of Three Gods

In his book, *Mormon Doctrine* (pp. 576-577), LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie wrote, “Three separate personages— Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—comprise the Godhead. As each of these persons is a God, it is evident, from this standpoint alone, that a *plurality of Gods* exists. To us, speaking in the proper finite sense, these three are the only Gods we worship. But in addition there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus gods.” Amazingly, two pages later, McConkie proclaimed, “The [LDS] saints are not polytheists.”

McConkie, having proclaimed that LDS worship three Gods, was out of touch with LDS scripture. *Doctrine and Covenants* 2:19 states, “And, [God] gave unto [Adam and Eve] commandments that they should love and serve him, the

(Continued on page 3)



LDS Apostle Denounces the Trinity Doctrine

(Continued from page 2)

only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship.”

Heavenly Father Became God

In the LDS teaching manual, *Gospel Principles* (p. 305),

This is the way our Heavenly Father became God. Joseph Smith taught: ‘It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God.... He was once a man like us;...God himself, the father of us all, dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did’ (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 345-346).

Our Heavenly Father knows our trials, our weaknesses, and our sins. He has compassion and mercy on us. He wants us to succeed [in becoming Gods] even as he did.

I hardly need to comment. The notion that God was once a man who succeeded in becoming God, that Jesus Christ succeeded in becoming a God, and that we can succeed in becoming Gods, has no biblical basis. *Gospel Principles* provides none, nor did Joseph Smith. And, for those who have never read the *Book of Mormon*, none of this is taught there, either.

Doesn't the *Bible* teach that God is from everlasting to everlasting? Yes. See 1 Chronicles 29:10, Nehemiah 9:5, Psalms 41:13, 90:2, 103:17, 106:48.

But, lo and behold, so does *Doctrine and Covenants* 20:17:

“By these things we know that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them;”

It is difficult to imagine how such inconsistencies escape the LDS. Could Mr. Holland and the rest of LDS leadership be unaware of them?

The Old Testament

Mormonism teaches that Jehovah is Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. The phrase “LORD God,” or a form of the phrase (like “LORD thy God”), appears almost 1,600 times in the *Bible*. In the Old Testament Hebrew it appears as “jehovah elohim,” and in the New Testament Greek as “kurios theos.” There is no way to interpret these phrases as meaning two Gods. The two names together, “Jehovah elohim” and

“kurios theos,” always refer to the one, single God, never two separate Gods, as the following incomplete list of scriptures demonstrates.

Space prohibits me from quoting the numerous Old Testament texts. Go to (www.concernedchristians.org) for an essay on the Trinity. The following scriptures are recommended proofs of the singleness of God:

And Moses said unto God (elohim), Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God (elohim) of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?...And God (elohim) said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD (jehovah) God (elohim) of your fathers, the God (elohim) of Abraham, the God (elohim) of Isaac, and the God (elohim) of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations (Ex. 3:13,15). See also: Exodus 6:2-3, Deuteronomy 4:35,39, Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Mark 12:29, 1Kings 8:60, Psalm 2:7, Psalm 100:3, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 42:5, 8, Isaiah 43:10, Isaiah 44:6,8, Isaiah 45:5.

The New Testament

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord (kurios) thy God (theos) (Matthew 4:7).

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My LORD (kurios) and my God (theos) (John 20:28).

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God (theos), and saying, Lord (kurios) Jesus, receive my spirit (Acts 7:59).

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; (1 Timothy 1:1)

To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour (Titus 1:4).

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (1 Peter 3:15).

(Continued on back cover)



Truth Matters

by Judy Robertson

Have you ever wanted to give up and let the LDS and others believe what they want and get on with your life? After all they're sincere and believe they're on the right path. Doesn't that count?

If you asked that question to anyone who has ever left the LDS, RLDS or FLDS church that question, you would get a resounding, "No! Never give up. The truth set me free." Over and over in our ministry we hear those who have escaped the clutches of the false doctrine of Mormonism, say that as hard as this decision was for them, their lives have never had such joy since leaving and accepting Christ alone for their salvation.

