NOVA RELIGIO

The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions

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Thomas Robbins — *Religious Movements and Violence: A Friendly Critique of the Interpretive Approach*

Jeffrey Kaplan — *Interpreting the Interpretive Approach: A Friendly Reply to Thomas Robbins*

Laura L. Vance — *Denominationalism and Changing Gender Ideals in the "Adventist Review": An Examination of Weber's Theory of Religion of the Disprivileged Classes*

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Catherine Wessinger — *Review E... Davidia...*

Jeffrey Kaplan — *Field No...*

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Specialists interested in reviewing articles in their field of expertise are encouraged to contact the General Editor at the above address.

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Phillip C. Lucas

It is proper at the beginning of a new venture to lay out its founding vision and purpose and to acknowledge the people and institutions who have contributed to its birth. *Nova Religio* was established in response to the growing number of scholars around the world who are engaged in the study of alternative religious communities and movements, but who have no established publication devoted exclusively to this field within which to publish their work. *Nova Religio* provides an interdisciplinary forum in which scholars of new religions can publish articles, participate in symposia on theoretical, methodological, and ethical issues, critique new books and Internet resources, and report on current events in the field.

The impetus for a new academic journal focused on the study of alternative religions came from the steering committee of the New Religious Movements group of the American Academy of Religion. Catherine Wessinger, Timothy Miller, J. Gordon Melton, Mary Farrell Bednarowski, Robert Ellwood, and myself all agreed that the growing number of scholars across disciplines whose primary research was in new and alternative religions could benefit from an academic forum devoted solely to these movements and communities. We decided to put together an executive advisory committee that would ask leading scholars in the field to serve as editorial consultants and referees for the new publication. We also entered into negotiations with various publishers for the rights to print, market, and distribute the new journal. Following several months of meetings and phone calls, we entered into a contractual agreement with Seven Bridges Press and its publisher, Ted Bolen. Seven Bridges is fast becoming a recognized publisher of academic books in the fields of religious studies, political science, and philosophy. Without the press's continued support and expertise, as well as a generous grant from the Hollis Renaissance Program at Stetson University, this inaugural issue would never have been possible. Our field is indebted to both Seven Bridges Press and Stetson University for their creative and visionary support. We are also indebted to an international cast of contributors—members of the executive advisory committee, the board of editorial consultants, article referees, our editorial staff at Stetson, and those scholars who submitted papers—whose generous efforts have helped us get this new venture rolling.

Our editorial board agreed early on that the journal would be interdisciplinary and cross-cultural in character. This would ensure that its purview would include the wide range of new religious movements and phenomena around the world and the many scholars studying these phenomena from diverse disciplinary perspectives.

The journal's interdisciplinary scope presents challenges as well as opportunities. On the one hand, no one discipline can comprehensively interpret and represent the many dimensions of alternative religious activity in the world. Indeed, since its burgeoning as a serious research focus during the 1970s and 1980s, the study of new and alternative religions has drawn scholars from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds. While recognizing the field's interdisciplinary character, however, it remains a challenge for scholars to articulate their research in such a manner that specialists from other disciplines as well as interested nonspecialist readers can comprehend their arguments. Our editorial team is involved in a continuing effort to coax authors to write in a manner accessible to nonspecialists—in other words to minimize their use of discipline-specific jargon and to be explicit in their use of theories and references to their field's literature. It is the editorial board's hope that the creative cross-fertilization of ideas and perspectives that takes place in *Nova Religio's* pages will compensate for the minor irritant of revising one's conventional mode of presenting research.

The cross-cultural dimension of *Nova Religio* recognizes that new and alternative religious movements occur in most of the world's religious cultures and that research in one culture can often provide helpful models and comparative insights for researchers in very different cultures. Moreover, the editorial board wants to ensure that the study of new religions does not become parochialized into the study of these phenomena in western industrialized democracies only. The plethora of new religions in Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and Japan, to cite only a few examples, makes a cross-cultural scope both necessary and salutary for the ongoing development of the field.

One of the distinctive features of *Nova Religio* will be a willingness to publish essays on controversial issues confronting scholars of new religions. We have designed the first three issues so that each one includes a discussion between scholars on topics that are causing disagreement in the field. In issue number one, Thomas Robbins critiques what he terms "the interpretive approach" to the study of alternative religious communities—an approach that sometimes, in Robbins' opinion, creates a distorted picture of new religions as victims of hostility from law enforcement and the larger society—and Jeffrey Kaplan, one of the targets of Robbins' critique, responds with an essay that insightfully considers the interpretive method's strengths and weaknesses. Our second issue contains the second half (the first half appears in issue number one) of Benjamin Zablocki's provocative essay

on the history and future utility of the brainwashing conjecture in the sociology of religion and David Bromley's thoughtful response to Zablocki's arguments. Issue number three will present a symposium edited by Timothy Miller that considers the many ethical issues confronting scholars of new and alternative religions. An announcement concerning the symposium appears following this introduction.

The terms "alternative," "emergent," and "new" with regard to religions will likely mean different topics and foci to different scholars. Rather than attempting to create a general definition of these terms—a task, as many have found, that yields diminishing returns—we thought it would be more useful to discuss what kinds of religious phenomena fall within the journal's purview. In general, *Nova Religio* is interested in religious communities and phenomena that fall outside the established, or dominant, religious institutions and traditions of a given nation or culture. Alternative religious activity has long been a part the world's cultures, and some traditions—Gnosticism and Hermeticism, to cite just two examples—have a history that extends back in time before the origins of many of today's more dominant religious communities. Innovation with regard to religious belief and practice appears to be the norm for most societies, and *Nova Religio* seeks to both describe and interpret the full range of alternative religions that have emerged and are emerging around the world. *Nova Religio* also aims to provide a systematic, critical, yet non-adversarial treatment of these phenomena in an effort to redress the misrepresentations, distortions, and misinterpretations of new religions that are regularly transmitted in the mass media. New religious movements can tell us much about the tensions, fissures, and challenges that a culture faces. It is our hope that *Nova Religio* will contribute to the ongoing discussions taking place in cultures around the world concerning the character and significance of, and the possible dangers posed by these movements.

Examples of the range of topics that fall within the journal's purview include millenarian and primitivist movements such as the Seventh-Day Adventists, Christian Identity, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, the Family, and the Branch Davidians; metaphysical movements such as the Swedenborgians, Christian Science, Unity, Scientology, and Spiritualism; Jewish movements such as Hasidism, Jewish feminist spirituality, the Kabbalah Learning Center, and messianism in the state of Israel; eastern religious imports such as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Siddha Yoga, Soka Gakkai, the Self-Realization Fellowship, the Nyingma Institute, and the Rajneesh movement; radical and emergent communities from the Middle East such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, various Sufi orders, and Baha'i; African-American and Black movements such as the Black Jews, the Black Muslims, Father Divine's Peace Mission, Santeria, and Rastafarianism; new religions in sub-Saharan Africa and Japan; Ancient Wisdom and New Age movements

such as Rosicrucianism, Eckankar, Church Universal and Triumphant, Heaven's Gate, the Holy Order of MANS, Theosophy, channeling groups, and eco-paganism; and additional topics such as alternative healing groups, neo-shamanism, Promise Keepers, and Marian apparitions. Although this list is by no means exhaustive, it is indicative of *Nova Religio's* eclectic purview.

A scholarly journal is ultimately an enterprise that stands or falls on the skills, diligence, creativity, and contributions of a large group of scholars and editors. The editorial board of *Nova Religio* invites all scholars in the field of alternative religions to assist us in this new venture by contributing articles, book reviews, review essays, evaluations of articles, ideas for improvement, and subscription support. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

A *Nova Religio* symposium:

Academic Integrity and the Study of Religious Movements

Call for papers

Nova Religio announces a print symposium to appear in 1998 on the theme of academic integrity and the study of new and alternative religions. We plan to publish a thematic article, several short essays (preferably not over 2,000 words each), and shorter notes following an interactive process in which the initial drafts of articles will be circulated to other contributors for comment. Authors will be given an opportunity to respond to each other and to revise their own articles in light of comments they receive. We hope that this process will foster a vigorous, open debate on ethics and the profession.

We seek essays and articles that address the following issues:

Since much academic research is supported by interested parties who sometimes exert control over the use of research findings (as in the case of tobacco and pharmaceutical companies that fund research and sometimes suppress its publication), should scholars of religion feel free to accept support from religious or secular organizations interested in research outcomes? In other words, should religious studies have restrictions regarding support from outside interests that are more stringent than those found in many other disciplines?

If a scholar accepts hospitality or support or a consulting position from a religious group, is his/her scholarship thereby necessarily compromised? Does the level or type of support matter—that is, for example, would it be proper to accept a free meal or a trip to a conference but not a paycheck?

May a scholar legitimately study and/or accept funding from a religion of which he/she is a member? Is personal religious commitment incompatible with credible scholarship?

Should funding be acceptable from some religions but not from others? If so, how do scholars distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable religions?

Under what conditions should scholars feel free to accept consulting positions?

Should scholars publicly disclose funding from and other relationships with new religious movements? How should such disclosure be made?

Are independent scholars under different professional obligations

with regard to funding than scholars employed by academic institutions?

To what extent should scholars recognize religious groups' right to privacy, and to what extent should secrets be exposed? Should scholars disseminate proprietary information against a group's express wishes? Must scholars always be honest about their intentions with the groups they study? Is covert infiltration of a group a legitimate research tool?

How closely should scholars associate with groups they study and their members? Should they publish under a religious movement's auspices? Should they avoid personal friendships with members of movements they study or might study in the future?

Should scholars join or consult for secular advisory or advocacy organizations such as law enforcement agencies, civil liberties groups, and anti-cult organizations? How do the questions raised above (accepting support, publishing, associating) apply to such involvements?

Is it legitimate for scholars to direct their research to support their own preexisting judgments and commitments? Some scholarship has a political agenda, as in the case of some work by persons committed to ending racism or sexism. Should NRM scholars work in areas in which they have such prior commitments (for example, support for maximizing freedom for alternative religions or agitation against "cults")?

Are scholars ethically obligated to take action on their convictions and findings? Some believe that pejorative "cult" stereotypes have smeared innocent believers whose only crime is being nonmainstream; others believe that real abuses are covered up by NRM public relations campaigns. Should scholars be crusaders for what they think the truth is?

Similar questions about scholars' relations with outside special-interest organizations and businesses have been increasingly raised in recent years in the sciences, where much research is sponsored by firms with great financial stakes in research outcomes. One good recent article that examines specific cases and the ethical issues they raise would make good background reading for anyone contemplating a submission to this symposium: Daniel Zalewski, "Ties That Bind: Do Corporate Dollars Strangle Scientific Research?" *Lingua Franca* (June/July, 1997): 51-19.

This symposium will be edited by Timothy Miller. Initial submissions will be due January 1, 1998; articles tentatively accepted for publication will thereafter be circulated to all authors for comment. Comments on articles will be accepted and forwarded to authors until March 15, 1998; final revised articles will be due May 15, 1998. Address submissions to Timothy Miller, Department of Religious Studies, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045; 785/864-4663; fax 864-5205; email tkansas@kuhub.cc.ukans.edu.

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND VIOLENCE: A FRIENDLY CRITIQUE OF THE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH*

Thomas Robbins

ABSTRACT: The analysis of episodes of violence associated with religious movements is becoming a key sub-area in the study of new religious movements. An influential method which we term the "interpretive" approach has produced important insights. This approach focuses on how messianic movements interpret the behavior of persons and groups which they perceive as deeply hostile. However, some scholars may have placed too much emphasis on the *reactive* quality of movement violence as a response to the hasty actions of authorities influenced by distorted or self-fulfilling stereotypes of deviant groups. Some movements are capable of violence that does not appear to be elicited by forceful and dynamic provocations against them, although some leaders may perceive a demonic quality underlying any criticism or opposition or blockage of their aspirations. While hasty or overbearing actions by authorities may lead to violence with respect to some groups in some situations, the withholding or slow pace of intervention may enhance the potential for violence relative to other groups in other contexts. The view of fringe movements as victims may often be valid, but sometimes it may inhibit legitimate criticism of some movements' problematic practices or repugnant beliefs. Objective scholars should consider relinquishing permanent investments in images of alternative religions as either victims or destructive demons.

"Don't Follow Leaders, Watch the Parking Meters"

Bob Dylan

The past two decades have witnessed a number of incidents in which communal or close-knit religious movements have become involved in violent altercations with authorities. To the horror of the American public, some of these conflicts have produced large-scale episodes of collective murder-suicide such as the tragic confrontations involving the Peoples Temple in Jonestown, Guyana, and the Branch Davidians at Waco, Texas. Mass mayhem is also alleged to

***The author wishes to thank Catherine Wessinger, Susan Palmer, and two anonymous referees for critical comments which have positively influenced the evolution of this article.**

have been perpetrated by the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan. Several episodes of murder-suicides are said to have transpired under the auspices of the Order of the Solar Temple in Quebec and western Europe. In addition to these spectacular incidents involving "cults," there appears to exist a number of armed paramilitarist groups, sometimes designated as "militias," which have elicited widespread concern, and are, moreover, sometimes associated with racist (e.g., Christian Identity) ideas.

Violent incidents involving "cults," racists, and paramilitarists have also elicited allegations to the effect that federal agents have aggressively overreacted to such groups with lethal consequences and that such overreaction is related to an ongoing militarization of law enforcement and to an increasing official willingness to escalate state violence against armed deviant groups. This criticism may have influenced the patient and forbearing posture of the FBI in the recent (summer 1996) siege of the Montana farm occupied by the Freemen which, happily, ended without bloodshed.

Most of these problematic groups are characterized by distinctly *apocalyptic* worldviews which are, moreover, often highly *dualistic* and entail a vision of the world as divided between absolute evil and absolute good forces. In an orientation which Anthony and Robbins have termed "exemplary dualism," polarities of a moral, eschatological, millennial, and metaphysical quality are seen to be embodied in contemporary, contending political or religious forces.[1] Thus, over the centuries in Europe and North America, absolute Satanic evil has been variously perceived to be embodied in the Papacy ("Whore of Babylon"), Islam, World Communism, the New Age-occult milieu, the USA-CIA, the Jews, the emergent "New World Order," etc. As Bernard McGuinn observes, "The great temptation of apocalyptic eschatology is always to externalize good and evil in terms of present historical conflicts."[2]

Movements that manifest apocalyptic and dualist worldviews, and particularly those which have been involved in controversial violent incidents such as Aum Shinrikyo, the Peoples Temple, or the Branch Davidians, have often been characterized by markedly *charismatic* styles of leadership. Arguably, volatility is particularly likely when extreme dualistic worldviews are combined with charismatic authority vested in "'messianic' leaders who identify the millennial destiny of humankind with their own personal vicissitudes and demonize any opposition to their own personal aspirations and aggrandizement."[3] Such leaders may be particularly likely to extrapolate external opposition and criticism into an imagined demonic conspiracy.

THE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

For a number of years scholars in religious studies, the sociology of religion, and other disciplines have been studying apocalyptic movements. Although interest has naturally focused on the emergence of volatile apocalyptic movements and their charismatic leaders, and on the conversion and commitment of individuals, these problematics have intertwined with a different focus on the dynamics of group volatility and in particular on the factors influencing violent eruptions such as took place at Waco and Jonestown. Pursuit of this kind of inquiry requires a consideration not only of the actions and orientations of the putative "fanatics" but also of their demonized "enemies" such as government agents or anti-movement activists, whose actions and evolving perceptions are sometimes seen to have significantly contributed to catastrophic outcomes. Built in to this problematic is a sort of policy-oriented agenda. If the way in which catastrophic outcomes emerge can be understood, then the consequences of confrontations might be mitigated—even while potentially troublesome paramilitarist groups and messianic sects still proliferate.

In terms of this "catastrophic" problematic it appears that a certain stimulating perspective has become highly influential among students of religion. What we will term the "interpretive" approach focuses on how militant or volatile groups are affected by the interpretations they construct of the actions and dispositions toward them on the part of those persons and groups which they perceive as their "enemies," e.g., authorities, apostates, and anti-movement crusaders. These images interact with the often overheated conceptions of "cults" entertained by officials and opponents of movements to exacerbate tension. Despite the putative dogmatic rigidity and fixed malevolence of "cult leaders," the orientations of such individuals and their followers can also be viewed as extremely changeable and as shifting markedly and sometimes quickly over time (part of their dangerous "volatility"), even to the extent that their attitudes and dispositions at a given crucial moment may sometimes be more or less "up for grabs," and, moreover, may be strongly influenced by the behavior of their adversaries and critics. The interpretive approach may thus afford a counterpoint to essentialist conceptions such as the "destructive cult" and its putatively uniform dynamics.

The interpretive model sees the orientations and behavior of problematic movements with apocalyptic worldviews as significantly influenced by the actions and perceived dispositions of groups in their environment, particularly groups and individuals who are perceived as distinctly *hostile* to the movement, such as state authorities, anti-movement activists, and recriminating apostates. Much of the scholarly analysis of the tragedy at Waco by students of religion has focused on the blunders of federal agents and the impact of such errors on the perceptions (and

subsequent problematic behavior) of fervent messianic zealots.[4] The sometimes simplistic and stereotyped interpretations of state officials have been seen as interacting with the interpretations of an apocalyptic prophet to create or escalate a dangerous confrontation.[5] While "the mythic imaginations of the Davidians were shaped by biblical narratives," notes James Lewis, "the imaginative fantasies of ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms] officials seem to have been programmed by late night action-adventure movies." By inviting the media to witness the raid, federal agents attempted to "cast themselves in the role of rescuing heroes—a kind of real-life *Rambo IV*."[6] Michael Barkun writes:

> By using massive force the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms on February 28, and the FBI on April 19, unwittingly conformed to Koresh's millenarian script. He wanted and needed their opposition, which they obligingly provided in the form of the initial assault, the nationally publicized siege, and the final tank and gas attack. When viewed from the millenarian perspective, these actions, intended as pressure, were the fulfillment of prophecy.[7]

An outstanding example of the insights afforded by the interpretive approach is John Hall's article, "Public Narratives and the Apocalyptic Sect: From Jonestown to Mt. Carmel."[8] Hall shows how anti-cult activists and the authorities whom they influenced conceptualized the Branch Davidians in terms of a Jonestown stereotype and were therefore led to take actions which made such a dire prophecy self-fulfilling. Thus, "government agencies' scenarios for dealing with Koresh gradually became infused with the opponents' warnings about mass suicide, and in ways that shaped the logic of the BATF raid."[9] The "dynamic entry" planned by federal agents was intended to transpire with such rapidity as to forestall collective suicide (which might be encouraged by a lengthy siege). Another outstanding contribution which is written from the standpoint of what we are calling the interpretive approach is James Aho's essay, "Standoff on Ruby Ridge: A Study in the Mutual Construction of Enemies," which appears as chapter four of his impressive volume, *This Thing of Darkness: A Sociology of the Enemy.*[10] Aho notes that in "the tragedy of armed conflict," generally,

> both sides victimize and in turn are victimized. Both sides fit their opponents into defamatory categories ignoring their actual human complexity . . . Both sides act toward their constructed enemy 'appropriately' and, in witnessing its predictable response, have their preconceptions confirmed . . . both the Weavers and the state were in part figments of each other's imagination; both, furthermore, were deluded about their own righteousness and victimization at one another's hands.[11]

However, in a cryptic afterword to his analysis Aho comments that notwithstanding the mutual responsibility of the Weavers and the

authorities for the lethal shootout, in such situations "a plague on both your houses" may not be the proper attitude.

The tragedy of Waco, however, seems to be the paradigmatic episode for the interpretive approach, and much scholarly commentary has emphasized the unnecessary and unfair quality of the authorities' actions at Waco, e.g., "The Davidians were such a poor choice for this raid that agency officials had to manufacture evidence to support a warrant: The Branch Davidians were, in other words, *framed* by the ATF." [12] On the other hand, the lethally violent response of the Davidians to the arguably unwarranted ATF raid was criminal [13] and, moreover, may be indicative of something dangerously volatile about movements such as the Branch Davidians. Suppose, for example, as occasionally happens, the Drug Enforcement Agency raids the wrong house due to a mix-up of suspects' identity or address. The innocent inhabitants would be unlikely to shoot at agents after the latter had identified themselves. The victims of a mistaken raid would probably define the situation as a "terrible mistake," would submit to the indignities, and would subsequently see a lawyer. They would not perceive that the demonic "Babylonians" had launched their prophesied assault against the Lamb of God or the Saints at the Time of Tribulation. There would not be a slaughter.

The problem may not be a merely cognitive one, a matter of perceptions and interpretations arising from a dualistic and apocalyptic worldview. As Ronald Knox noted almost 50 years ago in his now neglected classic, *Enthusiasm*,[14] a troublesome antinomian potential inheres in religious enthusiasts' self-conception as an elect whose redemptive transformation or experience of grace has situated them on a higher plane of existence than that inhabited by ordinary, profane folk. Although the saints or chosen "must perforce live cheek by jowl with the sons of perdition, [they] claim another citizenship and another allegiance." [15] Though usually quite well-behaved, their submission to worldly governments is really provisional, since the latter, "being of purely human institution, have no real mandate to exercise authority, and sinful folk have no real rights, though out of courtesy their fancied rights must be respected." [16] This antinomian subtext to some millenarian worldviews contributes to the dangerous volatility of some groups who may believe that when apocalyptic push comes to shove, "the worldling has no rights." [17] There may, however, be some movements which manifest this orientation more markedly than did the Branch Davidians.

LIMITS TO THE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

What we have called the "interpretive" approach focuses on the interaction of apocalyptics' *interpretation* of their perceived enemies' dispositions toward them with the enemies' reciprocal interpretations of the dispositions of the apocalyptics. In principle, this approach can

accommodate a situation in which officials and other opponents of an apocalyptic movement "objectively" appear to do relatively little in the way of harmful or unfair behavior to provoke a seemingly "paranoid" messianic leader. In practice, however, the emphasis has often been on how hasty and blundering behavior on the part of the agents of formal social control, their stereotypical orientations, their shallow grasp of messianic and ultra-sectarian religion, and their susceptibility to influence from anti-cult crusaders has led them to exacerbate tensions and provoke violent behavior from apocalyptic survivalists. This approach may work best with regard to the catastrophic siege of Waco or the federal agents' tragic shootout with the Weaver family of Christian Identity believers at Ruby Ridge.

In this context the murderous actions of the Aum Shinrikyo sect appear to represent a sort of limiting case for the interpretive approach in the sense that there was little forceful action taken by government forces prior to the notorious 1995 subway poison gas episode (or prior to the alleged murders of internal dissidents, apostates, and opponents) which can be said to have produced or elicited the violence. Of course there *was* growing resistance to the expansion and ruthlessness of the authoritarian sect, which was probably interpreted by the messianic leader as demonically-inspired. Police investigations of Aum were underway, but, on balance, there does not seem to have been a provocative overreaction on the part of officials. Indeed, a quicker and more aggressive reaction on the part of authorities might possibly have prevented the gaseous subway mayhem. The mere failure of the movement to grow and become more powerful may have heightened apocalyptic tension.[18]

The absence of hasty, powerful, and provocative action on the part of officials is also conspicuous with respect to the violence linked to the secretive Order of the Solar Temple, which is held responsible for collective murder-suicide episodes in Quebec and Western Europe in 1994 and 1995 (and in Quebec in 1997). In 1992-93 an incident did transpire involving the arrests of several devotees on weapons charges and resulting anti-cult agitation and public concern over the activities of a "cult" or occult group that had recruited some police officials (thus "infiltrating" officialdom). Charges were eventually more or less dropped ("suspended acquittals" with fines), but the humiliation and publicity may have had an effect on the leadership of a group which thought of itself as a secret order.[19] Nevertheless, the actions and orientations of officials do not seem to constitute dynamic factors provocative or explicative of the violent episodes associated with either Aum or the Solar Temple, at least in comparison with Waco or Ruby Ridge.

To put the matter in another way, it is unlikely that the future scholarly literature on Aum or the Solar Temple will be dominated by essays depicting "the construction and escalation of a cult threat"[20] in which

analyses of "symbolic politics," "moral panic," authorities' "self-fulfilling prophecies," and the rhetorical structures of "deviance amplification" will explicate how a movement analogous to the Branch Davidians "came to be defined as a serious threat to the society requiring elaborate government response."[21] External labeling will probably not be a major focus except possibly in terms of general persecutory milieus crystallizing in the aftermath of well-publicized violent episodes.

This is not to imply that the interpretive analyses of the Branch Davidian inferno are necessarily wrong. The point is that the etiology of violent episodes involving various groups may differ in terms of the relative contribution of "exogenous" factors such as opposition to and persecution of the group by external forces and of "endogenous" factors involving the beliefs, organization, and leadership of the group.[22] "Thus to elicit a violent response from Jim Jones required only that an unarmed congressman and a press entourage visit Jonestown and attempt to return to the United States with a handful of defectors."[23] But the conflagration in Waco transpired only after a military-style raid by the BATF plus a subsequent FBI action involving the breaking down of the walls of the Davidian compound by armored rams, and the insertion of CS gas. As John Hall puts it, "At Jonestown the threat to the community was more emblematic than immediate, but at Mt. Carmel . . . the FBI was engaged in the rapid and systematic physical destruction of the Branch Davidians' home."[24] The inference may thus be ventured that, "the Branch Davidian community was less internally volatile or violence-prone than the Peoples Temple settlement in Guyana."[25] State authorities and countermovement mobilization arguably made a greater contribution to the violence at Waco than at Jonestown. The role of external provocation was probably more marginal with respect to the Solar Temple and Aum Shinrikyo and probably more marginal still regarding the Heaven's Gate collective suicide in California in 1997. *The salience of external provocation may thus vary widely in different violent events.*

The reality of a variable balance of internal and external influences underlying violent episodes does not necessarily threaten the validity or utility of what we have called the interpretive approach. The relative salience of "endogenous" or "exogenous" factors in a given explosive outcome is really an observer's inference. Volatile messianic leaders are likely to *perceive* malevolent external forces controlling the action and necessitating a dynamic response. A phenomenologically-oriented interpretive approach will be vital to mapping out leader/group interpretations of the social environment and gauging their impact on group behavior and the escalation of conflict.

On the other hand, although the evolving interaction of sectarian-prophetic interpretations of reality with various critical externalist interpretations may be essential to explaining some violent outbreaks,

it is time to realize that a few movements seem to be quite capable of generating *relatively* unprovoked violence—occasionally even large-scale slaughter—in a context which may be confrontational largely as a function of sectarian paranoia and exaggeration of the scope of the perceived countermovement and its potential for violence. Aum Shinrikyo is particularly significant in this respect and has, moreover, traumatized Japan and impacted American thinking partly because its subway gassing escapade suggests a "terrorist" pattern involving the impersonal slaughter of anonymous citizens not personally involved in any conscious altercation with the movement. In this respect, there exists a significant political science literature on "religious terrorism" to which students of new religious movements should attend.[26] In any case, the example of Aum, according to Michael Pye, may be producing a crisis of sorts in religious studies. Discussions are said to be proliferating on "what it means to understand and to explain religious movements academically, and at what point the option of critical comment arises." [27]

DOES JEFFREY KAPLAN GO A BIT TOO FAR?

Most of the remainder of this paper will look at some of the work of an outstanding exemplar of the interpretive approach. In our view, the work of Jeffrey Kaplan is particularly fascinating and impressive, combining an extensive knowledge of seemingly obscure and colorful fringe groups (e.g., American "Nordic," neopagan groups such as the Asatrú and the Odinists) with stimulating analyses and provocative ideas. Kaplan focuses on the relationship between a controversial movement on the one hand, and the authorities and anti-cult or anti-racist "watchdog" groups which are spearheading a countermovement mobilization, on the other. The inter-movement relationship is often very intricate and even symbiotic as well as interactive in such a manner that the antagonistic parties' interpretations of each other's proclivities too often become self-fulfilling prophecies. Stigmatized fringe groups often tend to evolve in a direction that reinforces the stigma which has already been applied to them by countermovement "watchdog" groups.

> For just as a generation of American gangsters of the Lucky Luciano and Meir Lansky era of the 1930s were said to be so affected by James Cagney's Hollywood portrayal of their world that they almost unconsciously came to imitate the actor's cadences, dress and on-screen attitudes, so too in many ways have the "cult" and "counter-cult" come to fulfill the most dire constructions one has built of the other.[28]

The above passage would lead one to believe that as a result of the "cult wars" the beliefs and tactics of both anti-cult and cultic groups should become more extreme over time as a result of mutual awareness

and interaction. In fact, moderation seems to be the long-term evolutionary trajectory in some instances; e.g., some anti-cult groups are distancing themselves from coercive deprogramming, and the Church Universal and Triumphant has agreed to give up its arsenal. On the other hand, Kaplan has made a strong argument that watchdog agencies tend to extrapolate the most extremist elements of movements such as Christian Identity or neo-pagan groups and treat them as "typical" members with attitudes characteristic of racist and violent "hate groups." Many persons actually become aware of such stigmatized groups through countermovement and watchdog propaganda; as a result recruitment to stigmatized fringe groups is partly mediated by "information" from the countermovement. One consequence is that the new recruits will increasingly tend to be those disturbed or alienated individuals who actually find the demonized image of the fringe group purveyed by the watchdogs congenial. More moderate persons are thus warned off, and the group may become more extreme. At the same time, the strident countermovement mobilization provides the adherents of stigmatized sects with an example of a powerful and putatively demonic conspiracy out to destroy them. "What the ADL [Anti-Defamation League] has managed to do most is to convince Identity adherents of the proposition that the ADL—and the Jewish power behind it—is an ubiquitous fact of their lives." [29] The widespread expectation among Christian Identity adherents that in-group conferences are very heavily infiltrated by operatives controlled by the ADL and the FBI serves as an example of this. Kaplan quotes from the founder of a neopagan group:

> If watchdog organizations try to stigmatize all Asafolk or Odinists as haters or paramilitary types, they will hurt the very people within the movement who are a force for moderation. Reasonable individuals will be repelled, and the extremists will be attracted to what they perceive as like-minded folks. These groups—the watchdogs—will have created the very enemy they feared.[30]

Kaplan thus tends to see the objectionable (e.g., racist, violent) manifestations of the groups he reports on as partly *reactive* and responsive to actions and stereotypes that arise in the context of countermovement mobilization.

Kaplan certainly has a point. However, in two recent articles this point has been extrapolated in a troubling way. In one important paper Kaplan delineates the stages through which an increasingly militant splinter group of the millenarian anti-abortion "rescue movement" passed as it evolved in the direction of violent activism.[31] This submovement of the "rescue community" became increasingly despairing, apocalyptic, and violent as it perceived that all other avenues of anti-abortion protest and tangible "rescue" of the unborn, including physical blockades aimed at shutting down clinics, were being suppressed and criminalized with the support of the seemingly pro-abortion Clinton Administration.

The growing problems and frustrations of the rescue movement were ultimately "translated into theological terms and placed as part of the End Times' scenario of the Book of Revelation" with ongoing "speculation as to whether President Clinton was the literal Antichrist."[32] A "theology of violence" evolved. Satan was seen as leading America's terrible "war against the unborn," and thus "any action which deals a blow to Satan's murderous henchmen, the abortionists of America, is a laudable act in and of itself."[33] However, the evolution toward apocalyptic dualism and violence is seen as a reaction to the perceived persecution of the movement by state authorities who outlawed physical rescue via blockage of the doors to clinics. "Ironically, as long as true rescue through interposition was possible, the rescue community was largely deaf to those among its number who called for more resolute action."[34]

Kaplan's methodology involves seeking to see the hostile environment through the eyes of apocalyptic extremists, and in his article he tries to "allow the rescuers to speak in their own voices."[35] He may thus inadvertently appear more sympathetic to the violent rescuers than he actually is. His account of their shifting viewpoint is probably correct. However, there does seem to be an implication that if anti-abortion violence is to be avoided, the state should allow the physical blockade of clinics, a tactic which is viewed by the present writer as a physically coercive mode of intimidation that is poised on the slippery slope leading to mob action, riots, and storm trooperesque reactions. If activists who find to their dismay that they are not being allowed to "win" through physical coercion and intimidation ("interposition") subsequently become frenzied and turn to lethal violence, the horrible outcomes that ensue are not the responsibility of the opponents of the original non-lethal intimidation. Indeed, the acquiescence of public authority in a tactic such as interposition could conceivably raise activists' expectations as to the level of permissible force in a holy cause and thus produce the same escalation that 'hands on' judicial intervention allegedly did.

In a recent review essay on militias and the far right,[36] Kaplan argues forcefully that Jewish groups, such as the American Jewish Congress, crusading against militia racism and paramilitarism are having the effect of inducing anti-state paramilitarists to perceive a close association between Jews and the (hated) State or World Order. In consequence, anti-Semitism is growing in the militia movement:

> As anti-government anger spreads, however, there will be an increasing focus on the most outspoken proponents of government action against the militias. In militia circles, the perceptual merging of such Jewish organizations as the AJC and the ADL with the power of the U.S. government is growing. This process led to the birth of the ZOG [Zionist Occupation Government] theory in the American radical right in the 1980s. It appears to be only a matter of time before the militias accept the "fatal embrace" of the Manichean ZOG theory and its most radical proponents in the U.S. radical right.[37]

Two things bother me slightly about Kaplan's analyses. First, there seems to be an implication that some extremist groups *are essentially passive reactors to the slings and arrows issuing from "watchdogs"* such as the ADL which push them in racist and violent directions that they would otherwise eschew. However, Michael Barkun, also associated in the writer's mind with the interpretive approach, notes that Christian Identity groups employ "pseudo-validation" strategies to elicit hostile responses from perceived opponents which will appear to confirm the Identity racists' conspiracy theories.[38] Second, it seems implied that Jewish citizens should avoid denouncing racist groups and supporting anti-paramilitarist measures such as forms of gun control. The evolution of objectionable extremist groups in a more extreme (i.e., racist, violent) direction seems to be viewed as the responsibility of the vehement critics and opponents of the volatile groups!

SECTS, MILITIAS AND THE PROBLEM OF ORDER

Sociologists of religion and scholars in religious studies have sometimes been stigmatized as "cult apologists," a label which recalls the application of terms such as "communist sympathizers" or "comsymps" in the early 1950s to civil libertarians and others who challenged the prevailing demonology. Whatever its flaws or occasional overstatements, what we have termed the interpretive approach has produced a number of insightful analyses, some of which are particularly evident in the works of John Hall, James Aho, and Jeffrey Kaplan.

Notwithstanding the above, it is worth keeping in mind that authoritarian sects with messianic leadership are likely to have some sort of problematic "underside" (not necessarily violence) reflecting a lack of accountability and other factors. The small membership base of "new religions" mandates that members be induced to make sacrifices for the movement—no "free riders" or limited liability investors need apply. To elicit a willingness to sacrifice for the group, high levels of solidarity and commitment are cultivated. Bracketing the unduly polarized debates about "brainwashing" and "mind control," intensive indoctrination plus the relatively isolated and close-knit nature of many authoritarian sects empower their leadership to cultivate and reinforce a "separate reality" for members that may diverge in some respects from the prevailing ethical codes in the broader society. As a student of Aum Shinrikyo puts it, "as the commitment of members increases, along with their investment of time and money, their sense of responsibility is increasingly defined by the overall religious authority of the group, rather than by any values which they may have previously entertained."[39] This effect can facilitate violent behavior.

Charismatic leadership, which predominates in small sects and NRMs and may be functional in inspirational terms pertinent to member

commitment, also tends to be a potent de-stabilizing force enhancing group volatility. Charismatic leadership has been said to be intrinsically *precarious* by virtue of the absence of both institutionalized restraints on the willfulness of the leader and institutionalized supports to sustain and stabilize the leader's authority.[40] Venerated by devotees, relatively unconstrained by rules or customs, yet continually needing to "prove" his or her worthiness and uniqueness, the charismatic leader may be both empowered and pushed into deviant behavior. Beyond these considerations it should be noted that charismatic authority, more or less by definition, involves *a break with received codes and customs.* Strong charismatic leadership often provides a positive sanction for behavior that contravenes the standards which would otherwise inhibit deviance. Charismatic leadership, notes John Wilson, is distinguished by the leader's "claim to a unique source of wisdom, which does not rely on precedent and usually flies in the face of it. Thus Jesus said: 'It is written but I say unto you . . .' and the Mahdi proclaimed that 'We have cast aside acting in accordance with the schools of law and the opinion of learned men.'"[41] Of course the ability of strong, charismatic leaders to elicit non-conforming behavior is often deemed admirable, e.g., Reverend Martin Luther King's achievement in raising Southern blacks out of customary anxious passivity and energizing them to engage in bold civil disobedience against Jim Crow laws.

Finally, I want to emphasize that the proliferation of messianic sects and paramilitarists presents a "problem of order." The need to avoid hasty and overbearing action that will provoke or exacerbate confrontation is only one side of this problem. Most scholars, including the present writer, are gratified that the FBI did not replicate Waco and make an assault against the Freemen holding out in Montana in 1996. On the other hand, some media accounts suggest a delay of many months before the FBI entered the picture despite urgent appeals from local citizens. If these accounts are valid, the question arises as to whether public authority is now always capable of protecting citizens from paramilitarist zealots. The present writer has raised this issue before: "Suppose a messianic communal sect with numerous semiautomatic weapons moved down the street, and my dog 'Antichrist' chewed up their pamphlets? An outgunned local police force might not be able to protect me from violent retribution."[42]

There are abundant ironies in recent events. The Davidians, who were not viewed as physically threatening by their neighbors, became the target of a full-scale air-and-land military operation. The Freemen, on the other hand, who were feared by some of the local citizenry, were treated with kid gloves and forbearance. A hasty and unnecessary raid by federal agents led to bloodshed in Waco, while a belated police raid was too late to prevent subway mayhem in Japan.

There are, of course, no easy answers. The problem, however, is definitely two-sided. Confrontation is very risky, but there may sometimes

be risks in the postponement of confrontation. With the aid of a little paranoia, it may be possible to envision an increasingly "feudal" America in which armed private associations (citizens' militias, messianic sects, juvenile gangs, drug dealers, and anti-crime vigilantes) intimidate local officials, exercise quasi-governmental functions, and must be paid off by those improvident citizens who have neglected proper armament.

CONCLUSION

In a seminal paper on the Solar Temple deaths, Hall and Schuyler maintain that *the struggle for cultural legitimacy* represents a key factor influencing the trajectory of new religious movements.[43] It certainly does appear that groups such as the People Temple, Branch Davidians, Aum Shinrikyo and the Solar Temple had all more or less lost this battle prior to their "explosions." Lack of cultural legitimacy may therefore represent an "exogenous" variable that affects most violent outcomes and may include external opposition and provocation ranging from criticism and anti-cult agitation to armed assaults by officials. Nevertheless, the intensity or degree of opposition may vary significantly. Given a violent tragedy, a group such as Aum Shinrikyo or the Solar Temple is not primarily a "victim" simply because there has been some recent anti-cult agitation against the group or official scrutiny of it.

As Hall and Schuyler acknowledge, there are internal factors which interact with cultural legitimacy to shape a movement's trajectory.[44] Hostility from environmental forces may reflect as well as help produce internal characteristics which render the group more volatile, which may then elicit further opposition. Thus internal characteristics and external opposition may inhibit effective proselytization and lead to an attenuation of (and growing disinterest in) outreach, which Marc Galanter sees as a development which enhances volatility.[45]

Absent the armed assaults by authorities at Waco and Ruby Ridge, the concept of external *provocation* is more elusive than might be thought. Messianic leaders may often perceive a vast, unitary conspiracy against their vanguard and its truth (e.g., the insidious workings of "suppressive persons" or "malicious animal magnetism"). Evaluating the objective quality and magnitude of provocation from critics and authorities is no easy task. Moreover, the way in which external opposition affected leaders and devotees prior to an explosion is not always clear. Did a firearms arrest and anti-cult agitation lead the Solar Temple leaders to fear persecution and destruction of the group, or were they mainly humiliated by publicity that imperiled their self-conception as a secret order? How important was the mere failure of Aum to win more converts and become a powerful sociopolitical force in hardening Asahara's dualistic orientation and enhancing his ruthlessness?

So there will generally be manifold ambiguities and "no easy answers." More research and theory is not only vital but ought to proceed in a less polarized context: scholars emphasizing external provocation need not be viewed as "apologists" and those who pinpoint endogenous factors or psychodynamics are not necessarily giving aid and comfort to persecutory forces. Although both persecution and sectarian nastiness clearly exist, objective scholars may need to surrender any permanent investment in seeing the "cult" or "new religion" as either a victim or a destructive demon.[46]

ENDNOTES

[1]"'Exemplary dualism' denotes an apocalyptic orientation in which contemporary sociopolitical or socioreligious forces are viewed as exemplifying absolute contrast categories in terms not only of moral virtue but also eschatology and the millennial destiny of humankind . . . Exemplary dualism detranscendentalizes apocalypticism. It confers ultimacy on contemporary sociopolitical conflicts that are seen to have cosmic significance." Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony, "Sects and Violence," in *Armageddon In Waco,* ed. Stuart Wright (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 243. See also Constance Jones, "Exemplary Dualism and Authoritarianism at Jonestown," in *New Religious Movements, Mass Suicide and the Peoples Temple,* eds. Rebecca Moore and Fielding McGehee (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1989), 209-30; and Dick Anthony and Thomas Robbins, "The Effect of Détente on the Growth of New Religions: Reverend Moon and the Unification Church," in *Understanding New Religious Movements,* eds. Jacob Needleman and George Baker (New York: Seabury, 1978), 80-100. For recent applications to the Branch Davidians, see Dick Anthony and Thomas Robbins, "Religious Totalism, Violence and Exemplary Dualism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7 (1995): 10-50; and Dick Anthony and Thomas Robbins, "Religious Totalism, Exemplary Dualism and the Waco Tragedy," in *Millennium, Messiahs, and Mayhem,* eds. Thomas Robbins and Susan Palmer (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[2] Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist* (San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1994), 32.

[3] Robbins and Anthony, "Sects and Violence," 244. Shoko Asahara of Aum Shinrikyo may correspond to this model as may David Koresh of the Branch Davidians, who "identified himself with the Lord's anointed and saw the standoff at Waco as the literal fulfillment of an intensifying campaign by demonic earthly rulers to destroy the righteous remnant." Paul Boyer, "A Brief History of the End of Time," *The New Republic* (May 17, 1993): 30-33.

[4] See, for example, many of the scholarly essays in two recent edited collections dealing with the Waco tragedy: Wright, *Armageddon in Waco,* and James Lewis, ed., *From the Ashes* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994).

[5] See, particularly, James Lewis, "Self-fulfilling Stereotypes, the Anti-cult Movement and the Waco Confrontation," in Wright, *Armageddon in Waco,* 95-110.

[6] James Lewis, "Showdown at the Waco Corral," in Lewis, *From the Ashes,* 94.

[7] Michael Barkun, "Reflections After Waco," in Lewis, *From the Ashes,* 44.

[8] John Hall, "Public Narratives and the Apocalyptic Sect: From Jonestown to Mt. Carmel," in Wright, *Armageddon in Waco,* 205-35.

[9] Hall, "Public Narratives and the Apocalyptic Sect," 212.

[10] James Aho, *This Thing of Darkness: A Sociology of the Enemy* (Seattle: Washington University

Press, 1994).

[11] Aho, *This Thing of Darkness*, 66-67.

[12] Lewis, "Showdown at the Waco Corral," 90.

