

# The Methodologies of the Two Streams

## Line Upon Line vs. Conspiracy Theories

### **Introduction:**

There has been an explosion of conspiracy theories in the news and on social media in recent months. These have especially been seen in relation to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic where it has been demonstrated that belief in conspiracy theories can literally cost lives. This development presents an important opportunity to highlight the truth of the two streams which was opened to God's people under the sounding of the Midnight Cry. The two streams represent not only sources of information, but two contrasting methodologies. The methodology of the liberal stream being history or line upon line, and the methodology of the conservative stream being conspiracy theorizing.

The purpose of this article is to highlight these two methodologies and focus in on that of conspiracy theories. The dangers of this methodology will be highlighted followed by an identification of strategies one can use to approach, and hopefully help, those who are subject to conspiratorial thinking.

### **Two Streams and Two World-views:**

The Midnight Cry message teaches that one's worldview influences their understanding of Bible prophecy. Prophecy may be fulfilled in accordance with God's Word, but the worldview one espouses influences how those events are interpreted. An example of this is the American civil war which has come into focus under the Midnight Cry message. Both protestants and Adventists understood that the war was a judgement from God.<sup>1</sup> Adventists identified it as a judgement for slavery. While many protestants saw it as a judgement for the nation's supposed failure to acknowledge God in its laws and institutions. Underpinning these two interpretations of the civil war were two world-views that existed at that time. One which recognized the equality of all human beings and the injustice of holding any class of people in bondage. The other which held to the notion that some are inherently superior to others and that God ordained the superior to rule over those who were inferior. Those who espoused the latter could not (or would not) see the wrong in their course of enslaving their fellow human beings. So the judgement from God they were witnessing had to have some other cause. These world-views also influenced the nature of the solutions both sides proposed in connection with their interpretations of the event. Many protestants began to argue for the dissolution of the separation of church and state and the adoption of a religious amendment within the constitution. While Adventists, on the other hand, argued for the abolition of slavery and the ending of oppression against the former slaves.

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<sup>1</sup>1T 359

The above illustrates the fact that how one views the world is a matter of critical, and even salvational importance. If one's worldview is of salvational importance, it follows that the sources of information one draws from to frame their worldview are also a matter of salvational importance. Today news media plays a prominent role in shaping people's worldview. This has been spoken of at length in studies shared by Elder Tess Lambert on the two streams of Information. This study taught that there is a liberal stream which comprises of mainstream media sources. CNN was used as a symbol to represent the aggregation of liberal media houses. There is also a conservative stream which is represented by Fox News. As per Elder Tess' study, these two streams represent more than sources of news however. They also represent two ideologies (liberalism and conservatism) which broadly characterize the worldview of the organizations that fall under the two streams.

The differences of perspective between conservatives and liberals span a breadth of issues from the role and purpose of government, social progress and how it is defined, the family, individual rights, and one's obligations to their fellow man. However the study of the two streams focused on how these two ideologies differ specifically as they relate to the issues of gender, race, and homosexuality. On these three subjects the liberal stream emphasized equality as the principle which governs how people are to be treated by their fellow man and before the law. In contrast to this the conservative stream upholds patriarchy in the area of gender relations. It either ignores or minimizes the impact and importance of racial disparities in society, or upholds these disparities as the right and established order of things. Homosexuality is viewed as something to be proscribed by law. And if it is not to be proscribed by law homosexuals are at the very least viewed with contempt, and as an undesirable element in society. Hence in contrast to the equality and liberty of the liberal perspective, the conservative worldview is characterized by inequality and oppression as it relates to these three issues.

The two streams are seen externally within the world as framed above. However the liberal/conservative divide is also seen within the Adventist church. It has played out in debates over subjects such as women's ordination which has seen the conservative controlled General Conference contending with the liberal North American Division and the various European divisions. The contention between these two factions has reached a level of acrimony that it has generated a lot speculation about a coming split in the church.

