Apocalypse Now! The Realized Eschatology of the "Christian Identity" Movement

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> While Criminals Run Loose . . . Undeclared War Against Christian America.[1]
>
> There is a direct connection between [the above story], the Waco massacre and the assassination of Vicki and Samuel Weaver in Naples, Idaho. . . . Since Clinton's backing comes from Israel and International Zionism, that means that Christian Fundamentalists, and particularly those who tend to be independent and patriotic, could be targeted for repression, physical attack, or incarceration without cause at the behest of the Clinton backers. In fact, you or a group that you belong to may have already been targeted.[2]

THE ELECTION OF BILL CLINTON to the presidency of the United States may have been a welcome change to those in the American public sphere who have been out of power in the Reagan/Bush era, but it set forth a collective shudder from the consciousness of evangelical and conservative America. With the election of Clinton to the presidency, the social and political power base of the religious right has been undermined and a new generation of leaders and "social engineers" has assumed the reigns of responsibility. When viewed through the ideological framework of the extreme religious right, Clinton's election is a critical element in an apocalyptic struggle for the soul of a nation and the destiny of a people.

When Patrick Buchanan appeared at the 1992 Republican National Convention in Houston, he warned America of the change that would occur with the election of the Democrats to office. The change he described was a radical change, and as he put it, "not the kind of change we can abide in a nation that we still call God's country."[3] At a later point in his speech, he stated "There is a religious war going on in this country

for the soul of America. It is a cultural war as critical to the kind of nation we shall be as the cold war itself, for this war is for the soul of America."[4]

Though Buchanan's statement may have seemed like the rhetorical excess of a failed presidential candidate, he was articulating the deepest fears of a generation of disenfranchised Americans who perceive their way of life being challenged by the changing demographics of the American population. The radical religious right views these changes within an apocalyptic framework rooted in a century of prophetic thought and propelled by a theological perspective that views every event as leading to a final dramatic confrontation between good and evil. Though it is not entirely accurate to refer to Buchanan as the "thinking man's David Duke," his eloquence gives an air of credibility to a much darker vision in American religion and politics.

Two recent events crystallize this vision. The April 19, 1993, F.B.I. assault upon David Koresh's compound in Waco, Texas, is perceived by members of the far religious right as being an "American holocaust" in which "Americans were being pressured, intimidated, and coerced into believing that Gestapo and KGB tactics are par for the course and are thus to be accepted as everyday occurrences in our once Christian nation."[5] A second critical event for the far religious right was the F.B.I. assault and capture of survivalist Randy Weaver, in which his wife and son were killed by federal agents. Pastor Carl Franklin of Church of Jesus Christ Christian-Aryan Nations viewed this assault upon Weaver's family as the "government coming four-square against a Christian, American white family. When the feds blew the head off of Vicki Weaver, I think symbolically that was their war against the American woman, the American mother, the American white wife. This is the opening shot of the second American Revolution."[6]

A common denominator in each of these incidents is a religious movement of the far right, the "Christian Identity" movement. This movement, which came to public attention in the Reagan/Bush era, has spread in a global climate of accelerating right wing extremism. The "Christian Identity" movement, referred to as a "theology of hate" by the B'nai B'rith,[7] is a theological system centered on a racist/anti-Semitic *Weltanschauung* and a sense of prophetic destiny. Though it lacks a cohesive ecclesiastical structure, it is coordinated through a loosely affiliated collection of churches/compounds throughout the United States which serve as recruitment and organizational centers. Its theology is a unique cultural system that provides the ideological unity and theoretical framework for as many as 30,000 of the disparate elements of the far right, the

Ku Klux Klan, neo-nazis, skinhead racists, and the "Aryan" resistance movement.[8] "Identity" theology, in its current form, has its ideological origins in two nineteenth-century movements: nativism and an obscure historical theology known as Anglo-Israelism.

The Development of Identity Theology

From the very beginnings of the colonial enterprise, American Protestants have considered themselves to be a chosen nation. They see themselves set above the rest of humanity with a special responsibility for the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Millennial expectations shaped a view of Protestant America as the culmination of God's unfolding plan for the destiny of the nations. The English Reformation, the settlement of North America , the establishment of the "city on the hill," the wars against the French and the Indians, the American Revolution, and even the Civil War established that God was powerfully at work in our midst.

Nativist thought arising out of the economic and social crises of the nineteenth century increasingly came to define this evil as those who were non-white, non-Protestant, and non-native born. Nativism, as a movement, defined itself in opposition to that empirical other which more and more began to populate the American landscape. In this view of America, evil did not exist as an abstract force, but in a "very this-worldly personification."[9]

In the early nineteenth century, the nativist movement focused upon the massive influx of Catholic immigrants, especially the Irish, as a threat to America's internal security. Anti-Catholic sentiments viewed the Catholic church as the "Whore of Babylon" and sensationalist literature such as Maria Monk's *The Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal* whipped nativist sentiments into a flurry of violent activity. An Ursuline Monastery in Massachusetts was burned in 1834, anti-Catholic riots erupted in New York and Philadelphia (where a seminary and two churches were set ablaze), and an anti-Catholic party, the American Party, swept large numbers into political office on the eve of the Civil War. Following the Civil War, the American Protective Association was founded in 1887 to curb the dangers of "Romanism," limit immigration, and protect the public school system from the challenge of the parochial system.