[13] Several surviving Davidians were convicted of manslaughter and using firearms in the commission of a felony. They were acquitted of more serious charges of murder and conspiracy. Provisionally accepting the jury's verdict, the author also believes that, although the truth may never be known for sure, the evidence favors the likelihood that the Davidians set the climactic fire at Waco in an act that most Americans (but not necessarily the Davidians who assumed the "Babylonians" would kill them anyway) would interpret as suicidal. For a strong dissenting view, see Carol Moore, *The Davidian Massacre: Disturbing Questions About Waco Which Must Be Answered* (Gun Owners of American and Legacy Communications, 1995).

[14] Ronald Knox, *Enthusiasm* (London: Oxford, 1950).

[15] Knox, *Enthusiasm*, 2.

[16] Ibid., 3.

[17] Ibid., 585. Knox's analysis seems to have prefigured Robert Lifton's concept of "The Dispensing of Existence" as a dimension of "Ideological Totalism" whereby "those who have not seen the light are in some way in the shadows—bound up with evil, tainted—and do not have the right to exist as full equals." Robert Lifton, "Cult Processes, Religious Totalism and Civil Liberties," in *Cults, Culture and the Law*, eds. Thomas Robbins, William Shepherd and James McBride, (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 64. See also Robert Lifton, *Chinese Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (New York: Norton, 1961).

[18] On Aum Shinriky the author has relied primarily on Murray Sayles, "Nerve Gas and the Four Noble Truths," *The New Yorker* (April 1995): 56-71; Mark Mullins, "Aum Shinrikyo as an Apocalyptic Movement," in Robbins and Palmer, *Millennium, Messiahs, and Mayhem*; Michael Pye, "Aum Shinrikyo: Can Religious Studies Cope?," *Religion* 26 (1996): 261-70; and Ian Reader, "The Lessons of Aum Shinrikyo," presented to the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Nashville, TN, November 1996.

[19] On the Order of the Solar Temple, the author has relied largely on John Hall and Philip Schuyler, "The Mystical Apocalypse of the Solar Temple," in Robbins and Palmer, *Millennium, Messiahs, and Mayhem*; Susan Palmer, "Purity and Danger in the Solar Temple," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 11 (1996): 303-318; and Massimo Introvigne, "Ordeal by Fire: The Tragedy of the Solar Temple," *Religion* 25 (1995): 267-83. Hall and Schuyler believe that the humiliation of the firearms arrests and consequent anti-cult agitation may have led the leaders to move up the schedule for the "transits" that core members anticipated making to a higher, non-earthly sphere. The authors believe that there was probably little or no overt collaboration between authorities and anti-cultists during the 1992–93 actions against the order. However, the Temple leaders probably perceived a unitary conspiracy.

[20] Stuart Wright, "Construction and Escalation of a Cult Threat," in Wright, *Armageddon in Waco*, 75-94.

[21] Wright, "Construction and Escalation of a Cult Threat," 83.

[22] Robbins and Anthony, "Sects and Violence." As Robbins and Anthony have noted, the distinction between "exogenous" and "endogenous" factors may ultimately be somewhat tenuous.

[23] Robbins and Anthony, "Sects and Violence," 237.

[24] Hall, "Public Narratives and the Apocalyptic Sect," 230.

[25] Robbins and Anthony, "Sects and Violence," 238.

[26] See two articles by David Rapoport: "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984): 659-60; and "Messianic Sanctions for Terror," *Comparative Politics* 20 (1988): 196-207. See also Michael Barkun, ed., *Millennialism and Violence* (Essex, U.K. and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1996 [originally a special issue of the journal, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7 (1995)].

[27] Pye, "Aum Shinrikyo: Can Religious Studies Cope," 261. For an earlier discussion of problems of objectivity posed by controversial movements, see Thomas Robbins and Roland Robertson, "Studying Religion Today: Controversiality and Objectivity in the Sociology of Religion," *Religion* 21 (1991): 319-37.

[28] Jeffrey Kaplan, "The Anti-Cult Movement in America," *SYZYGY* 2 (1993): 268.

[29] Kaplan, "The Anti-Cult Movement in America," 278.

[30] Ibid., 287. Kaplan's discussion of the impact of "watchdogs" such as the ADL on Christian racist and American Nordic neopagan groups is more or less replicated in Chapter Five of his fascinating book, *Radical Religions in America* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

[31] Jeffrey Kaplan, "Absolute Rescue: Abortion, Defensive Action and the Resort to Force." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7 (1995): 128-63.

[32] Kaplan, "Absolute Rescue," 139.

[33] Ibid., 152.

[34] Ibid., 151.

[35] Ibid., 128.

[36] Jeffrey Kaplan, "The Politics of Rage: Militias and the Future of the Radical Right." *The Christian Century* 113 (June 10-26, 1996): 657-62.

[37] Kaplan, "The Politics of Rage," 662. While this writer would not wish to challenge Kaplan's expertise on contemporary American militias, might it not be a bit of an overstatement to propose that anti-Semitism is bound, given Jewish anti-paramilitarist activism, to come to dominate the militia movement? The present writer's impression is that "the movement" is rather fragmented. Anti-state leaders and spokespersons can employ "constitutionalist" rhetoric that is more respectable than overtly racist anti-Semitic appeals. Hopefully some anti-state paramilitarists will want to distance themselves from stigmatized racist drivel.

[38] Michael Barkun, "Millenarianism and Violence: The Case of the Christian Identity Movement," in Robbins and Palmer, *Millennium, Messiahs, and Mayhem.*

[39] Pye, "Aum Shinrikyo: Can Religious Studies Cope?," 265.

[40] See Robbins and Anthony, "Sects and Violence." See also Roy Wallis and Steven Bruce, "Sex, Violence and Religion," in *Sociological Theory, Religion and Collective Action,* eds. Wallis and Bruce (Belfast: Queens University, 1986), 115-127; and Frederick Bird, "Charisma and Leadership in New Religious Movements," in *Handbook of Cults and Sects in America,* Vol. 3A, *Religion and the Social Order,* eds. David Bromley and Jeffrey Hadden (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1993). Wallis and Bruce examine deviant patterns manifested in Synanon, the Peoples Temple, and the Children of God and conclude that the presence of violence and/or sexual deviance in "world rejecting sects" is related to strong charismatic leadership.

[41] John Wilson, *Introduction to Social Movements* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). For a discussion of the tendency for some charismatic leaders with violent proclivities and militant dualistic worldviews (e.g., leaders of "hate groups") to empower their followers to engage in violence by drawing out their latent hostilities and channeling them toward ideological scapegoats, see Fred Wright and Phyllis Wright, "The Charismatic Leader and the Violent Surrogate Family," *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 347 (1980): 266-76. For a recent application of the Wright's model to Christian Identity groups, see Thomas Young, "Cult Violence and the Identity Movement," *The Cultic Studies Journal* 7 (1990): 150-59.

[42] Thomas Robbins, "Proposed 'Bill of Rights for Communities' May Throw Out Baby with Bathwater," *Communities* 91 (Summer, 1996): 12-13. The problem of arms and intimidation is linked to other issues such as the occasional refusal of some groups to allow child custody disputes to be resolved by institutionalized judicial processes (i.e., refusal to allow lawful custody orders to be served). Interestingly, the Branch Davidians were less troublesome in this respect than some other American groups.

[43] Hall and Schuyler, "The Mystical Apocalypse of the Solar Temple."

[44] According to Hall and Schuyler, the struggle for cultural legitimacy interacts with a

movement's initial model for salvation and intramovement conflicts over leadership to shape the destiny of a religious movement.

[45] Marc Galanter, *Cults: Faith, Healing, and Coercion* (New York: Oxford, 1989). Using a system model Galanter sees reduction in proselytizing producing a shift of energy from external outreach to internal monitoring and regulation. Negative feedback becomes less tolerable. This increases the imperative of preventing penetration of the systemic boundary and may enhance the likelihood of boundary tension and volatility. See Robbins and Anthony, "Sects and Violence," for a brief summary of Galanter's system model.

[46] In our view different scholarly "factions" have specialized in extrapolating each investment or bias. As this paper is undergoing final revisions, the collective suicide of the Heaven's Gate group, which appears to have transpired in a context in which the group's obscurity shielded it from recent external provocation or scrutiny, seems to have led to a sort of media hegemony being exercised by anti-cult spokespersons. Discoursing on mass suicide and cultic mind control, some of these telegenic "cult experts" appear to more or less equate the Davidian violence at Waco with the violence of the Solar Temple and Heaven's Gate, as if David Koresh had planned the tragedy in advance of the ATF raid rather than reacting (in a dogmatic and arguably delusionary interpretive mode) to provocation. It is not unduly "apologetic" for careful scholars to reject a hermeneutic of "one size fits all" and "a cult is a cult is a cult."

INTERPRETING THE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH: A FRIENDLY REPLY TO THOMAS ROBBINS*

Jeffrey Kaplan

Some people got no choice,
And they can never find a voice,
To talk with that they can even call their own.[1]
Lou Reed

Thomas Robbins' most interesting article, "Religious Movements and Violence: A Friendly Critique of the Interpretive Approach," offers a number of pertinent observations and expresses several legitimate concerns about the possible misuse of the methodology as an *apologia* for violence emanating from new religious movements. Robbins' comments are both constructive and timely, and he singles out my own work as a prime example of the pleasures and the perils of this approach. This essay will therefore be divided into three sections. The first will offer some observations on Robbins' critique of the "interpretive" approach. Section two will answer the specific comments centering on my own work. A final section will consider the future utility of the methodology. It will also suggest that the interpretive approach's emphasis on dialogue may one day help to build bridges of mutual understanding that could help to allay the barriers of fear and hostility which have so long divided the mainstream culture from the adherents of millenarian and messianic movements, as well as from members of minority religio-political belief systems.[2]

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INTERPRETING THE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

So the first thing that they see,
That allows them the right to be,
Well, they follow it.
And you know what it's called?
Bad luck![3]

For many years, academics have sought to come to some understanding of outbreaks of millenarian violence. This form of violence has been given many names in the literature by such scholars as Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony, Norman Cohn, Ehud Sprinzak, David Rapoport, and Michael Barkun to name but a few.[4] But by whatever name, there has been a consistent thread in all of these works. While often brilliant theoretical encapsulations of the phenomenon, none fully succeeded in making the intuitive leap from the scholar's detached analysis to the emotional cauldron inhabited by the groups themselves that would allow the reader to see the world through the eyes of the adherents. It was arguably the conspicuous absence of such vital data that made such stunning events as Jonestown, Waco, and Ruby Ridge so traumatic to the civil authorities and the scholarly community alike—this despite calls for research that would make events like Jonestown part of the common corpus of our field. As Jonathan Z. Smith so aptly put it:

> How then, shall we begin to think about Jonestown as students of religion, as members of the academy? . . . A basic strategy . . . is to remove from Jonestown the aspect of the unique, of its being utterly exotic. We must be able to declare that Jonestown on 18 November 1978 was an instance of something known, something we have seen before. . . . We must reduce Jonestown to the category of the known and the knowable.[5]

The methodology that Thomas Robbins dubs the interpretive approach was a response to this call. In reality, Robbins may be somewhat premature in his analysis. The methodology, born of trial and error by a number of younger scholars working largely in isolation, is still very much in its infancy. This isolation raises several points that should be considered by scholars of religion interested in the question of religious violence should we ever collectively succeed at reducing Jonestown and Waco to the "category of the known and the knowable," and thereby contribute to preventing such tragedies in the future.

First is the problem of disciplinary boundaries. The cadre of researchers engaged in the fieldwork upon which the interpretive

approach must be based are scattered thinly through a number of disciplinary ghettos. For example, Bron Taylor, whose pioneering work with Earth First! is a prime example of the interpretive methodology, is in the field of Religion and Ethics. Heléne Lööw of Stockholm University, whose work with the radical right in Europe is among the best products of the interpretive approach, is a historian who has worked closely with political scientists for a number of years. Katrine Fangen, a graduate student at the University of Oslo who has done some fascinating work with Norwegian skinheads, is a sociologist. My own training is in the history of culture. It is only in the last several years that we have begun to establish contact and become familiar with each others' work. Such interaction is the necessary first step to replace our heretofore idiosyncratic trial and error methodology with anything so coherent as an 'approach'.

It is vital in this respect to understand what the interpretive approach is not. The approach must never be confused with apologetics on the one hand or with scholarship which deals entirely with the literature on the other. In the former case, the interpretive approach was never intended to in any way 'excuse' or 'explain away' violence emanating from millenarian movements. Thus, Thomas Robbins' use of the work of James Lewis in the context of the interpretive approach is unfortunate given the clearly apologetic nature of Lewis' coverage of events in Waco and in his work with other NRMs such as the Church Universal and Triumphant.[6] The central requirement of the approach if it is to succeed in providing the reader with a vision of the world from the eyes of the adherent is a Weberian detachment on the part of the scholar. This detachment means that the investigator must place to the greatest degree possible his own biases and preconceptions in abeyance throughout the research project lest he or she fall into the all too frequent trap of writing about the *scholar* in relation to his subjects—an ultimately sterile exercise. While the ideal of the scholar remaining utterly unmoved by his subjects is probably an impossible goal, it is nonetheless worthy of some effort. Moreover, I would argue that it is simply not possible to appreciate fully the millenarian worldview without considerable interaction with the groups' leadership and with its adherents. Thus even so brilliant an encapsulation of the history of Christian Identity as that offered by Michael Barkun should not be considered exemplary of the interpretive approach as Robbins suggests.[7] There is simply no substitute for fieldwork.

At the same time, there are a number of pitfalls inherent in this endeavor. The most serious of these, as Robbins implies, is the danger of being "captured" by the very movements that we seek to examine. The problem of distance is indeed of prime concern. It is important to remember in this regard that the movements which, for a myriad of reasons, may resort to (or become victims of) violence are relatively few

in number and have a pariah status in the view of the mainstream culture. For this reason, contacting them and establishing a sufficient level of rapport to engage in productive fieldwork is no easy task. Once accomplished, however, a dynamic is established that cannot help but affect *both* the scholar and the movement.

Contacting the movement one wishes to study is not difficult. Oppositional movements are rarely so deeply underground that potential adherents will fail to find them. Conversely, such movements must sustain a sufficient degree of friction with the dominant culture to maintain an internal cohesion based on a self-view of the group as an oppositional force with which to be reckoned. In such a milieu, it takes years of patient work to establish a relationship in which the scholar is able to earn even a qualified degree of trust.[8] In the process, as the researcher gets to know the members of the group as individuals, interacts with their families, and takes part in their private world, the aura of demonization that characterizes the public perception of the movement invariably fades away.[9] It is in this process of getting to know the oppositional movement as individuals who share a common humanity with the researcher that there is the greatest danger of becoming captured by the movement's worldview. Conversely, it is precisely through this give and take relationship that the members of the movement may be influenced, however unintentionally, by the researcher. This is a risk that both investigator and 'investigatee' must assume as the price of "interpretive" success.

With this preamble, we turn to the text of "Religious Movements and Violence" itself. The following discussion of Robbins' article will intentionally avoid the difficult issues arising from the tragedies surrounding Aum Shinrikyo in Japan or the Swiss-based Order of the Solar Temple. Given the vastly different historical, social, and political contexts of the United States, Japan, and central Europe, Robbins' decision to include these cases in a single, short critical article was unfortunate in that it may have done more to obscure than illuminate the issues involved in the resort to violence.

According to Robbins, "What we shall term the 'interpretive' approach focuses on how militant or volatile groups are affected by the interpretations which they construct of the actions and dispositions toward them on the part of those persons and groups which they perceive as their 'enemies,' e.g., authorities, apostates, anti-movement crusaders."[10] Moreover, "The interpretive model sees the orientations and behaviors of problematic movements with apocalyptic worldviews as significantly influenced by the actions and perceived dispositions of groups in their environment, particularly groups and individuals who are perceived as distinctly *hostile* (and sometimes conspiratorial) to the movement. . . ."[11]

At the same time, as Robbins accurately points out, the actual level of threat presented by forces perceived as hostile by the target movement

may vary greatly. Where the actual danger to the Jonestown settlement presented by Leo Ryan and a handful of newsmen and defectors may seem from our vantage point to have been rather minuscule,[12] the forces surrounding Randy Weaver's cabin were all too real, as the shooting death of his wife and young son, as well as of a federal agent—not to mention the subsequent attempt to cover up the unprecedented rules of engagement that made these tragic events all but inevitable—makes clear.[13] And this being the case, how much greater still was the threat of the full fledged siege of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco? Yet the perceptions of the immediate protagonists in these incidents—amounting in all cases to mutual demonization—were remarkably similar.[14]

The scholarly reaction to these three paradigmatic cases is instructive in evaluating the benefits of the interpretive method. The mass suicide/murder of the members of the Peoples Temple in Guyana understandably caught the academy by surprise. This sense of numbed shock explains the dearth of academic analyses that prompted Jonathan Z. Smith's challenge quoted above.[15] Equally understandable—but far less excusable—was the relative silence surrounding the Randy Weaver episode. Weaver, an admitted racist and an adherent of the then little understood but much feared Christian Identity faith, was hardly the stuff of an academic cause célèbre. Thus while a few academics took notice—James Aho and Michael Barkun come immediately to mind—few others in academe were interested in the drama in Ruby Ridge, Idaho.

Yet to those few of us engaged in the interpretive method and focused on the radical right, the Weaver drama was electrifying. Where most observers saw the standoff as an isolated case, the events at Ruby Ridge were seen quite differently through the eyes of the denizens of the radical right. For them, Weaver and his family were yet another in a long chain of martyrs to the cause. The deaths of Weaver's wife and young son were interpreted at once as a sure sign of impending apocalypse and as proof positive that the American government, believed to have fallen under the domination of a Jewish conspiratorial elite known as ZOG (Zionist Occupation Government), had at last decided to liquidate the "righteous remnant" of the far right once and for all.

Paranoia? Yes, but as I have written time and again, even real paranoids have real enemies. And the far right's list of martyrs—Gordon Kahl, Arthur Kirk, John Singer, Robert Mathews and David J. Moran to name a few—could be far longer. In most cases, oppositional centers such as the compound of James Ellison's idiosyncratic Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord chose the easy route of surrender when confronted by state power.[16] It was clear enough to anyone dealing with the radical right and utilizing a fieldwork-based interpretive approach that, by the time of the Weaver incident, some reaction was building. Moreover, it was obvious that this reaction would be seen by the community of the

far right as a defensive measure born of desperation and despair. That is, desperation arising from the all too certain knowledge of the far right's isolation from mainstream society, and despair that any hope of solace or salvation could come from the world as it was seen through the eyes of the faithful. Thus the movement's increasing turn to apocalypticism and violence by the late 1980s.

Also little known to the scholarly community were the accidents of timing that would mark the reaction to the Weaver and later the Waco affairs among the radical right wing faithful. In the Weaver case, as the siege turned towards its bloody denouement with the unconscionable killing of Vickie Weaver, by chance the fiery Identity pastor Pete Peters of LaPort, Colorado, was holding his annual Bible retreat in the Colorado mountains. The news hit the meeting like a storm, and in a men-only meeting, the decision was taken to accept once and for all the reality that the government had set out to eliminate the Identity faithful. In reply, those present agreed to put faith in the mercy of the Lord and at last fight back against the inexorable power of ZOG when the moment of truth arrived.[17]

In another quirk of timing, the Waco tragedy would take place during the Weaver trial.[18] The Identity world, and beyond it the wider world of the radical right, were thus immediately drawn into the outraged aftermath of Waco. This gave them common cause with David Koresh and the Branch Davidians—a group whose ideology and lifestyle most in the far right found repugnant, but with whose fate at the hands of a government seemingly run amok all could instantly identify. Herein lies the answer to the much asked question of the time as to why the radical right would react so strongly to the siege of Waco.[19] Here too lies the reason for the common ground the heretofore isolated radical right began to find with non-racist NRMs ranging from the Church Universal and Triumphant to scattered intentional communities throughout the rural United States.

With Waco, the scholarly community was at last taking notice of the increasing violence that was being employed by the state against oppositional religious movements, and the result was outrage. How could it be otherwise? For example, I had the opportunity to live and teach in the Palestinian sector through the University Graduates' Union in Hebron, West Bank, at the dawn of the *intifada*. It was no secret that the CS gas employed at Waco was deadly to children in an enclosed space. Every Palestinian could have told of the effects of the gas. That the government did not know, or did not care, is inexcusable. So too was the patent absurdity of the claim used to obtain a search warrant that the Waco compound housed a methamphetamine laboratory. Equally suspicious was the fact that the botched BATF action was undertaken, oddly enough, just weeks before the embattled agency was due to appear on Capitol Hill for a very tough round of funding hearings. And finally,

what better epitaph for the entire sorry affair than Attorney General Janet Reno's unconscious mimicking of the Vietnam-era cliché that "we destroyed the village in order to save it" with the repeated insistence that the raid was undertaken to "save children," although none survived the "rescue."

But our task is not to rehash the facts of the raid. Rather, it is to note the efficacy of the interpretive approach. Here, no better evidence could be offered than the best scholarly collection to emerge from the affair, *Armageddon in Waco*, edited by Stuart Wright.[20] In this anthology, Waco is analyzed from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and much new and important data comes to light. Yet, save for an obviously tacked-on reference in the preface as to the possible connection of Waco to Oklahoma City, nary a word in 377 pages of text deals with the effects of Waco throughout the milieu of the radical right or even of new religious movements.[21] This scholarly silence—and the shock that followed the Oklahoma City bombing—testifies to the vital need for the interpretive approach.

Yet, while Waco largely acted to unify scholars dealing with new religious movements and to motivate a few to initiate contacts with the FBI, the subsequent demonization of the federal government on the part of many adherents of non-traditional belief systems (and some NRM specialists) began to have a disquieting effect on many scholars. It is very much as a product of this reaction that Thomas Robbins is moved to write, "On the other hand . . . it is time to realize that a few movements seem quite capable of generating *relatively* unprovoked violence—occasionally even large scale slaughter—in a context which may be 'confrontational' largely as a function of sectarian 'paranoia' or exaggeration of the scope of the perceived countermovement and its potential for violence."[22]

With this observation, Robbins asks the question—not for the first time—of whether my own work goes "a bit too far."

WELL, DOES JEFFREY KAPLAN GO A BIT TOO FAR?

It's either the best or it's the worst
And since I don't have to choose I guess maybe I won't . . .[23]

In the aftermath of Waco, there was a rise in the temperature of the radical right wing that was palpable, and for some frightening. Linda Thompson's influential video, *Waco, the Big Lie,* was released to a remarkably receptive audience that went far beyond the narrow confines of the radical right, and the militia movement began to emerge to take up the torch of the defunct Posse Commitatus' localism and the paramilitary traditions pioneered by such groups as the Minutemen of

the 1960s and the 1980s vintage tax resistance movement.[24] The anti-state rage of which the militias and indeed the Oklahoma City bombing were but symptoms was no longer the exclusive province of practitioners of the interpretive methodology. The watchdog movements, groups like the Anti-Defamation League, and the Klanwatch Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center began to grind out increasingly shrill alarums.[25] Many scholars worried that the popular post-Waco demonization of the federal government had gone too far. After all, was not the government, for all its flaws, the last line of defense between *us* and the violent racists and anti-Semites of the radical right? This perception gave added impetus to the group of scholars noted above who had on their own initiative established a liaison relationship with the FBI after the Waco disaster.[26] At the same time, some attention was given to reassessing the scholarship that was seen as most sympathetic to the groups whose anti-state rage was now seen as a threat. Of the latter, the criticism offered by Thomas Robbins is the most acute. In particular, his question as to whether the methodology had gone too far in presenting the violence of the target movements as purely reactive rather than as in some ways causative of the deadly confrontations considered above is important and deserving of some reflection.

As my own work was largely singled out in this respect, I will restrict my response to my own published material rather than presuming to speak for others who employ much the same methodology in their own areas of study. In prefacing this response, however, it might be valuable to offer an observation that the reader might consider pertinent. This centers on the relevance of the insights offered by feminist scholarship concerning the dynamics arising out of highly asymmetrical power relationships. Put bluntly, the force at the disposal of the federal government, given the will to bring this force to bear, dwarfs many fold that at the disposal of the oppositional millenarian movements. As Identity pastor and Klan leader Thom Robb once told me in a moment of resigned candor, "Even if we were to link up all the Klan groups, all Identity, Nazis, or whatever, then so what? We still don't amount to anything."[27] This is true. And given the vast disparity that separates the relative power at the disposal of the two adversaries, it would appear to rest with the side enjoying the overwhelming superiority to show the greatest restraint in unleashing the force at its disposal. This does not absolve the millenarian adherents from the responsibility to obey duly constituted authority, but it does place the greatest burden of avoiding confrontation if possible, and minimizing the risk of the loss of life if clashes become inevitable, upon the state.

This said, we may proceed toward the determination of whether Jeffrey Kaplan does indeed go too far.

Exhibit A in this respect is Robbins' analysis of my work on the key role of the anti-cult movement that I have defined to include watchdogs

of every description.[28] Here he is correct in asserting that I do see at least some of the most extreme manifestations of the millennialist groups that I study to be at least partly reactive to the pressures put on them by the various watchdog movements. There is indeed a dynamic that makes the most dire images which the watchdogs are able to formulate of these movements attractive to a cadre of alienated and often psychologically unstable individuals. Indeed, George Lincoln Rockwell understood this dynamic so well that he consciously used the swastika and the label "Nazi" in forming his American Nazi Party in an effort to attract just such a cadre of angry and alienated young men.[29] Yet it is important to realize that the cult/anti-cult embrace and the "cult wars" that result involve other actors as well. Thus, while it is true that, as Robbins implies, an increasing radicalization would appear likely, this has not always been the case. There has indeed in some cases been a moderation of the behavior of both the 'cult' and 'anti-cult' actors. Yet, rather than a refutation of the interpretive methodology, the examples suggested by Robbins simply illustrate the complexity of the model.

Specifically, while it is certainly true that "some anti-cult groups are distancing themselves from coercive deprogramming," this would seem to be a function of the success of the lawsuit which brought the Cult Awareness Network into bankruptcy and ultimately into the indirect control of the Church of Scientology (through the purchase of the organization's name and assets by Scientologist Stephen Hayes[30]) rather than an interpretive over-emphasis on the reactive nature of the cult/anti-cult embrace. And while it is equally true that the "Church Universal and Triumphant has agreed to give up its arsenal," this was more a function of its fear that, after Waco, it was next on the federal hit list than a sign of moderation.[31] In both cases, it is arguably through fieldwork and via the lens of the interpretive method that these insights—common knowledge to the groups involved but apparently unknown to even the most astute outside observers—could be brought to light.

Nonetheless, Robbins is correct that a primary danger inherent in the interpretive approach is a tendency to overemphasize the purely reactive nature of the target movement. As a case in point, he presents two of my articles, "Absolute Rescue: Abortion, Defensive Action and the Resort to Force" and "The Politics of Rage: Militias and the Future of the Radical Right."[32] First to "Absolute Rescue."

Robbins was not alone in his disquiet over this article. It was a feeling that I more than shared in writing it, and one that not only academic readers (including the editors of the *Terrorism and Political Violence* special issue on millenarian violence) have expressed, but which so interested the federal government that I was subpoenaed to appear before a federal Grand Jury investigating abortion-related violence. For this reason, I am in particular debt to Robbins for his note that the methodology employed, "seeking to see the hostile environment through the eyes of

the apocalyptics" and to "allow the rescuers to speak in their own voices,"[33] does not necessarily represent my own views. Indeed it does not.

That said, however, the article sought to follow the trajectory of a millennial community through their gradual evolution from a quiet middle class Americanism to membership in a much feared and little understood activist subculture and at last into a deviant splinter of that subculture which has opted for the efficacy of millenarian violence. This insiders-view of the rescue movement is like no other academic or popular work on the pro-life movement, and in spirit harks back to the work of Jules Michelet's *Satanism and Witchcraft.*[34] But where Michelet opted for epic myth-making through the eyes of a composite character, I used the testimonies of real people in an effort to leave a record of how a particular group of millenarians interpret the world around them. That this effort was largely successful in imparting the rescuers' worldview has been brought home in letters and conversations with rescuers who, having read the piece in manuscript form or in the pages of *Prayer + Action News*, have said, "yes, that's me, that's how I grew up and that's how I felt." It seems to me that years from now, when the passions of the issue have died away and future historians and religious scholars seek to unravel the mystery of this particular apocalyptic sect, "Absolute Rescue" will serve as a valuable resource in illuminating the worldview of a small group of violent "apocalyptics" (to borrow Tom Robbins' redolent term) and charting the trajectory that brought the group to the threshold, and beyond, of violent activism. In this self-view, the violence emanating from the movement *is* purely reactive. It is seen at once as a calculated, rational effort to save the unborn from imminent death and as a last, despairing statement that if the American "culture of death" can not be rescued, at least the rescuer can give his or her own freedom or, if need be, his or her life for the life of an unborn child.

Uncomfortable stuff indeed. Yet the interpretive approach is not designed to reinforce the dogmas of the academy or to bring comfort to the reader. It seeks to translate the perceptions of the subject movement into a text that provides the academic audience with an insight into the group and the lives of its members and to offer a historical context that reduces this esoteric worldview to the category of "the known and the knowable."

This said, it is important to address a minor misconception which Robbins has of the text. The term "interposition" in rescue parlance does not necessarily mean the "physical blockade of clinics," although the idea does not preclude this tactic. Much less does interposition envision "mob action, riots, and stormtrooperesque depredations" (although the imagery of the latter term is fascinating, implying as it does state sanction for rescue actions). Rather, interposition is seen in the rescue world as a temporary measure that involves allowing a "sidewalk counselor" to attempt through reason and prayer to dissuade

a woman from having an abortion. It may fairly be argued that this in itself is coercive and adds to the already traumatic situation of a woman contemplating an abortion. Yet in rescue parlance, the tactic was never seen as a way to "win," and when court rulings in many states created "no speech" zones around many clinics,[35] rescuers did not react by becoming "frenzied" and turning to "lethal violence." The latter outcome would not eventuate until a much later stage in the evolution of the pro-force wing of rescue.

In his discussion of "The Politics of Rage," Robbins zeroes in on two very difficult points: (1) the implication that militia groups are "essentially passive actors to the slings and arrows issuing from the watchdogs such as the ADL which push them in racist and violent directions which they would otherwise eschew," and (2) the associated suggestion that "Jewish citizens should avoid denouncing racist groups and supporting anti-paramilitarist measures such as forms of gun control" lest the target groups become more extreme. The blame for this radicalization, he fears, is implied by the article to be "the responsibility of the vehement critics and opponents of the volatile groups."

Robbins' comments here do point out a potential weakness in the interpretive approach. The methodology is at its best when addressing small, relatively cohesive groups such as the pro-force wing of the rescue movement. Such groups are sufficiently homogeneous to allow for a relatively high degree of generalization to capture the nuances of the worldviews of individual members. The militia movement on the other hand is, as Robbins accurately states, a diverse and highly decentralized group of individuals representing a broad spectrum of interests and motivations. They thus defy global categorizations.

The context of "The Politics of Rage" involved a review of two contrasting volumes on the radical right, Jess Walter's *Every Knee Shall Bow* and Kenneth Stern's *A Force Upon the Plain.*[36] The former is a sensitive portrait of the actors on all sides of the Randy Weaver tragedy, the latter an alarmist account of the rise of the militia movement written by the American Jewish Committee's "expert" on the activities of the radical right. In the course of this review, to my own surprise, I found myself increasingly in agreement with Stern's dire prognostications of the increasing virulence of the militia groups—albeit coming to this conclusion from a distinctly opposite road than that traveled by Stern.[37]

In brief, I found Stern's argument that the militias were radicalizing and as a consequence becoming increasingly anti-Semitic persuasive for three reasons. First, there has in my view been an across-the-board rise in anti-government sentiment in the wake of Ruby Ridge and Waco not only in the radical right, but in a number of NRMs fearful of government persecution as well. Oklahoma City, while clearly not an operation connected with the militia movement, may well be seen as a portent of things to come. Second, on a more global level, the rapid changes

brought about by the end of the Cold War and the increasing interdependence of the global political economy would appear to be an ideal breeding ground for millennialist and other radical movements. Observers from Norman Cohn to Michael Barkun to Michael Adas have pointed to such dizzying change as conducive to such activity.[38] The third reason involves the element of self-fulfilling prophesy. In this, I cited as paradigmatic the experience of the German ex-National Socialist Ingo Hasselbach who reported that he and other disaffected East German youth adopted National Socialism only after repeated accusations to this effect by the hated East German government.[39]

Finally, I disagreed with Kenneth Stern's claim that, as the movement could hardly be more paranoid than it is today, fears of inducing further radicalization among militia members by the imposition of aggressive legislation to curb their activities is unfounded. In fact, the movement—which is quite diverse in terms of political and religious viewpoints, ethnicity, and gender and is moreover relatively quiescent when it comes to actual confrontations with state power—is fully capable of becoming *much* more aggressive given the kind of punitive measures Stern advocates and the not insignificant firepower in the hands of militia members. Further, despite the remarkable diversity within militia ranks, I suggested that if the perception takes hold that anti-militia activism stems *primarily* from the Jewish community, the anti-Semitic dynamic so well described in Benjamin Ginsberg's remarkable *The Fatal Embrace: The Jews and the State*[40] could come to pass in militia circles and beyond.

With this background, we can turn to Robbins' specific criticisms of the "The Politics of Rage." As a counterargument to the proposition that the militias' behavior is primarily a response to the actions taken against them by watchdog movements, Robbins offers Michael Barkun's observation that Christian Identity adherents employ a number of what he terms "pseudo-validation strategies" specifically designed for the purpose of "elicit[ing] hostile responses from perceived opponents which will appear to confirm the Identity racists' conspiracy theories."[41] However, for Barkun, the case is not so simple. First, he is referring to the Christian Identity community, a group more homogenous and far more radical than the militia groups (only a small minority of whom accept the Identity creed). The key, in Barkun's view, centers on such questions as the degree of deviance of the target movement and the forms of rhetoric employed by the group in question.[42] There is little question that in the case of Christian Identity, the degree of deviance from the dominant culture is sufficient to make Barkun's conception of "pseudo validation strategies" correct. For the militias, however, the degree of deviance from the norms of contemporary society is not as great, making it unlikely that most militia members would consider attempting to induce either the state or private watchdogs into taking hostile actions as a kind of suicidal mobilization strategy. This lack of

intentionality on the part of the militias makes the extraordinary level of opposition to their activities that is prescribed in Kenneth Stern's book all the more puzzling and thus alienating.

Robbins' second point, that there is in my work the implication that "Jewish citizens should avoid denouncing racist groups and supporting anti-paramilitarist measures such as forms of gun control," is both telling and troubling. It is an issue that I have frankly wrestled much with, and one that has been discussed with a number of colleagues. From the perspective of the interpretive approach, I have found time and again that the seemingly ubiquitous presence of the Jewish organizations, in particular the Anti-defamation League, in the forefront of efforts to combat manifestations of the far right—even when that activity has no obvious anti-Semitic content—is in itself a factor that has induced otherwise unconvinced adherents to take seriously the claims of Jewish control of the nation, and by extension, the world. The extreme manifestation of this view is the ZOG (Zionist Occupation Government) discourse which has today become ubiquitous among adherents of the far right, even in those nations that suffer from an inconvenient dearth of local Jews![43] Once again, this is an unpleasant fact to report. However, the interpretive methodology centers on presenting the reader with the world as seen through the eyes of the adherent, regardless of how repugnant that view may be to a mainstream audience.

But having returned from the field with this unpleasant news, to paraphrase Lenin, 'What is to be done'? This is at the heart of Robbins' criticism, and it is a question which would be more comfortable to avoid. It would be preferable if the interpretive methodology was not used in a prescriptive manner. Indeed, it would seem to be sufficient to provide the data and let the reader form his or her own judgment of 'what is to be done' in the policy field. Moreover, the fieldwork conducted through the interpretive approach should ideally be grist for the mills of both the comparativist and the policymaker. Yet Thomas Robbins has posed the question and it seems incumbent on me to answer in the same constructive spirit in which the observation was made.

Thus, to step for a moment outside of the interpretive framework, it appears to me that the path of dialogue rather than confrontation would be most fruitful with regard to relations between the Jewish community and those in the far right who have not adopted an *a priori* view of Jewish hostility. Certainly a good proportion of the militia movement as yet falls into this category, despite the hue and cry raised by Kenneth Stern and others.[44] Moreover, when confronted with anti-Semitism that is both ingrained and potentially threatening, there appear to be two avenues open to the Jewish community. The first is a strategy that has proved efficacious in the past. The dynamic silence strategy championed by the American Jewish Committee's Rabbi S. A. Fineberg enjoyed considerable success in isolating and thus neutralizing the most extreme

proponents of anti-Semitism.[45] Dynamic silence sought, with considerable success under Rabbi Fineberg's leadership, to limit the access of racist groups ranging from Gerald L. K. Smith's Christian Crusade to George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party to the mainstream media.

The second, the path of direct opposition, is not to be precluded so long as it meets two vital criteria—truth and proportionality. The former has been the most frequent victim of the "cult wars" involving the radical right. The threat of the radical right has often been exaggerated to the point of the ridiculous by the various watchdog groups.[46] Moreover, in their zeal to combat racist groups, the watchdogs have at times gone outside of the law, with often embarrassing results. Such was the case in the scandal involving the ADL and the theft of files from the San Francisco Police Department in 1993.[47] Proportionality is closely related to the first criterion of truth. Given the relative dearth of genuinely dangerous right wingers, the extravagant legislative and other repressive measures proposed by some to combat racism are potentially worse than the disease itself. Witness in this regard the attempts—tantamount despite its denials to an intent to censor—by the Simon Weisenthal Center to have "hate" removed from the Internet, a proposal even the ADL disavowed.[48] Witness as well the extraordinary, and now unconstitutional, measures to limit the free speech rights of rescuers noted above, and the use or misuse of RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) to deter rescuers from taking part in rescue activities. More than any single factor, this use of RICO may have pushed the pacifists out of the movement and left the field open to the direct action wing of rescue from which lethal violence ultimately emanated.[49] This use of the RICO statutes may well however, be as easily applied to left wing as right wing or Christian activists, and may ultimately represent a threat to the civil liberties of us all.

THE FUTURE UTILITY OF THE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

Sometimes people get all emotional
And they just don't act rational
They think they're just on TV[50]

In his postscript, Thomas Robbins accurately notes that in all authoritarian sects—as in the world of the radical right and other millennialist communities—there is often a "problematic underside" that scholars of religion have too often chosen to ignore in the greater interest of carrying on the battle against the anti-cult movement. The interpretive approach, however, when it is based on sufficiently intensive fieldwork, cannot fail to note these problems, and it is incumbent on the researcher

to deal with them forthrightly. On the other hand, it would appear to be the primary advantage of the methodology to provide some insight into the processes by which both leader and adherent of these sects understand themselves and interpret the world around them. By avoiding the trap of what Robbins warns can become a "cult apologist" (or, to borrow again from Lenin, a "useful idiot"), the insights provided by the interpretive approach at its best have the potential to contribute to a better understanding of the internal dynamics of authoritarian and/or millennialist sects. The need for such insights could have no more eloquent testimony than the three paradigmatic cases suggested in this article—Jonestown, Ruby Ridge, and Waco.

Which brings us in conclusion to Robbins' "problem of order." Offered almost as an aside, it would appear that this concern lies very much at the heart of "Religious Movements and Violence." Moreover, it reflects a very poignant fear that has been expressed often in relation to my writings—and never so forcefully as in reaction to "The Politics of Rage." The somewhat jocular reference to the havoc that a neighboring "messianic communal sect" might wreak in retaliation for the minor depredations of the family dog, "Antichrist," appears to reflect a deep-seated fear of disorder which is widespread in American society generally and is particularly redolent in the vast literature of anti-Semitism throughout the ages. This fear—expressed in this context in the form of "paramilitarist zealots" from whom the average citizen requires protection by "public authorities" who may no longer be willing or capable of performing the task—underlines the need for the insights provided by the interpretive approach.

From the vantage point of the "messianic communal sect" and the "paramilitarist zealots," the picture is quite different. In this view, the balance of power is decidedly unfavorable. Here, it is the embattled adherents of "constitutional order," the militias and the tiny righteous remnant of the "messianic communal sect," who fear the overwhelming power of a state bent on their destruction. Moreover, as Ruby Ridge and Waco—and a long series of one-sided confrontations with state authority that predated these well-known cases—teach, their fears would appear to have a far greater basis in reality than those expressed by Robbins.

Having said this, it is important to note that I do not take Robbins' fears lightly. Quite the contrary. The greatest benefit of the interpretive approach may yet prove to be that the methodology, through its emphasis on personal contact and dialogue, can provide a bridge of mutual understanding that will serve, in some small measure, to allay the barriers of fear and hostility which have so long divided us.[51]

ENDNOTES

[1] Lou Reed, "Street Hassle," Metal Machine Music, 1978.

[2] As Thomas Robbins has coined the term, "interpretive approach," I am content to accept his definition of the methodology. I would add only two provisos. First, the interpretive methodology must endeavor to allow the observer to see the world through the eyes of the target movement to as great a degree as possible. Second, the interpretive approach must never be relegated to the level of journalism which, at its best, has much the same goal. Rather, the interpretive approach must be aimed at a scholarly audience and be equipped to provide relevant contextual material in terms of the history and theology of the target movement. It must also provide comparisons with other belief systems in an effort to determine the degree of universality of the outlook and actions of a particular religio-political movement.

[3] Reed, "Street Hassle."

[4] Norman Cohn, *Pursuit Of The Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians And Mystical Anarchists Of The Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957; reprint 1970); Ehud Sprinzak, "Right-Wing Terrorism in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Deligitimation," *Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 17-43; David Rapoport, "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions," *American Political Science Review* 78 (September 1984): 658-77; idem., "Messianic Sanctions for Terror," *Comparative Politics* 20 (1980): 195-213; Michael Barkun, *Disaster and the Millennium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); and Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony, "Sects and Violence," in *Armageddon at Waco*, ed. Stuart Wright (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 236-59. Millenarian violence, millenarian revolutionary movements, and messianic terror are three relevant examples.

[5] Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Devil in Mr. Jones," in *Imagining Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 111-112.

[6] James R. Lewis, "Showdown at the Waco Corral: ATF Cowboys Shoot Themselves in the Foot," in *From the Ashes: Making Sense of Waco*, ed. idem (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 87-94; idem, "Self Fulfilling Stereotypes, the Anticult Movement, and the Waco Confrontation," in Wright, *Armageddon in Waco*, 95-110. A powerful criticism of this unfortunate tendency to provide an *apologia* for an NRM even before the group has formally been accused of anything is provided by Robert W. Balch and Stephen Langdon, "How Not to Discover Malfeasance in New Religions: An Examination of the AWARE Study of the Church Universal and Triumphant," in *Wolves Among the Fold*, ed. Anson Shupe (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, forthcoming). Cited with permission of Rob Balch, letter to author, 5 February 1997.

[7] Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, revised edition, 1997). Cf. for a review of the text and a discussion of these methodological issues, Jeffrey Kaplan, "On the Far Far Right: Christian Identity," *Christian Century* 2 (November 1994). This point is strongly disputed by such scholars as Michael Barkun and Catherine Wessinger. Their positions, taken collectively, point correctly to the vital contributions of scholars working from the literature or from a comparative perspective respectively. These points are extremely well taken, and both scholars have provided key contributions to our understanding of millennialist movements working from non-fieldwork approaches. In another well-taken criticism, Catherine Wessinger suggests that scholars engaged in a literature-based approach may contribute to the interpretive methodology by documenting the reactions of adherents to outside cultural opposition and by facilitating, directly or indirectly, a dialogue between members of the groups and outside forces (e.g., the FBI in crisis situations or the dominant culture through such forums as the media and classroom teaching). However, this insistence on fieldwork combined with a thorough grounding in the primary sources as

the key to a full understanding of the target movement—and thus of a fully interpretive approach—remains in my view a vital ingredient to the success of the interpretive approach. Fax from Michael Barkun, 24 March 1997; email message from Catherine Wessinger, 16 March 1997. Finally, in cases of historic millennialism where fieldwork is impossible in any practical sense, it seems reasonable to include intuitive reconstructions of the worldview of the target movement as being representative of the interpretive approach. Outstanding examples include J. Huizinga, *The Waning Of The Middle Ages* (New York: Doubleday, 1924); Jules Michelet, *Satanism and Witchcraft*, trans. A. R. Allison (New York: Walden, 1939); and Howard Kaminsky, "Pius Aeneas Among the Taborites," *Church History* 28 (1959): 281-309, to name but a few.