The two streams are seen within the present truth movement also. Most within the movement have been drawn from the church's conservative faction. But under the Midnight Cry the truth about the errors and dangers of conservatism were opened to God's people. The revelation of new light causes conflict and division between those who embrace it and those who are unwilling to conform their thoughts ideas to its requirements. Such was the case following the revelation of this concept of the two streams. Those who received the light turned away from conservatism. While the condemnation of their long held and deeply cherished ideas proved too deep a trial for many who chose to reject it. And this development precipitated the most pitched and bitter schism that the movement has suffered to date. A schism which mirrors the conflict taking place in the Adventist Church and that happening within the world at present.

### **The Methodologies of the Two Streams:**

Something that can be seen about the two streams is that there are specific methodologies that characterize them. By methodology it is meant that there are specific processes through which they interpret events and develop their conclusions about the world. The methodology of the liberal stream can be stated simply as history. When interpreting events within the world today similar developments from past histories are drawn upon to give understanding of the present. History is used not only to understand the present. It is also used as the basis of projections as to where current developments are leading. This methodology is referred to as line upon line (or the prophetic line methodology) within the movement. The movement's understanding and application of line upon line is well in advance of anything that is done by the secular journalists, historians, and political analysts within the world. But it is fundamentally the same methodology.

The methodology of the conservative stream is conspiracy theories. Under this methodology events are interpreted through a framework which takes the facts or particulars of a case, and strings them together to form a narrative. This narrative is what is called a conspiracy theory. By definition a conspiracy theory is an explanation for an event or situation that invokes a plot or a secret plan by sinister and powerful groups. These plots are often political in their motivation and they exist in contradiction to other explanations which are more probable.<sup>2</sup> This stringing together of particulars can be done either to form a narrative (a comprehensive theory) or to identify patterns which act as evidence in support of a pre-existing theory. However these narratives and the patterns used to support them assume more than the provable facts that underly them would allow. So much so that the theories are rendered false and misleading. It is a hallmark of conspiracy theories that they are resistant to being disproven even in the face of a greater weight of evidence or the demonstration of the weakness of the reasoning that underlies them.<sup>3</sup> Such can be the strength of belief in them that where the facts of a case do not support their narrative, conspiracy theorists are not beyond (consciously and sometimes subconsciously) falsifying evidence in order to support their narrative.

It is important to see the scriptural basis of these two methodologies. It should not be lost on students of prophecy that when God sought to give his people understanding of their current position, their future, the course they were to pursue, and the dangers that lay before them, He constantly appealed to history.<sup>4</sup> He establishes the principle that history repeats itself. This understanding is communicated by Ellen White when she says "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."<sup>5</sup> And again when she points out that every great religious movement bears a striking similarity with those of the past. This being true on account of the fact that God's dealing with man is ever the same.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Conspiracy*. (2001, November 25). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved May 29, 2020, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conspiracy>

<sup>3</sup> Lewandowsky, S., & Cook, J. (2020). *The Conspiracy Theory Handbook*. Available at <http://sks.to/conspiracy>

<sup>4</sup> Deut 29:2-20, Dan 5:17-23, Acts 6:9-7:53

<sup>5</sup> CET 204

<sup>6</sup> GC 343.1

The conspiracy theory methodology can be seen in Eden when Satan said that God forbade Adam and Eve from eating from the forbidden tree because He did not wish for the pair to reach a higher state of being. The insinuation being that God purposed, in a malicious way, to keep Adam and Eve in a state of subjection to Himself.

*Genesis 3:5*

*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

Some of the key characteristics of the conspiracy theory methodology are seen here. There are facts. Did God forbid Adam and Eve from eating from the tree? Yes. Would their eyes have been opened to a hidden knowledge - a knowledge of good and evil that they did not have before? Yes. But did it follow from these facts that God's purpose for the prohibition was to hold them down in an inferior state to Himself? The answer to this is no. Facts were presented; but a conclusion was extrapolated beyond the facts which painted a picture of a sinister design that was ultimately false and misleading.

Thus with the picture painted above it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that history or line upon line is God's methodology, while conspiracy theorizing is the methodology employed by Satan.

This methodology has its adherents within the Adventist church. Walter Veith from the Amazing Discoveries ministry is arguably its most prominent proponent. Through Walter Veith the conspiracy theories that are prominent within the world have been clothed with the garb of Biblical truth, and have thus found an audience with conservative Seventh-Day Adventists primarily. Veith is not alone in this however. He is part of a broader pool of popular speakers and evangelists who weave conspiracy theories into their teaching and interpretation of Bible prophecy.