Following the Civil War, especially in the South in the latter years of the nineteenth century, the nativist movement began to reframe evil from religious into distinctly racial terms.[10] Charles Carroll's *The Negro a Beast,*

published by the American Book and Bible House, in the early 1890s exemplified this movement. It built upon the racist mythology of the Curse of Ham that had played a significant role in the enslavement of Africans. Carroll further argued that the African-Americans were subhuman, beastly, and without a soul. Arising out of such sentiments, and ostensibly to protect Southern culture from the danger of "miscegenation," the Ku Klux Klan was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee, on Christmas Eve, 1865. The official application for charter membership to the Ku Klux Klan establishes that one must be "A believer in the tenets of Christian religion, the maintenance of white supremacy, the practice of honorable clannishness, and the principles of 'pure Americanism.'"[11] In 1867, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest reorganized the Ku Klux Klan as a paramilitary unit to protect Southern interests during reconstruction. In so doing, he set the tone for his modern paramilitary counterparts in the "Identity" movement. D. W. Griffith's epic 1915 film *Birth of a Nation,* based on Thomas Dixon's novel *The Clansman,* solidified the Ku Klux Klan's mythos of an apocalyptic racial struggle as an enduring vision in American ideology.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, nativist thought combined the religious and racial "other" into a single component and focused upon the Jew as the locus of evil in American society. Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent,* edited by William J. Cameron, gained notoriety in the twenties for espousing anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about the Jews controlling the world economy, Jewish Bolshevism exploiting the economic crisis, and the Jews as an evil religious force out to destroy Anglo-Saxon America.[12] Within the pages of the *Dearborn Independent* in the twenties was to be found the first publication of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* in the United States. The *Protocols,* which has been republished many times in the United States, details the strategy of the High Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin, and the Masonic Order for total global domination. The *Protocols* promotes the conspiracy theory of a secret council of Jewish elders who sought to seize world power by manipulating the economy through a cabal of bankers, puppet politicians, and the press. The *Protocols* are a critical element in "Identity" literature.[13] An influential individual who used the *Protocols* to promote anti-Semitism in the early twenties was Father Charles Coughlin. It was Father Coughlin, in the heart of the Depression, who laid the blame for the depression upon the international Jewish conspiracy. He also aligned himself with the neo-Nazi German-American Bund and spoke up in defense of Nazi persecution of Jews in Germany.[14] In his radio essay of

February 1933 entitled "Banks and Gold," Coughlin cites the role of international bankers in the depression and suggests a larger conspiracy:

> Long enough we have been the pawns and chattels of the modern pagans who have crucified us on the cross of gold. Through politeness only have we dignified them with the term of international bankers. . . . I have dared not only to suggest to you but to implore you to organize legally and peacefully against the Morgans, the Kuhn-Loebs, the Rothschilds, the Dillon-Reades, the Federal Reserve banksters, the Mitchells, and the rest of that undeserving group, who without either the blood of patriotism or of Christianity flowing in their veins, have shackled the lives of men and of nations with the ponderous links of their golden chain.[15]

In 1938, Coughlin's followers took his advice and the "Christian Front" was organized in New York City. The Christian Front was composed of organizations such as the Crusaders for Americanism, The American Nationalists, The American Patriots, the Christian Mobilizers, and the German American Bund.[16] The Christian Front's political vehicle was a newspaper entitled *Social Justice* that often bore titles such as "Keep America for Americans" and "The Truth about the Jews."[17] The Christian Front organized boycotts of Jewish establishments and established *The Christian Index* to Christian owned businesses. They advocated hiring Christians only, and emblazoned "Think Christian! Act Christian! Buy Christian!" on their materials. The Christian Front encouraged militancy in the face of increasing alien influences upon the nation. In so doing, Coughlin and the Christian Front proved to be the forerunners of the modern "Christian Identity" movement.

However, the most profound influence upon the formulation "Christian Identity" ideology is a theological movement from the nineteenth century known as Anglo-Israelism. Anglo-Israelism places the nations of Europe as descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. In 1871, the "Identity" movement's founder, Edward Hine, published and sold in England 250,000 copies of a treatise entitled *Identification of the British Nation with Lost Israel.* The work, a bestseller in England, was brought to the United States during the latter years of the nineteenth century by Rev. W. H. Poole of Detroit.[18] Hine's race-centered work was influenced by the scientific racism of post-Darwinian writers such as de Comte de Gobineau who stated in his 1855 *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines* that, "The racial question dominates all the other problems of history . . . the inequality of races suffices to explain the whole unfolding of the destiny of peoples. . . . History shows that all civilization flows from the white race, that no civilization can exist without the cooperation of this race."[19]

Anglo-Israelism, as espoused by Hine, believes that for two thousand years the world has mistaken the true identity of the Jews. The true Jews, the descendants of the patriarchs and those God called his "Chosen People," are the people of Western Europe. The people known today as Jews are actually an Asian race, the "Khazars" (Ashkenazim), that descended from the seed of Satan planted in Eve's belly when she was seduced by Satan in the Garden. Eve gave birth to two sons: Adam's son, Abel, and Satan's son, Cain. Cain slew Abel. The descendants of Cain crucified Jesus. Throughout the history of humanity, the descendants of Cain have attempted to eradicate the progeny of Adam.[20] The Bible is a history of the struggle. The *Revelation to John,* or Apocalypse, is the prophecy regarding the end of this struggle.[21]

According to Anglo-Israelism, the white race is biblical Israel. Isaac's sons (Saxons) crossed the Caucasus Mountains hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus to settle in the British Isles, the "British Israel." This migration to the British Isles occurred around 722 B.C.E., when the ten northern tribes of Israel were captured and taken into captivity by the Assyrians. Two of the ten tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, migrated virtually intact through the Caucasus Mountains into northwestern Europe. Ephraim was to become "a company of nations"—the British Commonwealth.[22]

The second son of Joseph, Manasseh, was to become a "great nation"—the United States. The "Identity" church teaches that the Manasseh tribe crossed the Atlantic aboard the *Mayflower* to America. In America, God gave them such sacred documents as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Therefore, the United States is a holy country of the House of David and the white people who settled it are entitled to the country through the divine covenant. The documents of the founding fathers are considered sacred and stand in continuity with the covenant of Abraham. "Identity" believers respond only to higher law and morality as defined in the Bible and to the divine will as expressed in the writings of the founding fathers.[23]