[8] Rodney Stark, "How New Religions Succeed: A Theoretical Model," in *The Future of New Religious Movements*, eds. David Bromley and Phillip Hammond (Macon, GA: Mercer Press, 1987), 23-24. Gone are the days when Festinger's covert methodology could be acceptable either on an ethical or a practical basis. Leon Festinger, et al., *When Prophecy Fails* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956). Conversely, for a fascinating account of the evolution of a participant/observer relationship with one such oppositional millennial movement—Earth First!—see Bron Taylor, *On Sacred Ground: Earth First! and Environmental Ethics* (Boston: Beacon, forthcoming 1998).

[9] For an outstanding example of this process, see the study of the satanic Process Church of the Final Judgment by William Sims Bainbridge, *Satan's Power: A Deviant Psychotherapy Cult* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). The intensive correspondence between Bainbridge and the adherents of the Process Church that reveal this dynamic with far greater clarity than the published work is preserved in the J. Gordon Melton Collection at the University of California Santa Barbara.

[10] Thomas Robbins, "Religious Movements and Violence: A Friendly Critique of the Interpretive Approach," this issue.

[11] Ibid.

[12] This observation is meant to reflect the relative dangers to the movement as seen from the safe remove of almost two decades and half a world away. The interpretive approach would be valuable in determining how this threat was perceived from the vantage point of the adherents themselves. Here, a much different picture no doubt emerges. For some insights into this issue, see Catherine Wessinger, "How the Millennium Comes Violently: A Comparison of Jonestown, Aum Shinrikyo, Branch Davidians, and the Montana Freemen." The article is forthcoming in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* and a form of the piece will appear as the introduction to her forthcoming book. Wessinger further suggests in this regard Mary McCormick Maaga, *Triple Erasure: Women and Power in Peoples Temple*, Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1996; and Rebecca Moore, *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown: The Moore Family Involvement in Peoples' Temple* (Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985).

[13] For the best coverage of these events, see Jess Walters, *Every Knee Shall Bow: The Truth and Tragedy of Ruby Ridge and the Randy Weaver Family* (New York: Regan Books, 1995).

[14] James Aho, *This Thing of Darkness: A Sociology of the Enemy* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994). This starkly dualistic scenario which afflicted both sides of these conflicts is hardly new. See Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994) and Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan & The Combat Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[15] The most informative materials to come out of the immediate aftermath of Jonestown were thus journalistic. See for example, Tim Reiterman with John Jacobs, *Raven: The Untold Story of Jim Jones and His People* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1982).

[16] For a discussion of these events and the impact they had on the milieu of the radical right, see Jeffrey Kaplan, "Right Wing Violence in North America," in *Terror From the Far Right*, ed. Tore Bjørgo (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1995). For an application of this scenario specifically to the militia movement, see John George and Laird Wilcox, *American Extremists: Militias, Supremacists, Klansmen, Communists & Others* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1996). For a less than detached journalistic overview of this history, see James Coates,

Armed and Dangerous: The Rise of the Survivalist Right (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987).

[17] Pete Peters, *Special Report on the Meeting of Christian Men Held in Estes Park, Colorado October 23, 24, 25, 1992 Concerning the Killing of Vickie and Samuel Weaver by the United States Government* (Laporte, CO: Scriptures for America, n.d.). This meeting and the accompanying documents and cassette sermons have been erroneously credited as the genesis of the militia movement. In reality, it was a step toward that end, but the true impetus of the emergence of the militias would wait a season for the Waco conflagration.

[18] For a good running account of the connection between the two cases drawn by the radical right, see Louis Beam, "Showdown in Waco," *Jubilee* 5, no. 5 (March/April 1993): 1; and indeed, any issue of the Identity newspaper *Jubilee* from late 1992-1993.

[19] This is a question that most academic "experts" were asked at the time. My own experience of these queries came as guest host of "Talk of the Nation," National Public Radio, on the topic "Charisma and Religious Authority," 9 March 1993; and on the topic "National Security and Millenarian Cults," 22 April 1993.

[20] See note 3 above.

[21] "Preface," in Wright, *Armageddon at Waco*, x-xi. By contrast, I had warned of precisely this effect in a number of publications to be discussed in the following section and made precisely this criticism of the Wright volume in a long backlogged review of the Wright book in *The Law and History Review* (forthcoming).

[22] Robbins, "Religious Movements and Violence."

[23] Reed, "Street Hassle."

[24] Kaplan, "Right Wing Violence in North America," 83. Cf. Richard Abnes, *American Militias: Rebellion, Racism and Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

[25] Jeffrey Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America: Millenarian Movements from the Far Right to the Children of Noah* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), ch. 5; idem., "The Anti-Cult Movement in America: A History of Culture Perspective," *Syzygy* 2, nos. 3-4 (1993): 267-96.

[26] This group would play an important role in the recent standoff involving the Freemen in Montana. Of the these scholars, only Michael Barkun had a knowledge of the Christian Identity beliefs that the Freemen professed. The others were quite open about their lack of knowledge of the subject, and none had done field work or come in personal contact with the milieu upon which they were proffering advice. A few of the documents faxed to the FBI during the standoff have been kindly provided to assist my research, and none of these samples demonstrate more than an abstract theoretical knowledge of the milieu.

[27] Author's interview with Thom Robb, 24 August 1991.

[28] Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America*, ch. 5.

[29] Frederick J. Simonelli, *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*, Ph.D. diss., University of Nevada, Reno, 1995.

[30] Message from Nancy O'Meara of the Church of Scientology, 5 March 1997; J. Gordon Melton, "The Modern Anti-cult Movement in Historical Perspective," paper presented to the conference on "Rejected and Suppressed Knowledge: The Racist Right and the Cultic Milieu," 13-17 February 1997, Stockholm, Sweden. At this writing (May 1997), Scientologist Gary Beeney (or Beeny) had purchased the CAN judgment from the original plaintiff, Jason Scott. For an update on this confusing situation, see Jeffrey Kaplan, "The Fall of the Wall?," this issue.

[31] This information, including the fascinating detail of a sudden influx of suspected federal agents into the vicinity of the CUT property, was provided by J. Gordon Melton to my class in "Radical Religions in America," Spring 1997.

[32] Jeffrey Kaplan, "Absolute Rescue: Absolutism, Defensive Action and the Resort to Force," *Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 128-63. This article was republished in Michael Barkun, ed., *Millennialism and Violence* (Portland, OR and London: Frank Cass & Co., 1996), 128-63, and was serialized and made available to the rescue community in the journal *Prayer + Action News* in 1996-1997. Idem., "The Politics of Rage: The Future of the Militia Movement," *The Christian Century*, 19 June 1996, 657-62.

[33] Robbins, "Religious Movements and Violence," this issue.

[34] Michelet, *Satanism and Witchcraft.*

[35] These "bubble zones" were recently found by the US Supreme Court in an 8 to 1 vote to be unconstitutional infringements on free speech in Schenck vs. Pro-Choice Network. See Richard Carallid, "Supreme Court Rules for Operation Rescue," AP wire story circulated by the Prisoners of Christ email news line, 19 February 1997.

[36] Walters, *Every Knee Shall Bow;* Kenneth S. Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

[37] Michael Barkun comes to a similar conclusion, having taken yet a different path from either Stern or myself. See Michael Barkun, "Religion, Militias, and Oklahoma City: The Mind of Conspiratorialists," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 50-64. Cf. idem., "Conspiracy Theories as Stigmatized Knowledge: The Basis for a New Age Racism?," in *Brotherhoods of Nation and Race: The Emergence of a Euro-American Racist Subculture,* eds. Jeffrey Kaplan and Tore Bjørgo (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, forthcoming).

[38] Cohn, *Pursuit Of The Millennium;* Barkun, *Disaster and the Millennium;* and Michael Adas, *Prophets Of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements Against The European Colonial Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979). I have briefly discussed this in the context of the militia movements in "The Politics of Rage," and consider it in greater depth in *Radical Religion in America.*

[39] Ingo Hasselbach with Tom Reiss, *Führer-Ex* (New York: Random House, 1996).

[40] Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[41] Michael Barkun, "Millenarianism and Violence: The Case of the Christian Identity Movement," in *Millennium, Messiahs and Mayhem: Contemporary Apocalyptic Movements in North America,* eds. Thomas Robbins and Susan Palmer (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[42] Fax from Michael Barkun, 24 February 1997.

[43] Kaplan, "The Politics of Rage," 661.

[44] Dialogue is not the easiest of paths, nor is it a panacea. The results can be depressing or worse. See for an example of this unhappy scenario, Raphael S. Ezekiel, *The Racist Mind: Portraits of American Neo-Nazis and Klansmen* (New York: Viking, 1995). The results can, conversely, be remarkable. See for example, Kathryn Watterson, *Not by the Sword: How the Love of a Cantor and His Family Transformed a Klansman* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

[45] Kaplan, "The Politics of Rage," 661-662; and Simonelli, *American Fuehrer.*

[46] Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America;* George and Wilcox, *American Extremists;* and Laird Wilcox, "Who Watches the Watchmen?: Another Side to the Watchdog Groups," paper presented to the conference on "Rejected and Suppressed Knowledge: The Racist Right and the Cultic Milieu," 13-17 February 1997, Stockholm, Sweden. This as we have seen is a point often made by denizens of the radical right wing groups themselves. Virtually all of the veterans of this esoteric subculture express disgust with their "comrades" and frank amazement that anyone in the "real world" could take them seriously. Witness for example the latest such expression to come my way. James Mason, a life-long National Socialist currently imprisoned in Colorado writes, "What kills me is that you and others apparently find something worthy of note about the so-called 'Radical Right.' Long ago I came to see it was nothing and that it is the broad cycles of history which need to be understood" (Letter from James Mason, 4 February 1997). Mason's sardonic view is precisely correct on all counts.

[47] Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America,* 135; and Laird Wilcox, *Anti-Defamation League 1993 Spy Scandal Clipping File* (Olathe, KS: Editorial Research Service, n.d.).

[48] Pamela Mendels, "Monitoring the Growing Web of Hate," *New York Times Electronic Edition,* 12 November 1996.

[49] Kaplan, "Absolute Rescue." The situation appears reminiscent of the extremes to which the British police went to stamp out the demons of the 1960s—the pop groups whose

lifestyles were seen as leading fans to perdition. The campaign was eventually halted after the *London Times*, decrying a questionable drug arrest involving the Rolling Stones, was moved to write an editorial with a title which may be applied to much of what we have been discussing in this article: "To Break a Butterfly on a Wheel."

[50] Reed, "Street Hassle."

[51] Aho, *This Thing of Darkness* suggests the efficacy of this approach in certain cases.

DENOMINATIONALISM AND CHANGING GENDER IDEALS IN THE *ADVENTIST REVIEW*: AN EXAMINATION OF WEBER'S THEORY OF RELIGION OF THE DISPRIVILEGED CLASSES

Laura L. Vance

ABSTRACT: This article employs a content analysis of the *Adventist Review* to explore Seventh-day Adventist denominational change and concomitant delimitation of women's roles and expectations in the denomination. It uses Weber's theory of the religion of non-privileged classes in order to consider denominational change and attendant advocation of specific gender ideals and proscriptions for Adventist women. The paper finds that early in its history Adventism defined itself in opposition to secular society, and that in the context of this definition by distinction, Adventist women were encouraged to assume positions of public religious responsibility not available to them in secular society. Following the turn of the century and especially during the 1950s and 1960s, as Adventist culture adopted an accommodating response to other denominations and secular society, the *Review* promoted conventional secular notions of gender appropriate activity, relegating men to the "bread-winner" role and discouraging women from engaging in wage labor, or religious activity outside of the domestic sphere. As suggested by Weber's theory of religion of non-privileged classes, examination of the *Adventist Review* illustrates the way in which Adventist leadership shifted from advocating ideals inconsistent with those promulgated in the wider society, when Adventist culture most emphasized its distinction, only to later embrace secular expectations of gender when the denomination adopted a more accommodating response to other denominations and secular society.

Because sectarian movements define themselves in opposition to secular society,[1] some social theorists have suggested that such movements provide greater opportunity for women and other disprivileged people than is allowed in secular society.[2] According to

Weber's theory of "the religion of non-privileged classes" (a theory never fully developed by Weber), "The religion of the disprivileged classes [sects] . . . is characterized by a tendency to allot equality to women."[3] Weber incorporates assumptions of the theory of sectarian development implicitly in his theory of the religion of the disprivileged classes, arguing that although in their initial stage sectarian movements maintain tension with secular society, sectarian movements generally tend toward accommodation. Weber asserts that as sects become bureaucratized and seek accommodation to secular society, positions of authority and leadership available to women in the initial phase of sectarian development diminish. Weber contends that while women and members of other disprivileged groups are allowed increased public power and authority early in sectarian development, "only in very rare cases does this practice continue beyond the first stage of a religious community's formation, when the pneumatic manifestations of charisma are valued as hallmarks of specifically religious exaltation." "Thereafter, as routinization and regimentation of community relations set in," public authority previously allowed to women is limited and, eventually, disappears entirely.[4]

In his examination of women in black spiritual churches, Baer observes that new religious movements which "appeal to the disinherited often grant equality to women."[5] A paradigm for understanding the greater gender equality apparent in new religious movements and their consequent appeal to women, as well as the eventual diminution of these characteristics, is provided by Carroll et al. in their delineation of stages of religious change. Specifically, Carroll et al. adumbrate an initial sectarian response to the world—the charismatic stage—in which a new vision is introduced by a prophet and members of the movement see themselves as being "in direct contact with the divine," and therefore as being informed of unique and essential truths.[6] These new truths unite believers against non-believers ("the world") and allow believers freedom to define expression of spiritual gifts in a manner sometimes unacceptable to the world. In this stage of development, women are encouraged to participate fully in the movement: "When a movement is at its charismatic phase, 'women's place' is not an issue."[7]

The authors' second phase of development is "one of consolidation and organization" which, according to Carroll et al., is initiated by the maturation of the sect's second generation: "If adherents of the movement become active participants in the status system of the wider society, organization and respectability become important goals; and the role definitions of the society at large become the natural order to which the group would grant religious legitimacy."[8] As sectarians become more aware of, and more concerned with, societal norms and expectations (as a result, for example, of the interaction with the world necessitated by proselytizing, participating in secular higher education programs,

and operating mass media services), they become concerned with the impropriety with which the world views women's participation in leadership, and "respectability demands that women be put in their place."[9] As they mature, however, religious movements may, like their forbears, attempt to instigate social change rather than maintain a hostile relationship with the world (phase one) or adapt to prevailing social customs (phase two).

This study considers the relationship between sectarian identity and proscription of women's roles in Seventh-day Adventism by employing content analysis of *Adventist Reviews* published between 1850 and 1993. The *Review*, the periodical serving as the primary vehicle for the establishment and promulgation of Adventist theology and doctrine, was examined with reference to (1) advocation of accommodation or hostility to secular society (the movement's "response to the world" or sectarian identity) and (2) promotion of specific gender ideals. In regard to the first variable, articles were considered with reference to the extent to which they advocated an accommodating or hostile response to secular society; regarding the second, articles addressing gender were analyzed to discern advocation of gender norms and activities and to determine whether those advanced were consistent with then prevalent secular norms.

RESPONSE TO THE WORLD AS DEPICTED IN THE *ADVENTIST REVIEW*

Adventism's portrayal of and proposed response to the world has changed dramatically in the *Review's* almost 150 year history. Early copies of the periodical identified the world as the seat of corruption and encouraged separation from secular society: "[Adventism] . . . lays its first foundation in the renunciation of the world, as a state of false Gods and false enjoyments, which feed the vanity and corruption of our nature, fill our hearts with foolish wicked passions, and keep us separate from God."[10] Through the 1870s, the Adventist response to the world distinguished the world as specifically non-Adventist. One anonymous 1873 article noted that "the religion of the day is entirely unlike the religion of the Bible. . . . In Bible times religion separated people from the world, . . . The heart cannot be fired up with the love of God and the love of the world at the same time. . . . We need earnestly to inquire for the old paths of experimental religion, and to walk therein. We want radical Christianity."[11]

This emphasis continued through the 1880s and 1890s. In 1884 Ellen White insisted that Adventists must reject the world or reject God: "The Lord himself has established a separating wall between the things of the world and the things which he has chosen out of the world and sanctified

for himself. . . . God has made this separation, and he will have it exist."[12] The following year, Ellen White asked Adventists to consider whether they were "separating in spirit and practice from the world." While she observed "how hard it is to come out and be separate from worldly habits and customs," she declared that such separation was essential as "eternal interests are involved."[13] Other Adventists agreed with White's assessment: "Few things more accurately determine our moral standing in the sight of God than the manner in which we relate ourselves to the world. . . . If from choice we seek the society of the world, it indicates that the love of God is leaking out of our hearts."[14] Another *Review* author called separation from the world "imperative" in 1887, and portrayed association with the world as posing danger to Adventists: "We must remember that we are in an enemy's land, and that he who is a friend to the world is an enemy of God."[15]

Ellen White, the *Review*'s most vocal proponent of separation from the world, insisted in the 1890s that there should be "no union between the church and the world. . . . Through union with the world the church would become corrupt. . . . The world is the chief enemy of religion."[16] White maintained that "those who are not wholly on the side of Christ are to a large degree controlled by the maxims and customs of the world" and then forbade "fellowship with the world."[17] Even in Adventist evangelical endeavors White argued that SDA missionaries "cannot conform to the world" because "the world is not God's way."[18]

The *Review* demonstrated a marked decline in insistence upon separation from the world following the turn of the century. Writing in 1910, Ellen White reiterated that a "great gulf [was] fixed" between Adventists and the world, but warned that SDAs should "beware of indulging in a spirit of bigotry [and] intolerance" toward the world; such an attitude of animosity, she cautioned, might deter Adventist evangelical labors.[19] Adventists were to continue to avoid worldly associations and activities, but Adventist missionary efforts necessitated increased interaction with, and at least a more overtly tolerant response toward, the world.

In the 1920s, *Review* articles continued to criticize alliance and intimacy with the world, but began to do so with reference to specific examples of Adventist interaction and association with secular society.[20] This decreased emphasis on separation from the world continued through the 1930s and 1940s and accelerated rapidly during the 1950s. While *Review* articles of the 1940s continued to emphasize Adventism's unique beliefs, authors concluded that, "we can agree on many points with those in other churches, in so far as they have derived their teaching from the unadulterated word of God."[21] The 1950s, which saw an explosion of Adventist evangelism (including televangelism efforts), initiated a period of Adventist accommodation to the world.[22] One 1955 author, identifying Adventists with non-Adventist Christians, asked, "are

Christians to have no intercourse with people of the world? Are they to cut loose from all their friends who aren't Christians? . . . Are they never to mingle with people of the world?" He responded that though Adventists were not to marry "unbelievers," they should interact, as Christians, with non-Adventists as such interaction would provide opportunities to "witness" to unbelievers.[23] Though the world was still identified as "the enemy," accommodation to the world was viewed as being acceptable to the extent that conversion efforts necessitated such accommodation and worldly interaction.[24]

In the 1960s, Adventists basked in the success of their burgeoning worldwide evangelical campaign. Recognizing Adventism's accession of cultural norms in its efforts to not only further missionary labors, but to demonstrate maturity as a Protestant religious movement, *Review* authors defended Adventism:

> Magazines, newspapers, books, as well as radio and TV feature the work of Adventists and usually commend it. . . . A few [Adventists] express the fear that this more respected position of Adventists is an indication that the church has drifted toward the world . . . that we are no longer the distinct, peculiar people we once were. [Adventists must not be] misled to believe that every change and adjustment in our work is worldliness.[25]

Another author, asking "How liberal are we?" concluded that although Adventists should refrain from joining the ecumenical movement, "it does not follow that we should ever permit ourselves to conclude that other religious groups are in some way really outside the fold of God, that they are insincere in their religious worship."[26]

In response to Adventism's tendency toward accommodation throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and more especially in response to perceived threats to the movement's distinct doctrine and, therefore, identity in the 1970s,[27] *Review* authors drew back from their previously more accommodating position and attempted to draw attention to the "dangers" of secularization. One author specifically distinguished between the characteristics of a church and those of a sect, identified Adventism as a sect (a religious body which endeavors to "'stand apart' from the world"), and called Adventism's then recent progression from sect-like status to church-like status "tragic." The proposed solution to this condition was "to sharpen the line between [Adventism] and the world."[28] In 1975, Willis Hackett, vice president of the General Conference, warned that Adventism was in danger of becoming secular: "Have we [SDAs] slidden from the primitive gospel that characterized the religion of our fathers? Is there a religious tide of worldliness creeping into our ranks? . . . Are we mixing too thoroughly religion and secularism?"[29] Another author wondered "why . . . so many Christians—even some Adventists—become so much like the world?" and called for increased Adventist separation from secular society.[30]

Despite the *Review*'s backlash against "creeping secularism" in the 1970s, by the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the periodical began once again to forge a path toward increased accommodation. Adventists, one author explained in the early 1980s, did have "the truth," but Adventist doctrine alone was not truth. Instead, he concluded that "truth" was a broad category that encompassed the Bible. Therefore, "Adventist doctrine is what the Bible teaches and in that sense is truth," but Adventists are not alone in their possession of truth.[31] Another author advocated Adventist "distinction" while concomitantly recognizing that Adventism could not remain entirely separate from the world if members were to witness effectively.[32] Gordon took this argument to its logical conclusion in 1993, noting that, "the message we [SDAs] bear is not ours, it is God's, and we must find an acceptable way to warn people without creating unwarranted conflict."[33]

PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY THROUGH GENDER PRESCRIPTIONS

While nineteenth-century North American women were expected to be exclusively responsible for the care of children, the nurturance of husband, and the maintenance of the home, Adventist women were, in addition to being presented with this ideal, deemed to have an important *participatory* role in Adventism.[34] Adventist writer B. F. Robbins pointed in 1860 to the active participation of women in Adventism as one peculiarity that served to distinguish Adventism from other religious movements:

> I know that most of us have been gathered into the message of the third angel from [other] churches where we received our religious training . . . and . . . in some of [those churches] the prejudice against women's efforts and labors in the church have crushed her usefulness. This kind of training has in many of you caused timidity, and discouragement, and the neglect of the use of gifts designed to edify the church and glorify God.[35]

Another author, S. C. Welcome, appealed to Adventist women to engage actively in religious work, arguing that Biblical sanction against women's full religious participation was destructive and had been misconstrued:

> Biblical passages have been construed as an objection to women's speaking in public; and thousands of females that have submitted their hearts to God . . . have been deprived of the privilege of speaking out their feelings in the public congregation, to the almost entire loss of enjoyment, by false construction put upon these paragraphs, notwithstanding the great amount of evidence that can be brought to prove that all who are made partakers of such love have a right to speak forth his praises.[36]

Interpreting Pauline injunctions against women speaking in meetings as simply an appropriate response to an overwhelming number of questions posed to early Christian teachers which would have been "better answered at home," Welcome concluded that "the prohibition of the apostle" had nothing to do with women's participation in "preaching, prophesying, exhorting or praying in public," each of which Welcome encouraged women to do:[37]

> The mind of the female . . . has equal access to the fountain of light and life. And experience has proved that many females have possessed the natural qualifications for speaking in public, the range of thought, the faculty of communicating their ideas in appropriate language, the sympathy with suffering humanity, a deep and lively sense of gratitude to God, and of the beauty of holiness, a zeal for the honor of God, and the happiness of his rational creatures—all these are found among the female part of the human family, as frequently and as eminently as among men.[38]

"Where is the authority for saying that females should not receive a gift of the Holy Spirit in the last days?" asked Welcome: "Verily God hath promised it. . . . We are informed on the authority of divine revelation that male and female are one in Christ Jesus; that in the relation in which they both stand to him, the distinction is completely broken down as between Jew and Gentile, bound and free. . . . Then let no stumbling block be thrown in their way, but let them fill the place that God wants them to fill."[39]

Contending that "God has given to women an important part in connection with this work throughout its entire history," Adventist writer George C. Tenney noted that in Biblical times women "wrought righteousness, exercised omnipotent power of faith, braved dangers, and witnessed for the truth as effectively as those of the other sex."[40] Citing "the work of the gospel" as removing "distinctions among men in race, nationality, sex or condition," Tenney concluded that "women who labor acceptably in the gospel are included among those of whom the savior says, 'Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my father who is in heaven.'"[41] James White agreed in his *Review* articles that Paul's mandate pertaining to women "certainly . . . does not mean that women should take no part in those religious services where [Paul] would have both men and women take part in prayer and prophesying, or teaching the word of God to the people." White also cited numerous examples of biblical women who served in important positions of religious leadership and told *Review* readers that "the Christian age was ushered in with glory. Both men and women enjoyed the inspiration of the hallowed hour and were teachers of the people. . . . And the dispensation which was ushered in with glory, honored with the labors of holy women, will close with the same honors."[42]

While the *Review* did not hesitate to defend and encourage women's active participation in worship services and in evangelical efforts, the periodical portrayed such endeavors, after 1880, as occurring within the context of a woman's position as wife and mother and entailing, rather than replacing, the responsibilities of those positions.[43] Instead of overtly challenging Victorian prescriptions for women, early Adventism, as depicted in the *Review*, added a dimension of religious responsibility and authority to Victorian expectations. Adventist women, like non-Adventist women in nineteenth-century North America, were presented with a delimited "sphere": "[Woman] has a sphere, and she cannot with propriety go out of it. She cannot go out of the circle which nature and propriety have drawn about her. Neither can man go out of his and invade hers."[44] Women's place, as outlined in *Review* articles, consisted of "homemaking" (cleaning, making the family comfortable, and completing other housework) and, more significantly, of caring for, and teaching religious principles to, children.

Notwithstanding admonitions of *Review* authors encouraging women to undertake and fulfill gender responsibilities consistent with cultural ideals, Adventists, recognizing the imminence of the advent, called upon all members to participate in the work necessary to hasten Christ's coming: "Sisters . . . everywhere, you can help prepare the way for blessing. You can be messengers for the Lord. . . . Awake! arise! and let your brightness shine. . . . Hasten the coming of him for whom the ages have waited."[45] Declaring that, "only in Jesus Christ is there neither male nor female,"[46] *Review* authors continued their attack on Pauline prohibitions against women's public participation in religious service (Pauline sanctions, "by no means intimated that when a woman received any particular influence from God to enable her to teach, she was not to obey that influence; on the contrary, she was to obey it") and called upon women to publicly "pray, testify, and exhort and expound the word."[47] Authors were quick to note historical religious contributions of women: "In the work of God women have ever acted an important part. . . . In these days when the great plan of salvation is well-nigh accomplished, and the years of time are almost ended, we find a similar spirit, and noble, brave, God-fearing women everywhere are taking hold of the work of warning the world."[48]

In addition to being cautioned regarding the importance of their homemaking/mothering responsibilities, Adventist women were reminded that "mind, voice, and every jot of ability are only loaned as talents, given by God to be used in his work."[49] Indeed, as one author admonished, "the work which the Lord has given us to do must go on. Each woman must carry on her part of it, regardless of any other, or lose the greatest opportunity that has been accorded women in any generation."[50] Thus, while during the late nineteenth century the *Review* acknowledged societal prescriptions regarding women's "appropriate"

responsibilities, the periodical's authors simultaneously advocated that women actively participate in the work of preparing for Christ's imminent coming by contributing to the functioning, spiritual leadership, teaching, and evangelism of Adventism.[51]

The shift in Adventism toward acceptance and promotion of the Cult of Domesticity, while subtly present in 1890s *Review* articles dictating women's child care and housekeeping responsibilities, became more overtly apparent after the turn of the century.[52] Adventist teacher G. E. Judd, as early as 1891, called the ideal home "a little heaven on earth in which to prepare for the heaven above,"[53] and by the mid-1890s authors more readily portrayed the home as an idyllic setting in which correct moral behavior was rooted.[54] Before the early 1900s, however, *Review* authors, unlike their Protestant and secular contemporaries, did not specifically associate the "home as haven" with restrictive, gender-specific behavior norms and expectations for Adventist women. A. R. Wilcox, in 1894, promoted the home as "a place of refuge for the adult *man or woman* [emphasis added]": "They flee to home [for] protection, and gain from intercourse with congenial friends the strength and courage to go forth with renewed determination to conquer in the battle of life."[55]

While prior to the 1900s the *Review* discussed women of Biblical times with reference to their religious authority and leadership capacity, by the turn of the century articles outlined a much more limited interpretation of Bible women, stressing foremost that they were housekeepers, and, by implication, that housework ought to be the primary responsibility of Adventist women in the early 1900s.[56] The *Review*, which began in the mid-1890s to carry a "Home" section—targeting women with housekeeping and parenting suggestions—by 1900 began occasionally to define strictly separated masculine and feminine spheres. One 1900 article, for example, portrayed "homemaking" not only as something that women should do, but as women's sole "vocation." Adopting the language of the Cult of Domesticity, the author depicted "man, with his strength of body and soul to battle the world, . . . and woman with her no less God-given power to put inspiration into his work, and to make a place of rest and refreshing for him when the day's conflict is over."[57] Another author departed from the ideal of partnership present in earlier *Review* articles to construct a more singular interpretation of women's (and by implication, men's) responsibilities: "The virtuous wife and mother seems to be the central figure of the home. She is industrious. She interests herself in all that is of interest to her loved ones. She becomes a safe counselor for both her husband and for her children."[58]

Although these changed gender expectations did not go unnoticed or unopposed, by 1915 the *Review* began increasingly to emphasize women's work in the home.[59] Moreover, women's work was defined expressly as non-wage labor, namely homemaking: "There are many

new professions open to women today, but in none of them can she shine brighter, or serve God and humanity better, than in the old profession of homemaking."[60] Women were encouraged to be efficient and effective homemakers and mothers and warned that their failure as mothers or homemakers would have long-lasting repercussions: "An incompetent . . . ill-trained . . . mother is a curse unto the third or fourth generation of those who love her and fall under her influence."[61]

This trend continued in the 1920s and 1930s as the Cult of Domesticity was increasingly perpetuated in the pages of the *Review*. The work of Adventist women was defined in the context of the wife/homemaker role to the exclusion of a variety of activities and endeavors in which earlier Adventist women had been encouraged to participate. Adventist women were told that they were "needed in the world's great work," but that they could "not find time to work outside the four walls of home." Women were described, beginning especially in the 1920s, as caring for and teaching children from infancy.[62] Although *Review* authors acknowledged that some SDA women lamented that "other women are doing things and getting paid for it," the *Review* countered that "when these home duties become sacred privileges, there will come a feeling of peace and satisfaction that cannot be exchanged for dollars and cents."[63] Furthermore, the *Review* asserted that a homemaker's/mother's "power is the great force that moves the world" and that women, by properly completing their responsibilities in the domestic sphere, "might cure half our national evils of divorce, extravagance, . . . marital unhappiness, [and] inefficient parenthood. They will never do it in the office, but it might be done in the kitchen."[64] Women's domestic labor was represented as being responsible for the success or failure of men ("With such a wife at the hearthstone, it is easy to understand why husband and sons live clean, noble lives"[65]) and was delimited in such a way as to be portrayed in opposition to intellectual, financial, or educational endeavors. Women's domestic work was "a far finer thing than the writing of any novel, or the painting of any picture."[66] Thus, while between 1850 and 1900 gender expectations for Adventist women did not preclude extra-domestic activities, later the Adventist ideal for women was defined strictly within the bounds of homemaking and motherhood, and these responsibilities were more directly associated with the success/failure of men in particular, and of society generally: "The home that is not in harmony with the laws of purity, justice, high ideals, and obedience is sending out a poisoning stream that will leave its blight everywhere."[67]

Again, this evolution of gender norms and expectations was not without its detractors.[68] By the 1930s, however, even those *Review* authors advocating extra-domestic activities for SDA women did so primarily within the parameters of emerging homemaking expectations. Women's evangelical labors were to be concentrated in the home and "busy

homemakers" were encouraged to take SDA higher education courses at home via correspondence.[69] While women (wives/mothers) were instructed to set aside wage labor participation and to make the home a "haven"—a reprieve from the world—the father was told to assume "his rightful position as head of his household" and to provide for the fiscal well-being of his nuclear family.[70] Whereas nineteenth-century Adventist women had been depicted as independent, competent, and intelligent workers (especially prior to 1880) whose responsibilities included, but were not limited to, domestic work, the woman portrayed in the *Review* of the 1920s and 1930s appeared to have little knowledge, experience or ambition outside of the domestic sphere.

The *Review*'s newly embraced emphasis on separate, gendered spheres of responsibility was briefly amended between 1940 and late 1945 to include women's participation in wage labor and, concurrently, to reemphasize the importance of women's participation in public religious work. As women in secular society were invited, during World War II, to contribute to the paid labor force in occupations and positions normally reserved for men, Adventist women also left the domestic domain long enough to be employed "regular hours" in addition to "keeping house."[71] At the same time, articles sought to justify women's participation in public religious endeavors:

> We are sure that Paul never intended that his words, which were directed to a specific situation, should be used to prevent any woman, simply because she was a woman, from taking any active part in public church services. . . . We believe that it is altogether reasonable for us to hold that there are other women, besides those strictly called prophets [Ellen White] who have been called of God to do a public work, and who have received a special training for that public work in schools set apart by God.[72]

Though not all women depicted in the *Review* during the years of the Second World War chose to participate in wage labor, and though the *Review* continued to portray women as being responsible for household work, as secular society insisted that women's contribution to the work force, especially in occupations usually reserved for men, was essential to the war effort, *Review* authors, instead of discouraging SDA women from participating in wage labor, encouraged Adventist women in extra-domestic enterprises.

The *Review*'s penchant, between 1940 and late 1945, for defining women's responsibilities as including, but not being limited to, housekeeping and mothering was reversed immediately and completely following the close of the war. As secular employers laid off female employees to make room for male workers returning from military service, and as the secular media encouraged, and attempted to legitimate, women's forced retreat from "male" (higher wage) occupations, *Review* writers resumed a definition of appropriate gender

behavior that precluded (even more strictly and overtly than it had prior to 1940) women's participation in the paid labor force and delimited women's responsibilities as involving solely mothering and homemaking. Furthermore, *Review* writers did not hesitate to blame employed wives, and especially mothers, for perceived social ills. Immediately following the close of the war, one author noted a rise in juvenile delinquency and attributed the problem to employed women: "With too many mothers working, the atmosphere of security and stability that a child needs so much has departed from many homes . . . The lure of easy money has taken many mothers away from their homes, and their children are left to shift for themselves."[73] Claiming that women were employed for wages because "there has been so much emphasis on earning more money, on a higher standard of living," *Review* writers criticized women who "farmed out" their children (placed them in child care) and accused them in so doing of contributing to the "breakup of the home."[74] Lamenting that "there was a time when women felt that the highest possible vocation that they could fulfill was in the home and in motherhood,"[75] the *Review* presented a bleak picture of children left alone, "crying" for "good mothers—mothers who make home and loved ones their first duty."[76]

By the 1950s, *Review* authors uniformly portrayed women as wives, mothers and homemakers, and held them specifically, and apparently exclusively, responsible for their children's welfare. Women were told repeatedly that wage labor participation would interfere with, perhaps even circumvent, the well-being of their offspring: "What a fearful thing it is for a mother to yield to the temptation to earn a high salary while others look after her children. 'Others' can never give the child the motherly interest and care the child deserves and requires."[77] Women (wives/mothers) were portrayed by *Review* authors of the 1950s and 1960s as being responsible for their own children's success and therefore, on a more general level, for the moral success or failure of society: "A good mother is better than all the policemen in the state. She is the one best able to nip trouble in the bud. The good mother prevents unfortunate tendencies in children from growing into serious problems [*sic*]": [78]

> The power of woman in shaping the destinies of men and of nations has always been greater than that of man. We have always expected women to live purer and better lives than men. As long as women are what they should be, even if men go wrong, there is hope for the future; but when women go wrong there is nothing to hope for. The world will then go from bad to worse, until, as in Noah's day, conditions will become hopeless.[79]

Women were, the *Review* of the 1950s repeated consistently, "important to God's work": "God created woman to be a helpmeet" and as such, women were to sacrifice, thereby contributing to the success of others.[80] "Many a man enjoys a fame that is really due to his self-sacrificing mother. People applaud the president, the governor . . . but the real

secret of their success is in that unknown, unappreciated, unheralded mother."[81] Thus, women's value was made dependent upon personal sacrifice and the achievement of others: "The greatest heroes in the world are the mothers. No one else makes such sacrifices or endures anything like the suffering that she uncomplainingly endures for her children."[82] *Review* authors of the 1950s propounded a feminine gender ideal that precluded personal aspiration, ambition, or purpose outside of the domestic context.

Although the *Review* did not hesitate, in the 1950s and 1960s, to embrace and even embellish the popular secular understanding of gender appropriate behaviors and spheres of influence, when, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the feminist movement began to assert that these delineations were limiting and unfair, the *Review* hesitated to explore or endorse criticisms raised. Instead, as SDA mothers of young children increasingly began to leave the domestic realm in order to participate in wage labor,[83] the *Review* resorted to reiterating previous claims regarding men's and women's roles and later hesitantly began to explore those claims more critically. In one 1970 attempt to reassert the periodical's earlier position regarding women's appropriate role, an author asserted that Eve's "downfall" "was her desire to rise to a 'higher sphere' than her present status afforded her."[84] The author concluded that the same was "true of women today! How true!"[85] In his critique of "modern Eves" the author singled out employed mothers for criticism:

> Many mothers today are spending their energies striving to reach that "higher sphere" all the while neglecting the important task at hand, that of rearing their families. We do not have to look far to see mothers who, while trying to satisfy their own personal ambition and hunger for unnecessary praise, are leaving their families to suffer for the want of a real mother.[86]

Another writer used the *Review* to insist that the archetypal Adventist woman was a proficient homemaker and wife who had few desires beyond meeting her husband's needs: "A man should look for a wife who has no desire for a college education and/or career. She should be a good, old-fashioned girl from 'down on the farm' who realizes her responsibilities to her children and husband."[87]

Although *Review* authors of the 1970s at times addressed such topics as the use of sexist language in Adventist publications and worship services and Adventist-sponsored child care for employed parents, most authors agreed that any challenge to gender norms as they had been defined in the *Review* during the two previous decades was inherently a secular threat to Adventism's distinct identity.[88] Although the gender standards advocated in the *Review* throughout the 1950s and 1960s were compatible with popular secular expectations of those decades, when those expectations were challenged, the challenge was identified as

secular and as threatening norms considered necessary to the perpetuation of distinct Adventist belief and practice.

In contrast to the "selfless" mother who chose to stay at home with her children, the employed mother was "selfish," compelled to pursue wage employment in order to satisfy personal desires.[89] Employed women were portrayed as participating in wage labor in order to purchase superfluous material items ("We should consider . . . carefully before taking a job as a telephone operator so that our sons can drive Hondas and our living rooms sport a color TV")[90] to "feel fulfilled," or in order to "broaden their horizons."[91] Employed women were depicted as uncaring and materialistic: "Too often the chief reason why women feel it necessary to work outside the home, leaving the family without a warm center and letting the children fend for themselves, is that the family is materialistic."[92] At the same time, women who sought employment in order to "'find themselves,' or . . . search [for] an identity . . . put their own interests and goals above those of everyone else in the family."[93] These sentiments led one author to conclude that employed women did "need liberating, not from the menial tasks of housekeeping, but from selfishness,"[94] and another to surmise that "it seems that some of us have gone a little too far in our liberation."[95]

In the face of vehement opposition by a majority of *Review* writers in the 1970s to any rethinking of gender norms and expectations as they had been outlined in the *Review* of the 1950s and 1960s, the *Review* began, by the 1980s, to explore alternative role expectations for women. One 1985 article, for example, explored possible positive implications of women's participation in wage labor. Noting that women might choose to work for wages for financial or personal reasons, the author asserted that "the problems a family faces when mother goes to work can either destroy *or reinforce* the qualities that make a house a home [emphasis added]" and added that all family members should contribute to completing "household chores" in order to ensure the latter outcome.[96] Offering practical tips for provision of child care, division of household labor, and financial and career planning, the author concluded that "[for women] working has its rewards and problems. But you, your family, and your relationship to God can survive and even thrive while you work."[97]

Another 1985 article noted that "homemaking is more than physical, material work; it is an emotional, spiritual responsibility" and encouraged all family members—men, women, and children—to participate in "sharing values, listening well, communicating intimately, accepting another's feelings, [and] offering respect."[98] Adventists were told that, "if the wife *decides* to stay home while the husband earns the income, the couple needs to examine the emotional needs unique to their roles and needs to plan for them [emphasis added]."[99] Adventist husbands were admonished "to recognize *openly* [their spouses'] job as equally important

[emphasis added],"[100] and SDA women were told that they had "every right to expect [their spouse] to aid in [their] individual development."[101] Adventists were told to be supportive of those women who participated in wage labor ("we need not create unjustified guilt"[102]) and were increasingly cautioned to work toward gender parity in primary and secondary relationships. This reemphasis on gender norms in a manner allowing for less strictly divided gender appropriate spheres and behaviors was presented as being consistent with early Adventist gender expectations: "Adventist history is replete with women who made major contributions, some in quiet ways behind the scenes, but many in positions of leadership. Thus each modern family has to *decide for itself* [concerning appropriate gender roles and activities] considering its needs, goals, responsibilities and convictions of God's leading."[103] By the early 1990s, *Review* writers embraced a revised and less rigid understanding of gender behaviors, responsibilities, and spheres. "If the traditional concept of the husband as sole breadwinner is disappearing," the *Review* argued by 1990, "then it is time that the traditional concept of the woman as exclusive caretaker of the home disappear with it. And we'll all be better for it."[104]

As *Review* authors of the 1980s and 1990s challenged gender ideals promulgated in the periodical in prior decades, they joined the movement as a whole in grappling with the issue of women's public participation in Adventist leadership and worship, an issue with which the movement and the periodical's editors had struggled over a century previously. One author, Roger Dudley (like James White), averred that Pauline prohibitions against women's active participation in religious worship were culturally and historically specific and therefore not relevant to contemporary Adventism. Other authors noted that among Adventists "a consensus is developing that we have no prohibition in scripture or in Ellen White's writings against the ordination of women to the gospel ministry"[105] and that, "if Adventists take the Bible seriously, if we take Ellen White seriously, only one course lies ahead: equality, equity and justice for women. Our attitudes, behaviors, policies, and practice must come into line."[106]

In the context of this debate many Adventist leaders from the North American Division (NAD) of the General Conference united with *Review* authors in support of ordination of women. They were outnumbered at annual conference meetings during which the issue was considered, however, by delegates from the Third World who overwhelmingly oppose ordination of women. In spite of a rethinking of women's place in the movement in the pages of the *Review*, the conference voted repeatedly to continue to prohibit the ordination of women (though women may participate in a "pastoral care" program and work in pastoral capacities as unordained associates) and has refused to allow individual divisions to make independent decisions regarding ordination of women,

effectively prohibiting ordination of women in the NAD. Nonetheless, a few local congregations in North America have instigated ordination of some female members of pastoral staffs without denominational approval.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The sociological theory of sectarian development, although it has not heretofore considered questions of gender, can provide insight in attempting to understand and explain the relationship, within Adventism, between the movement's advocation of specific gender ideals and the movement's evolving response to the world. Weber asserted that sectarian movements originally 'allot equality' to women and other disprivileged groups because, in defining themselves through hostility to the world (secular society), sectarians maintain identity by contrast. This being the case, sectarians may institute norms of behavior and ideals not only dissimilar from those of secular society, but distinctly in contrast to those of the world. The sociological theory of sectarian development also notes, however, that as sectarian movements become bureaucratized and seek accommodation to secular society, positions of leadership and authority available to women diminish.