As stated earlier, the movement's members have drawn principally from conservative Adventism. The superiority of the light of present truth had diminished the prominence of conspiracy theories within the movement. Among many these theories had been wholly or partially abandoned. But conspiracy theories have existed in the movement just as they have existed within the church. The light on the two streams was given as a blessing to remedy this situation. However many rejected the Midnight Cry and parted ways with the movement. Among this class conspiracy theories and conspiracy theorizing as a methodology have experienced a resurgence.

### **An Illustration:**

These two methodologies are most clearly understood when illustrated. A useful example is the ongoing crisis surrounding the COVID-19 coronavirus. Both the mainstream liberal media and the conservative press are reporting on this crisis. Both are tracking its spread and chronicling the efforts of politicians to enact measures to curb it. However key differences exist in how this crisis is being interpreted by the two camps. Mainstream media sources have looked to history

for lessons on how to understand the current crisis, and for lessons as to how to respond to it. They cite the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 as paralleling the current development. They point out that the notion of a disease previously confined to animals, crossing over to human beings with devastating effect is not new.<sup>7</sup> They point out that self-containment measures, social distancing, and the wearing of masks to mitigate the spread of the contagion were used against the Spanish Flu and that these measures met with a level of success at that time.<sup>8</sup> They also point out that there were individuals and groups who resisted the restrictions placed on them during the Spanish Flu pandemic. And how this contributed to the spread of the disease and an increase in the number of deaths that resulted from it. They point out that conspiracy theories also emerged during the Spanish Flu pandemic and how these theories hampered the life-saving measures advocated by government officials and medical experts.<sup>9</sup> All this is framed with the often unstated underlying understanding that history stands as lesson book from which one can learn the best course to pursue in the present and future.

The present truth movement develops this further by placing the Spanish Flu pandemic within the context of the First World War. And then the First World War itself is taken and used as a type of events in the present. These events in the present are located on a line or sequence of events that continues through to the second coming.<sup>10</sup>

Conservative media on the other hand has been peddling conspiracy theories. They have been regurgitating theories framed by the conspiracy theorist in-chief - the sitting president of the United States. These include the assertion that alarm over the crisis is a hoax being peddled by the Democrats in order to undermine his chances of re-election in the upcoming presidential elections.<sup>11</sup> They have given a platform to Eric Trump (Donald Trump's son) who repeated the allegation that the crisis was a hoax, and further to that, it would probably disappear after the

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<sup>7</sup> *Comparing COVID-19 with Spanish flu and other viral outbreaks*. (n.d.). Virginia Commonwealth University News.

[https://news.vcu.edu/article/Comparing\\_COVID19\\_with\\_Spanish\\_flu\\_and\\_other\\_viral\\_outbreaks](https://news.vcu.edu/article/Comparing_COVID19_with_Spanish_flu_and_other_viral_outbreaks)

<sup>8</sup> Bristow, N. K. (2020, April 29). *What the 1918 flu pandemic tells us about whether social distancing works* / Nancy K Bristow. the Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/apr/29/us-responses-1918-flu-pandemic-offer-stark-lessons-coronavirus-now>

<sup>9</sup> Dunne, S. (2020, May 10). *Conspiracy theories, mask protests and devastating loss: Historian of 1918 flu pandemic to give Zoom book talk through Avon library*. courant.com.

<https://www.courant.com/coronavirus/hc-news-coronavirus-influenze-pandemic-historian-avon-20200510-6lgxdbn6z5hq5jbe27rl55rtuq-story.html>

<sup>10</sup> Future is Now. (2020, March 21). *COVID 19 and Bible Prophecy - Tess Lambert* [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=39.%29+COVID-](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=39.%29+COVID-19+und+biblische+Prophetie+%2F+COVID-19+and+Bible-Prophecy+-+Tess+Lambert+21.03.2020)

