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THE GIMMICK IS ONE WALT DISNEY WOULD HAVE LOVED. Amusement parks with distinct biblical themes are planned for southern Alabama, southeastern Ohio, and the Cape Kennedy area of Florida. In the Mobile, Alabama, area, plans call for a $500 million, 1,190-acre "Holyland." Near Cambridge, Ohio, the first phase of a less expensive but equally gaudy "Biblelands" is expected to open for business this summer. And in Florida, Carl McIntire plans to construct a full-size replica of the temple at Jerusalem on his extensive property at the Cape. (McIntire already lures tourists with a model of the temple housed in one of his buildings.)
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Major east-west interstate routes to Las Vegas and Disney World visitors from the Southwest will conveniently pass Holyland's gates. Already it has undergone its own "cleansing of the temple": dissatisfied backers purged corporate president and founder Bill Caywood, a Mobile insurance man. They were worried that plans for the park were getting overblown and over-extravagant.

Kids were going to slide down the Tower of Babel and stroll through the Noah's Ark Kiddy Petting Zoo (two of each species) while more sedate visitors would stroll through an art gallery composed of copies of biblical-theme art or watch a passion play at a 4,000-seat amphitheater.

Also planned: daily Ben Hur-style chariot races, a biblical wax museum, a 100-foot model of Jonah's whale (complete with interior seating), and a sort of gospel train ride through heaven and hell. A Red Sea that "actually divides" was called for, as were daily gladiator fights. (Caywood also advertised for a lion without teeth and claws—presumably to "eat" actor-Christs.)

All in all, the backers felt it was a bit much, according to Patrick Owens of Newsday. However, they found small print in their contracts that gave Caywood their corporate proxy votes for ten years the minute they signed up. But Alabama law demands that backers get "something of value" in return for their proxy votes (one dollar for each of the twenty votes would have been sufficient), a rule with which Caywood failed to comply. With votes restored, Caywood was ousted. Meanwhile, plans for the park are going ahead, though the opening day has been delayed.

The highlight of Holyland will be a 157-foot statue of Christ (reportedly flashing the one-way sign) to stand atop a fifty-seven-foot reinforced-concrete base that will also serve as a chapel. Surrounding the statue will be a Plan of Salvation Garden (no admission fee), where invitations to receive Christ will be given.

The Ohio Biblelands, unbedeviled by Holyland's corporate hassles, is scheduled to open its first phase this summer. Included in the $30 million project will be theatrical productions and wax figures displays. As other phases are built visitors will be able to do such things as take a camel ride and fish in the "Sea of Galilee." The project director is Frank M. Roughten, a United Methodist minister who has staged religious productions in athletic stadiums in Atlanta and Cincinnati. Roughten and Biblelands founder Earl R. Voorhies, a Methodist layman, expect the project to be completed in 1976.

THEOLOGY OF DEFEAT

When the Washington Redskins trounced Dallas for the conference championship, millions of football fans saw the team kneel in the dressing room after the game and pray. When Washington lost the Super Bowl to Miami, no cameras were on hand but the team again prayed.
prayer meeting. One local Baltimore newspaper, the "Baltimore Sun and Observer," called it "nauseating" in an editorial and described the prayer as "a cheap, degrading exhibition played out on national television." They objected to what they saw as an attempt by the Redskins to claim God was on their side and to suggest God took an interest in game outcomes.

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Not so, says Redskins' team chaplain Tom Skinner (see January 5 issue, page 50). "We pray after every game, win or lose," the black evangelist said. "We were not aware the cameras were on. They should not have been in there." The critics, he said, were reacting to a private team affair they could not understand.

Following the Super Bowl defeat, said Skinner, team members, while disappointed, nevertheless listened while he expounded a theology of defeat. The country and the church, he said later, are success-oriented and are interested only in success stories of businessmen, athletes, and beauty queens. "But perhaps God has a message through the guy who fumbles four times and loses the game," Skinner said, "because we learn from our mistakes and failures."

For the Redskins, humbled by Miami, the meaning was not lost on the quiet flight back to Washington.

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