Seventh-day Adventism originally arose as a small, scattered band of believers who came together in an attempt to institute minimal legal organization to ensure that they could collectively own property. As former Millerites, early Adventists knew that Christ would soon come to the earth, making extensive worldly involvement, in either proselytizing or property ownership, unnecessary. The group was characteristic of a sect—Adventists despised secular involvement and found a collective identity in repudiating the world. Even after formal organization (1860) and eventual limited participation in evangelistic activity and institution building, Adventists believed themselves the sole possessors of truth and defined "'true Protestantism' in terms that could only include Seventh-day Adventists."[107]

In this context of a carefully delimited sectarian identity—the most important aspect of which was the urgency surrounding Christ's imminent return—all Adventists were counted necessary to the work; men and women, old and young, black and white, were encouraged and expected to further efforts deemed necessary to hasten Christ's coming. Soon, Adventist leadership came to view institution building as not only important but essential to furthering the goals they had identified. Institutionalization became synonymous with evangelism and was accompanied by the removal of women from positions of institutional leadership.[108] Adventist growth toward institutionalization and denominationalization began in earnest following World War II and

burgeoned through the 1950s and 1960s, with greatly increased evangelistic efforts, expansion of Adventism in mass media, and an overall de-emphasis of the unique sectarian characteristics of Seventh-day Adventism. For women, these developments signaled more limited opportunities: "The growing professionalism of the whole structure . . . served effectively to exclude women from positions of responsibility."[109]

During the 1970s, in the face of internal challenges to some of Adventism's most basic beliefs, growing numbers of Adventists, particularly prominent SDA writers, thinkers, and leaders, began to associate Adventism's move away from its distinct sectarian heritage with an unwanted capitulation to worldliness, and to call for a return to sectarian distinction. Traditionalists of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, however, while seeking to re-institute what they perceived to be Adventism's original (and therefore correct) theology, also advocated a return to socio-religious norms most prevalent in Adventism during the 1950s and 1960s because those norms were seen as being the antithesis of norms advocated by more recent secular movements (i.e., feminism). Adventist women, who had begun to lose positions of responsibility and leadership early in the century and who were forced from those positions completely by 1950, had proportionately fewer positions of leadership by 1973 than SDA women had had during the 1930s and 1940s (and certainly fewer positions than they had had prior to those decades). They were, furthermore, confronted with ideals of womanhood that severely restricted their options and were informed that those ideals were not secular, but divine. As depicted in the *Review*, Adventist bureaucratization and institutionalization coincided with a narrowing demarcation of gender ideals for Adventist women and with a removal of women from positions of authority and leadership within the movement.[110]

ENDNOTES

[1] Sociologists examining religious variation and change in the United States and Europe have adopted the church-sect typology as a primary analytical tool. The typology, first developed by Troeltsch, drawing from Weber's nomenclature, distinguishes between the church—defined as a conservative institution which accepts and legitimates the existing social and secular order—and the sect—whose membership is comprised of the socially disenfranchised, and which therefore rejects the prevailing social and economic order. Sociologists originally used the typology to consider the movement toward accommodation that occurs as religious movements mature. Although the typology has been refined—sociologists now distinguish sects and denominations in the context of the United States' religious plurality and recognize that sectarian movements do not necessarily evolve inevitably into accommodating religious organizations—it remains a powerful analytical tool.

[2] Charles H. Barfoot and Gerald T. Sheppard, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches," *Review of Religious Research* 22, no. 1 (1980): 2-17; Jackson W. Carroll et al., eds., *Women of the Cloth: A New Opportunity for the Churches* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1983); Nancy Falk and Rita M. Childs, *Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives* (Albany: State University of New York Press), 35; Hans A. Baer, "The Limited Empowerment of Women in Black Spiritual Churches: An Alternative Vehicle to Religious Leadership," *Sociology of Religion* 54, no. 1 (1993): 65-82.

[3] Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 104-05; Barfoot and Sheppard, "Prophetic Vs. Priestly Religion," 2.

[4] Ibid., 4.

[5] Baer, "The Limited Empowerment of Women in Black Spiritual Churches," 66.

[6] Carroll et al., *Women of the Cloth*, 21.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 22.

[9] Ibid., 23.

[10] Uriah Smith, "Christianity Requirith a Renunciation of the World and All Worldly Tempers," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 8, no. 10 (1858): 73. Sabbatarian adventists continued, through the 1850s, as a "scattered flock of believers." Though the "little remnant" had, by 1850, generally agreed on shared tenets of belief and practice (including the seventh-day Sabbath, conditional mortality, the spirit of prophecy, the imminent, personal advent of Christ, baptism by immersion, and foot washing [see Godfrey Anderson, "Sectarianism and Organization: 1846-1864," in *Adventism in America*, ed. Gary Land (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 36-65], Sabbath-keepers were often geographically isolated and alone in their religious study and worship. United principally by the regular publication of the *Review*, sabbatarian adventists considered themselves God's remnant people—outside of an organized religious institution and therefore outside of Babylon.

[11] "A Good Mother," *Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 42, no. 20 (1873): 155.

[12] Ellen G. White, "Separation from the World," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 61, no. 2 (1884): 17.

[13] Ellen G. White, "The True Standard of Righteousness," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 62, no. 34 (1885): 65.

[14] Albert Stone, "Separation from the World," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 63, no. 15 (1886): 227.

[15] H. Peebles, "Separation from the World," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 64, no. 18 (1887): 274.

[16] Ellen G. White, "No Union Between the Church and the World," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 72, no. 9 (1895): 129; idem, "Friendship with the World is Enmity with Christ," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 69, no. 34 (1892): 529.

[17] Ellen G. White, "Fellowship with the World Forbidden," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 71, no. 48 (1894): 753.

[18] Ellen G. White, "Be Separate," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 71, no. 46 (1894): 721.

[19] Ellen G. White, "Separation from the World," *Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 87, no. 34 (1910): 3.

[20] In 1935 the official Seventh-day Adventist statement of belief was changed to reflect this new belief that all people, not only Adventists, could attain salvation. Fundamental belief number nine was changed from reading, "immortality and eternal life come only through the gospel," to asserting that "immortality is bestowed upon the righteous at the second coming of Christ" (see *SDA Yearbook*, 1931 and 1935 editions).

[21] F. L., "What Makes a Seventh-day Adventist?" *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 117, no. 1 (1940): 6-7.

[22] One 1950 *Review*, typical of the *Reviews* of the decade, contained a high proportion of articles discussing evangelical labors, including: "Religious Liberty and the Earth's Closing

Work," " Christ and His Service are Forever Mine," "A New Day in Southern Asia," "The Time Has Come to Give God Your Best," "Advances on a 3,000 Mile Front," "Progress of the Message in the Dominican Republic," "The Radio Reaches Hearts," "Ringing Doorbells for God," and "Pictures of Progress," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 127, no. 7 (1950).

[23] H. L. Rudy, "Beware the Alien Yoke," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 132, no. 5 (1955): 4-5, 26.

[24] R. H. Wentland, "Come Unto Me," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 127, no. 10 (1950): 9.

[25] R. R. Figuhr, "The President's Page," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 137, no. 1 (1960): 3.

[26] Francis D. Nichols, "How Liberal Are We?" *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 142, no. 49 (1965): 12-13.

[27] Posed by Desmond Ford [the sanctuary doctrine] and *Spectrum* authors [accusations of plagiarism by Ellen White]. In a lecture to the Association of Adventist Forums at Pacific Union College in October 1978, Ford challenged traditional Adventist belief in a literal heavenly sanctuary, Christ's confinement in the holy place until 1844, and a pre-advent judgment. Ford's interpretation of the heavenly sanctuary (sanctuary doctrine) was controversial in that it de-emphasized the investigative aspect of judgment as understood by Adventists and instead placed emphasis on salvation by grace. Adventist scholars created the Association of Adventist Forums (AAF) in the 1960s to create a forum in which to consider religious and social issues in a critical, intellectually rigorous manner. The AAF initiated publication of *Spectrum* in October 1967 in order "to encourage thoughtful persons of Seventh-day Adventist orientation to examine and freely discuss ideas and issues relevant to the Church in all its aspects" (Richard C. Osborn, "The First Decade: The Establishment of the Adventist Forum," *Spectrum* 10, no. 4 [1978]: 42).

[28] K. H. W., "Capitulation to Culture," *Adventist Review* 147, no. 1 (1970): 13-14.

[29] W. J. Hackett, "The Church's Terrible Ordeal," *Adventist Review* 152 (1975): 4.

[30] Sidney Dakar, "Outward Splendor Without Internal Purity," *Adventist Review* 152 (1975): 6.

[31] Kraid I. Ashbaugh, "The Truth," *Adventist Review* 157 (1980): 14.

[32] Gordon Bietz, "Dream or Die!" *Adventist Review* 162 (1985): 7.

[33] Paul A. Gordon, "How Shall We Warn the World?" *Adventist Review* 170 (1993): 14.

[34] Even nineteenth-century feminists who worked for more equitable treatment of women in society perceived their goals "in terms of women's traditional role" (Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981], 98). Therefore, Adventist women who were actively engaged in movement work, but perceived that work in the context of a traditional understanding of their role in society were as "radical" as many early feminists in the sense that they defined women as having important work outside of their traditional sphere as well as within it (cf. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 [1966]: 151-74).

[35] B. F. Robbins, "To the Female Disciples in the Third Angel's Message," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 15, no. 3 (1859): 21-22.

[36] S. C. Welcome, "Shall Women Keep Silent in the Churches?" *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 15, no. 14 (1860): 109-10.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 110.

[39] Ibid.

[40] George C. Tenney, "Women's Relation to the Cause of Christ," *Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath* 69, no. 5 (1892): 26.

[41] Ibid.

[42] James White, "Women in the Church," *Review and Herald* 71, no. 40 (1897): 74.

[43] Prior to 1880, Adventist women's roles as wives and homemakers were not emphasized in the sect (cf. Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism*

and the American Dream [San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1989]) although mainline Protestantism had embraced the Cult of Domesticity by the 1830s-1840s.

[44] N. J. Bowers, "May Women Publicly Labor in the Cause of Christ?" *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 57, no. 24 (1881): 373.

[45] Eliza H. Morton, "To the Sisters Everywhere," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 62, no. 31 (1885): 4.

[46] Armory, "Only My Mother," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 67, no. 33 (1890): 517.

[47] Bowers, "May Women Publicly Labor in the Cause of Christ?" 372-73.

[48] Morton, "To the Sisters Everywhere," 484.

[49] S. M. I. H., "The Woman's Work," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 76, no. 23 (1899): 357.

[50] S. M. I. H., (no title) *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 76, no. 2 (1899): 21. Moreover, women were encouraged to participate in evangelical efforts as such work would specifically help non-SDA women.

[51] Ellen White encouraged women's full religious participation further, though less obviously, by advocating dress reform as more convenient, healthy and comfortable than contemporary Victorian dress, which included, among other impediments, the corset and large, cumbersome hoops (cf. Ellen White, "The Dress Reform," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 31, no. 18 (1868): 278-9). Other *Review* authors also encouraged women to dress in a manner more conducive to freedom of movement (cf. A. E. Tabor, "How Shall We Dress?" *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 71, no. 50 [1894]: 789).

[52] cf. Steve Daily, "The Irony of Adventism: The Role of Ellen G. White and Other Adventist Women in Nineteenth-Century America" (Ph.D. diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1985).

[53] G. E. Judd, "An Ideal Home," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 68, no. 23 (1891): 357.

[54] G. C. T., "The Home," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 71, no. 33 (1894): 517.

[55] A. R. Wilcox, "Working for the Women of India," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 71, no. 40 (1894): 628.

[56] For discussion of another example of utilization of women's work during a period in which there was a shortage of men, followed by subordination of women when the shortage of men was over, see Elaine J. Lawless, "Not so Different a Story After All: Pentecostal Women in the Pulpit," in *Women's Leadership in Marginal Religions: Explorations Outside the Mainstream*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (University of Illinois Press, 1993), 1-19.

[57] Caroline Abbott Stanley, "Home-Making: A Vocation," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 77, no. 25 (1900): 391.

[58] "Her Husband Also, He Praiseth Her," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 82, no. 13 (1905): 13.

[59] Priddy protested the narrowing scope of women's responsibilities in 1910, for example, adamantly and specifically calling for women's participation in Adventist labors: "There are many kinds of work in which women can successfully engage, and the spirit of prophecy tells us that their work is needed" (Luella B. Priddy, "Women and the Message," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 87, no. 2 [1910]: 11).

[60] C. C. Lewis, "School for Mothercraft Offers New Profession for Women," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 92, no. 5 (1915): 14.

[61] Mary H. Moore, "Why Have Mother's Meetings?" *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 92, no. 41 (1915): 12.

[62] Rebecca Bailey Stoner, "A Great Woman," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 102, no. 43 (1925): 12.

[63] Rebecca Bailey Stoner, "A Twisted Point of View," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 102, no. 12 (1925): 10.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Maud Harter, "The Home," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 102, no. 49 (1925): 15-16.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] cf. Ruth Tyrell, "Work Women Can Do and Are Doing," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 107, no. 3 (1930): 6.

[69] Ibid.; Williams, "Working for the Women of India," 18; M. E. Olsen, "Some Busy Marthas and What they Yearn For," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 107, no. 12 (1930): 15.

[70] Leroy I. Shinn, "From Hearthstone to Heaven," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 107, no. 44 (1930): 13-14.

[71] Lucia Mallory, "After College," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 122, no. 15 (1945): 15.

[72] Francis D. Nichols, "Should Women Speak in the Church?" *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 117, no. 41 (1940): 9, 15.

[73] Ernest Lloyd, "Juvenile Delinquency and the Church," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 122, no. 51 (1945): 11.

[74] A. L. Bietz, "Why Homes Crumble," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 132, no. 8 (1955): 12.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Helen K. Oswald, "Mother's Beautiful Place," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 132, no. 9 (1955): 12.

[77] Ernest Lloyd, "I Want My Mother," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 127, no. 12 (1950): 14.

[78] Ibid.

[79] D. H. Kress, "The Influence of a Godly Mother," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 127, no. 19 (1950): 15.

[80] Ida M. Johnson, "The Far-Reaching Influence of Christian Women," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 132, no. 4 (1955): 12.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

[83] cf. Michael Pearson, *Millennial Dreams and Moral Dilemmas: Seventh-day Adventism and Contemporary Ethics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990).

[84] Rose Otis, "Take Time to be a Mother," *Adventist Review* 147, no. 8 (1970): 9.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] "Homemaker's Exchange," *Adventist Review* 147, no. 21 (1970): 12.

[88] K. H. W., "Avoid Linguistic Sexisms," *Adventist Review* 152 (1975): 2; Kay J. Kuzma, "The Loma Linda Children's Center," *Adventist Review* 152 (1975): 10-12. One author asked rhetorically, "can we, who believe that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, who believe that some values are absolute because they are a reflection of God's character, leave our children's value system and character development to chance, and to the baby-sitter? Can we allow secular researchers, who see values as relative . . . to determine our course of action?" (Phyllis Newman, "The Liberated Woman," *Adventist Review* 152 [1975]: 8).

[89] June Strong, "A New Kind of Women's Lib," *Adventist Review* 152 (1975): 15-16.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ivy Doherty, "Heart Cry: A Surrogate Mother Reacts to the Heart-Cry of Children Left in Her Care by Working Mothers," *Adventist Review* (1975): 14.

[92] K. H. W., "The Home is in Big Trouble," *Adventist Review* 157 (1980): 3.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Strong, "A New Kind of Women's Lib," 16.

[95] Doherty, "Heart Cry," 14.

[96] Sharon R. Todd, "When Mother Goes to Work," *Adventist Review* 162 (1985): 11. The shift in the *Review* toward more inclusive definitions of gender appropriate activities and

roles did not go uncontested; initially some of the periodical's authors resisted any reformulation of gender ideals, particularly as applied to women (cf. Arnold V. Wallencampf, "Mothers: The Keepers of the Springs," *Adventist Review* 162 [1985]: 5-7).

[97] Ibid.

[98] Madeline S. Johnston, "Making Home, Making Church," *Adventist Review* 162 (1985): 11.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Julia Vernon, "Husbands in the Imitation of Christ," *Adventist Review* 162 (1985): 13.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Johnston, "Making Home, Making Church," 12.

[104] Marvin Moore, "Happy Homes Require Equal Effort," *Adventist Review* 167 (1990): 18.

[105] Roy Adams, "The Annual Counsel's Vote on Women—II," *Adventist Review* 167 (1990): 4.

[106] William G. Johnsson, "The Just Community—3," *Adventist Review* 167 (1990): 4.

[107] Gary Land, *Adventism in America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 169.

[108] Daily, *The Irony of Adventism,* 240.

[109] Ibid., 153.

[110] Bertha Dasher, "Leadership Positions: A Declining Opportunity?" *Spectrum* 15, no. 4 (1983): 35-37; idem, "Women's Leadership, 1915-1970: The Waning Years," in *A Woman's Place: Seventh-day Adventist Women in Church and Society,* ed. Rosa Taylor Banks (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1992), 75-84.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ANALYSIS OF RELIGION IN AVOIDING VIOLENT OUTCOMES: THE JUSTUS FREEMEN CRISIS*

Jean E. Rosenfeld

In Numbers 25, verses 1-9, when the People of "Israel" played the ***"harlot" with the daughters of Moab,*** *and a Man of Israel brought a* ***Midianite woman*** *to his family, in the sight of Moses and the whole congregation, whereby* ***a Priest took up the spear and killed them both for the sin of mixing with other races.*** *Kind after Kind. For this sin [plague] of race mixing,* ***24,000 Israelites were killed that day for playing the harlot with other races*** *. . . and when We move into a new land,* ***We are to kill all of the inhabitants of the other races****, Numbers 33:50.*[1]

INTRODUCTION

In the book of Numbers, Chapter 25, Phinehas, the priest of Israel, halts a plague sent by God to punish the Israelites for cohabiting with Moabites by slaying an intermixed couple, Imri and Cozbi. God rewards Phinehas and his descendents with a "covenant of a perpetual priesthood," and Israel unleashes holy war against Moab. The Phinehas story has inspired an assortment of millenarian groups from the Sicarii/ Zealots of first-century Palestine to the Aryan Nations of Hayden Lake, Idaho, and the Justus Freemen of Montana.

This paper is an analysis of the Justus Freemen standoff with the FBI from the perspective of three "outside experts" in religious studies who were called by the Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG) of the FBI to give them advice about this particular group. The incident presented scholars with an opportunity for the *prospective study* of a clash between a religious group and civil authorities and for the application of provisional

*I am very indebted to Susan DeCamp of the Montana Association of Churches, Christine Kaufmann of the Montana Human Rights Network, Bill Wassmuth of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment, Jeffrey Kaplan, Eugene Gallagher, and the hardworking personnel of CIRG for providing me with their expertise and feedback during the development of this account.

knowledge about millenarian movements.[2] I hope that this limited account will elucidate how the understanding of the formal features of religion can aid in avoiding violent outcomes in "critical incidents."

On January 27, 1994, a group calling itself "Freemen" took over the Garfield County courthouse in Jordan, Montana, to announce that they were setting up their "Supreme Court of Garfield County-comitatus."[3] They were led by Rodney O. Skurdal, an activist from neighboring Musselshell County, and Richard E. Clark, a local landowner whose wheat farm had been threatened with foreclosure for failure to make payments on a $710,000 mortgage.[4] The farm was sold at auction on April 14, 1994, although the Clarks were not evicted from the property.[5] Throughout the early 1990s, Ralph and Emmett Clark had consulted various "prophets,"[6] including Freemen founders Rodney Skurdal and LeRoy M. Schweitzer, for help with their financial and legal problems.

In September, 1995, Skurdal and Schweitzer led an armed convoy of supporters from their cabin in Musselshell County to the 960-acre Clark ranch near Jordan.[7] In December 1995, federal prosecutors charged twelve Freemen and their followers with fifty-one counts of conspiracy, mail fraud, and threatening the life of a federal judge. On March 25, 1996, the FBI captured Schweitzer and Daniel E. Petersen, Jr., outside the Clark ranch, triggering a standoff between the FBI and twenty-one Freemen inside the ranch. Between March 26 and June 13 over one hundred FBI agents ringed the Clark property while CIRG patiently sought to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

That the critical incident near Jordan did not result in bloodshed is remarkable. Confrontations between the state and oppositional groups that claim allegiance to the higher authority of God, a prophet, or a messiah, as history has shown, have the potential for violent outcomes. It was not clear to CIRG personnel at the outset that the Jordan group which called itself the Justus[8] Freemen was a religious movement. During the standoff the FBI consulted with many outside experts, but only a few were scholars of religion.[9] To those of us who had studied similar movements the uppermost question was, how could a nonviolent resolution of the standoff be negotiated with a group that would not compromise its claim to absolute truth?

The case of the Justus Freemen resembled former confrontations between millennialists and government agents which had culminated in mass suicide, homicide, or lethal conflict, a lamentable history that prompts the question: how and why do groups that can be identified as millenarian behave differently from criminals and hostage-takers? Initially, we did not know whether or not the Freemen expected an imminent end of the world. During the last month of the standoff, I was actively engaged with a few colleagues in assessing their potential for violence. We found ourselves in an untenable position in that we were asked for advice on procedures and outcomes without all the data we

needed to make critical analytical distinctions. This forced us to test the provisional knowledge we had derived from previous cases in an unfolding and volatile situation, while we tapped other sources of data and pooled our resources until two scholars were given access to Freemen videos, tapes, and documents.

SCHOLARS AND THE FBI

As we have expressed to each other on a number of occasions, it is increasingly apparent that the FBI once again is overlooking the religious dimension to this case. . . . The challenge here . . . is to convince FBI and Justice that religion, a religious worldview with [an] ultimate goal, has to be dealt with in order to resolve the standoff.[10]

I am not entirely comfortable with the task of producing an account of the Freemen standoff. First of all, our knowledge is still incomplete because we were part of a larger body of analysts, and we have not been debriefed. Second, the use of first person pronouns in an academic article does not come easily to me even in this age of disclosure. Third, I remain uncertain as to what information I should disclose or withhold about the incident, including Freemen papers, personal communications, other relevant legal cases, and written reports.[11] I have decided to limit my sources in this account to those in the public domain and those who have agreed to be cited.[12]

Some experts I know refused to give advice for various reasons. Scholars engage in dialogue in order to develop and refine ideas, whereas the FBI compartmentalizes and controls information-sharing. Each mode is appropriate to the usual tasks of each group. Despite our differences, however, we were committed to the common goal of finding a peaceful way out of a potentially violent critical incident.

After the lethal raid on the Branch Davidian community near Waco in 1993, Attorney General Janet Reno and FBI Director Louis Freeh developed a new "critical incident response management" policy that called for three changes: (1) "When the FBI reacts in a crisis situation, the reaction must be commensurate with the facts as we know them"; (2) ". . . our negotiations drive our strategy";[13] and (3) ". . . the FBI must never hesitate to go outside of government to seek other experts or other people who might help us peacefully in a crisis situation."[14] This new policy was tested in the Montana incident when the FBI's Critical Incident Response Group contacted religious studies scholars between March 25 and June 13, 1996.

In the aftermath of Waco, Phillip Arnold of the Reunion Institute in Houston formed the Religion-Crisis Task Force, a network of religious studies scholars who declared themselves willing to volunteer their aid in any future crisis, and Phillip Lucas of Stetson University founded a

new scholarly consultation under the aegis of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) to study millennialism. Arnold and Catherine Wessinger (chair of the New Religious Movements group of the AAR) were in communication with the FBI from April through June 13. It was Catherine Wessinger who prompted the FBI to contact me in early May, and I remained in daily contact with her until the end of the standoff.

After the Freemen left the Clark ranch on June 13, FBI Director Louis Freeh noted the use of "outside experts" and thanked "all who aided the quest for a peaceful solution."[15] However, subsequent news reports failed to mention the critical role that scholars' analysis of religion had played in the strategies that led to a peaceful denouement.[16] *If we are to construct a body of knowledge that may be applied to prevent or resolve any future confrontation between new religious movements and the state, we need to know why and how the analysis of religion serves as a useful technique for understanding and resolving confrontations between religious sectarians and the state.* This analysis was not heeded at Waco.[17] It was requested and utilized at Jordan. We believe it made a difference in the outcome.

Shortly after the Freemen story broke in the national news media in late March, I requested information about them from the Montana Human Rights Network and the Montana Association of Churches.[18] When I received a call from CIRG on May 7, 1996, I still did not have most of the data I needed to answer such questions as, are these people an apocalyptic group? or, how would they react to a tightening of the FBI perimeter? CIRG invited religious studies scholars to think about and forward to them any possible ideas we might come up with regarding strategies for a successful resolution. I am very indebted to Linda Collette for putting me in touch with Paul de Armond and David Neiwert, who supplied me with specific data on the multiform Christian Identity movement.[19] I also spoke infrequently with Michael Barkun[20] of Syracuse University, who was acting in a major role as a primary consultant to CIRG, apart from the network with which I was in touch. David C. Rapoport, an expert on millennialism and violence, and S. Scott Bartchy, a scholar of early Christianity, offered their thoughts on Skurdal's "Edict." Catherine Wessinger, Phillip Arnold, and I shared information with each other on a daily basis and with CIRG. Our contacts included electronic data gatherers, political scientists, New Testament scholars, and historians of religions.

YAHWEH'S BARRIER

Almost everyone outside the field of religious studies, including FBI analysts, is unfamiliar with the sectarian expression of religion and how it makes people act differently from "con men" and "hostage-takers." For example, we were initially asked to assess who among the twenty-

one individuals on the ranch were "religious" and who were not, on the assumption that those who had written fraudulent checks were nothing more than common criminals. One of these "scam artists" was a Freemen who told Bo Gritz that "Yahweh has placed an invisible barrier around this sanctuary that foreign enemies cannot penetrate," a statement that indicated considerable concern about evil cosmic forces outside their inviolable perimeter.[21]

The use of "Yahweh" as God's holy name reveals that the Freemen worshipped the warrior/savior of Exodus, who dwelt among his chosen people while he led them to the promised land. Yahweh is a celestial deity, and sky gods dispense laws for a new world. Similarly, the Freemen dedicated themselves to establishing their "common law" in place of existing U.S. law. The Freemen movement combined the doctrine of anti-government "Christian Patriots" who adhere to the "Organic Constitution"[22] and the hermeneutics of the "two-seedline" Christian Identity movement.[23] The Freemen believe their "common law" expresses God's law.[24] Yahweh's "invisible barrier" separated pure Freemen from a corrupt world and guaranteed them immunity from harm, much like Native American sectarians believed the Ghost Dance would shield them from bullets. Nativist movements frequently set their land and people apart from alien influences.[25] The choice of the word "sanctuary" for the Clark ranch marked it as the place where Yahweh abides. A sanctuary is a sacred place that shelters those who seek refuge from pursuers; trespassers may incur the wrath of God.

Inside "Yahweh's barrier" (until the electricity was turned off by the FBI on June 3) Rodney Skurdal was spreading the Freemen message via the Internet and short-wave radio. His activity attracted the notice of human rights groups in late 1994 after a Freemen cohort had set up a common law court in neighboring Musselshell County, where Skurdal filed his "Edict" of October 28, 1994.[26] This summary of Freemen religion was the single most valuable piece of information I received. The "Edict" is a coherent synopsis of the "two-seedline," racist theology of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian in northern Idaho and Montana.

The "foreign enemies" of the Justus Freemen are clearly defined in the "Edict," which asserts that there are two powers struggling for dominance over the world, God and Baal, or Satan. The Freemen identify themselves with Elijah in 1 Kings 18: 17-40, who confronted and executed the 450 prophets of Baal. Skurdal identified these prophets with "public servants," "state legislators," and "our so-called congress."[27] Dividing the world into good and evil parties and the cosmos into good and evil forces—ethical and cosmic dualism—is a characteristic feature of apocalypticism.

Because the Freemen had retreated to a refuge that was guarded by Yahweh, we advised CIRG that they might respond violently to any move to cross the perimeter separating them from federal agents. We also

advised that all of the Freemen were acting the way one would expect a persecuted religious sect to behave. Some of those tagged as "criminals" had ties to the Church of Latter-day Saints, a persecuted sect that had migrated to Utah Territory in order to establish their own society, a paradigm that was replicated by the Freemen's retreat to Jordan. Because Skurdal believed that his ancestors had left the Jordan River in ancient Palestine to found Denmark,[28] it was even possible that the name Jordan connoted an ancestral homeland to which, symbolically, they were returning.[29]

THE SPECTER OF WACO

Catherine Wessinger had advised the FBI in early April that there was a "millennial component" in groups related to the Freemen. She mailed them her work-in-progress on millenarian sects and a copy of *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement,* by Michael Barkun. A month later CIRG asked, "Is this an apocalyptic group?" Behind the question, I sensed, was the specter of Waco—and that if our answer was yes, the FBI would factor into their overall strategies the possibility of a fight to the death or a mass suicide.

In fact, there were significant differences between the Justus Freemen and the Mt. Carmel community. David Koresh belonged to the Branch Davidians, an offshoot of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and associated himself with the Lamb of God in the New Testament book of Revelation. Koresh was reading signs of the imminent endtime and anticipated that like the messianic Lamb he would be persecuted for opening the Seven Seals that unleashed the terrors of the Apocalypse.[30] The Freemen had no identifiable messiah or prophet. Their authority was Bible-based and resembled the theology of the Aryan Nations.[31] They did not appear to be reading signs of or setting dates for the end of the world.

Although initially there was no indication that the Freemen expected an imminent apocalypse, there were unsettling references to a "jubilee" and "the last days" in the "Edict" and other Freemen writings. By separating themselves and establishing counterinstitutions, the Freemen were behaving as if they were establishing a new state based on biblical law.

Studies of millenarianism tend to focus on prophet-led groups, but not all movements with prophets are of the same type. When one central leader reveals the laws of God, the deciphering of the archetype (s)he is enacting provides considerable insight into the community's perspective and reactions. However, when authority is assumed by any self-declared leader who disseminates a received doctrine, the group is open to variable interpretations of what God wants them to do, and a local leader may

act in rogue fashion. [32] Decentralized movements exhibit more variation, mutate more rapidly, and are less predictable. Five days after LeRoy Schweitzer was arrested by the FBI, he was in jail and refusing food. His compatriot, Rodney Skurdal, was still inside the ranch, and it was unclear who among the twenty-one people inside had assumed the authority to make critical decisions.

"CON ARTISTS"

The FBI's perception of the Freemen as criminals and hostage-takers did not seem to waver throughout the standoff. CIRG, however, adhered to the policy of negotiation and argued for time and caution, while the public increasingly urged the Bureau to take more definitive action. Subsequent news reports acknowledged that there had been ongoing dialogue between the tactical and negotiating teams within the FBI over how to proceed. I believe that the major reason for the pervasive miscategorizing of religious sectarians as "con artists" is the erroneous assumption that religion, as we know it, would not allow a mother to place her child in danger, would not undermine the authority of a democratic government, would not sanction mass suicide, and would not teach that Jews are children of Satan and that minorities are beasts of the field. Law enforcement personnel seemed to understand religion in a limited sense as a "moral" phenomenon that did not promote intransigent behavior, a truculent attitude, a claim to follow a "higher authority" at odds with the state, or the determination to violently resist arrest. However, *religion is, among other things, a construction of ultimate reality by means of an elaborate, self-consistent system of hermeneutical interpretation that is regarded as absolute truth.* It may justify almost any behavior, and millennialists often set up rules that run counter to normative customs and laws.[33]

CATASTROPHIC MILLENNIALISTS

Inside the ranch were people who appeared to have little in common beyond their refusal to leave. Were all of them equally committed to defend their position to the death? On May 29, 1996, in order to gain a closer look at these shadow figures, I telephoned a Protestant pastor in the nearby town of Jordan who had ministered to the cohort on the ranch before and during the early part of the standoff.

The minister's report of what certain Freemen believed conformed to our growing understanding of them as millennialists, i.e., a religious sect that believes that the world is too corrupt to be repaired and that an entirely new, more just world must be established through divine

intervention. They said that only "Justus Township," their governmental entity, follows God's law on earth, and the whole world needs to convert to their beliefs. They laid claim to federal lands that surrounded the Clark property and to some of their neighbors' ranches. Between the previous fall and the spring of 1996, about 700 people had come from all over the country to attend Freemen classes at the Clark ranch. They had been advised to return with arms in the event that government officials threatened the Freemen.[34] The sectarians spoke of the present time as the Advent of God's millennial reign on earth, saying to the minister, "This is heaven. We have established God's law on earth. This is what heaven is."[35] The Freemen believed that they were the vanguard of a nationwide challenge to the U.S. government, telling the pastor that their "common law is established all over the country already."[36] The Freemen had a plan, they expected violent confrontation,[37] and, significantly, many had sacrificed all their former possessions by refusing to pay taxes or to support usury by paying interest on their mortgages. In behavior reminiscent of Melanesian "cargo cult" members who had forfeited their possessions in anticipation of a deity bearing material rewards that would arrive in ships or planes, the Justus Freemen were laying claim to territory and establishing courts, magistrates, juries and even a bank that issued checks and paper currency.[38] According to the minister, they were "the latest incarnation of the Posse Comitatus."[39] The minister's data indicated that the Freemen were, in the words of Catherine Wessinger, "catastrophic millennialists":

> Catastrophic millennialism is the belief that God (or a superhuman agent) will destroy the hopelessly sinful world in order to subsequently create the kingdom of God on earth. In this earthly salvation, the limitations (the "fallenness") of the human condition will be overcome. Catastrophic millennialism involves a pessimistic view of human nature. Humanity is so evil, that it must be destroyed except for a remnant of the righteous elect, who will enjoy the earthly salvation. The catastrophe is the necessary preliminary to the establishment of the millennial kingdom.[40]

By late May it seemed likely that the Freemen were an apocalyptic religious group, even though they were not using the same language as the Davidians. Each millenarian sect has a mythology that has to be understood on its own terms before we can assess whether or not it may turn to suicide or homicide.

PATRIOT NEGOTIATORS

For five days between April 27 and May 1 two Christian Patriot leaders, Jack McLamb and Bo Gritz, were allowed into the ranch to serve as third-party mediators. Their efforts failed despite the willingness of the

FBI to make certain concessions. Between May 15 and May 21 Colorado state senator Charles Duke[41] initiated a face-to-face negotiation between FBI agents and Freemen representatives that ended in a tense moment of anger and the brandishing of guns. Gritz, McLamb, and Duke are leaders in the "Christian Patriot" movement, and I wondered why their mediation attempts had failed. Duke, in particular, expressed frustration and bitterness, urging that, "The time for negotiations is over. . . . They need to feel some pain."[42] One possible reason was that the chief weakness of a movement that tolerates a high degree of autonomy among localized leaders is internecine conflict. Paul de Armond believed that the Justus Freemen may have been perceived by rival Patriot leaders as a liability to the entire movement. In 1995, after what looked like a move towards collaboration with the Militia of Montana (MOM), they and the Freemen had a falling out.[43] MOM leader John Trochmann also denounced the Aryan Nations group in Idaho with whom he had formerly associated. It may be that the Freemen were moving faster and attracting more publicity than was deemed wise in their efforts to establish Yahweh's white nation of "true Israelites"—an ultimate goal they share with the Aryan Nations.

MILLENNIALISM, APOCALYPTICISM, AND VIOLENCE

Even after we were fairly certain that the Justus Freemen had a millennialist mindset, it was necessary to make further critical distinctions, especially after the talks broke down and the FBI considered cutting off the electricity to the ranch. An informed source believed that it was only Freemen rhetoric that was violent and that they would, like the proverbial bully in the school yard, lack the intestinal fortitude to resist an assault. Other experts had publicly expressed their convictions that the standoff was becoming "more volatile every day, and a peaceful ending is less likely the longer it drags on."[44] Robert Crawford of the Coalition for Human Dignity stated as early as April 3 that "Part of their philosophy is that there will be . . . an Armageddon to establish this white Christian republic," and Morris Dees of the Southern Poverty Law Center warned, "When these guys turn themselves over to the FBI, they think they are turning themselves over to Satan himself."[45]

However, a belief in the Apocalypse does not, in itself, indicate that a millennial sect will initiate violence. Otherwise we would fear violence and terror from mainstream Christian churches, who consider Revelation a canonical text. The belief on the part of civil authorities that any apocalyptic sect intends murder and mayhem may excuse a tactical intervention that induces group suicide or armed defense. *It is necessary to determine from sectarian documents what the group believes its role must be in the coming cosmic conflict.*

From copious historical data on similar millennial groups one may

derive a heuristic hypothesis that they fall into at least three types: (1) those who believe that the imminent and total transformation of the world will take place only if the elect bring it about through a deliberate strategy that includes violent action;[46] (2) those who believe that there will be a cosmic war, but that their role is essentially passive and watchful as divine forces fight the battle; (3) those whose active role in the endtime leads them only to separate themselves from a doomed society and to institute their own theocracy in some designated sacred place.[47] The first type—groups that *intend* violence—are the most rare and the most violent. The early Jesus movement is an example of the second type, which may proclaim a violent myth, but is itself nonviolent. The third type may also subscribe to a violent myth, but unlike the first type does not initiate violence. However, if cornered, it may defend its sacred space or prophet to the last person, because if God is on one's side, the outcome, however horrible, is part of the divine plan. Like the Branch Davidians, groups of the third type—who simply by separating themselves from mainstream society may *elicit* violence from civil authorities—are defensive, and like a coiled snake may attack if provoked. Thus, by May 21 we believed that the FBI's question, "Is this an apocalyptic group?" was most vital, but it was necessary to add, "And, if so, is it likely to respond to *any* tactical initiative with lethal firepower or suicide?" It was at this rather low point that we again recommended that religious studies scholars go on site, because the best way to assess the Freemen's potential response to FBI pressure was to analyze their writings and statements. CIRG invited Phillip Arnold on site, where he analyzed data in late May during the tensest part of the standoff.[48]

THE RELIGION FACTOR

In the latter part of May the most worrisome problem was how to move the negotiation process forward in order that the three children inside could leave.[49] Our view was that the Freemen had an "ultimate concern," a goal that they would live by or die for, and that they would not come out unless they trusted the authorities to protect their ultimate concern.[50] Phillip Arnold advised negotiators that if they viewed the behavior of the Freemen merely as a means to the end of money or power or ego, they would be out-of-step with the Freemen perception of reality. *He observed that it is the story (guiding myth or religious beliefs) as a whole that determines a group's actions and that we should seek to craft a settlement that fit the Freemen's story-world.* These were provisional axioms that we shared and communicated to the FBI. The three of us suggested a framework for settlement that took into account the Freemen's religious motivations and goals.[51]

While FBI personnel on site focused upon dividing the group into two categories—the hardcore Freemen and their less-committed

compatriots—we paid attention to individuals' statements for clues about what was of preeminent importance to them. Gloria Ward and her common-law husband, Elwin Ward, had come to the ranch in January 1996 seeking help from LeRoy Schweitzer. Gloria had violated a court order when she brought two of her daughters from previous relationships out of Utah to join the Freemen. The Wards were charismatic Christians who trusted in revelations from God to guide their important decisions.[52] While FBI negotiators believed that the Ward children were being held hostage by four adult "leaders," we came to understand that Gloria had reneged on an earlier promise to leave with the girls because she was waiting for spiritual guidance from her schismatic Mormon pastor, who was in jail in Utah.[53] We advised that if the Wards could be convinced that Yahweh wanted all of them to leave the ranch, they would leave.

In late May Phillip Arnold discussed Gloria's religious orientation at length with her sister, Lynn Nielsen. Through Nielsen's attorney, Martin Tanner, Lynn appealed to Gloria's pastor, John Chaney, who agreed to write to the Wards, saying "he had a revelation she should not stay with the Freemen."[54] On June 6, 1996, one week before the final settlement of the crisis, Gloria received Chaney's letter, and Gloria and Elwin immediately decided to leave the ranch with the two children. This was a critical breakthrough in the resolution of the standoff. A few days later a third child, Ashley Taylor, who was not related to the Wards, left as the Freemen prepared to exit peacefully.

A month before, we had seen little possibility that the Freemen would surrender; our greatest concern was to secure the children in case the adults resorted to violence. On June 6 a violent end was still a distinct possibility had the FBI tried to end the standoff by a tactical offensive. People in Jordan had gathered 200 signatures urging "reasonable force" to end the siege, and John Trochmann told the media that militia groups would rush to the Freemen's defense if the FBI employed force.[55]

DISCERNING THE LEADER

In the aftermath of the crisis, the FBI acknowledged the key role in breaking the negotiations impasse played by Edwin Clark, a younger member of the Clark family. In an interview on June 13, FBI negotiator Dwayne Fusilier said that during the Duke talks, he discerned after eight or nine meetings that "Clark wanted a nonviolent resolution."[56] In spite of Clark's perceived desire to avoid violence, after May 21 the Freemen refused even to answer the telephone. In response, the FBI cut off electricity to the ranch and decided on a "show of force" to bring the Freemen back to the negotiating table.[57]

At the end of May, Phillip Arnold met Edwin's wife, Janet, who was delivering medicine to her son inside the ranch, and spoke to her at

length. One of the CIRG personnel suggested that a meeting between the Clarks and the FBI be set up in a church. "Beginning on June 5, Fuselier and other FBI negotiators met with Edwin Clark and his wife Janet at a church building outside the Freemen compound. Clark told the FBI he believed there could be a peaceful resolution to the standoff."[58] The Clarks' willingness to meet was potentiated by more than the FBI's tactical offensive. Janet might have appealed to Edwin to end the crisis. I believe the value of scholarly analysis was again confirmed in the final focus on Edwin Clark and in Phillip Arnold's outreach to Janet Clark. Fusilier's account of the denouement did not refer to these events.

The FBI was not aware of a factor that motivates many nativist movements—the profound attachment to land as sacred place.[59] Edwin Clark "broke down in tears as he poured out his heart full of troubles" to Bo Gritz as early as May 1. The *New York Times* reported Clark's profound concern for his land in a May 18 interview with Gritz:

> "He explained how hard they had worked the land, only to come up short," Mr. Gritz recalled the 45-year-old Vietnam veteran saying. The Freemen system of printing up bogus money orders "offered the only hope to cling to what four generations had sweat [*sic*] and bled to keep." For almost 15 years, Mr. Clark's father, Ralph, had fought off creditors, finally losing the farm in . . . 1994.

After negotiators approached Edwin, he told them he needed to win the approval of LeRoy Schweitzer, who continues to function in court proceedings as the paramount leader. The FBI took the unusual step of flying Edwin to meet with Schweitzer in Billings, where they adopted a "five-point agreement for resolution of the standoff."[60] Edwin's gradual emergence as interim leader illustrates the importance of understanding a movement on its own terms. The inchoate structure of the Freemen presented opportunities to flexible negotiators as they learned more about how the Freemen operated. This is why time and patience are so critical in confrontations with religious groups.