Inherent in "Identity" thought as expressed in Anglo-Israelism is a dualism. A mythology that posits the white race as the Children of Israel, the highest expression of good, must also construct an evil. For "Identity" believers, this evil takes the form of the "false" children of Israel—what humanity considers to be Judaism. As the Assyrians were transporting the Northern tribes of Israel in the eighth century B.C.E., the Southern tribes of Judah were conquered by the Babylonians and transported into exile. It is during this period that the "Identity" movement sees Judaism

as separating itself from its Old Testament background and falling into heresy.[24] In Babylonia, the people of Judah fell under the influence of pagan beliefs and were introduced to the "black" magic of Satan. The product of this period is the Babylonian Talmud, one of the central documents of the Jewish religion and the foundation of Rabbinical Judaism.[25]

In addition, the people of Judea fell into even greater apostasy. Under the reign of the benevolent king Cyrus and the Persians, the people of Judea were allowed to return to the Holy Land to rebuild the Holy Temple of Solomon. During this period, the people of the Southern Kingdom intermarried with the Edomites (Africans) and began to take on the "dark" features of the native Africans. All people not of Northern European extraction are lumped into a category of soulless subhumans called "mud people."[26] When the people of the Southern Kingdom intermarried with the "mud people," they committed a crime against God:

> [the] characteristics of the racial type we recognize as that of the Jews today were the result of intermarriages in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. At that time a mutation of the blood stream occurred . . . (which was a) . . . defection from the will of God.[27]

Just as with the earlier nativist movement, a shift occurred from a religious conception of evil to a racial one. It is the construction of evil in starkly racial terms that reduces the complexity of our existence to the lowest common denominator and provides the key to "Identity" theology. When the white person recognizes their "identity" as the Nation of Israel and the nature of good and evil in our world, they will be compelled to act in a manner consistent with this ideology. In an apocalyptic struggle twixt good and evil, the "Identity" movement offers salvation. It is a salvation by race alone.

With the identification of evil in a "very this-worldly personification," "Identity" theorists begin to weave a web of ideology that traces the hidden hand of evil throughout history from the crucifixion of Christ to the Trilateral Commission of the postmodern era. Their ideology developed as nativist impulses combined with a racist and anti-Semitic "Identity" philosophy of history to create a panoply of conspiracy theories in which the common denominator is this face of evil. All complexities are rendered negligible within this ideology; all historical events and, indeed, all current events are controlled and manipulated by this hidden and powerful force. In reducing history to this lowest common denominator, the "Identity" movement has created a mythology that even the simplest mind can grasp. That is the appeal of the "Identity" movement.

Stephen O' Leary, in his recent work *Arguing the Apocalypse,* notes the interrelatedness of conspiracy theories and the apocalyptic mentality. Conspiracy theories are ultimately spatial, locating the source of evil outside of the "true community" and providing the impetus to locate and neutralize the "other," this locus of evil: the cabal. Apocalyptic myths offer a temporal or teleological framework for understanding evil by claiming that evil must grow in power until its ultimate day of reckoning. Thus, discourses of conspiracy and apocalypse are linked by a common function: each develops symbolic resources that enable societies to define and address the problem of evil. In fact, conspiracy arguments are often enveloped into the larger theoretical framework of apocalyptic mythologies in order to find expression within given communities.[28]

THE MODERN MOVEMENT

One of Coughlin's assistants in the Christian Front and an associate of Henry Ford and Huey Long was Gerald L. K. Smith. Smith, an ordained minister in the Disciples of Christ Church, gained notoriety as one of America's most noted anti-Semites by staging an elaborate Passion Play in Louisiana. When confronted concerning the profound anti-Semitism of the passion play, Smith responded that if his play is anti-Semitic, then "the New Testament is anti-Semitic."[29] Following World War II, Smith formed the Christian Defense League, an early survivalist offshoot of the Ku Klux Klan. Smith's tabloid, *The Cross and the Flag,* was among the first to specifically use "Identity" theology in the manner that it is used today, that is, to provide religious justification for racist and anti-Semitic violence.[30]

Smith, incorporating Ford's conspiracy theories and the popular image of the Jews as Shylock, spread the image of the "hidden hand" of Jewry influencing history. However, following World War II and the Nazi Holocaust, the widespread audience that had previously accepted this "hidden hand" message began to wane. No longer finding an audience among the general populace, the movement turned to a more extremist community. One of Smith's lieutenants in his organization, the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, was an ordained Alabama Methodist minister, Dr. Wesley Swift. As one of the editors of *The Cross and the Flag,* it was Swift who actually incorporated "Identity" theology, especially Anglo-Israelitism, into Christian Defense League rhetoric and helped establish Smith as one of the icons of the "Christian Identity" movement.[31] In 1946

Swift founded the Church of Jesus Christ—Christian, that is still in operation today in Hayden Lake, Idaho. It was Dr. Swift, a former Ku Klux Klan Kleagle, who was the first to spread the teachings of the "Identity" movement into the world of the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis in the early sixties under the auspices of his Church of Jesus Christ—Christian.

Dr. Wesley Swift rapidly became the foremost proponent of the "Christian Identity" movement in its modern formulation. He was also among the first in the "Identity" movement to assert the need for paramilitary organizations to defend the movement and to help accomplish its goals through means other than the organizational and rhetorical. Swift formed the racist paramilitary California Rangers in the early sixties; the Rangers formed the core of the late sixties right wing revolutionaries, the Minutemen. The Minutemen were arrested in 1968 after blowing up a police station and attempting to rob several banks. Keith Gilbert, one of the Minutemen and a member of Swift's church, was arrested for stealing 1,400 lbs. of TNT in a plot to blow up Martin Luther King at the Hollywood palladium.[32]

One of Swift's associates in the Church of Jesus Christ—Christian, Colonel William Gale, began his own "Identity" operation in Mariposa, California. Colonel Gale had formerly been an officer with Gen. Douglas MacArthur and a candidate for Governor of California on an anti-desegregation ticket in 1958.[33] In Mariposa, Gale began to produce the newsletter *Identity* that helped to solidify the ideology of the "Identity" movement. Early in the seventies, Col. Gale left Mariposa and settled in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains where he formed his own "Identity" congregation, the Ministry of Christ Church. During this period Gale and his associates organized an early branch of the Posse Comitatus, a violent survivalist paramilitary organization. Members of the Posse Comitatus have been involved in numerous violent episodes, including taking a grade school hostage in Wyoming and slaying two federal marshalls in North Dakota. In 1983, Gale described the goals of the "Identity" movement:

> Yes, we're going to cleanse the Land. We're going to do it with a sword. And we're going to do it with violence. "Oh," they say, "Reverend Gale, you're teaching violence." You're damn right I'm teaching violence! God said you're going to do it that way, and it's about time somebody is telling you to get violent, whitey.[34]

In 1963, Gale and Swift recruited Richard G. Butler, an aeronautical engineer from Lancaster, California, to the Church of Jesus Christ—Chris-

tian. Butler, a long-time white supremacist, had been associated with William Dudley Pelley's Silver Shirt Legion as early as the 1930s. Under Swift's guidance and direction, Butler became the lightning rod of the white supremacist "Identity Movement." Rev. Butler, a Presbyterian who received his "ordination" through the mail, assumed the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ—Christian following the death of Wesley Swift in 1970. In 1974, Butler and a handful of his congregation moved to southern Idaho near Hayden Lake to establish a survivalist "Identity" encampment. In this idyllic setting, Butler seeks to establish a "Promised Land"—a white-only, martially run, eugenically ordered, and self-enclosed enclave. As a follower of Butler puts it, "You have Detroit for your niggers, and we'll have the Northwest for our Aryans."[35] From this central church and compound at Hayden Lake, the gospel of "Christian Identity" would be used to consolidate the splinter groups of the hate movement into an army of God against the enemy ZOG—the Zionist Occupation Government.

Under Butler's leadership, the "Identity" movement has been propelled into a millennialist sect whose members not only have visions of the impending Apocalypse, but also seem bent upon ushering in the proposed conflagration through acts of insurrectionary violence. Butler has taken the "Identity" theology, with its roots in nativism and Anglo-Israelitism, and paired it with an active program of group violence. Thus a critical element in the "Christian Identity" movement is a militant apocalypticism rooted in the dispensational premillennialism of the Christian right and its fundamentalist counterparts. In "Identity" theology the modern era is the "last dispensation," perceived to be a time of particular depravity, reaching its climax in a seven-year tribulation entitled the "Rahowa"—the racial holy war.[36] However, a distinct difference between the "Identity" Christians and the dispensational premillennialists is that the "Identity" movement possesses no theory of the Rapture. According to "Identity" theology, the "Rapture Hoax" is sponsored by state supported (i.e., those churches receiving tax-free status from the government) "Ba'al churches" to lull "marshmallow Christianity" into a false sense of security. It prevents their active concern about the immediacy and even the necessity of the impending apocalypse.[37] It is this sense of necessity that pushes the "Identity" movement into confrontations such as the one in Los Angeles in which four Fourth Reich skinheads were arrested for plotting to murder prominent African-Americans and to bomb the First A.M.E. Church to precipitate a race war.

In this "present as future" centered theology, every action reveals the

immediacy of the struggle between good and evil. As there is no rapture, "Identity" believers see prophecy being fulfilled in their midst—apocalypticism's birthpangs/tribulations are evident. Recognition of one's "identity" is an act of salvation. One realizes that eschatology is a direct and personal story. The "Identity" believers understand themselves as "soldier saints" who are the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom. It is through their divine agency that the Lord expresses the divine will. It is they who will "rule and reign" in the "Kingdom."[38]

These are the end times, according to the "Identity" movement gospel, and the signs are everywhere apparent to those who have the power to see. A tract from the Covenant, Sword, and Arm (C.S.A.) of the Lord decries witches "sexually mutilating people," "sodomite homosexuals waiting in their lusts to rape," "negro beasts who eat the flesh of men," and "seed of Satan Jews sacrificing people in darkness."[39] The greatest threat, however, is from "city-living white Christians and 'do-gooders' who've fought for the rights of these groups."[40] These who have succumbed to "Judeo-Christianity" are being led by "Jewish trained theologians" into a blindness to the threat that is posed by a Satanic conspiracy to end the white race.

The mythology of the "Christian Identity" movement comes to its most interesting expression in its Christology, even though the Christology is a later development in relationship to most Identity beliefs. In the *Greatest Love Story Never Told,* Pastor Pete Peters asserts that it is through the blood of Jesus Christ that God has brought the Israelite people who recognize their identity back into the divine covenant:

> It was a bloody death so that her sins would be washed away, and a New Covenant be established with 'those who have been called.'. . . It is through baptism that we are able to contact the blood of Christ. It is a three step process. The first step was that Jesus Christ had to shed his blood to acquit us legally, or justify us. But, remission requires two steps on our part to accomplish the cleansing and complete the process. The second step is our death, or repentance, to our old way of life. The third step is our burial in baptism which permits us to seize the status of the acquitted through His blood—we become free of the old debt of sin.[41]

The Jesus of the Identity churches is a member of the House of David and of the true Nation of Israel, but we are to remember that this means that he is distinctly white. Jesus was also fully God, a militant, an extremist, a paramilitarist, a racist, and a Jew-hater whose only mission was to find the lost sheep . . . the true nation of Israel (Matthew 15:24).[42]

The responsibility for the salvation of the race lies with those who

recognize their "identity" and struggle to endure and "overcome" the tribulations. "Identity" gospel teaches that the "overcomers" who will overcome evil and survive Rahowa (the racial holy war) will be the "Elect" of the new kingdom. The "Elect" are the "soldier saviors," those who have prepared for the tribulations by paramilitary training, building fortifications, stockpiling weapons and supplies, and educating themselves regarding their "identity" and its ensuing responsibility. As Identity Pastor Richard Butler preaches from his pulpit in Hayden Lake:

> The white youth of this nation shall utilize every method and option available to them to neutralize and, quite possibly, engage in the wholesale extermination of subhuman non-Aryan peoples from the face of the North-American continent. Men, women, and children, without appeal, who are of non-Aryan blood shall be terminated or expelled.[43]