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and other break-off groups of the Salt Lake City LDS also continue to teach and believe Joseph Smith to be their founding prophet and rely on the three works LDS call scripture; the Book of Mormon (BoM), Doctrine and Covenants (D&C), and Pearl of Great Price (PoGP).

Carol Hansen, founder of *LifeLine ministries to RLDS*, reports many people of all ages are leaving this false religion to follow Jesus alone for their salvation. A short excerpt from one of Carol's many tracts for RLDS follows.

"Are you following modern day prophets and teachers, who present a 'different gospel'? The Apostle Paul told Timothy,

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers (1 Timothy 4:16 NIV).

The contradictory teachings found in the three standard books, [the BoM, D&C, and PoGP] are not sound doctrine and therefore, as former members of the RLDS church, we invite you to reject these false doctrines and turn to the Jesus of the Bible who freely offers forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Listen to the testimony of one young man who did just that:

I was born to devoted RLDS parents...At school my locker was never without my Book of Mormon. I testified of its truth to any who would listen. More than once I shared RLDS doctrine with the Christians

involved in a Youth for Christ group at school. I was at one such meeting where the group decided to testify door to door. I told them that it would probably be better if I didn't go along because of my differing doctrinal beliefs...One friend looked at me with a perplexed expression on her face and said, "I don't know what you think testifying is, but to me it's just sharing Christ." In a simple, honest Christian reaction I came to see that I was alienated from my friends because of what I believed... but this was only secondary to what I was feeling most.

I felt my gospel was less than Christian. The core of the gospel I had been implicitly taught only had Jesus added to the formula. He was not primary but secondary to my gospel...RLDS believe in Jesus, but Joseph Smith lurks in the background saying that God isn't pleased with all of the other churches...Mr. Smith still whispers that God had to start all over again to correct the old wrongs and restore the real organization.

RLDS cannot escape this teaching because it serves as the reason for there being any Latter-day Saints at all! Like any sincere believer and teacher I sought answers for the questions that challenged me...I so wanted to believe that what I had been taught all my life was true. It was during a summer camp that all my questions and rationalizations came to a resolution. I decided to leave the church. It was one of the most torturously difficult decisions I have ever made.

I have never felt so free to just be in Jesus. I have come to realize that Christ's true church is not an organization that can fall apart and need restoration. Rather, it is any and all those believers in Jesus' personal salvation. Most of all my salvation is secure by my faith in the true gospel, and its fullness is very precious to me. But in order to truly accept it I had to renounce Joseph Smith because he taught contrary to scripture [the Bible].

"Friend," Carol continues, "do you really want to continue to follow the teachings of a false prophet whose doctrines lead away from the true significance of Jesus' death on the cross and the salvation only He provides? Our testimony is that truth is available to all who will receive it, and as we have found, the truth really does set you free."

We, too, at Concerned Christians echo Carol's testimony. Truth matters. Jesus said: "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and *truth*, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in *truth*" (John 4:23-24 emphasis mine).

Let that truth ring throughout the world. I pray those of us who do share our faith in various ways with others, will be articulate, persuasive, and never, never, give up.



Another excerpt from,
THE FATE OF FALSE PROPHETS
by Carol Hansen
[For more information contact Carol at:
www.lifeline2rlds.org]

If Joseph Smith was a false prophet, and the evidence shows he clearly was, then those who promote his unbiblical doctrines must be considered false teachers. The Bible pronounces sobering words of indictment against false prophets and teachers and those who follow them. Why? Because they "defiled the Word of God...bring the way of truth into disrepute..." and "exploit you with stories they have made up" (2 Peter 2:1-20). Consider how the following verses, also from 2 Peter 2, parallel the statements of Joseph Smith.

BIBLE: "But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand" (2 Peter 2:12).

JOSEPH SMITH: "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man..." (Times and Seasons Vol. 5, p.613).

BIBLE: "They are bold and arrogant" (2 Peter 2:10).

JOSEPH SMITH: "I know more than all the world" (Times and Seasons Vol. 5, p. 615).