GRIEVANCE FACTORS

What law enforcement agents understandably tended to overlook in the heat of the encounter were the Freemen's "legitimate grievances,"[61] which mark it as a "nativist" movement, one that seeks to safeguard a cherished territory and way of life from a perceived invasion of alien powers. Most studies of nativist movements locate them among colonized peoples, but American Christian Patriots[62] and South African Boers furnish us with two recent examples of white nativist movements.

According to Christine Kaufmann of the Montana Human Rights Network, more than 100,000 family farms have failed or been sold at

auction in America since the mid 1980s. Largely unfelt and unperceived in the politically powerful urban centers of the United States, these losses affected thousands of rural towns and hamlets in the West and Midwest. Several of the Justus Freemen—the Clarks, William L. Stanton, Rodney Skurdal, and LeRoy Schweitzer—had their properties confiscated or threatened with confiscation for nonpayment of debt and/or taxes.

Historically, eastern Montana has been a difficult zone for farmers. Enticed by the railroad and the government, who painted a rosy picture of cheap land and new beginnings, families who homesteaded along the tracks moving west across Montana's drought-plagued plains had often failed and left the land in despair.[63] Thus, the inhabitants of Garfield County were predisposed to mistrust the federal government and corporate enterprises. The area was a good place for the Freemen ideology to strike a resonant chord. Some members of the Clark family became Freemen and others contested them,[64] but *the Freemen movement clearly conformed to a major feature of actively proselytizing movements that disperse authority among leaders of local groups: wherever it took hold it exacerbated existing tensions and polarized society.*

Many Americans believe that the Freemen brought catastrophe upon themselves by taking on debt and defaulting on their loan payments, or for renouncing their U.S. citizenship, driver's licenses, and social security cards and refusing to pay taxes. Viewed from their dualist perspective, however, the Freemen's separation from a government that they were certain had violated the laws of God led logically to these activities.

THE FREEMEN AS A RELIGIOUS SECT

To become a Freeman, one completed a rite of passage by filing a "Quiet Title" at the local county courthouse. A "Quiet Title" is a declaration of independence from the United States of America and a renunciation of its jurisdiction over oneself, one's offspring, and one's land.[65] It is "sealed" by one's fingerprint. The Freemen described themselves as "Sovereigns," a term that emphasized that they were not "citizens" or "persons"—designations that are routinely used in legal documents that the Freemen repudiate as fraudulent. Indeed, this dogma was a barrier to negotiation, since the Freemen did not acknowledge the authority of the FBI and its legal warrants. The "Quiet Title" is analogous to the rite of baptism in mainstream Christianity. One's old self is sacrificed, and a new self arises in its place.

The objective of a revitalization movement[66] is to create the world anew from the ashes of the old one. Their myths and expectations vary according to their parent religions, but they offer a means of salvation from a hopeless despair. The Christian Identity myth that is summarized in Skurdal's "Edict" identifies the present as a time of tribulation for the

white race in America. As whites see their numbers and influence decline while foreigners and minorities are perceived as taking their jobs (at lower wages) and increasing their numbers in proportion to Anglo-Saxon Americans, converts to Christian Identity feel dislocated and colonized in their own land. The Freemen are a white nativist movement with a territorial imperative; they believe that God gave to them, the white descendents of the tribes of Israel, the promised land of North America.[67]

In 1995 Freemen-style common-law courts were set up in at least seventeen states.[68] Skurdal flooded the courts of Montana with "liens" against public officials who attempted to foreclose on his property in Roundup and urged his followers to cash checks that he issued against those liens. Although local magistrates regarded this paper warfare as frivolous, it tied up the courts and forced public officials to spend time and money defending themselves against Freemen legal maneuvers. Freemen converts spread the faith to southern California and held seminars attended by hundreds of desperate individuals looking for a means to save themselves from economic failure. By the time the FBI surrounded the Clark ranch, Freemen tactics were spreading rapidly throughout the United States. How could the FBI, an arm of the repudiated United States government, entice the Justus group out of its sanctuary and into the hated courts of the "de facto" judges clothed in the "**color of darkness, Satan's colors?**"[69]

The Freemen insisted from the outset that their case be judged before a "grand jury" of their "peers." They came out of the ranch nearly eighty days later after the FBI called lawyers of the CAUSE Foundation on May 28[70] to mediate a resolution which allowed Montana congressman, Karl Ohs, to safeguard the legal documents that constituted their "case" against the "de facto" United States. CAUSE is reported to be a Christian Patriot support group.[71] Karl Ohs fit the profile of a neutral intermediary who was trusted by both sides. All other settlement initiatives failed, we believe, because they did not acknowledge the paramount importance of the Freemen's ultimate concern, that they be heard in a venue where *they and they alone could present their case before the country and the media without compromising their observance of God's laws.*

Earlier, the Freemen had renamed Garfield County "Justus Township" and set up their own common law court and grand jury. Since their case on charges of fraud and conspiracy has opened in Billings, Montana, they have consistently challenged the federal court's jurisdiction, acting in accord with their belief that they belong to a different country.[72]

According to what we know about religions, such behavior is not delusional, but magical. Members of "cargo cults" provoked the arrival of wonderful goods from another world by refusing to till their fields. Pai Marire disciples[73] uttered a sacred word to ward off harm from attacking soldiers. Filing writs, or "Quiet titles," and writing checks against an account funded by the expected proceeds from liens against

local magistrates is a similar kind of behavior.[74] "Constitutionalists" believe that such legal tactics as "jury nullification"[75] immunize them from punishment in the U.S. Courts. In Freemen religion the written word is regarded as sacred; every diacritical mark, capital letter, bold-faced type, and line has a magical power to create a new reality. Skurdal's "Edict" and various other "Quiet titles" and "affidavits" have differentiated "Sovereigns" from U.S. "citizens" and proclaimed that only their common law courts could exercise legitimate jurisdiction over "Sovereigns." Like most millenarians, the Freemen regard sacred word and sacred act as productive symbolic behavior. They are preparing a new world.

MEDIATING A RESOLUTION

Once the Freemen had been surrounded by a cordon of federal agents, they seemed impervious to offers to reduce charges if they would come out. The FBI moved carefully and persistently. No lives had yet been lost, as they had been in the initial engagement between the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and the Branch Davidians. Agents did not cross Yahweh's "barrier" and provoke an armed defense. The major problem was how to set up a fruitful negotiation and keep it going. The FBI was cautiously exploring new ground beyond a tactical approach.

Scholars discourage the use of third-party intermediaries (TPIs) who are associated with a movement that is under siege because they do not have an optimal "critical distance." In this case, we were concerned that Bo Gritz, Jack McLamb, and Charles Duke may have offered to become TPIs in order to further their own hidden agendas. Phillip Arnold and Michael Barkun understood that the Freemen held religious positions they would not relinquish. Arnold recognized that the Freemen needed to know that they would be able to continue their very public "exposure" of the U.S. government as a "satanic" oppressor even after they left the ranch, and that they had to feel that any agreement would preserve their dignity. FBI negotiators ultimately understood this as well and turned again to CAUSE personnel and Karl Ohs, who had built up trusting relationships with some of the Freemen before the siege.

Early Christians practiced their religion by disregarding threats of imprisonment or death to proclaim their message to the world. For eighty-one days in full view of the media the Freemen bore witness to their "gospel" from the Clark ranch. Their insistence to Bo Gritz that they be heard by a grand jury of their peers was the earliest clue that they would consider leaving the ranch to continue that witness. Only after CAUSE attorneys drafted terms of settlement in language acceptable to them and after Karl Ohs promised to keep their voluminous legal documents did the Freemen decide to leave the ranch on June

13.[76] From their viewpoint, they did not "surrender" to the government, but changed the venue of their protest from the ranch to the courtroom.

SYMBOLIC EXPRESSION

Media coverage of their departure showcased a baffling aspect of their worldview. On the day they left, Kirk Lyons[77] and Lourie Salley of CAUSE removed the American flag that the Freemen had flown upside down as a "distress signal"[78] to the outside world since May 21. They replaced it with a thirteen-star Confederate flag from the Clark ranch schoolroom. Lyons and Salley explained that "to those in the know, the raising of the Confederate battle flag sent a signal that the CAUSE team had been successful. It meant that everyone would be coming out."[79] Conversely, CNN reported that "a Freeman" had called their station to say that the flag symbolized the "tribe of Jacob, one of the tribes [*sic*] of Israel" and that there were "13 tribes of Israel."[80] Neither explanation was complete.

"The number 13 has great significance to the Identity movement and to the right wing groups," observed Allen D. Sapp ten years ago.[81] According to Identity hermeneutics, Moses led thirteen tribes out of Egypt, and the thirteenth tribe of Manassah emigrated to the U.S. colonies, where on 4 July 1776, Independence Day, the allotted "punishment time" for Israelite transgressions had just expired.[82] The change of flags on 13 June 1996 signaled the triumph of the thirteenth tribe, the "real" Israelites who revered American independence, to their supporters outside the ranch. Sacred dates and commemorative rituals are intrinsic features of religion. A group's dependence on such esoterica provides the analyst with clues that may enhance the resolution of a critical incident. Phillip Arnold tried to ascertain which approaching dates the Freemen held sacred in order to maximize their acceptance of a settlement offer and to avoid an inadvertent blunder.

I chanced on the symbolic importance of thirteen months later while researching possible origins of Skurdal's ideology in the Nehemiah Township Charter, a document filed by a coalition of Christian Identity leaders at a county courthouse in Idaho on 12 July 1982.[83] The Charter sought to establish a "National Jury" of "*thirteen* of our own Judges in the [white Christian] Nation from our many communities." I was unable to contextualize the Freemen's request to be tried by a "grand jury" of their peers, until I found the reference to the "National Jury" in the Charter. The idiosyncratic legal and financial schemes that the Justus Freemen spread through seminars, on websites, and in meetings throughout the U. S. may have been prompted by Article 14 of the Charter, which advocates a renewal of an archaic Anglo system of compensation called *wergild*.[84]

> Every white freeman shall have a WERGILD to be held against the world and all individuals and entities at large including juristic and corporate ones. . . . The Wergild shall be enforced after mere violation of a right, absence of damages notwithstanding. . . . All State, Federal, local, municipal, and foreign employees, agents, grantees, etc. shall be *subject to trials in our own common law Courts for damages arising out of their personal, professional, and/or official duties, acts and omissions* [emphasis added].[85]

Freemen threats against public officials and their filing of "liens" for millions of dollars in compensation for the "acts and omissions" of magistrates, judges, sheriffs, and county attorneys could have been inspired, directly or indirectly, by the *wergild* provision of the Charter.

By patiently negotiating a peaceful end to a potentially lethal confrontation, the FBI demonstrated the success of its "new policy." It concluded "the longest armed siege in modern U.S. history"[86] without giving Freemen sympathizers any reason to retaliate with acts of violence or terror.

In the final agreement, the FBI promised to allow the Freemen to represent themselves in court and agreed that the charges against Gloria Ward would be dropped. In fact, she lost custody of her children when the Utah state courts refused to accede to the settlement terms, and, initially, the sixteen Freemen who were arraigned on federal criminal charges in Billings, Montana, were not allowed to act as their own attorneys.[87] To date,[88] they are not cooperating with the "satanic" judges in charge of the case nor do they recognize federal jurisdiction over themselves.

THE FREEMEN MOVEMENT IN CONTEXT

An avowed determination to establish a nation that conforms to their doctrines of the law of God is espoused by a sizeable cohort of disaffected citizens, who tend to be white, male, and sophisticated in their use of electronic technology and weapons. Tax resisters, militia members, "Constitutionalists," and Freemen alike believe that they have been unjustly dislocated from their position in the world relative to women, minorities, and immigrants. In their eyes, the traditional boundaries that separated and defined women and men, minorities and whites, urban and rural dwellers, gays and straights, public lands and private property, employees and corporate executives, have been violated with impunity by liberals, feminists, environmentalists, and public officials. More important, they are convinced that the culture of white, rural, working, male Americans is declining precipitously. Holding on to their slipping position, their dignity, and their voice seems to be less and less possible. They perceive themselves as *being forced* into a lethal submission

of their privacy, property, guns, jobs, roles—in sum, all that defines their lives—to the humiliations of history.

Understanding any given millenarian movement's symbolic expressions of myth, hermeneutics, practice, time, and space is, I believe, the key to ascertaining whether or not and under what conditions it may initiate violence or respond violently to encirclement. A movement's particular myth of the endtime can be analyzed to elucidate how the members perceive civil society. Millenarians may have actually found a counterworld with boundaries and laws that challenge civil statutes and a conventional *nomos*. They are often stereotyped as "cults" that engage in "bizarre" behavior and "rambling" discourse, despite the internal coherence of their theologies. *Because most religious movements are not aggressive, it is important to establish a taxonomy of these phenomena that will assist in evaluating those that do promote violence and terror. Over time even the most extreme movements may become benign. In the interim, however, they may exacerbate social and political tensions.* "Patriot" groups, for example, regard the "New World Order" as a global conspiracy that has already taken control of the U. S. government, which they believe needs to be returned to whomever they define as the American people.[89] Because their apocalyptic beliefs assert that a war between good and evil powers is on the horizon, "two-seedline" Christian Identity groups should be approached with great caution.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the data I have been able to acquire about the Freemen movement during and after a "critical incident," I believe that they belong to a potentially violent subset of Christian Identity religion. However, this judgment is tempered by the observation that their paper warfare against the government has been magical and non-violent,[90] in marked contrast to Identity offshoots, such as the *Bruders Schweigen* and the Aryan Republican Army, who have practiced terrorism.

The Freemen intend to establish a theocracy in which white males will be judges and non-whites and Jews will be purged. Before the Montana standoff, they were actively recruiting people who felt severely persecuted by government, declaring their sovereignty, and effectuating a parallel "united states" of locally governed "townships." They believe that the inauguration of Yahweh's law on earth will restore their privileged position as his chosen people. They contemplate[91] a war between God and Baal, i.e., between "God's children" and "the Corporate United States (a bankrupt nation which has enslaved all Americans by fraudulent purposes)."[92]

So great was their concern about the evil powers arrayed against them that the Freemen attempted to purchase quantities of weapons,[93] built

an electronic network of compatriots, sought support from the Militia of Montana, and inaugurated a "township" that claimed to supplant local courts and institutions. Christian Identity believers have an intense nostalgia for the antebellum period when states rights were paramount, a racial caste system separated whites from blacks, women were submissive to their husbands, and each white man was a "Sovereign" in his own house on his own land. These are nativist dreams. They exclude all but the faithful from the promised land. They look to the past in order to reconstruct the present and ensure their position in a future realm. To achieve their dream they are willing to witness to their beliefs, live by them, and die for them.

The FBI's landmark success in peacefully resolving the Justus Freemen confrontation suggests that an analytic understanding of the *religion* that motivates catastrophic millennialists may enhance the peaceful resolution of critical incidents. The use of outside experts in religion, of trustworthy mediators, and of a patient new policy contributed to an optimal outcome. Blind luck also played a role. Skurdal's homage to Phinehas the Priest in his "Edict" places his movement potentially in the proto-messianic category shared by terrorists who have resorted to assassinations and bombings.[94] It is fortunate that the Freemen have not yet developed a messianic script, although Yahweh, their holy warrior God, is also their savior.

I believe that only a fully-informed populace can effectively resist the proselytizing techniques employed by the proponents of Christian Identity. Scholars of religion have a role to play in sharing with the public what we are learning about the impact of "catastrophic millennialism" on a society that is becoming increasing divided over real and perceived grievances. The rise of Christian Patriotism as one of many, rapidly-developing millenarian movements at the end of the century challenges us to develop more empirical, analytical, applicable, and accurate models of these complex religious phenomena. Most importantly, it challenges scholars to engage in a process of information gathering and analysis that is not limited to academic institutions, but, rather, works with law enforcement personnel, human rights organizations, journalists, and electronic data gatherers to piece together the puzzle of a emergent American religion of the racist right.

ENDNOTES

[1] Rodney O. Skurdal, "Edict," October 28, 1994. "Edict" is an unpublished document that summarizes the Christian Identity theology of the co-founder of the Justus Freemen. The document was obtained from the Montana Human Rights Network, P. O. Box 1222, Helena,

Montana, 59624.

[2] By "prospective" study I mean the study of an unfolding event, in contrast to a "retrospective" study of completed events for which we have documentary evidence. A prospective study offers an opportunity to test hypotheses derived from like phenomena, but one views events as they happen with little "control" over data. It is not the usual type of analysis that a historian engages in, but it can result in a less biased set of conclusions, since a retrospective study can be affected by one's mindset or tendency to "predict the past," as Paul De Armond is fond of saying.

[3] From "Freemen-chronology," *Billings Gazette Online*, April 24, 1996, available at http://www.bigskywire.com/gazette/ (forwarded to me by David Neiwert of Pacific Rim News Services). Only one branch of the Garfield County Clark family were Freemen. They included brothers Emmett, 67, and Ralph, 65; Ralph's son Edwin, 45, and Edwin's son, Casey, 21; and Ralph's wife, Rosie, 70, and Emmett's wife, Kay, 65. Early in the confrontation, Edwin's brother, Richard, turned himself in to the authorities. Edwin's wife, Janet, who was not a Freeman, was allowed to enter and leave the ranch during the standoff.

[4] Mark Pitcavage, "Every Man a King: The Rise and Fall of the Montana Freemen," May 6, 1996, Militia Watchdog website; available at http://www.greyware.com/authors/pitman/freemen.htm (forwarded to me by Catherine Wessinger).

[5] "Freemen-chronology."

[6] Quoted by Pitcavage from the words of Alven Clark, the non-Freemen brother of Emmett and Ralph.

[7] It was actually a wheat farm, but "ranch" is common parlance in the West.

[8] A wordplay on 'just us' and 'justice.' An additional meaning suggested by Heidi Rankin ("The Montana Freemen: The Untold Story," *The Jubilee*, Sept/Oct 1996, 1) is that "Justus is a surname of Jesus, Col. 4:11 KJV."

[9] FBI Director Louis Freeh revealed after the standoff that in addition to using "experts" the FBI used "45 different third-party intermediaries." The latter ranged from members of the Patriot movement to a neutral state legislator (CNN "Breaking News," transcript #892, 13 June 1996 [Denver: Journal Graphics, Inc., 1996], 29).

[10] Email communication from Catherine Wessinger on the fifty-eighth day of the Freemen-FBI standoff near Jordan, Montana, May 21, 1996.

[11] I do not recall being given specific guidelines about information-sharing and tried to use discretion. This paper has been submitted to the FBI for peer review.

[12] I utilize one unidentified source, a Protestant minister from Jordan.

[13] Negotiation has always been a strategy; after Waco it was elevated to the "driving" strategy.

[14] Freeh, CNN "Breaking News," 28-29.

[15] Ibid., 21.

[16] E.g., "FBI negotiator explains strategy of Freemen peaceful resolution," *Billings Gazette Online*, Wednesday, June 22, 1996. This was a report of an interview with FBI negotiator, Dwayne Fusilier.

[17] Phillip Arnold and James Tabor attempted to implement a religion-based negotiation with David Koresh, but they were not utilized as outside experts by the Department of Justice. Cf. James Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher, *Why Waco?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 4-5, 13-14, 217 n. 28; and Nike Carstarphen, "Third Party Efforts at Waco: Phillip Arnold and James Tabor," (unpublished paper, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University).

[18] Christine Kaufmann of MHRN and Susan DeCamp of MAC furnished vital data, including Skurdal's "Edict," and recommended other sources.

[19] Paul de Armond, "Christian Patriots at War with the State," *The Public Good Project*, April, 1996, available at http://nwcitizen.com/public good, April 1996. David Neiwert was

researching and writing a book on the militia movement from his vantage point in the Pacific Northwest.

[20] Barkun, a leading expert on millenarianism and Christian Identity religion, was consulted by CIRG between May 8 and the end of the standoff. He also communicated with Phillip Arnold.

[21] Bo Gritz is the founder of "Almost Heaven," a Christian Patriot community in Idaho County, Idaho, and the former running mate of Klansman David Duke in his 1988 national campaign for President. He volunteered and was permitted to act as a Third Party Intermediary between the Freemen and the FBI in early April 1996.

[22] The form of the U.S. Constitution before the Civil War.

[23] "Two-seedline" refers to the doctrine that the white race descended from Adam, while Jews are the "spawn of Satan/Cain" who have mixed with "Pre-Adamite" non-white races. Cf. Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: the Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); and James Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness, Idaho Christian Patriotism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990).

[24] 1bible.doc and 2bible.doc, unpublished Patriot texts found under "Montana Freemen Archive," formerly available at http://www.constitution.or/cs-legal.htm. This and other Patriot websites have either been shut down or have gone underground in the wake of the Republic of Texas standoff in Spring, 1997.

[25] Mary Douglas analyzed the religious significance of boundaries in *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1966).

[26] I am indebted to a chronology of previous events furnished to me by David Neiwert of Pacific Rim News Services.

[27] Skurdal, "Edict," 10.

[28] Ibid., 6. Skurdal's genealogy is an example of the Anglo-Israelite doctrine of Christian Identity.

[29] The pattern of undertaking a migration to an ancestral homeland is not uncommon among active millennialists. The new settlement is a replication of the world at the time of creation. Cf. David C. Rapoport, "Messianic Sanctions for Terror," *Comparative Politics* 20, no. 2 (January 1988): 201-202.

[30] This is mainstream Christian myth that most churches project to some indefinite future time.

[31] In a telephone conversation of Sept. 2, 1996, Floyd Cochran suggested that Skurdal and Schweitzer might have been on their mailing list or attended their church in Whitefish, Montana, in the early 1990s.

[32] I am contrasting local leaders with the centralized and sacred authority of one prophet or messiah.

[33] Rapoport, "Messianic Sanctions," 202.

[34] *AP News Online*, May 3, 1996 published a news report that "A nationwide FBI alert is warning of a militia extremist plan to wage war on the government and the media if the Freemen are attacked."

[35] Telephone interview with pastor.

[36] Ibid.

[37] They wore guns, had gas masks and talked a lot about violence, according to the pastor.

[38] Some Christian Identity groups expect a "Jubilee," a Sabbath of sabbaths every fiftieth year (7 times 7 completed), which will be a "Day of the Lord" in which all debts will be canceled and everyone will receive a just distribution of goods.

[39] Posse Comitatus means 'power of the county.' It claimed sole authority to enforce laws and is mentioned in the Nehemiah Township Charter of 1982 (see below). It was founded ca. 1969 by white supremacists in southern California and Oregon.

[40] Catherine Wessinger, email correspondence, October 3, 1996.

[41] Charles Duke was a Colorado Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1996 and a leader in Colorado's "Patriot" movement; "Freemen Mediator Praises FBI," *AP News Online*, May 22, 1996, available at http://www.latimes.com/HOME/NEWS/APONLINE/NATIONAL/

[42] "Freemen Increasingly Isolated," *AP News Online*, June 6, 1966.

[43] In March 1995 several Justus Freemen were arrested while ostensibly on their way to a meeting with John Trochmann and MOM, according to Paul de Armond (personal communication, August 10, 1996). Trochmann was also taken into custody later that day. All were subsequently released.

[44] "Experts: Peaceful End in Freemen Standoff Unlikely," *AP News Online*, April 3, 1996.

[45] Ibid.

[46] In Rapoport's analysis of messianism (millennialism), the same group may abandon nonviolence or reembrace it depending upon its interpretation of the present age ("Messianic Sanctions," 203-204). He also notes that "Most messianic groups have not engaged in terror" (ibid., 200).

[47] This rough typology oversimplifies real events. A given movement may change from one type to another. The three types are provisional and do not indicate all the permutations of millenarianism.

[48] Michael Barkun and Phillip Arnold were in communication during this time.

[49] Catherine Wessinger has suggested that the memory of Waco focused the attention of the critical response team on the fate of innocents inside the barrier. Certainly, the fate of the three young girls was uppermost in our minds.

[50] "Ultimacy" is a feature of religious phenomena; the phrase originated in the theology of Paul Tillich. Cf. Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 1-4.

[51] Although we did not know it at the time, CAUSE Foundation mediators had made a proposal in early April for an agreement whereby the Freemen could pursue their goal of exposing the alleged perfidy of the U.S. Government in the venue of the enemy's own courts and thus tell their story (cf. Neill H. Payne, "Shades of Waco," *The Balance: A Newsletter of Civil Rights and Current Events* [CAUSE Foundation] 7, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 1-3.

[52] James Aho found that fundamentalist Christians were associated with the origins of Christian Identity and "Patriot" groups, providing a disproportionate number of their recruits in Idaho *(The Politics of Righteousness*, 53, 177).

[53] John Chaney, founder of the House of Chaney, taught that girls should be married at puberty to older men. He had married Gloria's oldest daughter, who was expecting their first child.

[54] Tom Laceky, "Next Step in Standoff Unclear," *AP News Online*, June 7, 1996.

[55] "Freemen Increasingly Isolated," *AP News Online*, June 6, 1996.

[56] "FBI negotiator explains strategy of Freemen peaceful resolution," *Billings Gazette Online*, June 23, 1996. On May 20, I had suggested that the key Freemen in any negotiation would be Clark and Skurdal. On May 21, I proposed that an impartial person reach out to Edwin Clark.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] The FBI analysts I have spoken to are unfamiliar with the formal features of religion.

[60] Payne, "Shades of Waco," 2.

[61] Chip Berlet, "The Right Rides High," *The Progressive*, October 1994, 26.

[62] The Patriot category includes a wide range of militias, churches, and movements that share a truculent attitude towards a government they consider hostile to white Christians.

[63] Jonathan Raban,"The Unlamented West," *The New Yorker* 20 May 1996, 60-81.

[64] On June 12, Dean Clark (a non-Freemen member of the Clark family) threatened to set

off a fight by insisting on preparing the fields on the farm for planting before the sensitive settlement agreement was implemented.

[65] Devin Burghart and Robert Crawford, *Guns & Gavels, common Law Courts, Militias & White Supremacy* (Portland: Coalition for Human Dignity, 1996), 7; Gloria Teneuviel Ward, "'WHO HAS THE RIGHT,' God's Children or Satanists?" *The Jubilee* 9, no. 1 (September/October 1996): 6.

[66] The category is discussed by Anthony F.C. Wallace in "Revitalization Movements," *American Anthropologist* 58, no. 2 (April 1956): 264-81.

[67] Skurdal, "Edict," 11.

[68] Burghart and Crawford, *Guns & Gavels*, 27-38; "Freemen-chronology."

[69] Skurdal, "Edict," 13.

[70] CAUSE had contacted the FBI in late March and, at their request, had submitted a proposal for resolving the standoff to the chief negotiator in early April (Payne, "Shades of Waco," 1).

[71] CAUSE is an acronym for Canada, Australia, United States, South Africa, and England—all countries that include in their populations descendents of the Caucasian race, the "true Israelites" according to Identity doctrine. Included on the Southern Poverty Law Center's 1995 listing of hate groups, CAUSE describes itself as "an international civil rights legal foundation that defends the rights of the unpopular, the powerless, and the politically incorrect ("Freemen Resume Negotiations, *AP News Online*, June 11, 1996).

[72] Roger Roots, "Judge Recognizes Freemen Court," *The Jubilee* 8, no. 6 (July/August 1996): 1, 6.

[73] A Polynesian (New Zealand) millenarian movement (1862-1866) that predated the Melanesian cargo cults.

[74] This helpful insight was provided by Catherine Wessinger of Loyola University, New Orleans.

[75] A finding by a jury that the charges against the accused do not merit prosecution.

[76] It was not hard to surmise these terms from the unfolding of events, but it was confirmed afterwards by the CAUSE account of the final settlement process (Payne, "Shades of Waco," 2).

[77] Kirk Lyons' brother-in-law is a jailed member of the terrorist group known as *Bruders Schweigen* (The Order), and his father-in-law is associated with Aryan Nations in Idaho; "Freemen Resume Negotiations," *AP News Online*, June 11, 1996.

[78] This also is a general symbol in the Identity movement, sometimes used to attract questions and engage people in a sympathetic discussion of Identity theology.

[79] Payne, "Shades of Waco," 3.

[80] CNN "Breaking News," 13 June 1996, 20.

[81] Allen D. Sapp, "Ideological Justification for Right Wing Extremism: An Analysis of the Nehemiah Township Charter Document" (Warrensburg, MO: Center for Criminal Justice Research, Central Missouri State University, 1986), 25.

[82] Ibid., 6, 7.

[83] The Charter was put together by Richard G. Butler of Aryan Nations and was filed in order to set aside land for the Aryan Nation in Kootenai County, Idaho, according to Floyd Cochran, an expert on Butler's movement. Daniel Levitas traces the origins of the "common law court movement," which the Freemen actively fostered, to Henry Lamont "Mike" Beach's "Blue Book" in the late 1960s. Beach founded the Posse Comitatus (Burghart and Crawford, *Guns & Gavels*, 2, 3).

[84] In early Germanic and Anglo-Saxon law, *wergild* referred to a payment by a killer to the family of the person killed, in order to atone and to avoid reprisals. In the Nehemiah document *wergild* appears to refer to a compensation owed by one who violates the rights of a freeman.

[85] Sapp, "Nehemiah Township Charter," 3.

[86] "Remaining Freemen Surrender," *AP News Online*, June 13, 1996.

[87] As of January 1997, there were twenty-four Freemen in custody facing charges in the federal court system. In some cases, they have been allowed to represent themselves, but they continue to refuse to accept the court's jurisdiction, and were placed in "lock-down" for disruption of court proceedings and pending their consent to have their fingerprints taken.

[88] January 1997.

[89] Fundamentalist Christians, militias, the John Birch Society, Libertarians, and Identity movements may subscribe to this theory, which varies in its details from group to group.

[90] They have issued verbal threats and been suspected of at least one plot to kidnap officials, but have not actually committed violent acts.

[91] Whether or not they believe that they must take action to induce the final war is not clear from the documents I have seen. "Patriots" and Identity groups exhibit doctrinal variations.

[92] Ward, "'WHO HAS THE RIGHT,'" 7.

[93] Cajun James, a Eureka, California, arms dealer disclosed that LeRoy M. Schweitzer and some other Freemen tried to buy $1.4 million in "military arms" from him in February, 1995. The Freemen money order bounced and the weapons were not delivered ("Freemen-chronology," 3).

[94] Cf. Ithamar Gruenwald, "Apocalypticism, Mysticism, Messianism and Political Assassination," *Criterion* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 11-17; and David C. Rapoport, "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions," *American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (September 1984): 659-60. During the Freemen siege, a group of suspected "Phineas Priests" from Idaho bombed a newspaper office and robbed a bank in Spokane, while allegedly shouting their support of the Justus group.

THE BLACKLISTING OF A CONCEPT: THE STRANGE HISTORY OF THE BRAINWASHING CONJECTURE IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION*

Benjamin Zablocki

ABSTRACT: This is the first part of a two-part article on the concept of brainwashing in the study of new religious movements (NRMs). The use of this term has become so emotionally charged that scholars find it difficult to discuss its merits and scientific utility with calmness and objectivity. I devote Part One of this article to an examination of the cultural and structural sources of an extreme polarization that has occurred among scholars of new religious movements. I argue that a majority faction within the discipline has acted with a fair degree of success to block attempts to give the concept of brainwashing a fair scientific trial. This campaign has resulted in a distortion of the original meaning of the concept so that it is generally looked at as having to do with manipulation in recruitment of new members to religious groups. Its historically consistent use, on the contrary, should be in connection with the manipulation of exit costs for veteran members. In Part Two of this paper (to be published in a later issue of this journal), I go on to examine the epistemological status of the brainwashing concept and compare theories based on brainwashing to alternative theories accounting for patterns of switching out of new religious movements.

In principle, the cult is derived from the beliefs, yet it reacts upon them.

Emile Durkheim[1]

What happens to individuals when they become swept away by commitments to charismatic social movements? This is an important question, never more so than in the waning years of our cataclysmic twentieth century. People have done some bizarre things when caught up in the enthusiasm of commitment to global, national, or communal ideologies. The recent mass suicides of the Heaven's Gate group are but one dramatic manifestation of this familiar

***This is Part One of a two-part work. Part Two will appear in our second issue along with a response from David Bromley.**

phenomenon. But whether to attribute disturbing and perplexing acts such as these to ordinary religious enthusiasm, or to brainwashing, or to mass-psychosis, or even, as some have suggested, to calcium deficiency[2] has remained an unsolved mystery of social science.

The sociology of religion has thus far missed a golden opportunity to make progress in solving this mystery. It could have done so by taking advantage of the naturally occurring social experiment that has been presented to us since about 1965 in the form of a proliferation of what have been called "new religious movements" or "cults." The argument of this paper is that most sociologists of religion have failed to use the normal scientific procedures of careful conceptualization, theoretically derived hypothesis testing, and systematic observation to make progress in solving this mystery. Instead, sadly, they have become caught up in a culture war—a destructive polarization (mainly but not entirely over entrenched positions on the brainwashing conjecture) that has divided the field into a majority and a minority camp whose members seldom cite and rarely even talk to each other. For reasons I will shortly explain, I have called the dynamics of this polarization "blacklisting." The majority camp (debunkers of the brainwashing conjecture) has declared victory and demanded premature closure to the scientific debate. The minority has retreated to obscure journals and has been marginalized within the discipline.[3] None of this has helped us get any closer to what should be our primary aim—understanding what makes people tick in intense religious situations.

Neither of the two sides in this debate is going to be happy with my arguments in this paper. I believe that both sides have contributed—through abrasiveness, smugness, and paradigm-mongering—to the rather hateful polarization that now exists.[4] Rather than seeking common ground in a shared respect for scientific procedures, they have chosen to culturally contextualize the dispute using such epithets as "cult-basher" or "cult-apologist."

Because the intellectual climate is so polarized on these issues, I feel it necessary to preface my arguments with the following disclaimer. I am not personally opposed to the existence of NRMs and still less to the free exercise of religious conscience. I would fight actively against any governmental attempt to limit freedom of religious expression. Nor do I believe it is within the competence of secular scholars such as myself to evaluate or judge the cultural worth of spiritual beliefs or spiritual actions. However, I am convinced, based on more than three decades of studying NRMs through participant-observation and through interviews with both members and ex-members, that these movements have unleashed social and psychological forces of truly awesome power. These forces have wreaked havoc in many lives—in both adults and in children. It is these social and psychological influence processes that the social scientist has both the right and the duty to try to understand, regardless of whether

such understanding will ultimately prove helpful or harmful to the cause of religious liberty.

Although it may seem paradoxical to say so, I think that the brainwashing conjecture best fits within a rational choice perspective on religious motivation and behavior as seen for example in the work of Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, Roger Finke, and Lawrence Iannaccone.[5] Iannaccone, in particular, by modeling communal religion as "a club good that displays positive returns to 'participatory crowding'" provides a basis for understanding the function that brainwashing might play within a high-demand religion.

As we put the brainwashing conjecture on trial, we must try to establish (to borrow a metaphor from criminal justice) motive, opportunity, and weapon. I believe that motive and opportunity can be derived as corollaries within Iannaccone's model. It follows from his model that some religions will wish to raise social-psychological exit costs as high as possible within the constraints of the United States Constitution's guarantee of freedom of religious conscience and religious affiliation for all citizens. It also follows that some religions will have the opportunity to do so by virtue of the high levels of trust and willingness to make heavy personal sacrifices that members of these groups exhibit. If I am right, it only remains to demonstrate the existence of the weapon and not to be too squeamish to see the weapon for what it is, once it has been found.

In the past thirty years I have visited hundreds of religious communes and talked with or interviewed over a thousand members and ex-members of these groups. Enough of these people have explained their experiences by something like a brainwashing model to convince me that the weapon exists. Some of them probably are lying or confabulating, but it is unlikely that all of them are. Most had no particular ax to grind, nor were the majority associated with any anti-cult organization. Moreover, most of those whom I have had the opportunity to interview repeatedly over long periods of time (sometimes decades or more) have tended to stick to their stories even as their youth has given way to presumably more judicious middle age.

One interview in particular impressed me with its veracity. I was talking with a man—not a respondent but a personal friend—who knew that he would soon die of AIDS. He had been a member, not of a religious community or an anti-cult organization, but of a revolutionary political group organized as a totalist community. He had left the group and was quite bitter about the corruption of its leadership but had not spoken publicly against it. His main concern was with his health, and he would probably not have spoken to me of this group at all except that he knew I was interested in this subject. He told me that the leaders of his group had studied the thought-reform techniques of the Chinese Communists with great admiration and had quite openly and successfully used these

techniques to brainwash the members of the group. He made it clear that some group members at least knew that they were being systematically brainwashed and acquiesced to the process because they felt it would be for the good of the revolution. However, this voluntary acquiescence did not lessen the effectiveness of the technique. When the time came that he and others became thoroughly disillusioned with the group's goals and methods, they nevertheless found it emotionally impossible to leave. They felt trapped. Years later, this man was still convinced that he had been trapped and was able to leave only after the group began to disintegrate. Of course one anecdote does not constitute a smoking gun. But stories like this have convinced me that the real sociological issue ought not to be whether brainwashing ever occurs but rather whether it occurs frequently enough to be considered an important social problem.

Somewhat closer to a smoking gun is the evidence provided in interviews with former leaders or top lieutenants of religious movements who have since left their groups or witnessed their groups' disintegration. In four such interviews, those in positions of power have showed surprising candor in the admission that brainwashing procedures were consistently and deliberately used "to keep weak members from straying." In one case, the leader I interviewed was well aware of the parallels between what he was doing to his followers "for their own good" and the classic brainwashing model as described by Lifton.[6] In the other cases, the leaders interviewed were naïve about the classical brainwashing model and somewhat amazed when I pointed out parallels between their practices and the classic model. However, the testimony of these leaders cannot be considered definitive because the possibility cannot entirely be ruled out that all were motivated to fabricate evidence in order to discredit the groups they had left.[7]

In this paper, the first in a two part essay, I will confine myself to discussing definitional and cultural issues surrounding the dispute over brainwashing. Questions of the epistemological status of the concept and the empirical evidence for its utility must, for the most part, be deferred until the second part of the essay to be published in a later issue of this journal. In the next section of this paper, I will discuss problems in the definition of the term "brainwashing." I will show that definitional imprecision has contributed to the persistence of polarization in the discipline and made it more difficult to resolve issues. Of course, if the conflict were simply one of terminology, we could solve it by inventing a new term. Therefore, I go on to show in the following section that the intellectual conflict goes far beyond the definitional. There is on one side a strenuous effort to ban any investigation of the manipulative effects of charismatic influence in religious groups out of fear that it will be used to suppress freedom of religious expression. On the other side, there is an equally strenuous (and equally wrong-headed)

effort to evaluate the activities of intense religious groups by the standards of secular humanism. After discussing how this unfortunate state of affairs has resulted in a blacklisting mentality of which disinterested empirical research has been the victim, I will then go on, in the last section of this paper, to assess the current state of the conflict and to make some suggestions for how moderation and scientific integrity can be restored to this area of inquiry.

DEFINITIONAL CONFUSION

Sociologists of religion do not generally agree on a definition of the term "brainwashing." In this section, I will discuss three elements of confusion in the definition of brainwashing that have prolonged dissensus within the discipline, making it more difficult for the polarized camps to talk to each other. These are (1) confusion over whether the term refers to deception in recruitment or obstacles to disengagement, (2) confusion over the extent to which brainwashing can be identified and measured empirically, and (3) confusion over whether brainwashing is to be conceived as a mysterious property found only in unpopular ideological groups or along a social-psychological continuum of normal influence processes occurring in a wide variety of groups and organizations. After discussing the distortion of perspective that arises from these areas of confusion, I will briefly sketch a definition that I believe is consistent with historical usage as well as being precise and scientifically testable.

The first of the distortions abetted by the polarization I have mentioned above is that popular usage, especially in the media and in civil law, has grossly misunderstood this concept. Popular usage has come to imply that brainwashing has something to do with recruitment mechanisms when, on the contrary, it has mostly to do with socio-emotional exit costs. An examination of any of the foundational literature makes it very clear that what these researchers were attempting to explain was the persistence of ideological conversion after the stimulus was removed, not how subjects were initially hooked into the ideology.[8]

How may we explain this shift in the definition of brainwashing, from a concern with difficulty in extricating oneself *after* joining to a concern with deception in recruitment *before* joining? I believe it is an example of how the debased currency of litigation can all too easily drive out the honest currency of science. Lucrative stipends to expert witnesses were offered by members of both sides of this dispute in court cases involving allegations of deception in recruiting. And so it came to be in the mutual interest of both extreme camps in this debate to perpetuate a common distortion of the phenomenon, while at the same time arguing in favor of opposite positions as to whether or not the phenomenon itself was real or an illusion.

The issue of whether some NRMs practice deception in recruiting is not germane to the point and is beyond the scope of this paper. The brainwashing conjecture is concerned with whether something happens to a member while he or she is in a group to make it emotionally not impossible, but very difficult to get out again. Does something occur to create, in the mind of the person, a social-psychological prison without guards or walls?

A second source of distortion has to do with identification and measurement. Ironically, in their eagerness to discredit each other, scholars on both sides have fallen prey to the same error. In social psychology, there is a type of error that is found very frequently when ordinary people attempt to attribute causes to puzzling events. This error is so widespread that it has been given the name *the fundamental attribution error.*[9] The error consists of overemphasizing the importance of dispositional factors and underemphasizing the importance of situational factors in the attribution of causation:

> The fundamental attribution error is pervasive. For instance, letters to advice columns such as "Ann Landers" or "Dear Abby" provide a good illustration of the phenomenon. When social psychologists . . . analyzed the letters . . . they found that writers tended to attribute the cause of their circumstances to the situation when describing their problems ("I'm always late to work because the bus doesn't run on time," or "We're having marital problems because my wife won't sleep with me anymore"). On the other hand, observers reading the letters were more apt to see the problem in terms of the characteristics of the person writing the letter ("She's too lazy to take an earlier bus" or "He should take a bath more often").[10]

In the dispute over the brainwashing conjecture, observers on both sides have demonstrated that they are no more sophisticated in attributing cause than the observers of the Ann Landers and Dear Abby letters. One side has attempted to marshal evidence for brainwashing by attempting to measure dispositional changes in the "victims," while the other has attempted to refute the existence of brainwashing by demonstrating the absence of any such measurable dispositional changes. Neither side has sufficiently recognized that the brainwashing conjecture is about relationships, not about individual dispositions. Alleged symptoms of brainwashing, such as deployability and passive complicity, are not individual dispositions but relational characteristics. If they exist, they will not be understood or measured without also bringing in that charismatic leader lurking at the other end of the puppeteer's string, not to mention the stage on which the puppet show is being enacted.

Many of the harshest critics of the brainwashing conjecture assume it to be an evaluative concept for the existence of which it is impossible, even in principle, to marshal empirical evidence. But this criticism has never been supported, to my knowledge, by a careful epistemological

comparison of brainwashing with other sociological concepts derived from theory. How is brainwashing as an explanatory concept any more nonempirically evaluative than charisma, or risky shift, or the strength of weak ties, or white flight, or institutional completeness, or role-strain? Once the concept of brainwashing has been rehabilitated from definitional confusion, I think it will be clear that it deserves to be treated like any other social psychological concept.

One of the major arguments for the assertion that brainwashing is not intrinsically a scientific concept is the claim that the conjecture is based on questions of "free will" which are not scientifically verifiable even in principle. But the brainwashing conjecture does not assert that subjects are robbed of their free will. Free will is a philosophic concept that has no place in scientific theory building. Neither the presence nor the absence of free will can ever be proved or disproved. However, free will is an important ideological concept, and, therefore, the brainwashing conjecture, when distorted in this way, is ideologically threatening to our sense of the value of individual responsibility. This should be of no particular concern to the researcher, but it becomes only too relevant when researchers are called upon to function as expert witnesses in civil or criminal cases.