Not being one to tarry with idle rhetoric, Butler in the early 1980s established the political/military arm of his Church of Jesus Christ—Christian: the Aryan Nations. In cooperation with other "Identity "ministers such as Rev. John Harrell , Rev. Gordon Mohr, "Bishop" Daniel Gayman, and Rev. Jim Ellison, the "Identity" movement began setting up paramilitary training centers throughout the country. Gathering forces for the final battle of Armageddon to take place in the heartland of the United States, places such as the Church of Israel and Our Heritage Academy in Missouri and the "Endtime Overcomer Survival Training School" in Arkansas help train the Elect:

> We believe that God is raising up a remnant out of the nations, giving them the spirit of the Sonship, to groom them into perfection, to be manifested as mature sons of God, who walk upon this earth, and who will rule and reign upon earth as his elect.[44]

In Pastor Butler's Church of Jesus Christ—Christian Aryan Nations (symbolizing the fusion of religion and politics), the Church and the military compound stand side by side. To accentuate the austerity of the current situation, Butler often ends his sermon with "As long as this alien tyranny evil occupies our land, hate is our law and revenge is our duty" and requires new members to the Church take an oath "never to betray my Aryan brothers, never to rest on this earth until there is created a national state for my Aryan brothers, one God, one Nation, one Race."[45] A letter from Sheldon Emry to the Christian Patriot's Defense League in 1979 articulates the apocalyptic fervor:

> The Kingdom Identity Truth does not just tell you that you will remain on earth during this last battle, it gives you instruction, hope and strength as you join in and are used as the hand of God in the battle. . . . The attaining of the Kingdom is called a 'battle,' 'warfare,' we are told to 'oppose,' and we are called 'God's battle ax and weapons of war.' . . . We must prepare ourselves for the journey and the war for the Kingdom. . . . That will mean spiritual preparation and physical preparation all the way from survival supplies, weapons, and training, to contingency plans.[46]

In 1978, the *Mein Kampf* of a new generation was published under the auspices of the National Alliance, a fusion of Klan and Nazi organizations that evolved out of George Wallace's presidential campaign of 1972. *The Turner Diaries*, written by William Pierce (a George Lincoln Rockwell associate and director of the National Alliance), is an apocalyptic manifesto that not only details the coming race war but also lays out the strategy and mechanisms for accomplishing it.

The Turner Diaries describes the struggle of Earl Turner against the "Jewish-liberal-democratic plague"[47] that has turned America into "a swarming horde of indifferent, mulatto, zombies."[48] The American public has been disarmed as a result of gun control legislation entitled the "Cohen act." They are controlled by bands of armed (often Black) police known as Human Rights Councils, rape laws have been ruled "discriminatory," and "sexual debauchery" has "reached a level that would have been unimaginable only two or three years ago. The queers, the fetishists, the mixed-race couples, and the exhibitionists are parading their perversions in public."[49] In this violently racist novel, Turner and his cohorts in the "Organization" (and the even more elite secret society, the "Order") wage war against the government of the United States. In *The Turner Diaries*, the stakes of the war are quite clear:

> If the Organization fails in its task now, everything will be lost—our history, our heritage, all the blood and sacrifices and upward striving of countless thousands of years. The Enemy we are fighting fully intends to destroy the racial basis of our existence. . . . If we fail, God's great Experiment will come to an end, and this planet will once again, as it did millions of years ago, move through the ether devoid of higher man.[50]

The Turner Diaries, set in the waning years of the twentieth centuries, meticulously details a series of terrorist bombings, counterfeiting rings, political assassinations, armed car and bank robberies, and wholesale military assaults upon "the System." In a final cataclysmic struggle, chemical and nuclear weapons assaults are launched upon a number of

metropolitan areas so as to secure control of the United States for the "Organization," establishing a political order based on the ethnic cleansing of the population. In the end, the "Great Revolution" is accomplished: ". . . it was the year 1999, according to the chronology of the Old Era — just 110 years after the birth of the Great One [Hitler]—that the dream of a White world finally became a certainty."[51]

Though *The Turner Diaries* was a fictionalized account of a right-wing revolutionary overthrow of the United States, it became the blueprint for a series of paramilitary strikes originating out of "Identity" encampments throughout the United States in the middle of the 1980s. The Order, an organization directly inspired by *The Turner Diaries* and originating at Butler's Aryan Nations Church in Idaho, engaged in a series of bombings, robberies and attacks on federal officers in the early 80s. The Order was led by Robert Jay Matthews, who died in a 1984 fire started by FBI flares after a 35-hour standoff near Seattle. Also arising out of the "Identity" paramilitary encampments and influenced by *The Turner Diaries* was Gordon Kahl's survivalist tax-resistor organization, the Posse Comitatus. Kahl, a North Dakota farmer and "Identity" follower, and his son killed two federal marshals in a gunfight in 1983 following an attempted arrest after a Posse Comitatus meeting in Medina, North Dakota. Kahl fled to an "Identity" encampment in Smithville, Arkansas, which was then surrounded by marshals and FBI agents. The elder Kahl was immolated in a fire ignited when a smoke grenade thrown by police landed in one of the 100,000 rounds of ammunition stored at the fortified encampment. In his account of the slaying of the two federal officers, Kahl noted:

> We are a conquered and occupied nation, conquered and occupied by the Jews and their hundreds or maybe thousands of front organizations doing their Un-Godly work. They have their objectives in ruling the world. Destroy Christianity and the white race. Neither can be accomplished by itself. They stand or fall together.[52]

In the late eighties, many of the "Identity" movement's leaders were arrested, and violent confrontations with federal authorities led to a great decrease in the strength of the movement as an organized paramilitary operation. However, the movement has neither ceased to function as an ideological apparatus nor has it decreased in its appeal to numbers of dispossessed and disenchanted young people seeking an outlet for their frustrated ambitions. In a movement that thrives on martyrs, the death or imprisonment of a leader only serves to proliferate a message among an audience who already feels besieged and can easily explain political

repression within the contexts of conspiracy theory. In addition, the "Identity" movement flourishes in prison where race is often the lowest common denominator and where "Identity" ideology serves as a link between the prisoners and those who run the prisons. As a black prisoner from Lucasville Prison in Ohio recently described the situation following a riot in the prison, "Everything there is straight-up politics on the white side, the Aryans control everything drugs, prostitution, and getting the best jobs."[53] What was seen as a punishment for sedition is producing a whole new generation of insurrectionaries.