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<sup>11</sup> Dale, D. (2020, March 17). *Fact check: Trump tries to erase the memory of him downplaying the coronavirus*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/17/politics/fact-check-trump-always-knew-pandemic-coronavirus/index.html>

elections in November.<sup>12</sup> Fox News has also peddled Donald's Trump's conspiracy theories about the origins of the virus. Stating without proof that it originated in a lab in Wuhan, China.<sup>13</sup>

The effects of these two approaches upon society are clear for all who are willing to see them. The countries that have been most diligent in learning from history, and in following the advice of the leading bodies of scientists and medical professionals, have weathered the crisis more effectively than those whose leaders have adopted a conspiratorial mindset towards this issue. Trump's America, Bolsonaro's Brazil, and Johnson's United Kingdom are among the worst affected nations as of this writing. These are all nations with conservative leaders with a record for employing conspiracy theorizing as part of their political repertoire; and who are employing it now in their response to the pandemic.

### **The Danger of Conspiracy Theories:**

It is important to probe more deeply into the character of conspiracy theories to better understand the dangers posed by them. Inspiration teaches that error is always dangerous. Its influence is ever to mislead and bring souls to ruin.<sup>14</sup> Many of the conspiracy theories that are current in the world today speak to events that are addressed by the movement as subjects of Bible prophecy. Yet they offer interpretations of these events that are contrary and irreconcilable to those that form part of this movement's narrative of the history of the end of the world. Their influence over time will be to bring in confusion and lead away from the truth if they are not relinquished.

Conspiracy theorizing also forms part of the populist playbook. Populism is the political ideology espoused by Donald Trump and other leaders that have emerged in recent years to challenge the established norms of democracy in the west. It is an ideology that juxtaposes the "ordinary people" against a group of elites. It presents a given group of people as being great and noble, and emphasizes the belief that this group's interests and concerns have been disregarded by established elites. The collective identity of the group as well as their sense of having being grieved become rallying cries for political mobilization.

Populism appeals to the worst impulses in humanity in order to achieve its objectives. It employs "othering" which is defined as viewing or treating a person or group of people as "intrinsically different from and alien to oneself."<sup>15</sup> But inherent in this viewing of people as different to the

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<sup>12</sup> Rupar, A. (2020, May 18). Eric Trump used his latest Fox News appearance to push an absurd conspiracy theory about COVID-19. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/2020/5/18/21262403/eric-trump-jeanine-pirro-coronavirus-hoax>

<sup>13</sup> Brewster, J. (2020, May 24). *A timeline of the COVID-19 Wuhan lab origin theory*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackbrewster/2020/05/10/a-timeline-of-the-covid-19-wuhan-lab-origin-theory/#1bc8c38b5aba>

<sup>14</sup> ...Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. It is always dangerous. The enemy has great power over minds that are not thoroughly fortified by prayer and established in Bible truth. 5T 292.2

<sup>15</sup> *Other* | Definition of other by Lexico. (n.d.). Lexico Dictionaries | English. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/other>

group to which one belongs are notions of superiority and inferiority, and a hostile partisanship which views the interests of other groups as incompatible or even hostile to those of one's own.<sup>16</sup> Othering undergirds territorial disputes where groups define themselves and others according to the territories from which they originate. It undergirds the sectarian violence and military conflicts which lead to hunger and food insecurity. It is even the basis of the gridlock and conflict over climate change.<sup>17</sup> Where there isn't an elite or some other group that can be identified as the cause of the people's problems such a group must be invented. Conspiracy theories are the tool for accomplishing this. They serve as a means for creating targets for populist angst.

Conspiracy theories are also used to justify prejudicial opinions against people who are differentiated from the populist's group by their race, religion, culture, or some other distinction.<sup>18</sup> They are often a mask for racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance.<sup>19</sup> An example of this is the 2016 U.S. presidential election which saw Trump winning the presidency. Sexism against Hillary Clinton was masked through the conspiracy theories which painted her as inordinately corrupt and physically unfit for the presidency.<sup>20</sup> Another example is Jair Bolsonaro and his response to the ongoing COVID 19 crisis in Brazil. He justified his contempt for the World Health Organization and its recommendations by promoting the conspiracy theory that the organization encouraged little children to become homosexuals.<sup>21</sup> Contempt for international organizations such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations, and the European Union are a hallmark of populist ideology which espouses the primacy of the state in world affairs. But beyond this his framing of homosexuals as an undesirable element - as something to be avoided - would likely strengthen prejudice against homosexuals in his country.