**Volunteer
Corner**

Mormon at my Door — Witnessing Effectively in 100 Words (or Less)

by Marsha Book

I am often asked the question:

“What should I say to a Mormon at my door in a short time, say five minutes or less?”

I love that question. But if you are like me, quite often I feel inadequate in sharing my faith with a Mormon. Nevertheless, it’s a subject that must be addressed because it is likely going to happen, especially if you live in the Mesa, Arizona area. Anyone who lives here, or has even visited for any length of time will notice that Mormonism is in abundance, to say the least.

First of all, keep your cool. I know that my pulse rate rises with anticipation whenever I see the bicyclers pedaling up, clad in their notorious black and white clothing - complete with matching helmets and backpacks. Take a deep breath and remember -- **they need** to hear **you**. Politely greet them and listen to their opening lines. When you get a chance to respond, ask them to explain something that you have been wondering about and you don’t understand. This may seem like you are changing the subject from whatever their opening line was, but remember -- they are quite eager to dialog with you and they won’t mind a bit. You can use your own words, but ask them something like this:

“Why does your religion do good deeds in order to reach the highest heaven...doesn’t the Bible say we are saved by faith alone in Jesus?”

If they respond by saying, “No, we don’t have to work for our salvation.” ... don’t fret. Ask them this follow-up question:

*Then why don’t you stop going to the temple to do these works? Don’t you go to the temple to do baptisms by proxy and rituals and such? Aren’t these **required** for exaltation?*

They will **not** have a sufficient answer for you. Because yes, they **are** required to do this to be in good standing with the church as a “temple Mormon” in order to gain exaltation.

While witnessing may be intimidating and seem complicated if you are not fully acquainted with Mormon doctrine, again – don’t worry ! You have given them something to seriously think about when they go to bed at night ! And you have just asked them a very important question regarding their doctrine of exaltation.

Here’s another 5-minute “door stumper” which addresses the Mormon doctrine of the nature of God – Ask them:

“Has the god of Mormonism always been God?... I’ve

heard in your religion that God had a god, who had a god, etc. on and on...

If their reply is a hedge answer, don’t worry. You can do this! First, just politely nod to whatever their standard answer may be. When they give you a chance to speak again, make this simple statement:

2. *“Well, in the book of Isaiah, it explains that the god you believe in is not the same God of Christianity.”*

Here is the Isaiah verse:

*You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. **Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me.** (Isaiah 43: 10-11).*

The Mormon at your door may suddenly have another pressing appointment which he claims is at this time, and make a fast exit. But realize this at least – you’ve conquered and squelched your fear of witnessing, even though you may know very little about Mormonism. You’ve just addressed two major problems in Mormon theology. Your confidence level will go nowhere but up.

Try to memorize these few things, and/or keep this newsletter handy as a reference for the next time you are faced with Mormon missionaries. Soon, it will be first nature for you to be helping reach Mormons for the real Jesus. Also, remember to keep the faith, study the Bible, ask questions, and don’t shy away when Mormon missionaries are heading your way.

References taken from *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* by Joseph Fielding Smith, pp. 347-348, 370, 373).



** See back cover for details.*



From the Mailbag

Dear Concerned Christians,

You are such a blessing in my life as my son and family are Mormons. Thanks for all you do – and the joy in knowing the “real” Jesus.

(Port Orange, FL)

Dear Concerned Christians,

May God continue to richly bless you in the service of our gracious Lord Jesus! Thank you for all you do and all your sacrifices for the *true* Gospel. I work with several LDS folks whom I really try to love and show/tell the grace of God. Your newsletter is God’s gentle reminder to share the truth in love – but for their sakes, share the truth!

(Mesa, AZ)

To the Staff at Concerned Christians,

May God continue to bless your work as you seek to inform and expose untruths concerning Mormonism. If only present-day Mormons would study their history so they would see the man-made foundation on which an organization has been built (I will not call it a church). May this donation help in 2008.