APOCALYPSE NOW

The "Identity" movement in the nineties has no shortage of martyrs. In Randy Weaver of northern Idaho, the "Identity" movement has found a celebrated figure in the lineage of martyrs Gordon Kahl and Robert Matthews. Weaver (an associate of Richard Butler) and Kevin Harris (a friend of Gordon Kahl since high school) were recently acquitted of federal charges of murder of a federal officer following a shoot-out with federal authorities in Naples, Idaho (near Hayden Lake). Weaver, whose wife and son were killed by federal authorities, was under federal indictment for selling illegal weapons to an undercover officer.

During the eleven day stand-off of August 1992, a number of "Identity" followers surrounded the encampment carrying signs that said "30.06 Go Through Your Vest Easy Fed Dogs," and "Zionist Murder." A group of skinhead "Identity" followers tried to break through the federal lines to assist Weaver. One of Weaver's supporters voiced his anger, "I'm ready to get my gun and my clips and take off my safety and pull my trigger with my finger. I don't care anymore. This is the beginning of a revolution, a war."[54]

To the followers of the "Christian Identity" movement, Weaver was not arrested for violation of federal firearm regulations, he was singled out for persecution solely because of his "Identity" beliefs. A May 1993 article in *Criminal Politics* magazine by "Identity" minister Dr. Gordon Ginn detailed this allegation:

> The fact is the government has no evidence against Randy Weaver, his wife, his family, or for that matter Kevin Harris. The Weaver family was put upon for the same reason the Davidians were put upon in Waco, Texas. . . . That is: their religious beliefs are not in accord with the limits of what is acceptable to the International Zionist Government secretly running the United

> States. . . . Obviously, you have here religious persecution of any person or organization that does not agree with the "established religions.". . . Obviously, it's time for sleepy Americans to wake up and take a stand.[55]

The Spotlight, another newspaper of the far right frequently associated with the "Identity" movement, focused upon the case as an issue relating to "thought crimes":

> Because federal prosecutors have asked to move the date back, some speculate the federal government will try to bring the defendant's religious beliefs and opinions on race into question. A lawyer not involved with the case told *The Spotlight* that prosecutors will put the defendants on trial for thought crimes. Prosecutors will make Harris and Weaver's religious beliefs relevant, then cross examine them on their views. . . . Prosecutors will try to tie these guys into every 'evil' organization in the last ten years. Doesn't that amount to persecuting these people because they have particular beliefs.[56]

The "Identity" movement, which felt beleaguered under the Republicans during the eighties, feels besieged in the nineties by Clinton: "Clinton, as the front man for a Satanic conspiracy—with his hand on our collective throat—must be expelled along with his mentally sick backers who are part of the deathly Zionist cabal."[57] The "Identity" movement believes that 55% of the Clinton cabinet is made up of Jewish Americans.[58] In addition, they believe that Clinton seeks to establish a "police state" to enforce "religious persecution" of "Identity" churches and to "make possible the expansion of the wanton brutality leveled against the Weaver family in Naples."[59] The article that discusses this police state features a prominent picture of a black police officer at the head of the article.

The May 1993 issue of *Criminal Politics*, a magazine that has become a key voice in the "Identity" community, portrays a country in the throngs of a compelling moral crisis. It notes that "You will be paying for abortions with your tax dollars," and that an "atmosphere of debauchery was evident at the 1993 Gay and Lesbian March on Washington" at a time when the "Tailhook investigation was being used to twist this country's morality."[60] In addition, Pastor Peters' *America the Conquered* offers a detailed description of the forces that are perceived to be in control of the country. With numerous clippings from the country's newspapers, Peters decries everything from gun control, witches, baby killers and child stealers, Ba'al preachers, sodomites, crime, drugs, and interracial marriage. Behind it all is the international conspiracy of bankers who use these forces to undermine the morality and quality of life for decent God-fear-

ing Americans. It begins with gun-control and ends in an enslaved society. Peters' outrageous assertions even accuse "the cabal" of such plots as using margarine and fluoridated water to demasculinize the country's men.[61] Within the literature of hate, it is as though the *Turner Diaries* have become a virtual reality; the *Diaries* have become the defining point of a worldview rooted in apocalyptic rhetoric more explicit than within the depiction of the assault upon David Koresh's Branch Davidian "Identity" movement compound in Waco, Texas. In discussing the "Waco Holocaust," the "Identity" press believes that the entire event was precipitated by the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith against the Anglo-Israelite Davidians because of their "Identity" beliefs. The descriptions of the burning of the Waco compound are framed within the contexts of the assaults upon Robert Matthews, Gordon Kahl, and Randy Weaver. An article in *The Spotlight* describes the assault as part of an even larger exercise to "further the agenda of the one world government. . . . They are helping the ban-Christianity movement."[62]

Criminal Politics places great significance on the fact that the CS gas used against the Davidians was developed by the Israeli military and has been used by the Israelis against Palestinian "refugees." *Criminal Politics* consistently runs photographs of the children killed in the Waco assault and advertises "Seventeen Little Children (the story of the Waco Holocaust)."[63] An editorial in the August 1993 *Criminal Politics* speaks of "the seventeen children who died at the hands of the Clinton Government in Waco . . . and the atrocities committed by the government in Naples, Idaho. These constitute *our own* holocaust . . . a uniquely *American* holocaust." The article concludes by saying "in reality we did not join God's Christian army and we are not part of a volunteer force . . . but rather we have been chosen—*(or drafted)*—we have been drafted into God's army. As a warrior your steps—*are ordered by the Lord.*"[64]