The brainwashing conjecture does assert that resocialization remaps the values and preferences of the subject so that the subject voluntarily chooses to do what the group wants him to do. The goal of brainwashing is to create deployable agents. A deployable agent is one who evaluates his self-interest rationally as the group would wish. It does not argue the elimination of choice but rather the modification of the preference structure on which choice is based. The brainwashed individual remains capable of rational choice and action but over a transformed substrate of values and preferences remapped to conform to the collective ideology.

This important distinction becomes clouded by an imprecise use of the term "choice." For example, Janet Jacobs argues that, "In contrast to this 'brainwashing' perspective, other researchers . . . maintain that religious commitment is a matter of choice on the part of devotees who assume a religious problem-solving approach to life."[11] The brainwashing conjecture does not deny, however, that group members make choices that are rational in the context of their newly transformed values and preferences. Such distinctions lead into a hopeless quagmire when they are made in legal depositions, but they are exactly the sort of distinctions that are most helpful to scientists trying to build more general theories of human socialization. Here we see a concrete instance in which the needs of courtroom law and the needs of science are in opposition.

A third source of distortion has to do with whether the phenomenon of brainwashing is something mysterious and specific to certain ideological movements or whether it is consistent with other types of

influence found in a wide variety of social groups and organizations. *Fu Manchu* movies to the contrary, there is nothing about the brainwashing process that should be incomprehensible to the typical undergraduate student of social psychology. The particular combination of structural characteristics including totalism, extreme psychological persuasion techniques resulting in a symbolic death-rebirth experience, and fluctuations in the religious marketplace eliciting both a high level of demand for and a high level of supply of charismatic leaders and charismatic followers is not commonplace. But neither is it confined only to Chinese and Korean reeducation centers and prison camps and American NRMs. It does not trivialize the concept to demonstrate that it may also be at work in institutions such as the United States Marines and in Catholic monasteries both past and present. It is quite likely that something similar to what we now call brainwashing was used as early as the twelfth century by the Assassins of Alamut.[12] What may be new in the late twentieth century is the extent to which technological advances (e.g., electronic bugging devices or psychoactive drugs) may be increasing the efficiency with which it may be employed. However, brainwashing is likely to always remain a relatively rare phenomenon because of the difficulty of achieving the high degree of milieu control and charismatic influence necessary to make it effective.

It is little wonder that scholars have rejected a concept that seems to involve frightening powers of mental abduction of innocent bystanders with a loss of free will accomplished through mysterious mechanisms of persuasion which appear to be possessed only by the leaders of unpopular ideological movements. I too would reject such a concept. However, the concept of brainwashing as it appears both in the foundational literature and in the great majority of the accounts by ex-members of religious groups that I have seen has nothing to do with such nonscientific attributes. To locate a scientifically useful concept of brainwashing, we must turn away from these metaphysical speculations to what we can directly observe.

Surprisingly, there exists a fair amount of consensus with regard to the underlying observable sequence of events which the brainwashing conjecture purports to explain. These behavioral facts comprise a sequence of events often spread over a considerable number of years. This visible and relatively unambiguous sequence consists of four steps: (1) affiliation, (2) lifestyle modification, (3) disaffiliation, and (4) disenchantment. People (most often adolescents and young adults) are observed to affiliate with certain NRMs (sometimes labeled "cults"). Affiliation is soon followed by a sharp and sudden rejection of prior roles and relationships and a substitution of new roles and relationships prescribed by the group. This adds up to an often rather dramatic lifestyle modification characterized by new behaviors that many people outside the movement label as deviant. Persons may stay affiliated with these

groups for widely varying lengths of time ranging from an entire lifetime to less than 24 hours. After a while (for some but not all), disaffiliation from the group occurs. Disaffiliation can be (a) voluntary, (b) forced by the group (expulsion), or (c) forced by outside agents (abduction). Among those that disaffiliate, a certain percentage eventually begin to complain that actions taken while associated with the group have come to be perceived as ego-dystonic (i.e., highly alien to the person's own current values as well as to the values held prior to affiliation as they are recollected). Without making any judgments as to the veracity of these complaints, let us refer to this step in the behavioral process as disenchantment. It should be noted that disenchantment in some cases comes prior to disaffiliation rather than afterwards.

Although the brainwashing conjecture is by no means the only possible explanation for these generally agreed upon empirical facts, a scientifically derived concept of brainwashing may be based on hypotheses that attempt to explain these facts. The core hypothesis is that, under certain circumstances, an individual can be subject to persuasive influences so overwhelming that they actually restructure one's core beliefs and world-view and profoundly modify one's self-conception. The sort of persuasion posited by the brainwashing conjecture is aimed at somewhat different goals than the sort of persuasion practiced by bullies or by salesmen and teachers. Bullies persuade by using threats to modify behavior. Salesmen and teachers utilize a variety of affective and cognitive influences to modify specific attitudes and beliefs. The more radical sort of persuasion posited by the brainwashing conjecture utilizes extreme stress and disorientation along with ideological enticement to create a conversion experience that persists for some time after the stress and pressure have been removed. There is no justification in the foundational literature to assume that this experience is either irresistible or irreversible.[13]

The brainwashing conjecture attempts to explain the lifestyle modifications of a NRM participant as the behavioral result of an intensely focused and highly structured process of manipulative influence. The influencing agent is a cohesive normative group with total or near total control of the social and physical environment (often although not always communal in organization) acting at the behest of a charismatic leader. The target of influence is always an isolated individual, frequently an adolescent or young adult.[14] According to the conjecture, some people may be more susceptible to brainwashing than others, and a given person may be more susceptible at certain times of life than others. However, the brainwashing conjecture does not focus primarily on initial characteristics of the subject. The assumption is that many different kinds of people can, with enough effort, be brainwashed. Attention is therefore focused on the charismatic leader and the manipulative group.

In summary then, brainwashing is to be understood as nothing more than an orchestrated process of ideological conversion that takes its subjects through a well-defined sequence of social psychological stages. To be considered brainwashing, this process must result in (a) effects that persist for a significant amount of time after the orchestrated manipulative stimuli are removed and (b) an accompanying dread of disaffiliation which makes it extremely difficult for the subject to even contemplate life apart from the group. There is nothing in the definition to imply that brainwashing is easy to accomplish, always effective, or impossible to resist.

Some people find this word "brainwashing" itself so offensive that they have difficulty following an argument in which the word is used, even if the argument might otherwise have made perfect sense to them. I am sorry if the word itself offends anyone. My concern is with the concept and I do not really care which word is used to describe it. In fact, in my earliest work on the subject (a study of the Bruderhof), I described the phenomenon without using the word "brainwashing" at all.[15] Instead I used the synonymous term "thought reform" favored by Robert Lifton in his foundational work on the subject.[16] Many synonymous terms for roughly the same phenomenon can be found in the literature. I have chosen to call this social-psychological phenomenon "brainwashing" because that is the one term with which most people are familiar. In any event, it is not the word but the underlying concept which is important. If the sociology of religion as a discipline were to reach consensus on the use of a different term to denote this concept, I would be among the first to adopt it in brainwashing's stead.

There are persuasive reasons why it might be preferable to start out with a new term. Brainwashing[17] is a subject upon which much nonsense has been written from all sides. Some of this nonsense has come from sensationalist journalists attempting to frighten the public with images out of *The Manchurian Candidate.* Much of it, however, at least in recent years, has come from researchers attempting to debunk the concept without properly understanding it. It has been called the evil eye theory,[18] the robot theory,[19] an ideological weapon,[20] and cynical reductionism.[21] Thomas Robbins has said that " . . . sociological perspectives and findings are likely to undercut the more extreme 'Invasion-of-the-Bodysnatchers' stereotypes of cults. . . ."[22] James Richardson and Brock Kilbourne scoff that "a vocal minority of professionals and lay persons continue to use this scientifically defunct term. . . ."[23] Unfortunately, these authors have focused their attacks and their hostility not only on the word but on the underlying concept as well.

It is not my aim in this paper to claim that we currently possess evidence proving that brainwashing is the best explanation of commitment to NRMs. Personally, I believe it is merely the most parsimonious explanation available to explain the commitment histories

of *some* individuals in *some* NRMs. It is my more modest aim to show that brainwashing is a precise and empirically testable conjecture about a very important social-psychological process that has been treated shabbily by majority opinion within the sociology of religion. My argument is that the brainwashing conjecture has been convicted and dismissed without a fair scientific trial. It is this shabby treatment that I have called "blacklisting" and that we turn to in the next section of this paper.

THE BLACKLISTING OF THE CONCEPT

In two essays on the differences between science and politics, Max Weber makes an important distinction concerning the treatment of minority positions in science as opposed to politics.[24] The norms of science clearly specify that an unpopular theory may not simply be voted or shouted down. It must be refuted. Moreover, this refutation must be epistemological[25] or empirical,[26] never cultural or political. The brainwashing conjecture has never been subjected to such refutation. Instead, a caricature of the brainwashing conjecture supplied by various anti-cult groups for litigational rather than scientific reasons has been put on trial in its place.

Even worse, this has been accompanied by an attack upon the motivations of those who are interested in studying brainwashing. It is said that they must be members, no doubt, of the anti-cult movement.[27] A climate of discourse is created in which it is considered reprehensible or suspicious for a scientist to be driven by curiosity to try to understand the behavior of NRM members and to be drawn to the brainwashing conjecture as one plausible framework. It seems to me that even if one believes that brainwashing is less plausible than some other conjecture in accounting for NRM behavior, such vilification is immoderate.

But why call this treatment blacklisting? Scientific theories have been shouted down by impatient or intolerant majorities many times in the history of science. Some, like the theories of parapsychology advanced by J. B. Rhine of Duke University, have been deservedly obliterated without a full scientific trial. Others, like the theory of evolution, the theory of the link between smoking and lung cancer, and the theory of white flight from the cities, have proven more embarrassing when evidence has eventually accumulated leading to the general acceptance of these theories. For me to say that a line of potential sociological inquiry has been blacklisted would be rhetorically excessive were it merely that an unpopular theory has been shouted down, shameful as that alone may be. To justify the charge of blacklisting requires additionally that there be some degree of collusion within the established power structure of a discipline to defame, ridicule, or ignore the theory and to

marginalize its adherents. I want to show that this has happened and try to explain why.

The prototype to which I am comparing my use of the term, of course, is the blacklisting of Communists and suspected Communist sympathizers by the Hollywood establishment (The Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals and later by The Screen Actors' Guild) from 1947 to about 1959:

> The movie industry was conscripted into the Cold War in 1947 when HUAC [the House Un-American Activities Committee] was invited to Los Angeles. The committee's host was the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, an organization that struck a typical postwar stance in asserting that "*co-existence is a myth and neutrality is impossible . . . anyone who is not fighting Communism is helping Communism.*" About fifteen hundred members of the film community had founded the alliance three years earlier; they included John Wayne, Gary Cooper, Walt Disney, Adolphe Menjou, and Cecil B. DeMille.[28]

Compare this with the following statement at a meeting of a few sociologists of religion in 1989 shortly after an incident (discussed below) which resulted in their failure to get the American Sociological Association to endorse a statement to the United States Supreme Court denying the scientific validity of the brainwashing conjecture:

> We need to find a way to neutralize the statements of a few well-meaning scholars [who] are not particularly well informed about the legal issues that have been of concern to our group. . . . We have been advised by [our attorneys] that even a single such statement, if left unrefuted, could be of harm to our cause. . . . Our meetings with [representatives of] the Unification Church confirmed that, while they share our goals and strategy, they are not prepared to help materially with this particular project.[29]

To the best of my knowledge, my work on the subject [30] as well as that of Richard Ofshe,[31] Marybeth Ayella,[32] Robert Cialdini,[33] Amy Siskand,[34] Roy Wallis,[35] Philip Zimbardo,[36] and others has never been directly confronted, much less refuted by sociologists of religion. Rather it has been defamed, ridiculed, or ignored. There has been a sophisticated and subtle form of intellectual bullying by an entrenched majority within the discipline of a small minority composed of both sincere scholars and academic opportunists. By continuing to shine their spotlight on the opportunists and studiously ignoring the work of the scholars, the myth can be sustained that what this is all about is a purely ideological spat between the good guys and the bad guys.

It is interesting in this regard that "both sides" make use of similar victimization claims in a context of McCarthyite imagery. I don't think that either side is being hypocritical in this regard. I understand very well how Dick Anthony, Eileen Barker, David Bromley, J. Gordon Melton,

James Richardson, Thomas Robbins, et al. might consider themselves to be a small beleaguered minority courageously battling tremendous odds in a fight against the overwhelming power of the press and public opinion. I can understand how they can see themselves as defenders of religious minorities against bigots who would deprive them of their constitutional rights. However, it is also necessary to understand that those who stubbornly cling to an intellectual interest in the brainwashing conjecture are equally sincere in seeing themselves as an ignored or ridiculed minority within the smaller frog pond of academia. Depending on the context, both sides have a claim to the victim role.

Joe McCarthy appealed to a national hysteria that tended to see a communist under every bed.[37] In retrospect, it is easy to see how paranoid and ridiculous this was. I think that many sociologists of religion see themselves as victims of a paranoid public opinion that tends to see a potential Jonestown or Heaven's Gate in every unpopular religious movement. But at the same time, proponents of the brainwashing conjecture view themselves as victims of a paranoid scholarly opinion that tends to see every attempt to investigate the efforts of religious leaders to manipulate the minds and emotions of their followers as providing aid and comfort to deprogrammers and to apostates involved in litigation. In reality, it would be good to recognize that most new religious groups are not at all like Jonestown or Heaven's Gate and that, in reality, very few who leave religious movements get deprogrammed or sue their former groups for damages. In my own longitudinal study,[38] which comes closer to drawing on a national random sample than any other I know, only two respondents left because of a deprogramming. This mutual posturing in the rhetoric of victimhood helps to lend a comic air to the blacklisting of the brainwashing conjecture. It is time for the media to recognize that cults are not the symptom of wholesale cultural disintegration they may once have seemed. And it is time for sociologists of religion to recognize that the anti-cult movement is far from being the powerful monolithic threat to religious liberty that it may once have seemed.

Somehow it became politically correct, at least within sociology, to defend NRMs and to attack those who argued that some NRM members may have been brainwashed. Although the beliefs and practices of NRMs themselves are rarely praised, their constitutional right to be misguided and to mislead their members is vigorously defended. The harm of squelching a form of free religious expression seems to many to be a far greater danger than any harm that might come to members of NRMs or their children. Oddly, the opposite position is considered politically correct when weighing the rights of abused spouses and children against the value of privacy within the nuclear family.

In an attempt to explain this curious anomaly, Robbins has argued,

Critics of cults have expressed to the author the view that sociologists or other scholars who seem sympathetic to new movements are really "in love with religion." Arguably, there is a general "pro religion" bias in the sociology of religion. . . . The effects of any "pro-religion" bias in sociology is possibly reinforced by the particular "esprit de corps" of the sociology of religion and solidarity of its practitioners. Since the sociology of religion has been marginal within general sociology, sociologists of religion have assiduously developed their own reference groups and their own systems of status-conferral, i.e. conferences and journals. These "frog ponds" tend to involve both sociologists and religious studies and divinity scholars, the latter being even more likely than sociologists of religion to be ordained and pro-religion.[39]

Another source of the bias against the brainwashing conjecture may be found in the role that NRMs play in sponsoring scholarly activities. Irving Louis Horowitz's early warning of the corruption of the scientific community by lavish funding from NRMs is relevant to this issue.[40] Maybe all the money that flows from NRMs to scholars has no effect on research. But it is odd that all this cozying up to NRM resources has resulted in an unprecedented bullying of scholars working with conjectures antithetical to the interests of these movements. Bear in mind that, for social scientists, these are interesting theoretical intimations, whereas for NRMs and ex-members involved in law suits, they are, in contrast, legal issues in which millions of dollars may be at stake. Robbins has said in this regard, ". . . it is essential for sociologists to avoid appearing to be too closely connected to NRMs. The issue here is the extrinsic one of credibility. Sociologists might be well advised to avoid any appearance of being 'in the pocket' of those who sometimes benefit from (and eagerly trumpet and exploit) their findings."[41] I believe that much of the sociology of religion, without intending to, has somehow wound up in this pocket.

Unfortunately, instead of a community of interested scholars, there are two warring camps, each utterly convinced that the other side's work is without merit. Neither camp agrees on a set of criteria for defining, identifying, or measuring the phenomenon. They tend not to publish in the same journals nor to cite each other's work. Therefore, scientific dialogue cannot take place, only partisan sniping. For example, much of the debate in the courts has naturally focused on the question of who is guilty. Is an allegedly brainwashed person responsible for actions taken while under the influence of the NRM? For a scientist, concerned with determining the plausibility of the conjecture, this is not a question that would loom very large on the research agenda, at least in the early stages of investigation.[42] Being forced or tempted to confront issues like this early in the investigation is one way in which the offering of "expertise" within the legal system can distort the scientific process.

In order to understand how this unfortunate situation came to be, it will be useful to chart a brief chronology of events concerning NRMs in

America in the 50 years since the end of World War II. This half century can be divided into five rather distinct periods.

1946-1964. The calm before the storm. This was a period of minimal activity for NRMs in America. The Beats, of course, had a great interest in Zen Buddhism, but this interest was not expressed in organization or social movement building. Scientology was only beginning to establish itself and was not yet clearly identified as a religion. The Unification Church had made only a few very tentative scouting expeditions to America from Korea, where the movement was still largely based. The only major success story of this period was the Bruderhof. Coming to the USA in 1954, the Bruderhof enjoyed phenomenal success in part because, at least in the eastern United States, it was virtually the only game in town for seekers of total Christian community. This was also the heyday of the Cold War and its attendant anti-Communist hysteria. Attempts were made to frighten the American public by claiming that the Communists had discovered in brainwashing a powerful and mysterious new weapon that could rob ordinary people of their free will.[43] Although these claims totally distorted the foundational scholarship on brainwashing, they left a bad odor attached to the concept which lingered for long time, particularly for intellectuals who opposed McCarthyism and anti-Communist hysteria.

1965-1969. The coming of the gurus. Horowitz and others have pointed out that the context changed in 1965 when newly relaxed immigration laws allowed a flood of Asian gurus and their followers to come to the United States.[44] Since this was the peak of the counterculture in the United States, these gurus found rapid acceptance and many eager followers. The Unification Church, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), the 3HO, and the Children of God all established themselves in America during this period as did thousands of smaller communal groups of every ideological type, including an apocalyptic California group called the Manson Family. There was minimal scholarly interest in these groups and no polarization during this period. Rosabeth Kanter and I were collecting data but had not yet published. Only a handful of pioneering scholarly works were beginning to call the attention of social scientists to this new phenomenon.[45] Nobody was as yet talking about brainwashing with respect to NRMs.

1970-1977. The drawing of the battle lines. The trial of Charles Manson and his followers (including the well-publicized preparation for the trial) took up most of the year 1970 and captivated the American public.[46] It was the OJ trial of its day. It was at about this time that the mass media began to use brainwashing terminology to explain the behavior of young people who joined cults. It was also about this time that I published the

first sociological study making use of the brainwashing conjecture to explain commitment to a religious community.[47] During this time the first anti-cult organizations were getting started. FREECOG was founded in San Diego specifically to combat the Children of God (COG), and soon after that, in 1974, the Citizens Freedom Foundation, the first general anti-cult organization, was founded. I think it is fair to say that both the NRMs and their opponents had some victories and some defeats during this period. It was a time of maximum growth for the Unification Church and Scientology as well as some newer movements such as Guru Maharaj Ji's Divine Light Mission.[48] But it was also a time when deprogramming began to thrive[49] and not all court cases were being decided in favor of the NRM defendants. Sociologists were much in demand as expert witnesses for both sides beginning in this period. This laid the groundwork for the later hardening of positions that I have documented in this paper. It also established a very unfortunate precedent of sociologists being led by their clients rather than by their data. But during this period there was still a certain degree of tolerance toward divergent positions. In 1976, the anti-cult movement suffered a defeat when Patty Hearst's brainwashing defense was disallowed. But it took heart from the fact that in that same year, Senator Robert Dole agreed to hold hearings on the "cult problem" in Washington, D.C. A rough balance of power existed between the two sides. Only a very few sociologists, such as Irving Louis Horowitz, Amitai Etzioni and Seymour Martin Lipset[50] were as yet speaking openly of the danger of academic co-optation by wealthy new religious organizations.

1978-1986. The Triumph of the Anti-Cult Movement. All this changed on November 18, 1978 when the world was shocked by the mass suicides and murders of nearly a thousand followers of the Reverend Jim Jones at Jonestown, Guyana. In the ensuing eight years, national anti-cult organizations thrived, and the leaders of a number of major NRMs were successfully prosecuted for a variety of crimes.[51] Charles Dederich of Synanon, after being exposed by Richard Ofshe and his colleagues in a book for which they won the Pulitzer Prize,[52] pleaded no contest to a murder conspiracy charge. The Reverend Moon was found guilty of tax evasion.[53] Various leaders of ISKCON were charged with murder and other crimes.[54] The Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was deported from the United States, and his communal headquarters in Oregon was dismantled.[55] During this eight year period, those sociologists who were attempting to defend the religious freedom of these highly unpopular NRMs could perhaps be forgiven for feeling themselves to be a beleaguered and totally outgunned garrison. Also during this period, sociologists were in increasing demand as expert witnesses (as both plaintiffs and defendants) in civil litigation involving complaints of brainwashing. Huge sums of money were at stake, and these witnesses

were, therefore, generously rewarded for their testimony. A few began to count these fees as a principal source of income. Unfortunately, the importance of these expert witness roles exceeded the growth of any real expertise to speak of within sociology. Although a few good studies were published,[56] many sociologists on both sides of the debate were seduced by events into claiming far more knowledge than they or anybody yet had.

1987-1997. The Religophiles Strike Back. By 1987, a substantial network of sociologists specializing in the study of NRMs, feeling that the very foundations of religious liberty and freedom of religious choice were in grave peril, had succeeded in organizing as an effective force for the critique of some of the most outrageous of the claims of the anti-cult movement.[57] Since some of these claims were truly outrageous, as shown by London[58] and others, this might have proven a valuable public service if left at that. However, by this time, many sociologists had gotten so caught up in courtroom drama that they had lost sight of their primary function: collecting data and testing hypotheses. Most of the scholarship published in this period was nothing more than cultural interpretation with the goal of deconstructing and thereby marginalizing opposing points of view.[59]

The single event most responsible for pushing the pro-NRM sociologists over the edge and provoking what I have called the blacklisting response was a decision by a California Supreme Court Judge Mosk (speaking for the majority) in a celebrated case known as Molko and Leal vs. The Holy Spirit Association:

> Some highly respected authorities conclude brainwashing exists and is remarkably effective. . . . To the contrary, other authorities believe brainwashing either does not exist at all . . . or is effective only when combined with physical abuse or physical restraint. . . . We need not resolve the controversy: we need only conclude that *the existence of such differing views compels the conclusion that Molko and Leal's theory indeed raises a factual question—viz., whether or not Molko and Leal were brainwashed—which . . . precludes a grant summary judgment for the Church* [emphasis added].[60]

It is important to understand exactly what signal this ruling sent to those sociologists of religion who had allied themselves against what they perceived as the anti-cult menace to religious liberty. To obtain a summary judgment against allegations of brainwashing, it was not enough to mount a convincing argument or even an argument that had convinced an overwhelming majority of social scientists.[61] Even a single contrarian research finding, if not discredited by the discipline, would be enough to turn the issue into "a factual question," thus necessitating a trial and thus risking that "emotionality" would triumph over "reason" in the rendering of justice. From this, more than anything, arose the

blacklisting mentality echoing the words quoted earlier, in a different context, from the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals: "co-existence is a myth and neutrality is impossible. . . . anyone who is not fighting [anti-cultism] is helping [anti-cultism]." No longer was there even a pretense of the disinterested search for truth.

The stock-in-trade of blacklisting campaigns is reputational degradation, and the immediate result of Judge Mosk's ruling in the Molko and Leal case was a vigorous two-pronged attack on the reputations of (a) NRM apostates and (b) scholars who were not prepared to disavow the brainwashing conjecture. Just as in the Hollywood blacklisting campaign, the attacks were, for the most part, not directly aimed at specific persons but instead at classes of persons. Since many NRM apostates were sources of evidence about brainwashing, a tendentious campaign was begun to define the apostate role as one whose accounts were inherently unreliable.[62] Instead of letting the issue of the reliability of apostate accounts be settled empirically, an attempt was made to settle it definitionally. The following definition of apostasy offered by David Bromley is an example of how this has been done: "Apostasy may be defined in preliminary fashion as a role that is constructed when an organization is in a state of high tension with its surrounding environment and that involves an individual exiting the organization *to form an alliance with an oppositional coalition* [emphasis added]."[63] This strange sort of definition has the function of allowing statements by any and all apostates critical of their former groups to be more easily discredited. By *definition*, they are all now following the ideological line of some opposing group, usually an anti-cult organization.[64]

The reputational attack on scholars was also carried out indirectly for the most part. The principal weapon came in the form of *Amicus Curie* briefs filed with the United States Supreme Court (to which the Molko & Leal case had been appealed) by the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the American Sociological Association (ASA) as well as by a number of independent scholars. This strategy attempted to split off good brainwashing research[65] done in prison camps and other coercive environments from what they labeled bunkum brainwashing research[66] done in NRMs. Other NRM research such as my own that could not so easily be discredited was simply ignored. Note the wording of the *Amicus* brief: "There is, furthermore, *no evidence* to suggest that anything can substitute for physical coercion in the process of 'coercive persuasion' [earlier defined as synonymous with brainwashing]. To the contrary, *all available research* refutes any such claim [emphasis added]."[67] Note the strained and strange haste to declare the sort of closure that is rarely achieved in any branch of sociology in an area that was only beginning to be explored.

The *Amicus* brief nevertheless enjoyed clear sailing through the SSSR. In the APA and the ASA things got a little sticky. Both organizations first signed onto the brief and then were forced to withdraw it when some members of each organization protested. In 1989, an executive officer of the ASA simply signed the brief on behalf of the entire ASA and sent it off to the Supreme Court (as if the ASA had formally approved it) before it was ever seen by the Council. He later admitted that he had made an honest mistake and that he thought he had discussed the brief with the Council. His notes, however, showed no record of such discussion. The haste and secrecy in which such mistakes could be made is another indicator of the blacklisting climate that prevailed at the time. Had they not been blocked, these briefs would have put the major professional organizations representing sociologists and psychologists in the United States on public record making the outrageous claim that the concept of brainwashing had been so thoroughly discredited by a definitive body of research that no further research on this subject was necessary.

In the 1990s the anti-cult movement continued to wane in influence while the influence of those who took a hard line against the investigation of brainwashing and the credibility of apostate accounts continued to grow. The SSSR, to its credit, did begin to moderate its position somewhat. At its November 1990 meeting, it passed the following more moderately worded resolution:

> This association considers that there is insufficient research to permit informed, responsible scholars to reach a consensus on the nature and effects of nonphysical coercion and control. It further asserts that one should not automatically equate the techniques involved in the process of physical coercion and control with those of nonphysical coercion and control. In addition to critical review of existing knowledge, further appropriately designed research is necessary to enable scholarly consensus about this issue.

Perhaps this is an indication that the historical high-water mark for both cult and anti-cult hysteria has already passed. In personal conversations with people representing a variety of "extreme" points of view, I have perceived that a sense of moderation is starting to reassert itself although it still has a long way to go.

SUGGESTIONS FOR RAPPROCHEMENT

In this paper, I have tried to document how a regrettable polarization has come to exist in the way sociologists of religion study and think about NRMs. I hope I have been clear in indicating that there are no real villains in this little intellectual drama but rather a shameful loss of perspective on both sides. Each side has found a way (for the most part

sincerely) to claim underdog status, and each side has thus felt entitled to eschew moderation in attacks on the position of the "enemy." This has left the discipline hobbled in research situations calling for the ability to see, in religious movements, instances of *both* courageous fidelity in the pursuit of an unpopular religious calling *and* widespread corruption in the cynical or fanatical use of social-psychological techniques of extreme persuasion to block exits and to minimize the probability that highly committed members will feel able to blow the whistle or even to just say good-bye. Jonestown, Waco, The Solar Temple, and Heaven's Gate are merely the most well known recent charismatic religious movements which, although they differ from each other in many ways, are similar in exhibiting clearly the need for a sociology that is willing to look at both sides of this picture. In the absence of such a clear-sighted sociology, we have, I think, been pathetically incapable of providing useful guidance in dealing with such tragedies while they are unfolding or plausible explanations of them after the fact.

In my opinion the two most important ways in which the sociology of religion could encourage the trend toward moderation in this field are the encouragement of disinterested empirical research and the encouragement of financial disclosure.

With regard to the former, many rumors continue to circulate to this day concerning the difficulty that proponents of the brainwashing conjecture have encountered in getting papers accepted in sociology of religion journals, annual volumes, and annual meetings. Although none of these rumors has been unambiguously substantiated by me at this writing, the very fact that so many rumors of this sort are in circulation is testimony to the chilling effect that a blacklist, even in its waning days, can have on freedom to choose a research direction, particularly for young scholars.[68] One young post-doc told me that she "would have to be crazy" to undertake a research project that might result in finding that brainwashing was being used in a particular religious community until she had tenure. Such concerns make it all the more difficult to ever resolve these matters on scientific terms.

Social scientists seeking to debunk the brainwashing conjecture have often spoken as if extensive research has already been done on the behavior of cult participants and as if definitive conclusions could now be formed. And, indeed, there has been a great deal published concerning cults in the past ten years. However, a close examination of this vast quantity of writings shows that it is based upon a very skimpy body of actual data. Most of the best research that has been done consists of ethnographic monographs on single NRMs, and all of this remains to be synthesized. The few epidemiological or other comparative and quantitative studies have most often been based upon small sample sizes and unrepresentative samples.[69] I also think some researchers have been naive in underestimating the ability of cults to put a favorable spin

on research findings by "helping" social science investigators get in touch with subjects to be interviewed. At the other end of the spectrum, samples based upon psychiatric outpatient lists are similarly biased.

With regard to finances, a major obstacle toward the sort of progress desired is the cloud of secrecy that surrounds the funding of research on NRMs. The sociology of religion can no longer avoid the unpleasant ethical question of how to deal with the large sums of money being pumped into the field by the religious groups being studied and, to a lesser extent, by their opponents. Whether in the form of subvention of research expenses, subvention of publications, opportunities to sponsor and attend conferences, or direct fees for services, this money is not insignificant, and its influence on research findings and positions taken on scholarly disputes is largely unknown. It is time to recognize that this is an issue of a whole different ethical magnitude from that of taking research funding from the Methodists to find out why the collection baskets are not coming back as heavy as they used to. I know there will be great resistance to opening this can of worms, but I do not think there is any choice. This is an issue that is slowly but surely building toward a public scandal. It would be far better to deal with it ourselves within the discipline than to have others expose it. I am not implying that it is necessarily wrong to accept funding from interested parties, whether pro or anti, but I do think there needs to be some more public accounting of where the money is coming from and what safeguards have been taken to assure that this money is not interfering with scientific objectivity. [70]

ENDNOTES

[1] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), 121.

[2] All these and others are conjectures that have been proposed for explaining the dramatic changes that individuals go through when caught up in charismatic movements. These conjectures, only mentioned here by way of introduction, will be discussed in Part Two of this paper.

[3] To some extent, they have also tended to publish in clinical psychology journals where support for their point of view is a bit stronger.

[4] Several people on each side of this debate have told me, in personal communications, not only that they disagree with, but that they hate or despise certain members of the other camp.

[5] Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge. *A Theory of Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America 1776-1990* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992); Lawrence R. Iannaccone, "Sacrifice and Stigma: Reducing Free-Riding in Cults, Communes, and Other Collectives," *Journal of Political Economy* 100 (1992): 271-291.

[6] Robert Jay Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

[7] If the evidence in all cases was fabricated, it was done with remarkable consistency over time. I have returned to talk with all of these people and they all have stuck to their stories over periods of time as long as twenty years.

[8] Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*; Edgar Schein and C.H. Barker, *Coercive Persuasion* (New York: Norton, 1961).

[9] Lee Ross and Richard. E. Nisbett, *The Person and the Situation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991).

[10] Robert Feldman, *Social Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 35.

[11] Janet Jacobs, *Divine Disenchantment: Deconverting from New Religions* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), 40n.

[12] This Shiite sect, operating out of a headquarters fortress in Tabaristan near the south coast of the Caspian Sea, terrorized the Islamic world for over 150 years by training agents to carry out often suicidal missions of assassination. The agents were trained using hashish (from which both the sect and the English word "assassin" get their names) to give them a glimpse of paradise and to make them impatient to get there. Cf. Colin McEvedy, *Atlas of Medieval History* (London: Penguin, 1981), 62.

[13] Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism.*

[14] Even when a closely bonded married couple joins a cult as a family, the brainwashing process, at some point, separates the two people from each other, psychologically if not always physically.

[15] Benjamin D Zablocki, *The Joyful Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[16] Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism.*

[17] Throughout this paper, I have used the term *brainwashing* to describe a process that has gone by many names in the scientific and popular literature. This process has been called *thought reform* (Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*); *menticide* (Joost Meerloo, *The Rape of the Mind* [New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1956]); *coercive persuasion* (Edgar Schein and C.H. Barker, *Coercive Persuasion* [New York: Norton, 1961]); *mind rape* (Meerloo, *The Rape of the Mind*); and *debility, dependency, and dread* (I.E. Farber, H.F. Harlow, and L. J. West, "Brainwashing, Conditioning, and DDD [Debility, Dependency, and Dread]," *Sociometry* 20 [1957]: 271-285). Singer has preferred to use the longer phrase *systematic manipulation of psychological and social influence* (Margaret Singer, "Group Psychodynamics," *Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy*, ed. R. Berkow [Rahway, NJ: Merck Sharpe & Dohme Research Laboratories, 1987]). All of these terms are roughly synonymous. I have chosen to use the term *brainwashing* because it has the widest public recognition. It may also be the most misunderstood of all these terms, but I see that as an advantage, since using the term impels us to face these misunderstandings head-on instead of avoiding them with linguistic sleights of hand.

[18] Harvey Cox, quoted in: Gene G. James, "Brainwashing: The Myth and the Actuality," *Thought* 61 (1986): 254.

[19] Perry London, "Deposition in the Case of the United States Versus Fishman" (Northern District of California: United States District Court, 1990), 4.

[20] James A. Beckford, *Cult Controversies: The Societal Response to the New Religious Movements* (London: Tavistock, 1985), 204.

[21] James T. Richardson and Brock Kilbourne, "Classical and Contemporary Applications of Brainwashing Models: A Comparison and Critique," in *The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy: Sociological, Psychological, Legal, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. David G. Bromley and James T. Richardson (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1983), 8.

[22] Thomas Robbins, *Cults, Converts, and Charisma: The Sociology of New Religious Movements* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1988), 200.

[23] Richardson and Kilbourne, "Classical and Contemporary Applications of Brainwashing Models," 31.

[24] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 77-128; Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 129-56.

[25] An epistemological refutation would consist of showing that the supposed theory was not really a scientific theory at all in that it failed to meet the all-important scientific criterion of disprovability.

[26] An empirical refutation would consist of a marshaling of evidence that contradicts or at least fails to support the theory. A thorough empirical refutation would be based on several such studies, each of which had been replicated several times.

[27] To be fair, it must be said that scholars associated with the anti-cult movement have often been equally condemnatory of research that has anything good to say about NRMs. The poor disinterested scholar tends to get it from both directions. However, I dwell here chiefly on the abuses of those who defend cultic influence processes because by and large they hold most of the positions of authority within the institutional framework of the sociology of religion.

[28] Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 127.

[29] This quote was taken from an email message in 1989 that was sent out to an extensive list of recipients. I was one of the recipients on the mistaken belief that I would be sympathetic to the ideas expressed. Even though the email message has been widely distributed and is famous throughout the discipline, I see no need to embarrass the author by citing his name.

[30] Zablocki, *The Joyful Community*; Benjamin D. Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: Free Press, 1980); Benjamin D. Zablocki, "Rational Models of Charismatic Influence," in *Social Theory and Social Policy: Essays in Honor of James S. Coleman*, eds. Aage B. Sorensen and Seymour Spilerman (Westport, CN: Praeger, 1993), 73-91.

[31] Richard Ofshe, N. Eisenberg, R. Coughlin, G. Dolinajec, K. Gerson, and A. Johnson, "Social Structure and Social Control in Synanon," *Voluntary Action Research* 3 (1974): 67-76; Richard Ofshe, "Coercive Persuasion and Attitude Change," in *The Encyclopedia of Sociology*, eds. Edgar Borgatta and Marie Borgatta (New York: MacMillan, 1992), 212-24; Richard Ofshe, "Synanon: The People Business," in *The New Religious Consciousness*, eds. Charles Glock and Robert Bellah, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 116-37; Richard Ofshe and Margaret Singer, "Attacks on Peripheral versus Central Elements of Self and the Impact of Thought Reform Techniques," *Cultic Studies* 3, no. 1 (1986): 3-24.

[32] Marybeth Ayella, "Insane Therapy: Case Study of the Social Organization of a Psychotherapy Cult," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1985); Marybeth Ayella, "'They Must Be Crazy': Some of the Difficulties in Researching 'Cults,'" *American Behavioral Scientist* 33, no. 5 (1990): 562-77.

[33] Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The New Psychology of Modern Persuasion* (New York: William Morrow, 1984); Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: How and Why People Agree to Things* (New York: Quill, 1985); Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence, Science and Practice* (Glenview, IL: Scott Foreman, 1988).

[34] Amy Siskind, "Two Utopian Communities in the United States: The Oneida Community and the Sullivan Institute/Fourth Wall Community" (Ph.D. diss., The New School for Social Research, 1990).

[35] Roy Wallis, *The Road to Total Freedom: A Sociological Analysis of Scientology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

[36] Philip Zimbardo and Susan Anderson, "Understanding Mind Control: Exotic and Mundane Mental Manipulations," in *Recovery From Cults: Help for Victims of Psychological and Spiritual Abuse*, ed. Michael D. Langone (New York: Norton, 1993), 104-25.

[37] David Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: The Free Press, 1983).

[38] Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma.*

[39] Robbins, *Cults, Converts, and Charisma*, 203.

[40] Irving Louis Horowitz, *Science, Sin and Scholarship: The Politics of Reverend Moon and the Unification Church* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978).

[41] Robbins, *Cults, Converts, and Charisma*, 200.

[42] It might be helpful to science, in this regard, to make a clear distinction between brainwashing and actionable brainwashing. Not all cases in which the social-psychological process of brainwashing might be demonstrated are necessarily deserving of compensation. If we could separate these two issues, it might help those who feel that the cults are being subjected to inquisition by lawsuit to acknowledge evidence of brainwashing without feeling that they were thereby acknowledging the cult's culpability.

[43] Edward Hunter, *Brainwashing in Red China: The Calculated Destruction of Men's Minds* (New York: Vanguard, 1956).

[44] Horowitz, *Science, Sin and Scholarship.*

[45] John Lofland and Rodney Stark, "Becoming a World Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective," *American Sociological Review* 30 (1965): 862-875; John Lofland, *Doomsday Cult: A Study of Conversion, Proselytization and Maintenance of Faith* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966); Lewis Yablonsky, *The Tunnel Back* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); Thomas Robbins, "Eastern Mysticism and the Resocialization of Drug Users: The Meher Baba Cult," *Sociological Analysis* 38 (1969): 281-303.

[46] Vincent Bugliosi and Curt Gentry, *Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Murders* (New York: Norton, 1974).

[47] Zablocki, *The Joyful Community.* Interestingly, at this time there were nothing but positive reviews for this treatment within sociology. A number of other sociologists writing in this period saw in my use of the brainwashing conjecture a model of how to understand NRMs (James Richardson, Mary Harder, and Robert B. Simmonds, "Thought Reform and the Jesus Movement," *Youth and Society* 4 [1972]: 185-202).

[48] James V. Downton, Jr., *Sacred Journeys: The Conversion of Young Americans to Divine Light Mission* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

[49] Ted Patrick had begun to deprogram abductees of the Children of God in San Diego in 1971. By 1976, when he published his book, *Let Our Children Go*, deprogramming had become a well-established profession enjoying a certain degree of immunity in its brushes with the law: John LeMoult, "Deprogramming Members of Religious Sects," *Fordham Law Review* 46 (1978): 599-640.

[50] Horowitz, *Science, Sin and Scholarship.*

[51] The Cult Awareness Network (CAN) was founded in 1978 as was the American Family Foundation, an organization for clinical professionals engaged in anti-cult activity.

[52] Dave Mitchell, Cathy Mitchell, and Richard Ofshe, *The Light on Synanon* (New York: Seaview Books, 1980).

[53] Joel Fetzer, *Selective Prosecution of Religiously Motivated Offenders in America* (Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen, 1989).

[54] Some were later convicted. Cf. John Hubner, and Lindsey Gruson, *Monkey On A Stick: Murder, Madness and the Hare Krishnas* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988).

[55] Lewis F. Carter, *Charisma and Control in Rajneeshpuram: The Role of Shared Values in the Creation of a Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[56] For example: Eileen Barker, *The Making of a Moonie: Choice or Brainwashing* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984); Marc Galanter and Peter Buckley, "Psychological Consequences of Charismatic Religious Experience and Meditation," in *The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy*, eds. David Bromley and James Richardson (New York: Edwin Mellon, 1983), 194-204; Janet Jacobs, "The Economy of Love in Religious Commitment: The Deconversion

of Women from Nontraditional Religious Movements," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 23, no. 2 (1984): 155-171; Stuart A. Wright, "Post-Involvement Attitudes of Voluntary Defectors from Controversial New Religious Movements," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 23, no. 2 (1984): 172-182; Trudy Solomon, "Integrating the 'Moonie' Experience: A Survey of Ex-Members of the Unification Church," in *In Gods We Trust*, eds. Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1981).

[57] This critique was exhibited not only in courts of law but increasingly in the mass media where the demand for "experts" had also increased.

[58] Perry London, "Deposition in the Case of the United States Versus Fishman," (Northern District of California: United States District Court, 1990).

[59] Dick Anthony and Thomas Robbins, "Religious Totalism, Violence, and Exemplary Dualism: Beyond the Extrinsic Model," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 3 (1995): 10-50; Dick Anthony, "Religious Movements and Brainwashing Litigation: Evaluating Key Testimony," in *In Gods We Trust*, eds. Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1990); Thomas Robbins and Roland Robertson, "Studying Religion Today: Controversiality and 'Objectivity' in the Sociology of Religion," *Religion* 21 (1991): 319-337; J. Gordon Melton, "Another Look at New Religions," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 527 (1993): 97-112; James R. Lewis, "Self-Fulfilling Stereotypes, the Anticult Movement, and the Waco Confrontation," in *Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict*, ed. Stuart A. Wright (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[60] Molko and Leal v. Holy Spirit Association (Sacramento: California Supreme Court, 1988), 1109-10.

[61] The reason that such a summary dismissal of complaints was thought to be so important was the widespread belief among sociologists at that time that juries (and lower court judges) could not be trusted to provide justice in brainwashing cases. The very words "brainwashing" and "cult" were thought to be so inflammatory to the sensibilities of average jurors (and ordinary judge) as to practically assure findings in favor of the plaintiff.

[62] Benjamin Zablocki, "Reliability and Validity of Apostate Accounts in the Study of Religious Communities" (paper presented at the Association for the Sociology of Religion, New York, N.Y., August, 1996). David G. Bromley, "Religious Disaffiliation: A Neglected Social Process," in *Falling From the Faith: Causes and Consequences of Religious Apostasy*, ed. David G. Bromley (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988), 9-25.

[63] David G. Bromley, "The Social Construction of Religious Apostasy," in *The Politics of Religious Apostasy*, ed. David G. Bromley (New York: Praeger, 1997), 4.