Examples of how far conspiracy theories can go are Anders Behring Breivik who was responsible for the 2011 Norway mass shooting; and Brenton Tarrant who was responsible for the 2019 Christchurch mass shooting in New Zealand. Both these men believed in "the great replacement" - a conspiracy theory which posits that elites (usually Jews) are working to replace

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<sup>16</sup> Powell, J. A. (2017, November 30). *Us vs them: The sinister techniques of 'Othering – and how to avoid them*. the Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/nov/08/us-vs-them-the-sinister-techniques-of-othering-and-how-to-avoid-them>

<sup>17</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 149-151; The Mosaic Rooms, *Naomi Klein: Let Them Drown—The Violence of Othering in a Warming World*, May 4, 2016, posted May 10, 2016, <https://vimeo.com/166018049>

<sup>18</sup> Douglas, K. (2019, March 14). *Conspiracy theories fuel prejudice towards minority groups*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/conspiracy-theories-fuel-prejudice-towards-minority-groups-113508>

<sup>19</sup> Brotherton, R. (2017). *Suspicious minds: Why we believe conspiracy theories*. Bloomsbury Sigma. pg.46

<sup>20</sup> Crockett. (2016, September 13). *There's a subtle sexism in asking excessive "questions" about Hillary Clinton's health*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/2016/9/13/12891310/hillary-clinton-pneumonia-sexism-questions>

<sup>21</sup> *Bolsonaro Says WHO Encourages Kids to be Gay, Masturbate*. (2020, April 30). *France24* . <https://www.france24.com/en/20200430-bolsonaro-says-who-encourages-kids-to-be-gay-masturbate>

white populations in the West through immigration and integration.<sup>22</sup> This theory served as both a motivator and justifier of the actions these men took to defend (as they saw it) the racial and cultural survival of western civilization.

Examples as those cited above vividly demonstrate the danger of conspiracy theories and how far they can go. Conspiracy theories have thus far not led to physical violence within the church. But they have been equally damaging at a spiritual level. They are causing people to bring into their character development materials and influences that justify prejudice and inequality; and that will ultimately lead them to make a shipwreck of their faith. Conspiracy theories centre on the idea that there are powerful people (such as Jesuits, Freemasons or Illuminists) with evil agendas who are working clandestinely to control or harm those outside of themselves. And that evidence of their machinations can be seen in society by those with the knowledge and skill to identify them. They promote a mindset of looking for evidence of evil in authority figures and people with whom one disagrees.<sup>23</sup> Ellen White warns against this when she teaches that the act of looking for evil in others develops evil in the one who looks.

*Earnest workers have no time for dwelling upon the faults of others. We cannot afford to live on the husks of others' faults or failings. Evil-speaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. **The very act of looking for evil in others develops evil in those who look.** By dwelling upon the faults of others, we are changed into the same image. But by beholding Jesus, talking of His love and perfection of character, we become changed into His image. By contemplating the lofty ideal He has placed before us, we shall be uplifted into a pure and holy atmosphere, even the presence of God. When we abide here, there goes forth from us a light that irradiates all who are connected with us. MH 492.2*

As with many such theories, the interpretations of the evidence used to support them are not sound. The Spirit of prophecy passages which speak of Freemasons and other secret societies do not uphold the assertions they are used to support. However an analysis of these passages is a subject for another publication.

### **Meeting Conspiracy Theorists:**

With the above having been stated it is important to understand that people's motivations for believing conspiracy theories are not always dark or malevolent. Human beings have a natural desire to understand the world around them. The mind is hard-wired to try to make sense of the often random and chaotic occurrences within the world and within one's life. Especially when such occurrences are traumatic or life-changing. Conspiracy theories are compelling in part because they provide a framework for explaining the unknown - for bringing order out of the random and chaotic. Conspiracy theorizing becomes a natural temptation as people are predisposed to it as a function of human psychology.