The Icemen Cometh

It is important to note the growth of the "Identity" movement among different segments of the population, especially among women. In the early "Identity" movement, women played little or no role, especially in the leadership. Even though their role in leadership has changed little, women are now becoming a meaningful presence in the "Identity" movement. Women make up as much as one-third of the total membership. In spite of the rigid patriarchy of white supremacist ideology, the women

are also beginning to assert themselves. White supremacist organizations such as the Aryan Women's League, an offshoot of the White Aryan Resistance, have attracted as many as 400 women in a dozen states and several countries. Contrary to the stereotype, says Danny Welch, director of the Southern Poverty Leadership Center's watchdog group Klanwatch, "identity" racist skinhead groups include women activists. "Women were in leadership roles from the beginning," he says. "They've been out there with their Doc Martens from the start, stomping people."[65]

It is David Duke, Populist candidate for the U.S. Senate, who is credited with opening up the movement to women in the late seventies. According to Duke, "Women have a vital role to play."[66] Jim Redden, a reporter who has researched women in the movement, agrees with Duke: "The women are more committed to racial purity, more ferocious than the men. Perhaps they felt threatened by minorities as street kids. They definitely buy into the idea of racism."[67]

However, the most explosive growth of the "Christian Identity" movement has occurred among the disenchanted and angry youth who make up the racist skinhead groups that have sprung up in largely urban areas. "Identity" churches such as the Neo-Nazi Church of the Creator of Niceville, Florida, and Butler's Church of Jesus Christ—Christian/Aryan Nations have attempted to spread "Identity" ideology among this lost generation. They have been most successful in their recruitment of new members from the skinhead movement. Because of their volatility and preference for confrontation, the skinheads have become the front-line troops for the white supremacists. David Mazella, former skinhead, sees the skinheads as the forefront of the "Identity" movement: "The old guys, they were a bunch of bench sitters. The skinheads took it to the streets. It was a new resource to rejuvenate these organizations."[68]

A skinhead "identity" group from Hurricane, Utah, that calls itself the "Army of Israel" has made plans to establish a whites-only homeland on the border of Zion National Park. A Georgia skinhead group, SS of America, published a notification in the "skinzine" *War Axe* that stated simply, "We are everywhere, and we are nowhere. You fail to see us, but we are here. . . . We are the predators in your urban jungles. And our time to strike is fast approaching."[69] And strike they will:

> —A series of four racially motivated bombings occurred in Sacramento, CA, over a ten-week period in the late summer of 1993. A Chinese-American City Councilman's house was bombed, the offices of the Japanese American's Citizen's League was firebombed, the NAACP headquarters was fire-

bombed, and B'nai Israel Temple suffered attempted arson. A caller from the Aryan Liberation Front claimed responsibility.

—On July 19, 1993 six white youths were arrested in Los Angeles who called themselves the Fourth Reich and planned to attack the congregation of Los Angeles' most prominent African-American church and assassinate Rodney King, Louis Farrakhan, Al Sharpton, and Public Enemy. The youth said that they hoped the attacks would initiate a race war.

—The three white supremacists were brought into federal court in San Francisco and accused of bombing a NAACP office in Tacoma, Wash., on July 20, 1993 as part of an aborted series of commando raids planned by the neo-Nazi group Church of the Creator. The next target the trio had planned were rap music figures Ice-T and Ice Cube.

—On Aug. 6, 1993 a plastic surgeon Dr. Martin Sullivan was assassinated by "identity" follower Jonathan Haynes. Haynes, an adherent of William Pierce, was influenced by *The Turner Diaries*. Haynes believed that surgeons such as Sullivan helped destroy the Aryan race by giving non-Aryans Nordic features.

—This spring (1994), convicted pipe bomber Randall Anderson admitted that he bombed a roller-skating rink in Zion because its customers were minority youths. Anderson painted graffiti on the rink's wall reading, "... Now We Will Do What is Necessary to Ensure the Race and Make a Better World For our Children."[70]

Hate crimes are on the rise in the country. In the past year, statistics indicate that hate crimes have increased nearly 17 percent. In New York, hate crimes have increased by nearly 20 percent. In New Jersey, which has the highest number of reported hate crimes, they have increased by nearly 33 percent. Chicago has seen the highest rate of increase in hate crimes. Anti-Semitic incidents have risen to a record high: incidents on college campuses alone rose 36 percent. Anti-gay violence climbed 42 percent according to a survey of eight major cities. Though these figures may be the result of an increased willingness to report hate crimes, that there is a rise in bias attacks is something that few people challenge.

Skinheads are frequent actors in hate crimes. Between 1987 and 1990, skinheads were responsible for six murders nationwide. In the three years since, skinheads were responsible for twenty-two killings. In 1992, skinheads were responsible for seven deaths, almost a quarter of all bias-related deaths in the country. When one skinhead in Sacramento tried to leave his group, six of his friends crucified him on a board with nails, slashed his throat and left him for dead.[71] These children of discontent

form a new generation of racists. "Hell, the Klan is a bunch of old farts who ride around shooting and cursing, burn a cross and go home," said Officer W. D. McNally of Birmingham, Alabama, "These little kids will get worked up and go out and kill somebody."[72]

The millennialist rhetoric of the "Christian Identity" movement has emerged from within the ideological corpus that developed out of the nativist and Anglo-Israelite movements of the nineteenth century. It centers upon the chosenness of the white race, particularly "White America," and its destiny within the framework of the divine plan for salvation of humanity. It pits the special "identity" of the chosen race against the dark forces of the conspiracy that seeks to destroy "White America" by "polluting" the "white seed" and by introducing alien political and religious beliefs into the American consciousness. This struggle is framed within an apocalyptic vision, in which "salvation by grace alone" is replaced by "salvation by race alone" and the millennial clash is reduced to the simplest and most base form of racist ideology.

It is easy to trivialize the rhetorical excess of a movement such as the "Christian Identity" movement and to marginalize them as a fringe element in the American religious identity. However, it is important to note that in the seven years since the "Christian Identity" movement first gained national attention, its numbers have grown from between 2,000–5,000 in 1986 to currently more than 30,000. From a handful of churches in 1986, the "Christian Identity" churches now number more than one hundred churches in at least twenty states. Apart from the regular membership in the churches, it is estimated that there are nearly a quarter of a million people who are followers of the "Identity" movement.[73] The "Identity" movement is spreading its message of hate through the use of computer networks, public access television programs such as "Race and Reason" and "Airlink," and radio programs such as "Radio Free America" and "Scriptures for America." Pastor Pete Peters, the new doyen of the "Identity" movement, even uplinks a weekly program via satellite disks into millions of American homes.