[64] Even scholars who took a strong anti-brainwashing position were not immune from attack if they dared to utilize research designs calling for interviews with both current members of NRMs and apostates. James A. Beckford was dismayed by the prevailing climate of opinion that seemed to assert that "if you are not with us, you're against us": "One might have thought that professional sociologists did not need to be reminded that having an academic interest in a certain group of people does not necessarily supply any degree of personal support for their cause. Unfortunately, however, some of the 'professional' response to my work indicates that I am taken to be an anti-cultist because of my interest in ex-Moonies. . . . I am therefore obliged to preface the following chapter with an express denial of the charge that my interest in apostates' and critics' accounts of the UC evinces any personal antipathy on my part toward this particular NRM or, indeed, any others" (*Cult Controversies*, 46).

[65] Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*; Schein and Barker, *Coercive Persuasion.*

[66] Richard Ofshe and Margaret Singer, "Attacks on Peripheral versus Central Elements of Self and the Impact of Thought Reform Techniques," *Cultic Studies* 3, no. 1 (1986): 3-24; Margaret Thaler Singer, *Cults in Our Midst* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995); Ronald Enroth, "The Seduction Syndrome," in *Cults in Context: Readings in the Study of New Religious Movements*, ed. Lorne L. Dawson (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1996).

[67] *Amicus Curie Brief* by the American Sociological Association to United States Supreme Court (1989) page 11.

[68] I have had instances of this sort of barrier being lifted against me so I am personally confident that at least some of the stories by others are correct. However, confidentiality issues prevent me from saying more about these instances at this time.

[69] For example Stuart A. Wright, *Leaving Cults: The Dynamics of Defection*, ed. S.D. Gaede, SSRC Monograph Series Vol. 7 (Washington, DC: Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1987).

[70] Since it would be hypocritical to suggest that others do what I am not willing to do myself, let me give here a brief accounting of my own funding . Full details are available upon request. I have never taken any fees for serving as an expert witness either on the side of a NRM or on the side of any individual plaintiff or organized opposition group. In fact, I have always refused invitations to serve as an expert, whether paid or unpaid, for either side. All of my research funding (approximately $960,000) has come from U. S. government agencies (NIMH, NSF, NIDA), from the Russell Sage Foundation, and from the universities on whose faculties I have served (UC-Berkeley, California Institute of Technology, Columbia University, and Rutgers University). I have accepted research funding from no other source. No publication of mine has ever received subvention from any source. I have had my expenses paid to two conferences, one sponsored by the Unification Church and one by a group of anti-cult scholars.

REVIEW ESSAY: UNDERSTANDING THE BRANCH DAVIDIAN TRAGEDY

Catherine Wessinger

The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation. By Dick J. Reavis. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. 320 pages.

Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America. By James D. Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. 255 pages. $15.95 paper.

Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict. Edited by Stuart A. Wright. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. 394 pages.

From the Ashes: Making Sense of Waco. Edited by James R. Lewis. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994. 269 pages.

The Davidian Massacre: Disturbing Questions About Waco Which Must Be Answered. By Carol Moore. Franklin, TN: Legacy Communications, and Springfield, VA: Gun Owners Foundation, 1995. 494 pages.

Investigation into the Activities of Federal Law Enforcement Agencies toward the Branch Davidians: Thirteenth Report by the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight Prepared in Conjunction with the Committee on the Judiciary together with Additional and Dissenting Views. By House of Representatives. Report 104-749, Union Calendar No. 395. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996.

In 1993, the community known as Mount Carmel Center near Waco, Texas, became the site of a tragic conflict between federal law enforcement agents and a religious group that became known as the Branch Davidians.[1] On February 28, 1993, Mount Carmel was subjected to a massive assault conducted by agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) resulting in the deaths of five

Davidians and four BATF agents, and in the wounding of numerous others. Later that day, a sixth Davidian was shot and killed as he attempted to return to Mount Carmel on foot. Afterward, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents took charge of the situation, and presided over a siege that lasted fifty-one days and culminated in a gas and tank assault on the residence on April 19. As vividly captured on television, the FBI assault ended in an inferno in which 23 children (including two infants born when their mothers expired), 32 women, and 21 men perished. Only nine adults escaped the fire.

During and after the siege, the popular understanding about the Branch Davidians was that they were brainwashed "cultists" whose leader was either an insane messiah or a manipulative con man. Most of the American public still regards David Koresh as solely responsible for the tragic deaths. The books reviewed here reveal the ways in which federal agents contributed to this tragedy and bring a number of abuses to light—not the least of which was ignoring the importance of the Davidians' religion. These six books demonstrate that many of the facts about the Branch Davidian tragedy are available in the public domain. They therefore raise two questions: Why have criminal charges not been pressed against certain law enforcement commanders? Why have the media not reported the story fully?

Dick Reavis, a journalist, notes in *The Ashes of Waco* that the story of the Davidian tragedy was not reported fully, in part because the FBI controlled information, but also because reporters did not investigate. The Branch Davidians articulated their beliefs in a bible-based language that reporters did not comprehend. Reporters merely repeated the prejudiced stereotype fed to them by FBI spokesmen. Reavis sums up this simplistic explanation: "Texas—Child Molester—Gun Cult—Crazies."

In order to research his book, Reavis quit his job to study the Bible and Davidian doctrines, and to sift through the data. Reavis' sources include the 1993 Treasury Department report on the BATF raid, the Justice Department report on the FBI siege and final assault, the federal interviews of Texas Rangers that have been declassified, the logs kept by the Justice Department and BATF undercover agents, the courtroom testimony in the 1994 trial of the Davidians, and interviews with Davidian survivors. Reavis reports that he legally gained access to about 18,000 pages of transcripts of the telephone conversations between the Davidians and federal agents, but he does not reveal his source. The reader must decide whether or not to trust Reavis' extensive quotations from the negotiation transcripts. They appear to be trustworthy; however, Reavis does not provide citations.

Reavis tells a good story, presenting a humanized—not demonized—depiction of David Koresh, the Davidians, and federal agents. The reader gets a sense of the Davidians as individuals. They definitely marched to

a different drummer, but they were an integral part of a Texas rural community in which everyone, including the sheriff's deputies, knew everyone else and was on good terms. The Davidians' Mount Carmel, an offshoot of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, had been in the Waco area since 1934.

The strength of Reavis' presentation is that he relates the story of the two assaults from a variety of perspectives. The views of the Davidians, law enforcement agents, and outside witnesses are reported, permitting discrepancies between people's stories and the factual evidence to speak for themselves. Reavis goes into some detail about the complexities of the trial of eleven Davidians, after which the judge turned the jury's lenient verdict into harsh jail sentences.

Scholars would like more clarity from Reavis about his sources, but he has told a compelling story. Reavis' account is supported by the more scholarly treatments reviewed below. His book is a good introduction to the Branch Davidian tragedy for the general reader.

Why Waco? by James Tabor and Eugene Gallagher provides the best presentation of David Koresh's teachings and interpretations of the Bible. Koresh taught that he was the "Lamb" who was divinely inspired to interpret the symbolism of "Seven Seals" on a scroll described in the Book of Revelation. Davidians believed that Koresh's interpretations of the Seven Seals prophesied the catastrophic events of the endtime leading to the final judgment. The Davidians regarded their community as a gathering of the elect who heeded the message of their apocalyptic prophet. They believed that in the future they would relocate to Israel and fight in armageddon[2] on the side of the Israelis against an international army led by the United States. Koresh taught that he would be slain in armageddon, but that he would return, defeat God's enemies, and create God's kingdom. Koresh's children would be rulers in this millennial kingdom.

After the BATF assault, the Davidians understood themselves to be in the "Fifth Seal," which describes how some members of the godly community are martyred. After a waiting period, the rest of the community is murdered, thus initiating the events of the endtime.

The appendix of *Why Waco?* provides a transcript of the unfinished manuscript by David Koresh on the Seven Seals with an editorial preface and commentary by James Tabor and Phillip Arnold. *Why Waco?* details the efforts of Arnold and Tabor to communicate with Koresh and the Davidians utilizing the Davidians' own bible-based language, and to suggest an alternative apocalyptic scenario in which the members of the community would not have to die. Interpreting other passages from Revelation, Arnold and Tabor argued in a radio broadcast that Koresh was destined to write a "little book" to disseminate his message. They argued that the events of the endtime would occur at an unknown future date—not at that time in Waco. The strategy of Arnold and Tabor

appears to have worked, because on April 14 Koresh sent out a letter stating that after he wrote his interpretation of the Seven Seals and the manuscript was in safe keeping with Arnold and Tabor, he and the Davidians would come out. On April 19, however, the FBI initiated its disastrous assault in which Koresh, most of the adults, and 23 children perished. One of the survivors brought out a disk that contained Koresh's interpretation of the First Seal.

Tabor and Gallagher provide an illuminating analysis of the miscommunications between the Davidians and the FBI agents. The FBI agents had no understanding of the bible-derived language the Davidians were speaking. The FBI agent in charge, Jeffrey Jamar, refused to speak with Bible scholar Phillip Arnold, who was on the scene offering his services. Attorney General Janet Reno was not told about Koresh's promise to come out. Despite repeated requests from the Davidians, Arnold and Tabor were not permitted to serve as mediators. The FBI agents never took the Davidians' religious worldview seriously.

A significant feature of Tabor and Gallagher's book is that it avoids demonizing the Davidian apostate, Marc Breault, who was instrumental in shaping how BATF and FBI agents saw Koresh and the Davidians. Interviews were conducted with Breault, who condemned the excessive force used against the Davidians.

The final chapters of Tabor and Gallagher's book carefully evaluate the results of sensationalized media coverage—how the Davidians were prevented from explaining their beliefs to the American public, how the cult stereotype was applied, how any testimony about the Davidians that did not correspond to the cult stereotype was disregarded, and how the focus on Koresh as the deranged and controlling "cult leader" reduced the other Davidians to nonentities. Their discussion of conversion, affiliation, and defection points out the deficiencies of the "brainwashing" theory. Comparison is made between Mount Carmel and Jonestown to highlight the differences, and also to demonstrate how the Jonestown cult model was imposed on the Davidians. Tabor and Gallagher demonstrate that the label "cult" applied to the Branch Davidians determined the actions taken against them by the BATF and the FBI agents.

The final chapter of *Why Waco?* is an intelligent discussion of the issue of freedom of religion. Tabor and Gallagher argue:

> The anticult activists' claim to support the fundamental values of American democratic society is undermined by their willingness to suppress the exercise of religious freedom and, moreover, to engage the state in that campaign. If the purpose of the First Amendment is to protect religions from the state, rather than the state from religion, there is no constitutional basis for enlisting the power of the state in the campaign against so-called cults. That does not mean that the state is impotent to punish illegal acts done in the name of religion, but that the intervention must be carried out through normal legal channels (p. 184).

At the end of *Why Waco?* is a list of the Davidians, which provides information about who survived, who died in the BATF raid, and who died in the FBI assault. Tabor and Gallagher's book puts faces on some of these names by including photographs. Now available in paperback, *Why Waco?* can serve as a very useful textbook in courses on new religious movements, religion in America, and millennialism.

Armageddon in Waco, edited by Stuart Wright, is a book for scholarly and professional reading and is packed with hard-hitting essays. Unfortunately, Wright's excellent introduction, in which he highlights the questions raised by the Davidian tragedy, is followed by a first chapter that is a shallow presentation of the Davidians' historical context. The first section gets off to a shaky start with the chapter by Robert S. Fogarty. Fogarty's haphazard method of describing a series of eccentric prophets sheds no light on David Koresh and the Branch Davidians. In contrast, the historical chapter by William L. Pitts, Jr., demonstrates that David Koresh's group is part of an international Davidian tradition that developed out of Seventh-day Adventism in 1929. The Shepherd's Rod or Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, led by its prophet, Victor Houteff, settled on property they named Mount Carmel near Waco in 1935. A succeeding prophet, Ben Roden, added the term "Branch" in 1955 to refer to biblical prophecies about a messianic branch from the House of David. Pitts documents the succeeding leadership of Lois Roden, and the dispute for succession between Vernon Howell (later David Koresh) and the Rodens' son George. Pitts' history mentions a number of themes from the earlier Davidian prophetic lineage that were continued in Koresh's ministry, but only the well-informed reader will be able to note these themes. The chapter by sociologists David G. Bromley and Edward D. Silver provides a coherent historical account of the Davidian tradition from Houteff to Koresh along with helpful sociological analyses of the sources of Koresh's authority, the evolution of the group's structure and economic base, a fascinating account of Koresh's relations with his wives, and the causes of the group's increasing tension with the outside culture.

Part Two of *Armageddon in Waco* begins with a sophisticated analysis by Wright of the process of "deviance amplification," in which the social deviance of Koresh and his group was exaggerated by apostates, the media, and anti-cult activists to depict the Davidians as a "dangerous cult." Wright solves two mysteries in his chapter: Why did the BATF agents not consider serving the warrants peacefully, and why did the BATF agents not consult with the local law enforcement personnel who had positive relations with Koresh? The answer to both questions is that exaggerated allegations made by apostates caused BATF agents to believe that Koresh would not permit a search of Mount Carmel, and to view local authorities as being overly sympathetic to Koresh. In other words, the local law enforcement officers were judged to be "cult sympathizers,"

because they saw the Davidians as human beings. Wright documents the influence of anti-cult activities and writings on the BATF and FBI agents, as well as on Attorney General Janet Reno. An anti-cult document was an influence on Jeffrey Jamar, the FBI agent in charge of the siege. Wright's evaluation of the document is refreshingly blunt: "To assert that the [anti-cult] document is an objective treatment of marginal religious sects is akin to suggesting that Ku Klux Klan materials are dispassionate assessments of racial minorities" (p. 90). James R. Lewis' discussion of "cult" as a prejudiced stereotype follows, but after Wright's cogent presentation of the influence of the anti-cult movement, Lewis' assertion that there were no direct connections between the BATF and the anti-cult movement is untenable. Christopher G. Ellison and John P. Bartkowski examine the allegations that Koresh and his group abused children. They demonstrate that the evidence indicates greater complexity than what was reported in the news. Ellison and Bartkowski offer guidelines for evaluating such allegations, which include taking into account the agendas of persons making allegations. It should be noted that allegations of child abuse come under state, not federal, jurisdiction, and that Texas social workers had investigated and closed the case because they found no evidence of abuse.

Part Three of *Armageddon in Waco* begins with a masterful article by James T. Richardson analyzing the role of the media. Richardson discusses the "filters" that determine what is news and how that news will be presented, the reasons for the dominance of the anti-cult perspective on new religious movements, the FBI control of information given to the media during the siege, and the resulting dehumanization of the Davidians so that they became "unworthy victims" deserving of their final fates. I suggest that the treatment of the Davidian victims can be contrasted with the extensive media depiction of the victims of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. The media judged the Oklahoma City bombing victims as worthy of the public's compassion and outrage directed against the perpetrators. The chapter by Anson Shupe and Jeffrey K. Hadden illuminates the causes of the lack of public outrage about the deaths of the Davidians by discussing the self-legitimating aims of individuals and institutions in constructing narratives about crisis events. The events of the BATF raid and the FBI siege legitimated Koresh's prophecies to his group, but the Davidian narrative was blocked from reaching the public. The narratives constructed by federal agents, the media, and the anti-cult movement reinforced and legitimated each other. Because the anti-cult narrative appeals to media consumers, reporters did not investigate and discover a narrative alternative to the one promulgated by federal agents. Alternative narratives of the Davidian tragedy were not brought to public attention until the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. Both these chapters should be required reading for journalists, aspiring journalists, and media consumers.

Part Four of *Armageddon in Waco* begins powerfully with an essay by the eminent scholar of Jonestown, John R. Hall, discussing how the cultural narrative of "mass suicide" significantly shaped the BATF decision to make the "dynamic entry" instead of serving the warrants peacefully. Hall suggests that concerns about mass suicide may have prompted the BATF commanders' decision to "hurry up," instead of canceling the raid once they learned the element of surprise was lost. Hall convincingly presents a case that the confrontational tactics of anti-cult activists, government agents, and sensationalized media coverage create situations that produce tragedies such as Jonestown and Mount Carmel. These violent outcomes are obviously counterproductive to the primary goal espoused by anti-cult activists—to secure the well-being of loved ones. Hall's article is followed by a comprehensive analysis by Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony of the internal and external factors that can cause a religious group to become volatile. These include apocalypticism and its accompanying dualistic worldview, and charismatic and totalitarian leadership within a noninstitutionalized group. This essay is a gold mine of insights including: 1) a communal apocalyptic group is most volatile when it abandons proselytizing and views the outer society as beyond saving; and 2) external hostility directed toward the group is crucial in determining volatility.

Part Five of *Armageddon in Waco* begins with a clear account by James Tabor of David Koresh's apocalyptic interpretations of the 1993 events and the biblical passages on which Koresh based his interpretations. Tabor explains the steps taken by Phillip Arnold and himself to communicate an alternative biblical interpretation that would permit a peaceful resolution of the siege, and how their efforts were nullified by the FBI assault on April 19. Nancy Ammerman, one of the scholars of religion called in by the Justice Department after the fire, offers an illuminating analysis of a BATF and FBI culture that predisposed federal agents to downplay the salience of religious factors in their negotiations. She reveals that the FBI's behavioral scientists accurately assessed the Davidians and correctly recommended a nonconfrontational approach, but they were ignored by the tactical commanders. Ammerman's chapter makes valuable recommendations, including that law enforcement agencies develop a list of experts on religion, that agents establish working relationships with scholars of religion, and that consultations be held in which small groups of agents and scholars work jointly to consider the best strategies for addressing law enforcement problems. The consultations would promote collaboration between religious studies scholars and FBI agents, thus enhancing communication during future crises.

Part Six of *Armageddon in Waco* begins with a consideration by Rhys H. Williams of the constitutional and legal context in which the actions against the Davidians occurred. Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr., next

reviews the three constitutional rights that were abrogated in this case: the right to religious freedom, the right to privacy in the home, and the right to possess weapons. Gaffney persuasively defends the need for critical evaluation of excessive actions taken by law enforcement agents.

Armageddon in Waco concludes with a humane chapter by Dean M. Kelley, who discusses the March 11, 1993, letter he and James Dunn wrote to President Clinton requesting the demilitarization of the confrontation. Kelley's chapter also discusses the legal and practical implications of the case, the outcome of the trial of eleven Davidians, and the resemblance of the Branch Davidians to a first-century apocalyptic movement focused on Jesus of Nazareth as the messiah. The appendix of *Armageddon in Waco* provides the name, age, and citizenship of each Davidian who died at Mount Carmel.

After the deaths at Mount Carmel, many scholars of new religious movements were appalled at both the actions taken by law enforcement agents, and the consultation of "cult experts" with no academic credentials. The purpose of *From the Ashes*, edited by James R. Lewis, is to allow bona fide experts of new religious movements to respond to the tragedy. Some of the essays in this volume are scholarly papers. Many are opinion pieces. A number of these articles have been superseded by subsequent work published by their authors. Despite a few questionable articles, this volume includes numerous essays that remain important for reflection and research on the Davidian tragedy. I will highlight some of these essays.

Timothy Miller makes a persuasive statement about the problem of "Misinterpreting Religious Commitment." James Tabor's autobiographical account of the efforts of himself and Phillip Arnold to prevent disaster is informative and moving. Phillip Arnold expains the eschatological significance of fire in biblical passages and stresses that the Davidians were committed to obeying God. Michael Barkun's important *Christian Century* (1993) article is reprinted here. In this piece he presents advice that would prove accurate during the Freemen standoff—that federal agents should have a barely visible presence and demonstrate a willingness to wait. The excellent overview by Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony of the legal conflicts engendered by the "brainwashing" debate concludes with the lesson to be drawn from all of these studies: "Arguably, anti-cult brainwashing theories encourage confrontational state actions which trigger the very violent and self-destructive activities they are ostensibly designed to prevent" (p. 133).

The two articles on the media by James Beckford, and Constance Jones and George Baker will be good discussion assignments in religion and media courses. Lawrence Lilliston asks cogently, "Who Committed Child Abuse at Waco?" Larry Shinn's article broadens the lens through which the Davidian tragedy is viewed to include as contributory causes increasing secularization and the American propensity to utilize violence

to win conflicts. Shinn writes about the zeal of federal agents to strike out at the community they viewed as responsible for killing four BATF agents. According to Shinn, "That the law enforcers were willing to sacrifice even the children for the righteousness of their cause when they decided to bring an end to the standoff reveals the same level of devotion to symbols and values that those inside the Koresh compound had" (p. 187). Charles L. Harper likewise notes the American predilection for violence and for "doing something," as well as the momentum generated by the internal workings of the federal bureaucracy, as contributing to the catastrophic outcome of the siege. Anticipating the approach that was taken with the Montana Freemen in 1996, Harper suggests that the advice from scholars would be to utilize a low-key presence of agents along with a stress on negotiations and patience. Prophetically, Harper imagines the reaction from the general public to this approach: "You can hear the hoots of derision at the prolonged challenge to government authority and the government 'lack of guts' to do anything decisive." [A *New Orleans Times-Picayune* editorial about the peaceful resolution of the 81-day Freemen standoff accused the FBI agents of lacking virility.]

In the final essay, J. Gordon Melton bluntly says what many other articles in *From the Ashes* and *Armageddon in Waco* conclude. Melton asserts that as a result of its campaign against new religious movements and the stigmatizing of these groups with the stereotype conveyed in the term "cult," "the Cult Awareness Network and its spokespersons become morally, if not criminally, responsible" for the deaths at Waco (p. 259).

A unique contribution of *From the Ashes* is that it includes the voices of military and law enforcement experts criticizing the botched handling of the Davidian standoff. The articles by Robert D. Hicks and Col. Charlie Beckwith are valuable in this regard. However, the article by Moorman Oliver, Jr., is filled with incorrect allegations of fact.

The Davidian Massacre is authored by Carol Moore, a Washington activist who describes herself as a long-time Libertarian and pacifist. Her book is co-published by the Gun Owners Foundation. Just as scholars of religion have been concerned about the abrogation of First Amendment rights in the Davidian tragedy, gun owners are concerned about federal officials executing violent entries into gun owners' homes without valid cause. Moore performs a service in bringing together the numerous facts from the Treasury and Justice Departments' reports, the trial transcript, newspaper and television reports, and other sources.

Moore documents the flawed BATF investigation, David Koresh's ignored invitation to a BATF agent to come to his home and inspect his weapons, the inadequate affidavit alleging probable cause for a search warrant, the planning of the BATF raid, BATF and Davidian actions during the shootout, the BATF lies afterward to cover up mistakes, the technicalities and details of Koresh's guns, and a description of the

Davidians' legal gun trade which financially supported the community. Moore presents Davidian testimony that BATF agents in three National Guard helicopters initiated the shootout by firing upon the Davidians.

Moore presents evidence indicating that BATF agents may have changed their stories from the time of the raid to the time of the trial of eleven Davidians, that FBI agents may have interfered with the investigation by Texas Rangers of the BATF shootings, and that a refrigeration unit storing 30 Davidian corpses failed—making further autopsies impossible.

Moore's thesis is that the BATF agents' "justifiable fear of prosecution is a primary motivation for the vicious treatment of the Davidians by federal agents during the fifty-one days that followed" (p. 157). In other words, Moore contends that FBI tactical commanders aimed to destroy evidence that on February 28 the BATF teams at the front door, on the roof, and in the helicopters shot into the Davidian residence without first attempting to serve the warrants peacefully. All of the evidence that would have supported the allegations made by the Davidians and their two attorneys is now gone: the building with its allegedly bullet-ridden roof and walls, the right side of the steel-encased front door that allegedly contained numerous bullet holes fired from the outside, and the Davidians' parked vehicles. Tanks crushed the Davidian vehicles. During the fire, a tank pulled the double front doors away from the building, but the right side of the door is missing (p. 128-29).

Moore delivers the gun owners' perspective in sentences beginning, "Many think . . . ." Moore carefully separates her speculations from her factual reporting, and she provides extensive citations so that her assertions can be checked. The facts as reported by Moore are compatible with the accounts given in the books by Reavis, Tabor and Gallagher, and the articles in Wright's edited volume.

The report entitled *Investigation into the Activities of Federal Law Enforcement Agencies toward the Branch Davidians* is the product of the joint investigation by the Judiciary's Subcommittee on Crime and the Government Reform and Oversight Committee's Subcommittee on National Security, International Affairs, and Criminal Justice, that included public hearings from July 19 to August 2, 1995. The majority report (Republican), which had the potential to become a partisan attack on President Clinton's administration, is arguably well-researched.[3] The report makes constructive use of *Why Waco?* by Tabor and Gallagher, and *Armageddon in Waco* edited by Wright. Despite the majority report's data and critical analysis, however, it falls short in a number of areas. I recommend first reading the other books reviewed in this essay to spot the numerous omissions and glosses in the majority report. The majority report stops its fact-gathering and analysis in crucial areas.

The majority report is a much stronger work of research than the minority report, which aims to place all blame on the "criminal conduct

and aberrational behavior of David Koresh" to prevent investigation into possible incompetent and/or criminal conduct on the part of federal law enforcement agents (p. 98). The minority report is an obvious Democratic attempt to prevent blame from falling on the Clinton Administration. It goes so far as to assert, "We disagree with the majority's assertion that the FBI should have developed a thorough understanding of the religious tenets of the Davidians" (p. 106). This report reflects poorly on the elected officials who endorsed it.

The shortcomings of the majority report include the omission of investigation into the shooting death of Michael Schroeder by BATF agents on February 28 as he attempted to return to Mount Carmel, and whether there was deliberate obstruction of justice by leaving his body where it fell for several days and by Jamar's prevention of investigation of the site by Texas Rangers. The majority report states that the videotape of the BATF raid taken from the helicopters is not continuous. In contrast to its lengthy discussion of facts pertinent to other allegations, the majority report makes the glaringly unsupported statement: "There is no evidence that the FBI discharged firearms on April 19" (p. 83). It does not discuss the evidence for and against this allegation. The majority report also neglects to consider evidence that passageways of escape from the fire such as doorways and stairways were destroyed by the tanks. It claims that the three initial fires occurred in parts of the residence that had not been rammed by tanks, but the other books reviewed here discuss evidence indicating that was precisely the case.[4]

The majority report is strong in its research and analysis of the BATF investigation of the Davidians and the BATF raid. It presents an illuminating account of the interaction of federal agencies that resulted in the debacle of the BATF raid. The story of the interactions of federal agencies is complex and convinces the reader of the dilemma of being inadvertently caught up in the machinations of large bureaucracies. The majority report finds that the BATF investigation of the Davidians and the planning and execution of the raid were grossly incompetent, and that BATF agents knowingly made false allegations in order to secure military support—such as that Mount Carmel contained a methamphetamine lab. The affidavit upon which the search warrant was based provided no evidence that the Davidians were illegally converting semi-automatic weapons into automatic weapons—the purported reason for the raid. The report demonstrates that BATF commanders decided to execute a dynamic entry two months before undercover surveillance of Mount Carmel began, and that the surveillance was poorly conducted.

The majority report's consideration of whether the Posse Comitatus Act[5] was violated is informative. Detailed evidence shows that the BATF agents in charge of the investigation and raid knew that there was no methamphetamine lab in Mount Carmel. BATF commanders falsely claimed the existence of a methamphetamine lab to secure assistance from the National Guard and U.S. Army Special Forces. The report

reveals that the BATF received military assistance in four ways: 1) surveillance overflights by the National Guard; 2) training of BATF agents by U.S. Army Special Forces; 3) the use of National Guard helicopters in the raid; 4) post-raid support in terms of personnel and equipment to both BATF and FBI.

The majority report concludes that the Posse Comitatus Act was not violated in the February 28 raid or afterward, and that BATF agents knowingly misled the Defense Department in claiming the existence of a drug nexus in order to obtain non-reimbursable military support. The majority report concludes: "**Civilian law enforcement's increasing use of militaristic tactics is unacceptable**" (bold in original, p. 53).

The majority report finds that BATF commanders Phillip Chojnacki and Chuck Sarabyn recklessly endangered the lives of their agents by proceeding after learning that Koresh knew of the impending raid. The report finds there is no justification for the rehiring of Chojnacki and Sarabyn, and wonders if "there are facts not disclosed to the subcommittees that led administration officials to agree to rehire these men" (p. 29).

The majority report details how the efforts of FBI negotiators to resolve the siege peacefully were undermined by FBI tactical maneuvers, which included tanks destroying Davidian vehicles, shining bright spotlights, and blasting high-decibel sounds at the Davidians. BATF agent James Cavanaugh, who served as negotiator until the FBI arrived, was immediately removed from negotiating. Before his removal, Cavanaugh had produced significant results by negotiating a ceasefire and securing the exit of a number of Davidians (p. 58). The FBI permitted McLennan County Sheriff Jack Harwell to serve briefly as mediator. He established a rapport with Koresh's lieutenant Steve Schneider, but thereafter "Harwell's participation in the negotiations consisted of having his previous conversations broadcast into the residence via loudspeaker" (p. 59). The Davidians highly regarded Texas Rangers, but Texas Rangers were not permitted to participate in the negotiations. Texas Rangers had concerns about how the siege was being conducted, but Jeffrey Jamar refused to see Ranger Captain Byrnes or speak with him by telephone (p. 59). These refusals of input parallel the refusal of Jamar and other high-level FBI agents to speak with Phillip Arnold, or to permit Arnold to serve as third-party mediator even though Steve Schneider, the Davidian most involved in the negotiations, requested Arnold by name (p. 61). The FBI also disregarded the advice of the Harvard Negotiation Project to utilize a third-party mediator (p. 63).

The majority report concludes that there was an FBI subculture that inclined agents to refuse outside offers of assistance. However, FBI tactical commanders also disregarded the advice of FBI agent Peter Smerick, a behavioral expert, that a confrontational approach would produce disastrous consequences (p. 64).

I believe that the consistent refusal to utilize expertise and strategies that had been productive, combined with the destruction of evidence and the federal refusal of cooperation in the subcommittees' investigations, signal the need for more thorough investigation.

The majority report states that two Texas Rangers were flown by the Treasury Department to Washington to be briefed before testifying (p. 7), and that the Justice Department neither permitted examination of the Davidians' legal semi-automatic weapons to see if they had been illegally converted to automatic weapons, nor conducted its own examination of the weapons. Military personnel who were interviewed by the subcommittees' staffs were first counseled by their commanders (p. 9).

The majority report reveals that no one told the Attorney General about Koresh's promise in his April 14 letter that the Davidians would come out after he wrote his interpretation of the "Seven Seals" of Revelation. The majority report states that the Davidians could be heard cheering on the negotiation tapes when they learned that they would be coming out (p. 65). On April 15, the chief on-site negotiator, Byron Sage, told Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell that there was no use in continuing negotiations (p. 65).

The majority report extensively discusses the CS gas, its characteristics, and how it was used at Mount Carmel. It concludes "that CS insertion into the enclosed bunker at a time when women and children were assembled inside that enclosed space could have been a proximate cause of or directly resulted in some or all of the deaths attributed to asphyxiation in the autopsy reports," but it does not mention how many women and children in the bunker died of asphyxiation (p. 71). The report also concludes that the CS gas "might have impaired the ability of some Davidians to be able to leave the residence had they otherwise wished to do so" (p. 75), and that in using CS gas, "the FBI failed to demonstrate sufficient concern for the presence of young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with respiratory conditions" (83). It does not report that the United States has signed an international treaty agreeing not to use CS gas in warfare.[6]

Moreover, the majority report analyzes each of the reasons given by the Attorney General and the FBI for why the final assault was carried out instead of continuing negotiations, and finds each rationale to be without basis. At the hearings, both Jeffrey Jamar and Janet Reno testified that they were certain the Davidians would fire upon the tanks once the FBI started gassing the residence, and therefore it was nearly certain that the contingency plan of accelerating the gassing and initiating the demolition of the building would be implemented. Curiously, they do not appear to have reflected on the effect the accelerated assault would have on the children. In light of these findings, the majority report's conclusion that President Clinton should have accepted Attorney

General Reno's resignation is mild.

Addenda reveal that both the Republicans and the Democrats find fault with the investigation proceedings. The most intelligent addendum is a statement by Hon. Steven Schiff, which indicates that he carefully studied and considered the complex evidence. Schiff disagrees with the majority report's conclusion that most Davidians could have escaped the fire if they had chosen to do so. Instead, he concludes that the tank demolition of the building blocked most avenues of exit, and that many people probably were incapacitated by the CS gas.

> The Government's use of CS gas in the manner it did, that is, clearly designed to incapacitate men, women and children in a confined, unventilated space, after avenues of escape had been deliberately cut off, was unconscionable; as was the cursory manner in which the Government, and especially Attorney General Reno "bought into" the conclusory and simplistic analyses that the use of CS gas posed an "acceptable" level of risk (p. 94).

Schiff is concerned about "what clearly are breaches of ethics, and possible obstruction of justice by Government attorneys and investigators" (p. 95). He points out that many witnesses did not answer all questions asked of them (p. 95).

I agree with Hon. Schiff that the majority report is an excellent start in understanding the actions of federal agents toward the Davidians, but that more thorough investigation is needed. Schiff points out that military operations aim to "demolish an 'enemy'" and military tactics run "roughshod over the 'niceties' of caring for the rights of those involved" (p. 93). I share Hon. Schiff's concern about "the militarization of domestic law enforcement and the lack of accountability by Federal law enforcement" as exemplified in the Branch Davidian tragedy (p. 93).

The federal government was quick to prosecute surviving Davidians and then convict them of conspiracy to murder—a charge of which they were acquitted by the jury. Why have no charges been brought against certain BATF and FBI commanders? A great deal of information on the Davidian tragedy is available in the public domain. There have been hearings, a trial, and (redacted) reports published by the Treasury and Justice Departments; and transcripts of the Waco hearings and the House of Representatives report are available. It is by no means clear that there was no wrongdoing on the part of federal law enforcement agents.

The Branch Davidian tragedy is a complex puzzle, and each of the books reviewed here supplies crucial pieces, but the puzzle has not yet been assembled completely. Important pieces are not visible. A future President's administration could take the high road by appointing an independent and impartial commission to ask the hard questions and search for complete answers. Such an ethical step, however, is not likely to happen for a long time.

We also have to ask, Why does the news media persistently refuse to investigate and report this story? As I followed the 1995 Waco hearings, I noted that the *Washington Post* barely reported the hearings, while the *Washington Times* (owned by the Unification Church and partial to Republicans) thoroughly and intelligently reported on the information coming out of the hearings. Clearly, most of the news media have chosen the *Washington Post* approach to the Branch Davidian tragedy.

The books reviewed here make it abundantly clear that the Branch Davidians were assaulted by the BATF and subjected to psychological warfare by the FBI, and that some survivors have been given extraordinarily long prison sentences for defending their community. These federal actions appear to be reasonable to the majority of Americans, because the Branch Davidians were dehumanized and stigmatized by the "cult" stereotype. All of these researchers and authors have performed an important service in not letting the memory of the Branch Davidian tragedy die.

The Davidians' religious beliefs contributed to the tragedy. The group believed that they lived in the catastrophic endtime predicted in the Bible, that their godly community would be attacked twice, and that they would be slaughtered by Babylon. They believed that these events would inaugurate God's judgment and the final battle between good and evil, after which God would establish his kingdom on earth. Despite these beliefs, however, I am convinced by the Davidians' constant efforts to communicate with the FBI (which are described particularly well in *The Ashes of Waco* and *Why Waco?*) that **the Davidians did not want to die.** They hoped that armageddon would not occur yet, and Koresh was sincere in his promise to come out after he wrote his interpretation of the Seven Seals. This was confirmed by the discovery of a disk in the pocket of a surviving Davidian that contained Koresh's interpretation of the First Seal.

The Branch Davidians were sincerely religious people who had an ultimate concern, a concern for eternal salvation, that was more important to them than anything else.[7] Some people are willing to die or kill for their ultimate concern. The Davidians' ultimate concern was to be included in God's kingdom by obeying God's will as revealed in the Bible and as interpreted by God's inspired messiah, David Koresh. The Davidians did not want to die, but they were committed to obeying God's will above all, and God had told David Koresh that they were to wait for further revelation of God's will. During the waiting period, the Davidians attempted to communicate with the FBI agents, but the agents failed to appreciate the Davidians' ultimate concern and the importance of the Bible as the authority by which they interpreted the events.

Religious studies scholars Phillip Arnold and James Tabor are to be commended for taking innovative action in stepping forward and offering their expertise to the FBI. When rebuffed by the FBI, Arnold

and Tabor independently researched the Davidian religious worldview, and then formulated and carried out a plan to communicate with the Davidians via a radio broadcast. The Davidians were elated that finally someone who knew the Bible and understood their language and their ultimate concern was communicating with them. Arnold and Tabor offered a way for the Davidians to come out of Mount Carmel and remain faithful to their ultimate concern. The Davidians were persuaded by Arnold and Tabor's biblical arguments, they were excited to be coming out, and Koresh began writing his "little book" on the Seven Seals. In their final moments, the Davidians probably concluded that they were in the Fifth Seal after all, and therefore they were ordained by God to die at the hands of Babylon. The Davidians did not want to die, but they relied on the biblical assurance that they would achieve eternal life.

The methodology pioneered by Arnold and Tabor in the Branch Davidian case was tested again during the Freemen standoff in 1996. The Freemen's worldview is shaped by the white supremacist interpretation of the Bible known as Christian Identity. Their ultimate concern is to overthrow the federal government identified as "Babylon," and establish American republics obedient to the laws of Yahweh given in the Bible. During the Freemen standoff, FBI agents consulted religious studies scholars including Phillip Arnold, Jean Rosenfeld, Michael Barkun, and myself. It was difficult to convince FBI agents of the importance of religion. After Phillip Arnold spent four days in Montana with FBI negotiators, the negotiators successfully offered terms that permitted the Freemen to remain faithful to their ultimate concern and come out of Justus Township. The Freemen are continuing their fight against Babylon in the federal courts.

The peaceful resolution of the Freemen standoff is an important breakthrough in law enforcement. In many times and places, government agents typically crush religious groups that acknowledge an authority higher than the government. At the very least, they execute the messiah. Hopefully in the future, scholars of religion will be consulted in law enforcement cases involving religious people to prevent unnecessary loss of life.

ENDNOTES

[1] I am grateful to Jean Rosenfeld, Michael Barkun, Rosalee McReynolds, Robert Ellwood, and the two anonymous reviewers for their comments on a previous draft of this article.

[2] Armageddon in the Book of Revelation is the name of the place where the final battle between good and evil will occur. Throughout this essay, I use "armageddon" in its popular sense of the battle itself.

[3] For the record, I do not belong to a political party, and I virtually never vote Republican.

[4] Surviving Davidians claim that the tanks entering the building turned over lanterns,

while FBI agents claim that Davidians deliberately set the fire.

[5] The Posse Comitatus Act (1878) stipulates that federal military forces cannot be utilized against civilians. The Act was eroded during the 1980s by congressional approval of the use of military forces in the war on drugs (30-31).

[6] One hundred countries including the United States signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in Paris in 1993, which bans the use of CS gas in warfare. See Moore, 293.

[7] See Robert D. Baird, *Category Formation and the History of Religions* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 18, for a definition of religion as ultimate concern.

FIELD NOTES: THE FALL OF THE WALL?

Jeffrey Kaplan

In an offhand remark at the New Orleans AAR meeting, Robert Ellwood observed that the victory of the Church of Scientology over the Cult Awareness Network (CAN) over the issue of deprogramming may represent the functional equivalent of the fall of the Berlin Wall to religious studies scholars. At last, scholars could disengage from the "cult wars" and open a new chapter in the study of new religious movements (NRMs).

Ellwood's observation was of particular relevance to the creation of a column on current events that will be a regular feature in *Nova Religio*, for it highlighted the dilemma of how, in the age of the Internet, a semi-annual journal could hope to keep up with the protean world of new religions.

To answer this problem, it was decided to dedicate each column to a central theme or trend, with a listing of "Random Notes" to follow. These notes will serve both as announcements of new developments in the field and as pointers to where readers may obtain information via the World Wide Web and other resources between editions of *Nova Religio*. It is hoped that even this will be a stop-gap measure, as the *Nova Religio* web site <http://www.novareligio.com> in the future will allow events to be reported in a truly current fashion.

So in keeping with Ellwood's observation, no event would seem to have such profound implications for NRM scholars as the Scientology/CAN confrontation. For that reason, the premier Field Notes column will deal primarily with this issue. It should be noted at the outset that, despite David Bardin's spirited set of appeals claiming that the CAN name is being used fraudulently by the new CAN and the Church of Scientology, the former Cult Awareness Network is dead according to almost all of the principals involved in the case. By electing to file for both Chapter 11 protection and Chapter 7 liquidation, CAN as it was formerly constituted has virtually no chance of returning to the scene. What follows then will be a brief review of the Jason Scott deprogramming case, a discussion of the CAN files which are at the center of one of the

most divisive disputes of the post-CAN era, the extraordinary rancor that the "cult wars" continue to elicit, and the formation and future direction of the new "CAN" under a Board of Directors headed by George Robertson. It should also be noted that while this column deals exclusively with Scientology's involvement in the case which brought down CAN, other religious groups were part of the consortium which pursued this litigation. In a final disclaimer, this column concentrates solely on the CAN/Scientology dispute in the United States, but as such recent press articles as "The Shadowy Story Behind Scientology's Tax Exempt Status," and "Ultra-Aggressive Use of Instigators and the Courts," both in the *New York Times* of 9 March 1997, "Anti-Cult Group Dismembered as Former Foes Buy its Assets," *Washington Post*, 1 December 1996, and the massive Scientology study, "Religious Apartheid: Continuing Official Repression of Minority Religious Rights in Germany," available at <http://hatewatch.freedommag.org/gerwpap/> all indicate, the battle with CAN is linked to a global chain of events involving the Church of Scientology.

The initial facts of the Scott case are straightforward. In 1991, Jason Scott, then eighteen years old, and his family were members of a Pentecostal congregation in Washington state called the Life Tabernacle Church. Scott's mother, Kathy Tomkin, decided to leave the church and insisted her children do the same. Scott chose to stay and was kidnapped by deprogrammer Rick Ross. According to Scott's attorney, Kendrick Moxon, Scott, like most victims of deprogramming, had no wish to sue his family over the traumatic event. In the overwhelming majority of deprogramming cases every attempt is made to heal the breach in the family rather than to worsen the situation by resorting to the courts. Scott did, however, eventually file suit. Here the story becomes somewhat murky. Ross was recommended by a volunteer named Shirley Landa in Seattle. Landa was a volunteer for both CAN and the unrelated Seattle Crisis Hotline. Thus, Landa may not have been acting as a CAN volunteer when the referral was made. In any case, Scott was abducted and held for five days against his will. In 1993, he ultimately did decide to sue. The result was a historic $1.8 million victory for Scott and Kendrick Moxon that forced CAN to close up shop. With CAN effectively defunct and its assets in receivership under a court appointed trustee named Philip Martino, the Scott case took several new and unexpected twists.

First, Scott, claiming that his attorney had not been sufficiently attentive and that he had not seen a cent from the judgments, fired Moxon and hired Graham Berry. Berry has been accused of having represented or been connected to CAN members in the past, although he denies this and states that two courts have sided with his position on this point. Moreover, Scott began to settle with Rick Ross and with other creditors for a fraction of the judgments levied against them. Indeed, at

this writing (April 1997), Berry had filed on Scott's behalf a partial assignment of judgment which in effect sells Scott's judgment against CAN to an individual named Gary Beeney (or Beeny—the sources differ on the spelling). Beeney is reported to be a Scientologist who, according to Stephen Kent, was given the title of Honor-Status Patron in the International Association of Scientologists in a 1986 issue of *Impact* magazine for his large financial contributions to the group. Moxon, for his part, expresses surprise and some raw feelings at these events following a case in which he states that he "won the biggest civil rights case in history for Jason."