(Solvang, CA)

Bob,

Please if you would thank Jim and Judy for me. This site [message board on website] has been a blessing in more ways than you could ever know. The people that post here consistently (including you) have been very instrumental in my progress out of Mormonism, and I am sure that others who post here frequently, concur. Merry Christmas.

(received on the web)

To Concerned Christians,

Thank-you very much for continuing to send me you newsletter. A few months ago, I faced three Mormon Missionaries outside my home. I quickly went inside and came out with a copy of your newsletter and immediately the conversation became confrontational. I admit I was not prepared for that kind of reaction. One of them professed that your ministry “lies” about the LDS church. As the pontification continued, I simply stood my ground and tried to respond in a gracious way. The conversation did not end as I hoped, but I simply could not allow them to discuss their “lies”.

God bless all you do and thanks for the “continuing education”.

(Chandler, AZ)

Dear Concerned Christians,

I received the 20 DVDs [Jesus Christ/ Joseph Smith] all in good condition. Enclosed is a check ... I will share these with others. Hopefully I will be able to give some to Mormons.

My prayer is for you all to continue to share the truth of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Acts 26:18.

(Harrison, AR)

To Whom It May Concern:

Please stop sending your newsletter to the following address ... [the person to whom it was addressed] has never lived here. Also the Lord tells us judge not for ye shall be judged!! Love one another. No one should speak (gossip) about anyone or anything, good or bad. If you can’t say anything nice don’t say anything at all...

(received via e-mail from Sheridan, MT)

To the people of Concerned Christians,

At this time, I can only do a one time gift ... Andy Poland is helping me at the moment and I’m grateful for that. Your website is amazing, really good information. Thank-you.

(Apache Junction, AZ)

Dear Concerned Christians,

Thank-you for your monthly newsletter. I am constantly witnessing to my daughter-in-law who was born and raised Mormon. I have several books on how to reach Mormons for the truth of Jesus Christ. It really gets down to “a work of the Lord” so I’ll keep on but will hold her and my granddaughter up before the throne of Grace.

Again, thank-you for the encouragement I receive from your newsletter.

(Garden Valley, CA)

Dear Concerned Christians,

We received the DVD on Saturday in time to show it on Sunday. Thank-you for expediting the order. My [High School] Youth Group is also very concerned about the Mormon deception and is hopeful that their donation will help further your mission to share the true Gospel to those who need to hear it so desperately. We will pray for your strength.

(Rifle, CO)

Dear Judy, Jim, Bob & Cheri,

Thanks again for all you do for so many! Hope you all enjoy a joyous Christmas and a blessed New Year. Judy & Jim are hopefully home for the holidays for some relaxation. Was sorry I was unable to help get the last CROSS out. Hopefully next time things will be back to normal!

(Mesa, AZ)



Concerned Christians of Mesa

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Inside this issue:

LDS Apostle Denounces the Trinity Doctrine	1
Truth Matters	4
Mormon at my Door — Witnessing Effectively	5
From the Mailbag	6
Witnessing Resources	7



Amazing Quotes from LDS Church Leaders

From "The Great Things Which God Has Revealed," *Ensign*, May 2005, 81.

(Quoted in the NEW ERA, December, 2007, p.11)

"President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, 'In the short time of that remarkable [first] vision Joseph learned more concerning Deity than all of the scholars and clerics of the past'"

LDS Apostle Denounces the Trinity Doctrine

(Continued from page 3)

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come (Rev. 4:8). See also, Revelation 11:17, 15:3, 16:7, 18:8, 19:1, 6, 21:22, 22:5-6.

If Elohim and Jehovah (theos and kurios) are supposed to be two separate Gods, then all of these scriptures, and hundreds more like them, are phenomenally misleading.

Denouncing the trinity is just one of many doctrinal issues that divide LDS teaching from historical Christianity.



WORK DAY



February 23, 8:00 a.m.

Come with your paint brushes and work clothes! Help us spruce-up Concerned Christians.

One hour or more of your time would be greatly appreciated.

Morning coffee and donuts provided and pizza later.