The "Christian Identity" movement is the link that ties young to old; it is the bond that coalesces the various forces of the white supremacist movement into a coherent ideological force. Propelled by an apocalyptic vision of a racial holy war, guided by a destiny in which God's purpose is fulfilled through their actions, and understanding themselves as part of a historical tradition, the members of the "Christian Identity" movement gather their numbers. In acts of organized violence or in random acts under the terms of the new "leaderless resistance" movement, they seek

to initiate a "new age" by responding to a prophecy guided by a "theology of hate."

It is this new "leaderless" resistance that poses the greatest threat. Whereas, the "militia" movement seeks to engage in a strategic military struggle and prepares itself for such, the "leaderless movement" believes in the acts of individuals and the power of such dedicated individuals to engage in cataclysmic acts of violence. The *Turner Diaries* is the bible of the "militia" movement, but a new work by the same author guides the actions of this new group of God-inspired terrorists. Andrew McDonald's newest work is entitled *Hunter* and details the work of the solitary soldier:

> Oscar Yeager, a former combat pilot in Vietnam, now a comfortable yuppie working as a defense department consultant in the Virginia suburbs of the nation's capital, faces this question. He surveys the race mixing, the open homosexuality, the growing influence of drugs, the darkening complexion of the population as the tide of non-white immigration swells. He finds that for him, there is no choice at all: he is compelled to fight the evil which afflicts America in the 1990's: his conscience will not let him ignore it and joining it is inconceivable.
>
> In "The Turner Diaries" author Andrew McDonald showed the outcome of what is going on in society right now. Now, in "Hunter," he shows us what one man can do before it gets that far.[74]

Recognizing the inevitability of loss in a military confrontation, this new theory of war has been advanced in recognition of the tremendous potential of decentralized terrorism and the relative inability of the government to respond to such a threat.

We can be lulled into a false sense of security in thinking that the war is over. However, it has really yet only begun. "Christian Identity" adherents wait patiently and struggle silently. While choosing to hold on to their "identity," many have chosen to eschew the traditional racist diatribe in order to become a part of the "system" and betray it from within. Many more quietly wait for the moment when they will be called upon in a moment to become a warrior and strike a blow for their "liberation." A new generation of "Earl Turners" and "Oscar Yeagers" now quietly waits till God taps them on the shoulder and tells them it is their time:

> We, the older and less active spokesmen for the folk and faith, are being replaced by the young lions. The dragons of God have no time for pamphlets, for speeches, for gatherings. They know their role. They know their duty. They are the armed party which is being born out of the inability of the

white male youths to be heard. They are the products of the failure of this satanic, anti-white federal monstrosity to listen to more peaceful voices, such as our own. We called for the dog federal government to let our people go! We called for the government in Le Cesspool Grande to let us be apart from their social experiments and their mongrelism, but to no avail. And now, as we had warned, now come the Icemen! Out of the north, out of the frozen lands once again the giants gather.[75]

NOTES

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4. Buchanan, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 714.
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7. Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, "The 'Identity Churches': A Theology of Hate," *A.D.L. Facts*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring 1983), 3.
8. Helen Zia "Special Report: Women in Hate Groups: Who Are They? Why Are They There?" *Ms.* v. 1 no.5, (Mar-Apr 1991), 22.
9. Peter Williams, *America's Religions: Traditions and Cultures* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1990), 190.
10. This is, of course, establishing a false dichotomy. The religious and the racial "other" were always perceived in a similar light. The other was usually distinguished as both "dark" and "heathen." However, I would argue that during this period racialist perspectives came to dominate religious perspectives.
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12. Ronald Bayor, "Klans, Coughlinites and Aryan Nations: Patterns of American Anti-Semitism in the Twentieth Century," *American Jewish History* 76, no. 2 (1986), 182.
13. "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion are a program for the enslavement of the world and the destruction of Christian religion above all. Ever since their publication, 'The Protocols' have been the most controversial writings in the world. Powerful elements in society have made them controversial so that few would be courageous enough to use them. We are well aware that who-

ever uses the 'Protocols' as a legitimate reference is automatically labeled as a fool and an 'anti-Semite,' for they are vehemently condemned by Jews as the product of either Russian Czar Nicholas II and his gov't, or as plagiarized material from other sources such as the 'Geneva Dialogues' written by one Maurice Joly. Many deceived Christian/Patriotic Researchers have stated that they are a product of the Bavarian Illuminati" [Elizabeth Dilling, *Smyrna* (BeWISE, n.d.), 1].

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15. Charles Coughlin, "Banks and Gold" in L. B. Ward, *Father Charles Coughlin* (Detroit: Tower Publications, 1933), 170.
16. Rev. Alson J. Smith, *The Christian Front: Coughlin's Storm Troopers* (New York: American League for Peace and Democracy, n.d.), 5.
17. Smith, 9.
18. James Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: The Rise of the Survivalist Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 80.
19 Comte de Gobineau quoted in William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 103.
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21. Peters, 32.
22. John R. Fry, "Hate Crime in America," *Church and Society* Vol. LXXX, No. 5 (May/June, 1990), 18.
23. Maynard Campbell, *Kingdoms at War: The Second North American Revolution* (n.p., 1990), 6.
24. Howard B. Rand, *Sabotaging the Scriptures* (Merrimac, MA: Destiny Publishers, n.d.), 7.
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31. Coates, 55.
32. Aho, 57.
33. Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 49.

34. Coates, 97.
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39. *Prepare War* (Pontiac, Mo.: C.S.A. Bookstore, n.d.) 3–5.
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42. Gil and Gloria Whitehurst, *Identity Scriptural Directory: "Or where is it?"* (n.p., n.d.) 28–30.
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