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<sup>22</sup> Ebner, & Davey. (2019). *The 'Great Replacement': the violent consequences of mainstreamed extremism*. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. <https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Great-Replacement-The-Violent-Consequences-of-Mainstreamed-Extremism-by-ISD.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Suspicious Minds pg.96



Every human being has a propensity for flawed patterns of thinking which make them susceptible to believing conspiracy theories. Such flawed patterns of thought include the tendency to see causal relationships between phenomena where no such relationship exists, seeing intentionality in random occurrences, and seeing patterns where there are merely coincidences.<sup>24,25</sup> This propensity is stronger in some than it is in others. But regardless of the motive for believing them, the spiritual harm caused by conspiracy theories is real nevertheless. The souls of those who believe them are in danger. Given this fact it is important to engage those who are subject to conspiratorial thinking with patience and forbearance.

There is a growing body of research on conspiratorial thinking. This research gives pointers as to the best way to help people who are mired in it. It plainly states that turning people away from such beliefs is difficult. Where a weight of evidence is presented against them the mind of the conspiracy theorist is often drawn to seek out further evidence to confirm their beliefs. And they are inclined to see greater force in evidence that supports their beliefs than that which debunks them.<sup>26</sup> Such cognitive bias makes it an extremely difficult task to break someone free from their belief in such theories. But of the various techniques recommended by psychologists two will be cited here. The first is “fact-based debunking.” This involves simply presenting the facts of a subject under consideration to counter the conspiracy theories around it.<sup>27</sup> Research has demonstrated that the simple presentation of correct information (Obama’s birth certificate) in the birther conspiracy<sup>28</sup> was effective at causing some to relinquish it.<sup>29</sup> While there is a scientific basis for fact-based debunking, the present truth message, when presented systematically, has a convincing power that is strong to bear away error. The thorough interpretation of sacred texts, the system and clarity of the prophetic lines, the patterns from history and scripture and the demonstration of how they parallel the history of the final reformatory movement - when these are understood and received they will tend to draw people away from conspiracy theories which in contrast appear inferior and speculative.

Another useful technique is logic-based debunking. Conspiracy theories often involve leaps in logic and contradictory reasoning.<sup>30</sup> It is not uncommon for people to believe two theories that contradict one another and to be oblivious to this fact until the contradictions are clearly pointed

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<sup>24</sup> van Prooijen, J.- W., Douglas, K. M., and De Inocencio, C. (2018) Connecting the dots: Illusory pattern perception predicts belief in conspiracies and the supernatural. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.*, 48: 320–335. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2331>.

<sup>25</sup> Suspicious Minds pg.169-175

<sup>26</sup> Suspicious Minds pg.74

<sup>27</sup> Lewandowsky, S., & Cook, J. (2020). *The Conspiracy Theory Handbook*. Available at <http://sks.to/conspiracy>

<sup>28</sup> The birther conspiracy theory was a theory championed by Donald Trump which posited that Barack Obama was not born in the United States and was therefore constitutionally ineligible to hold the office of the presidency.

<sup>29</sup> Warner, B. R., & Neville-Shepard, R. (2014). Echoes of a conspiracy: Birthers, truthers, and the cultivation of extremism. *Communication Quarterly*, 62, 1–17. doi:10.1080/01463373.2013.822407

<sup>30</sup> Suspicious Minds pg.94-97

out to them. Identifying these failures in logic can be a painstaking task. But doing so can be effective as logical consistency in one's beliefs is something people generally seek.<sup>31</sup>

### **In Closing:**

The light of the Midnight Cry arrived in time to both cure and inoculate God's people against the confusion of conspiracy theories that has become increasingly widespread in recent months. However beyond seeking protection for oneself the object should be to try, as far as possible, to help those who are mired in this confusion. This requires an understanding of the character of conspiracy theorizing as a methodology and of conspiratorial thinking. There is more involved in understanding these subjects than has been covered in this article. But the hope is that this writing will serve as a useful primer for those seeking a better knowledge of how to address them.

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<sup>31</sup> Lewandowsky, S., & Cook, J. (2020). *The Conspiracy Theory Handbook*. Available at <http://sks.to/conspiracy>