Nor has the confusion ended there. The receiver, Philip Martino, has indicated that, after a campaign of considerable harassment centering on the ultimate disposition of CAN's files, he wishes nothing more than to withdraw from the case. According to all who were interviewed for this article, the expected blizzard of lawsuits that will ensue over the CAN files makes them, from a monetary point of view, worthless. Indeed, according to a Chapter 7 Notice of Intended Abandonment brief submitted to Judge Ronald Barliant on 30 January 1997, Martino alerted the court of his intent to abandon CAN's key assets, including "computer memory, video and audio tapes, files on cults, phone records and financial records," because the "Trustee has been 'assured' that he and the estate will be sued if the Materials are sold, even in a redacted state."

Judge Barliant replied in a decision entered on 3 March 1997 that "It is bizarre, to say the least, that CAN, having elected the liquidation chapter of the Bankruptcy Code, then complains that the trustee liquidated its assets." However, Judge Barliant balances this criticism of CAN with the observation that "due to the highly litigious posturing of the parties in interest and CAN, who are ready to litigate at all cost[s], regardless of the economic benefit or harm to the estate," the administrative fees involved in the case may be expected to rise far beyond any monetary value the files might have held.

But the files obviously hold considerable value for all concerned. At issue is a mother lode of data, ranging from news clippings to records of CAN's dealings with the public and possibly with various professional deprogrammers (a term that is defined quite differently by the former CAN employees and by the Scientologists). These files are, in short, potential dynamite. The question of the eventual disposition of the files reveals some cleavages among the Scientologists involved in the case and elicits considerable foreboding from CAN sources, and according to press coverage, much discomfort from members of the public who may at some time have consulted CAN.

At issue are some 270 boxes of material—about 600 feet worth of documents. But what is the nature of this material, and to what uses could it be put should its final disposition ever be adjudicated?

Scientology sources and new Board Chairman George Robertson are convinced that contained in this mass of data is evidence of crimes, some of which may still be prosecutable under the statute of limitations of the various states in which the offenses may have taken place. But here the agreement ends. Nancy O'Meara of the Office of Public Relations of the Church of Scientology denies any intention on the part of the Church to persecute or punish any individual who contacted CAN. From her perspective, the issue is, what was said about Scientology and other religions, not who the source of the information might have been.

Kendrick Moxon has taken a consistently pragmatic line, offering the compromise that CAN ultimately declined of having the records redacted at the expense of the buyer—a process estimated to take months and cost as much as $50,000—to eliminate the names of all but well known public figures. In the view of former CAN official Cynthia Kisser, this compromise was rejected by CAN due to the extravagant exceptions to redacting insisted on in Moxon's proposal. Moreover, Moxon charges that while the records were still the property of CAN, Cynthia Kisser destroyed 50,000 files. Kisser's response to this allegation is to the point: "I have never destroyed anything I knew to be evidence." Stephen Hayes, an attorney and a Scientologist who bought the name and most of the effects of the Cult Awareness Network after CAN declared Chapter 7 proceedings, does want the names, feeling that only those who committed criminal wrongdoing need worry. George Robertson espouses a number of positions, ranging from burning the files if they are turned over to CAN, preserving them for research purposes, and redacting them if necessary. Cynthia Kisser expresses some disquiet over the prospect of the records becoming the property of the Church of Scientology or the new CAN. Indeed, the new CAN's first two newsletters to members largely reproduce well known Scientology studies, primarily on deprogramming (these are available at the new CAN web site <http://www.barepower. net/~can/info/ca970327.html>). Kisser notes too that some people on the old CAN mailing list have already begun to receive unsolicited mailings from the new CAN, and in any case, even if the former CAN recovered the files, they are at issue in a welter of pending litigation, leaving them in such a "legal quagmire" as to effectively mitigate their usefulness to anyone.

What exactly those files and associated records actually contain is a matter of considerable speculation. Should they ever emerge from the "legal quagmire," however, the good news for scholars is that the Scientology side and the new CAN state that the records would be made available for academic research. Scholarly critics of Scientology such as Stephen Kent, however, insist "that the organization is prohibited by both ideological commitment and policy from disseminating negative information about itself, its founder, or its current leaders, regardless of its factual nature." Moreover, Kent predicts that "Academics

researching Scientology who believe that the new CAN will be a useful tool are about to get a lesson in Scientology's self-promotion policies."

To my personal knowledge, the files in the former CAN's Barrington office were made available to some scholarly researchers in the past. Cynthia Kisser notes that, for the cost of postage and copying, the files were available to anyone. Those files, however, were comprised almost entirely of news clippings, a few academic articles, some haphazardly collected materials from the groups themselves, and a few letters of inquiry from members of the public regarding particular religious groups. The "smoking gun" of referrals to deprogrammers, if they exist, were certainly not filed in this area. Phone records, personal notes, financial records, and computer hard drives, however, may well tell another story.

Whatever the fate of the CAN files, what has not changed is the cult wars' venomous atmosphere, especially with regard to CAN. It is the extraordinarily emotional character of this confrontation that may, in the end, frustrate Robert Ellwood's hopes for a new day for NRM scholars. In the course of this brief research, CAN as an organization was referred to with such epithets as "hateful," "an equal opportunity hate group," "a deadly virus," "a very strong bacteria," "evil people who, like the Nazis, hated everything to do with religion and spirituality," "the KKK of religion," and much more.

Nor did it end there. Blistering personal attacks on individual CAN members were commonplace and were disseminated in published form by the Church of Scientology in both *Freedom Magazine* and *The Cult Awareness Network: Anatomy of a Hate Group.* In these sources, past CAN president Micheal Rokos is accused of being a pedophile who preyed on young boys while Cynthia Kisser is accused of having been a topless dancer, a person with no academic qualifications, and a criminal. Kisser for her part has filed a defamation suit. While the topless dancing aspect of the suit was dismissed because it failed to meet the stringent malicious intent standards regarding a public figure, the charge was in any case withdrawn as untrue. The suit alleging defamation on the criminality charge is ongoing. The "criminality" aspect of the suit stems from an October 1991 *Freedom Magazine* article, "Exposing the Criminal Clique called 'CAN.'" At issue are several passages in the article in which deprogramming is first defined as "a form of brainwashing which uses kidnapping, forcible restraint, assault, battery and even rape in an effort to get an individual to recast his or her chosen beliefs…." Then, using this definition, the article alleges that "Kisser has few qualms about her open support of deprogramming-for-hire. In 1978, she deprogrammed her own sister, the[n] went on to conduct other assaults."

All those interviewed on the Scientology side of the controversy believed with absolute sincerity all or most of these charges (Stephen Hayes was mordantly skeptical of the topless dancing scenario), while

George Robertson proudly takes credit for the research which brought all of these "facts" to light. Robertson reacted with outraged shock to the suggestion that the topless dancing charge for which he was primarily responsible had been withdrawn. For her part, Kisser denies them all and notes that she has both a B.A. and an M.A. in American Studies—facts which she contrasts with what she states are George Robertson's lack of accredited educational credentials and lack of ordination from any recognized ministerial body. Alone among those interviewed for this article, Robertson declined to discuss any aspect of his past, including his educational background.

From the perspective of the putative post-Cold War state of the field, however, none of this bodes well. Stephen Hayes speaks for all of the Scientologists interviewed when he recalls that he started out in the anti-CAN litigation with a rather detached feeling, but as he became more involved, the battle became increasingly personal and emotional. Much the same could be said as well for a number of NRM scholars who have been drawn into the "cult wars" over the years.

So much for the past. But what of the new CAN under the direction of George Robertson's Foundation for Religious Freedom? There has been some bitingly satirical—if not downright hostile—press coverage depicting the irony of Scientologists fielding calls from concerned parents who may be inquiring about Scientology itself. Indeed, a significant point of David Bardin's appeal on behalf of CAN charges that such use of the name CAN by an organization having diametrically opposed purposes amounts to fraud and cites case law to support his position (Cult Awareness Inc. v. Martino). Yet there is some reason for optimism if current plans as outlined by both George Robertson and the Church of Scientology itself are put into effect. First, as Kendrick Moxon points out, the deposition process revealed that CAN officers Priscilla Coates and Patricia Ryan felt that their job was to disseminate only "truthful information" that would counter the claims of the religious groups they were monitoring. What this meant in practice, according to Moxon, was that only derogatory information was given out under the theory that the religions would be deceptive about their own beliefs and practices. The new CAN promises to use standard reference works such as Gordon Melton's *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, to employ only trained counsellors to answer the phones (so far, the great majority of calls coming in to the new CAN have involved Christian groups rather than "cults" as they are popularly conceived), and to refer callers to a group of qualified independent experts. Moreover, in a controversial but perhaps quite hopeful development, the new CAN has resolved to suggest that callers get in touch with representatives of the religion with which they are concerned to have their questions answered firsthand. Such a process of open dialogue may well yield quite positive results in holding families together where deprogramming all too often has had precisely the opposite effect.

In response, those interviewed from the Barrington office state that those answering the phones were qualified. They also argue that, in their view, referrals were made not to deprogrammers but to exit counselors, whose work was legal. There seems, at best, to have been some naïveté at work here, inasmuch as Rick Ross, or for that matter almost any other exit counselor, is assumed in these depositions to have stuck scrupulously to the letter of the law. Moreover, given the number of calls fielded over the years by the Barrington office (Marty Butz estimates about 27,000 handled by him alone), it would have been a virtual impossibility for CAN to either thoroughly vet all those to whom referrals were made, or to follow up on what happened after the referral in every case. Indeed, given the former CAN's decentralized nature, it would probably be safe to assume that CAN volunteers around the country may well have been even more naïve on this score than the full time staff in Barrington.

Finally, in an early test of the direction of the new CAN, the Heaven's Gate suicides brought a brief flood of media interest once again to the "cults," and NRM experts were much in demand to once again explain the inexplicable to a bewildered public. The new CAN in a press release dated 27 March 1997 cautioned against "fanatical anti-religious statements being made, painting all religions or groups with the same brush stroke and creating further hysteria." This was the overwhelming consensus of NRM experts interviewed in the media as well, and there was an undercurrent of deep foreboding by members of NRMs as diverse as wicca and various Gnostic Christian churches that a new round of "anti-cult" polemics was forthcoming from the media. Fortunately, media interest in the mass suicides was short-lived, and the tragedy quickly passed from the serious talk shows and the op-ed columns of major newspapers to the routines of comedians throughout the country.

The release went on to urge that attention be given to the use of drugs in the cult's final act rather than to non-traditional religion per se. According to new CAN president Isadore Chait, "Mix extreme apocalyptic views with use of psychiatric drugs, and you have a cocktail for disaster." Yet this suggestion proved controversial among Scientology's critics. Stephen Kent, for example, believes that "this news release attempted to link psychiatry to the suicides, [suggesting] that the new CAN has become another vehicle for Scientology to launch attacks against the mental health profession."

Finally, the new CAN offered a list of experts who could be consulted by the press. The list included such recognized specialists as J. Gordon Melton, James Richardson, James E. Woods, William Bainbridge, and John Saliba, as well as more controversial figures.

If this brief research came to one overwhelming conclusion, it is this: sadly, the demise of the former CAN does not yet presage the dawning of a new world order for scholars concerned with new religious movements.

[Material for this column was obtained through the kind assistance of members of the Church of Scientology, the former Cult Awareness Network, interested scholars, and a battery of lawyers on all sides who gave generously of their time through telephone interviews and by supplying legal papers in profusion, press clippings, and other published material. In particular, I would like to thank Nancy O'Meara of the Office of Public Relations of the Church of Scientology; Stephen Hayes, an attorney and a Scientologist who bought the name and most of the effects of the Cult Awareness Network after CAN first declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings to shield them from creditors and then Chapter 7 proceedings to liquidate their assets; George Robertson, who now heads the new Scientology-run CAN through an organization known as the Foundation for Religious Freedom; Cynthia Kisser, the former National Director of CAN; Marty Butz of the former CAN Barrington office; Dr. Robert Ellwood of the University of Southern California; Dr. Stephen Kent of the University of Alberta; attorneys Graham Berry (representing Jason Scott), David Bardin (representing the former CAN in its appeal of the bankruptcy aspects of the Scott decision), and Kendrick Moxon, a Los Angeles-based attorney and a dedicated Scientologist with a considerable track record of litigation against CAN. Moxon was the attorney of record in the Scott case that drove the organization into bankruptcy. Invaluable too was J. Gordon Melton's excellent paper, "The Modern Anti-cult Movement in Historical Perspective," which was presented to the conference on "Rejected and Suppressed Knowledge: The Racist Right and the Cultic Milieu," 13-17 February 1997, in Stockholm, Sweden. Finally, the transcripts of recent court decisions, Scientology's *Freedom Magazine* (available on the Web <http://www.freedommag.org>), and the controversial Scientology publication, *The Cult Awareness Network: Anatomy of a Hate Group,* were helpful as well.]

RANDOM NOTES

In net news, a new discussion group for nature religions named NATREL-L, moderated by Chas S. Clifton, has begun. The address to subscribe is <majordomo@meteor.uscolo.edu>, with an associated web site at <http://www.uscolo.edu/clifton/natrel. html>.

A new, quarterly non-refereed journal of neo-paganism is set to appear as well. *The Pomegranate* has a website at <http://www.interchg.ubc.ca/fmutean> and an email address <antech@teleport.com>. The subscription price is $16 to *The Pomegranate*, 501 NE Thompson Mill Road, Corbett, OR 97019.

For on-line breaking news, a good source is RelNews <http://www.he.net/~rnews/rnews.htm>. This source does not specialize in New

Religious Movements, but does cover a variety of news on religion.

The Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance archive news and offer a number of fascinating files on their web page at <http://www.religioustolerance.org>.

From an anti-cult perspective, the Watchman Institute has published on-line a massive document called "Watchman Fellowship's 1996 Index of Cults, Occult Organizations, New Age Groups, New Religious Movements, and World Religions with Related Terms and Doctrines," at <http://rampages.onramp.net/~watchman/cultindx.htm>.

With the millennium approaching, a wide variety of on-line sources for news and views are available. The Millennium Institute publishes an email newsletter of events and activities. Subscription is free and can be accessed through the website <http://www. igc.apc.org/millennium/news>. Ted Daniels, publisher of *Millennium Watch*, also has a very useful website with news and various files at <http://www.channel1.com/mpr>.

Several efforts to compile a database of websites containing new religious movement material are underway. One of the more promising is that of Steve Hayes, <hayesstw@risc1.unisa.ac.za/> or <steve.hayes@diakonos.iafrica.com>, who has developed a form which he requests all persons and organizations with an NRM-related webpage to fill out. His website is at <http://www. nn.independent.co.za/~donn/clt/sites.htm>. Another fine NRM web page is that of Irving Hexham <http://www.ucalgary. ca/~hexham/>, who is also the list owner of Nurel-l, the primary email discussion list for new religions at <listserv@listserv.ucalgary.ca>.

Off line, a good newsletter noting emergent trends in religion—albeit with a more mainstream bent—is *Religion Watch.* The monthly newsletter costs $19.95 annually and may be obtained from Religion Watch, P.O. Box 652, North Bellmore, NY 11710.

The NRM panels for the next annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Francisco are now set. The panels are:

Theoretical Issues and the Study of NRMs

Bron Taylor, "Pagan Environmentalism and Green Apocalypticism: From Global Bricolage to the Question of Violence"

Judith Coney, "Falling in Love and Learning to Love: Two Types of Charismatic Attraction in New Religious Movements"

60s Spirituality: Then and Now

Yaakov Ariel, "Neo-Hasidism in the Age of Aquarius: The House of Love and Prayer in San Francisco, 1965-1975"

Nova Religio

Jeffrey Kaplan, "The Manson Legend: The Creation of a Soteriological Icon Three Decades On"

Robin Sylvan, "The Summer of Love, 1967 and 1988: Two Generations' Articulation of a Spirituality Expressed through Psychedelic Musical Youth Subcultures"

Scriptural Interpretations and NRMs

Eugene V. Gallagher, "The Bible and New Religious Movements: An Overview"

Richard A. Gardner, "Aum Shinrikyo's Use of 'Animated Scriptures' and a 'Panic' about Popular Culture"

Tamal Krishna Goswami, "Transformation vs. Continuity: Tensions in Scriptural Transmission and Hermeneutical Strategies in the Commentaries of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada"

Jeanne S. Hopper, "New Meanings from Old Methods: Contemporary Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture"

Judith R. Tafelski, "A Course in Miracles: The Scriptural Manifestations of Revelation in Postmodern Culture"

The Millennialism Studies Consultation, too, has finalized its panel for San Francisco:

Jerusalem in Millennial Visions Old and New

Guy L. Beck, "Celestial Lodge Above: Jerusalem's Temple of Solomon as Millennial Symbol in Freemasonry"

Marsha Mihok, "Jerusalem: The Millennial Vision and the Political Realities"

Yaakov Ariel, "The Focus of Messianic Hopes: The Evangelical Premillennialist View of Jerusalem"

Bron Taylor, "When Is Apocalypticism Millenarian? Reflections Based on the Subcultures of Radical Environmentalism"

David W. Damrel, "Islam at 1,000 AH: Millennial Expectations in Indian Sufism"

To close this premier column on a more somber note, minority religious movements, be they cult movements or long established religious communities, continue to suffer persecution around the world. The problems experienced by Scientology in Germany and other countries were alluded to above and have drawn the intervention of the United States Department of State on their behalf. Less well publicized is the fate of the Baha'i community in Iran. There has been a long, well documented history of enmity between the Shi'ite *ulamma* and the Persian Baha'i community that was greatly exacerbated under the despotic reign of the Shahs. This column is certainly not the forum to rehash this history. However, Amnesty International has taken up the cases of Dhabihullah Mahrami and Musa Talibi, both of whom have been convicted of apostasy for having converted to Islam in the past and then having reverted to the Baha'i faith. An Amnesty International release of 30 January 1997 notes that Baha'is in Iran have suffered systematic persecution, and 201 have been known to have been executed under the Islamic Republic. The Amnesty International country reports may be accessed at <http://www.oil.ca/amnesty/ailib/aipub/1997/SUM/index.html>, its main web page at <http://albertina.inesc.pt/iguana/htdocs/AI/index.html>, and its Middle East reports at <http://www.oil.ca/amnesty/ailib/aipub/1997/MDE/index.html>.

Note: Please send information about significant events, meetings, conferences, or workshops in the field of alternative religions to our new Field Notes editor, John Bozeman. His address is: Department of Religious Studies, University of Virginia, Cocke Hall, Charlottesville, VA 22903. Email: jmb5b@faraday.clas.virginia.edu

Book Reviews

Same-Sex Dynamics Among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example. By D. Michael Quinn. University of Illinois Press, 1995. 477 pages. $29.95 cloth.

Mormonism, like a good deal of American culture generally, is today staunchly opposed to homosexuality, and the casual observer might presume that the situation has ever been thus. D. Michael Quinn, however, has demonstrated in an exhaustively-researched work that rigid homophobia was not always the dominant Mormon outlook; the Latter-day Saints Church was once less rigid on the issue than it is today. Those Mormons who condemn homosexuality in the name of supporting long-standing traditional Mormon values are thus undermined.

Much of Quinn's book, especially the early chapters, deals with same-sex friendships and associations, not specifically homosexual relationships. We read at length of two men or two women who lived together, slept (certainly often chastely) in the same bed, or were extremely close to each other. Gradually, however, the case becomes more explicit, and finally Quinn proves his basic point, that strict official Mormon antihomosexuality is a development of the last few decades.

In that regard Quinn confirms the larger case developing among nonmormon and dissenting Mormon scholars that rigid Mormon social and structural conservatism is a relatively recent development. The Word of Wisdom, the church's discouragement of the use of such substances as alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine, was once much less stringently interpreted and enforced than it is today. As Quinn demonstrated in his earlier book *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Signature, 1994), the church hierarchy was once more informal and egalitarian than it has lately become. By the time of the publication of that work, the author had resigned, under fire, from his professorship at Brigham Young University, had been branded an apostate, and was excommunicated from the LDS Church for his revisionist historical scholarship, one of several casualties in a wide-ranging Mormon crackdown on free inquiry. Thus the current volume and its author's situation are major pieces of evidence of the hardening of the Mormon line and organization.

Quinn's scholarship is, as usual, meticulous; by my rough count, in the main portion of the volume, notes actually outrun text by 198 pages to 195. In both documentation and argument the case Quinn makes is a convincing one, and this book rightfully takes its place as a contribution to the ongoing development of an independent, critical understanding of the LDS tradition.

Timothy Miller, University of Kansas

Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism. By Aviezer Ravitzky. Translated by Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chipman. University of Chicago Press, 1996. 303 pages. $17.95 paper.

Aviezer Ravitzky, the chairman of the Department of Jewish Thought at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, may be best known to English-speaking readers for his article on the Lubavitcher movement in the Fundamentalism Project's *Accounting for Fundamentalisms,* Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Indeed, for the uninitiated, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* could well be preceded by a reading of Samuel C. Heilman and Manachem Friedman, "Religious Fundamentalism and Religious Jews, the Case of the Heredim," and Gideon Aran's "Jewish Zionist Fundamentalism: The Bloc of the Faithful (Gush Emunim)," in the first volume of the Fundamentalism Project series, *Fundamentalism Observed,* Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Together, these articles provide a valuable overview of Jewish religious radicalism.

Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism measures radicalism in relation to secular and religious Zionist conceptions of the state. The radical critiques of the Israeli state which emerge in the course of the volume are formed through a particular group's eschatology, and thus center on strikingly different theories of messianic redemption. These beliefs range from the militantly anti-state beliefs of such Hassidic courts as Neturei Karta and the Satmar Hassidim to the ultra-Zionist settlement movement, Gush Emunim (GE). Ravitzky's book, however, is very much a history of ideas rather than of concrete actions.

The contrasting messianic beliefs of the Heredi anti-Zionist radicals and the militant religious Zionism of Gush Emunim are at the heart of Ravitzky's book. He posits the resulting political quietism of the Heredim and the activism of the Gush in terms of a messianic scenario which is roughly analogous to Christian pre- and post-millennialism. For the Heredim, the only sure sign of messianic times is the appearance of the messianic figures Rabbis Ben Joseph or Ben David. Until that blessed time, the Jewish people must passively accept the condition of exile—even in Israel—lest attempts to 'Force the End' through settlement and statehood cause the long tarrying messiah to further delay the advent of universal redemption. Heralding his arrival, however, will be the apocalyptic 'birth pangs' in which the Jewish people will face their sorest trials. How these pangs are detected amidst the palpable success of the Zionist enterprise and of American Jewry comprise some of Ravitzky's keenest insights and proof positive of the truth of Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory (p. 74). Gush Emunim, on the other hand, believes that these are messianic times. Redemption in this view is personified in the state itself, and the frontiers of redemption may be measured meter by meter as the land comes back under Jewish control.

Ravitzky's detailed discussion of the anti-Zionist Heredim and of the somewhat anomalous case of the Lubavitcher movement (to which he devotes a separate chapter) counts as the greatest strength of *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism.* The author takes a somewhat revisionist approach to the subject that will engage the specialist and will nevertheless fascinate the non-specialist. With his coverage of Gush Emunim, however, some questions do arise. In particular, the Gush's emphasis on the sacrality of the Israeli state, while certainly present in the writings and speeches of leading Gush personalities and a regular feature of the movement's journal, *Nekudah*, would seem to be somewhat overstated at the expense of the far greater Gush emphasis on the whole land of Israel as sacred space. In Gush theology, the messianic scenario demands that the full biblical patrimony come once again under Jewish control. Thus, the mantle of religious legitimacy could be forfeited by the state if the government should agree to 'alienate' the patrimony in the evacuation of the Sinai enclave of Yamit after the Camp David Accords. There, when faced with a choice of obedience to the state or fealty to the land, many GE settlers on the scene chose to fight the army, albeit without arms.

While this overemphasis on the Gush's belief in the state may reflect the author's wish to better weave the material into the book's emphasis on the state as the litmus test of Jewish radicalism, it may as easily point to the distaste Ravitzky occasionally expresses for both Heredi and (especially) GE's politics. At heart, Ravitzky is a philosopher, a man of ideas for whom radical activism is seen as coming at the expense of Jewish unity. This is clearly expressed in the chapter on the Gush. Here, almost 90 percent of the discussion is lavished on the complex theology of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of mandatory Palestine. The rather unorthodox discussion of Rabbi Kook's thought is indeed stimulating, relying as it does on certain long-overlooked pre-aliya writings. Yet the discussion offers less insight into GE than would a discussion of Rabbi Kook's son, Rabbi Zvi Yahooda ha-Cohen Kook, the spiritual mentor of the first generation of Gush activists. This foundational period—and indeed virtually the whole of GE's history—is relegated to a mere eight pages at the end of the chapter! Readers interested in this theology are directed to Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook's *Torat Eretz Yisrael*, translated by Tzvi Fishman, (Jerusalem: Torat Yisrael Publications, 1991); while the best political history of the subject may be found in Ehud Sprinzak's *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

This demur aside, however, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* is highly recommended.

Jeffrey Kaplan, Ilisagvik College

DA: The Strange Case of Franklin Jones. By Scott Lowe and David Lane. Mt. San Antonio College Philosophy Group, 1996. 93 pages. n.p.

This short book is among the very few important studies (another is found in George Feuerstein's *Holy Madness*) of one of the most interesting and outrageous sixties-generation American gurus. Spiritual genius, practitioner of "crazy wisdom," sometime disciple of Swami Muktananada's Siddhi Yoga, and Lutheran seminarian, Franklin Jones (of which the best known appellation is Da Free John), like his organization, the Free Daist Communion, has gone through several changes of emphasis and name. His books, with unusual titles such as *The Knee of Listening* and *Scientific Proof of the Existence of God Will Soon Be Announced by the White House!*, are published by his Dawn Horse Press. Accounts of life with Da Free John in his closely-knit spiritual community, where life runs to extremes of asceticism and indulgence, of authoritarianism and antinomianism, sound hardly less strange. Supporters of the alleged avatar rationalize such eccentricities as shock therapy for the sake of enlightenment.

This book consists of two essays, both revised versions of articles that appeared in Lane (ed.) *Exposing Cults: When the Skeptical Mind Confronts the Mystical* (New York: Garland, 1994), Lane's "The Paradox of Da Free John," and Lowe's "The Strange Case of Franklin Jones." The first is a hard-headed but fair-minded assessment of the way in which spiritual guides can deliver teaching that is morally and mystically elevated, yet which seems to help others more than the guides themselves, producing the phenomenon of "crazy adepts and sane disciples." If this is an accurate description of Da Free John, he is far from alone, and the article ought to be useful to generalists in the study of new religions.

David Lowe's piece, basically an account of his own brief youthful stay with Jones' group in 1974, complements Lane's article with firsthand information of what the group was like in its early years, when it was still an ex-hippie community with signs of the abuse of power already becoming apparent. Yet he too is cautious and even generous in his assessment of the guru, well aware of the mysterious complexity of human spiritual paths. Though modest in format, these two well-written essays make a substantive contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of the disciple-guru relationship in new religious movements.

Robert Ellwood, University of Southern California

Healer in Harm's Way: Mary Collson, A Clergy Woman in Christian Science. By Cynthia Grant Tucker. The University of Tennessee Press, 1994. 240 pages. $14.00 paper.

This book is a labor of love on the part of Professor Tucker and, on that basis alone, well worth reading. Tucker's crisply written, engaging narrative leaves the reader wondering how this fascinating story could have been left out of American religious history. In recovering the Mary Collson saga, Tucker has performed a great service for scholars of Christian Science. An account of a woman's struggle to find herself in an androcentric social order, *Healer in Harm's Way* delivers a strong feminist message. Energized by the desire to improve the lot of society's dispossessed, Collson clawed her way through careers as a Unitarian minister, a Hull House social worker, and a Christian Science practitioner, at every stage frustrated by society's unresponsiveness to her idealistic vision of human perfection.

The story, however engaging, leaves the reader wondering who or what is the healer and whence cometh the harm. Setting aside the feminist/sociological interpretation of Collson's life and reflecting instead on the inner, spiritual motivations for her actions, the impulse is to re-title the book *Healer in Heart's Way.* If, as Bruce Springsteen rages, "everybody has a hungry heart," then Mary Collson's heart was voracious. Tucker portrays a woman brilliant of mind and, despite frequent bouts of depression, powerful of will. Like the Tin Man in "The Wizard of Oz," however, Collson appears to have desperately, if unconsciously, sought the heart—a place of ambiguity, a place of authentic relationships, a place of love and emotion, a place where depression is welcomed as a genuine healer, and a place where the mystery of human suffering whispers to the healer, "I don't need cure, I need care and compassion."

Collson longed to ease human suffering, but until she suffered her own heart to heal, her noble goal remained unattainable. A critical moment finds Collson on the verge of emotional collapse after a particularly awful day as a Hull House case worker. If at this low point she could have "let go" of her fixation on achieving perfection and allowed depression to offer her a way out of this obsession, then harm's way might have been transformed into heart's way. Unfortunately, the sparks of authentic emotion were snuffed out by an icy blast of Christian Science denial. As Tucker painstakingly points out in chronicling Collson's career as a practitioner, Christian Science is no place for a person with a "hungry heart."

Collson's real healer may have been the very depression she attempted to transcend. In a state of depression, she at least suffered relief from the tyranny of a strangely masculine quest for perfection. In turning to Christian Science, the healer Collson got in the way of the real healer, her own heart.

Whether the story ends tragically, with Collson as a lonely woman left to contemplate her life's failures, is hard to say. In quiet contemplation, Mary Collson may have discovered the truth she spent a lifetime searching for: "Oz never did give nothing to the Tin Man that

he didn't already have" (from "Tin Man," America, 1974).

John K. Simmons, Western Illinois University

Mission to America: Five Islamic Sectarian Communities in North America. By Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith. University Press of Florida, 1993. 238 pages. $34.95 cloth. $18.95 paper.

Mission to America: Five Islamic Sectarian Communities in North America is an important pioneer study of five Islamic groups that are probably not well known even to persons widely acquainted with America's religious diversity. Because the North American Muslim community is itself poorly understood and often viewed with suspicion by the larger society, these minority groups can easily be overlooked. It must also be granted that these sectarian bodies are regarded as highly heterodox and viewed with grave suspicion by mainstream Islam. The five movements studied are the Druze in North America, the Ahmadiyya Community of North America, the Moorish Science Temple, the Ansaru Allah Community, and the United Submitters International. Moorish Science and Ansaru Allah are African-American; the other three are of immigrant background.

Those familiar with Islam's colorful history will know that the Druze and Ahmadiyya reflect significant episodes in its medieval and modern development. However, though I was aware of North American Ahmadiyya, partly because of controversy surrounding its desire to participate in the 1993 Parliament of Religions, I had not known until reading this book that the fascinating Druze religion (well regarded, incidentally, by Helena Blavatsky of Theosophy as a deep reservoir of esotericism) was also present in North America. The United Submitters made news in 1990 when its founder and leader, Rashad Kalifa, who had been the recipient of continual death threats, was murdered at his mosque in Tucson.

Readers of this volume will receive competent surveys of the history, teachings, and life of these communities with emphasis on their North American experience. Their stories are told largely through the literature and interview statements of the groups and their leaders. Yet more work remains to be done. It is certainly important to allow religious groups to speak for themselves, particularly groups as little known and liable to distortion as these. Yet, aware as one is of the tendency for most religions to refine their self-presentation, a more critical perspective on the part of the authors would have strengthened this volume. There are also a few mistakes. For example, on pages 59–60 John A. Dowie, in connection with his anti-Islamic polemics, is said to have been a Catholic priest. In fact, though he called the church he founded in Zion, Illinois,

the Christian Catholic Church, Dowie was an extreme Protestant who carried fundamentalism to the point of flat-earth belief, and who included Roman Catholics as well as Muslims on his lengthy list of enemies of the true faith.

In spite of these minor flaws, this book is as good as it gets for now on sectarian Islam in America. It is accessible and highly recommended to all readers, academic and non-academic alike, who are interested in this significant topic. One hopes it will stimulate more study of sectarian Islam in the West.

R. E.

Living in the Lap of the Goddess: The Feminist Spirituality Movement in America. By Cynthia Eller. Crossroad, 1993. 268 pages. $18.95 cloth. Beacon Press, 1995. 268 pages. $14.00 paper.

Cynthia Eller has written the first thoroughly comprehensive survey of the feminist spirituality movement in America. This work is highly commendable not only for the depth and breadth of Eller's research, but for its clarity and insight in identifying the central themes and concerns of the movement. Eminently readable and accessible, it is a treasure for spiritual feminists. The work creates a context that enriches one's understanding of one's own place in the movement. In addition, it is an invaluable resource for those inside and outside the movement who are studying feminist spirituality groups. The volume provides a wealth of information that can be a starting point for more in-depth research on specific themes raised in the work. Undoubtedly, Eller will pursue such themes in her future work. In the meantime, this work should be considered strongly for inclusion in the bibliography of courses on feminism, alternative religious movements, and religions in America.

As Eller notes at the beginning of the book, she has relied primarily on written sources—books and periodicals—within the feminist spirituality movement, although she did conduct a few in-depth interviews to ensure that her written resources were representative of the movement as actually practiced. One problem with this approach is that influential figures who teach in the movement but do not write are missed. Still, in Eller's effort to "locate the center" of the movement, this loss probably has resulted only in missing a few nuances outside of this center. In light of the richness of nuances already provided in the work, one cannot legitimately complain that every nuance is not presented.

Coming from a legal background where scholarship is considered inadequate if statements made in a work are unsupported by an immediate citation to their sources, it is difficult for me to become

accustomed to religion scholarship, which allows more leeway in this regard. I have observed, however, that in this field women's writings are more likely to receive criticism (from both men and women) for "lack of scholarship" when citations are missing. I think one would be right in refuting any criticism which questions the scholarship of *Living in the Lap of the Goddess* in this regard. A more thoroughly researched and conceived work is hardly imaginable unless one were willing to wait a lifetime for a complete ten-volume treatise. Such a course of action would risk piecemeal marginalization of this important topic in the meantime. I appreciate what undoubtedly is "volume one" of this work and look forward with excitement to volume two.

Barbara A. McGraw, University of Southern California

Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America. Edited by Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby. Indiana University Press, 1995. 416 pages. $39.95 cloth, $18.95 paper.

This volume, edited by two distinguished Roman Catholic scholars, presents a panorama of a world little known or understood even by many mainstream Catholics: the world of the church's conservative wing and its quasi-sectarian forms of expression. Those forms, generally developed in their present shape in the traumatic wake of the Second Vatican Council, include extremists who contend that the papacy itself has been apostate and the See of Peter therefore vacant *de jure* since Paul VI promulgated the "heretical" decrees of Vatican II, rigid Latin Mass "Traditionalists" within and without the church, the burgeoning ranks of recent Marian visionaries (many of whom harp on the transgressions of the amoral world and of "liberal" churchmen alike), and sober and loyal spokesmen for a theologically and politically conservative Catholicism with the *gravitas* of Michael Novak, Richard Neuhaus, or George Weigel. Contributors to this book include representative Catholic conservatives and outside observers. One can read Weigel on "The Neoconservative Difference," Helen Hull Hitchcock on "Women for Faith and Family," Sandra L. Zimdars-Swartz on "The Marian Revival in American Catholicism," and Mary Jo Weaver on "Alternative Catholic Colleges," among other excellent papers.

While uneasy about using the term "fundamentalism" in connection with these conservative Catholic activities, the editors agree there are some generic similarities with other manifestations of that religious style. Like many fundamentalists, conservative Catholics see the contemporary world and their church to be in crisis. They are consistently opposed to what they perceive as the pernicious acids of modernity and tend to idealize the purer faith of earlier generations. Also like other

fundamentalists, they tend to form enclaves—schools, colleges, parishes, lifestyles—true to their vision of how things ought to be, and make those enclaves powerhouses for that vision's political and social enactment.

For many conservative Catholics, anti-abortionism is a touchstone of immense importance not only for its intrinsic moral importance, but also as a sort of defining issue demarcating who is likely to be on the right side of all important issues and calling them out from among the rest. As the second millennium draws to an end, eschatological and apocalyptic themes, especially those derived from Marian apparitions, are becoming increasingly important in some segments of the conservative camp.

What is the future of conservative Catholicism? The editors have clearly given no small amount of thought to this question. Generally they conclude that Catholics who are merely nostalgic for the days of pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism have little to look forward to as that generation passes. On the other hand, Catholic movements that are not only in principled opposition to modernity but also have an alternative vision of a viable post-modern Catholic church and society, and are willing to labor on behalf of that vision in season and out seem to be attracting younger people. Sometimes aided by fresh signs and wonders, they appear to have forward momentum and will doubtless remain in spirited dialogue with the mainstream church and the world for some time to come. Meadows and Appleby refer to those two styles as "World-renouncers" and "World-transformers" and clearly believe the latter have chosen the better part.

Being Right is a significant book and a good read for anyone seriously interested in contemporary American religion. It would be nice if a companion work could be done on the plethora of comparable conservative movements connected with Anglicanism and Episcopalianism since the 1960s.

R. E.

Taking Up Serpents: Snake Handlers of Eastern Kentucky. By David L. Kimbrough. University of North Carolina Press, 1995. 232 pages. $14.95 paper.

The Holiness serpent handlers of Appalachia have been in the headlines ever since their beginnings in the early years of this century, yet even scholars of religion are likely to know them only through articles in the popular press or lurid television specials. David Kimbrough's *Taking up Serpents: Snake Handlers of Eastern Kentucky* gives a scholar/participant's view of serpent handling practices and theology, correcting many

misconceptions and stereotypes while grounding the rise of serpent handling churches in the brutal and socially disruptive economic conditions produced by the exploitative industrial development of Appalachia.

The practice of serpent handling is founded on a literal reading of Mark 16:17, "And these signs will accompany those who believe: they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them." For snake handlers, "following the signs" is not a description of possibilities, but a divine command. Based on this passage in Mark and six other proof texts, snake handlers drink strychnine, hold flaming torches to their bodies, and, of course, handle snakes: rattlers, copperheads, and water moccasins. If a snake handler is "anointed"—that is, filled with the spirit—it is believed that no harm will come from these potentially fatal actions.

According to Kimbrough's research, only 75 deaths from snakebite have been confirmed in the entire history of Holiness snake handling. Certainly, there appears to be little correlation between death by snakebite and obvious lack of faith; some of the most devout exponents of the practice have died by the fangs of serpents. Most amazing, perhaps, are the individual differences in bite rates. Renowned preacher Park Saylor, for instance, was never bitten in over sixty years of snake handling. Other prominent pastors, however, have suffered hundreds of bites during their snake handling careers.

Taking up Serpents is simultaneously a thoroughgoing history of snake handling churches and an ethnographic study of selected present-day congregations in eastern Kentucky and their offshoots in northern industrial cities. Kimbrough also concentrates on one particular extended family, the Saylors, who through the years have produced some of the most famous snake handling preachers. Through anecdotes and biographical sketches of the Saylor clan, the reader gets a nuanced portrayal of the everyday lives—tribulations and accomplishments, frustrations and hopes—of typical believers.

Kimbrough claims that due to the fiercely maintained autonomy of individual congregations, there is too much variation in beliefs and practices among snake handling congregations to treat them all in one study; hence, he focuses on eastern Kentucky. While he may be correct, there are still only an estimated 2,500 snake handlers in the entire United States. If it is impossible to consider them as a whole, what does this suggest about larger studies of, say, Buddhists in America.

Kimbrough, a child of the Appalachian diaspora, understands mountain dialects and local folkways, enabling him to gain unusual access to media-wary congregations. Even he, however, had to earn the trust of many congregations over the course of years of participant-observation. Interestingly, Kimbrough is shown handling poisonous

snakes in several of the photographs illustrating the text. Readers will want to know what Kimbrough felt while handling serpents and what inspired him to join; unfortunately, he does not reveal this information. Although Kimbrough works to maintain a scholarly detachment, he communicates clearly his warm and palpable affection for the human subjects of his study. *Taking up Serpents* is a labor of scholarship and love that humanizes a long-maligned religious minority.

Scott Lowe, University of North Dakota

The Handbook on Cults and Sects in America, 2 vols., Parts A and B. Edited by David G. Bromley and Jeffrey K. Hadden. Vol. 3 of *Religion and the Social Order.* JAI Press. 292 + 229 pages. $146.50 cloth.

These two substantial volumes are the result of a sustained effort by members of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Association for the Sociology of Religion to bring together papers representing the best current work in the field of NRMs. The project was believed necessary in order to communicate more effectively with the public about the findings of scholars in this controversial area, to assist scholars involved in litigation as expert witnesses in cases involving NRMs, to inventory the current literature and state of the field, and to help develop a research agenda for the rest of the century.

The project has succeeded admirably. The list of contributors includes many of the leading names in the field: in addition to the editors, Richard Machalek, David A. Snow, James T. Richardson, John A. Saliba, Meredith McGuire, Wade Clark Roof, Janet Jacobs, Eileen Barker, J. Gordon Melton, Robert Balch, Bryan Wilson, Frederick B. Bird, Phillip E. Hammond, Rodney Stark, Roger Finke, Armand Mauss, Thomas Robbins, Arthur L. Greil, Anson Shupe, Stuart A. Wright, Helen Rose Ebaugh, Karen Walsh, Lynn Davidman, David W. Machacek, James A. Beckford, William V. D'Antonio, Laurence R. Iannoaccone, Theodore E. Long, and William Sims Bainbridge.

It is customary to say of collections like this that they are uneven, but with the stellar lineup offered here, hope for high quality is not disappointed. I personally found of great interest two articles coauthored by Rodney Stark: "A Rational Choice Approach to the History of American Cults and Sects," with Roger Finke, and "Rational Choice Propositions About Religious Movements," with Laurence Iannoccone. In these articles, Stark and associates pursue their new "supply-side," "rational choice" paradigm of American religion in relation to NRMs. Others may turn first to the work of James Richardson and John Saliba on NRMs, mental health, and the "brainwashing" issue, or to Meredith McGuire on healing, or Lynn Davidman and Janet Jacobs on feminist

perspectives on NRMs.

Scholars of NRMs will find solid food here. This book belongs in all research libraries and should be perused by all scholars in the field.

R. E.

The Odyssey of a New Religion: The Holy Order of MANS from New Age to Orthodoxy. Phillip Charles Lucas. Indiana University Press, 1995. 312 pages. $39.95 cloth.

The Odyssey of a New Religion is a thoroughly enjoyable book that would fit well into a graduate readings seminar on new religious movements. The author interviewed many members and ex-members of the Holy Order of MANS (HOOM) and, though not a member himself, observed the group for some ten years.

The career of Earl Blighton, HOOM's founder, has some interesting parallels with the life of Swami Prabhupada, the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Both were older men (64 and 70, respectively) when they began the organizations for which they were best known. Both had been religious loners with a desire to found a religious community, and both happened to find themselves in San Francisco during 1967, the "Summer of Love," a classic case of being in the right place at the right time. Lucas' evocation of the milieu of the 1960's in general, and of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood in particular, blends into his narrative history of HOOM in such a way as to allow readers to feel they have gained a genuine appreciation of both the time and place, and the development and transformation of HOOM.

HOOM began as a New Age/Gnostic group with a deep sense of history, liturgy and hierarchy, an ascetic and monastic lifestyle, and an unusually strong social justice emphasis. It centered on its founder, who by 1968 had established himself as a respected teacher of Western esotericism and created a role for himself as a mystagogue and revelator in a religious community that provided a socially constructive outlet for counter-culture youth in search of a more altruistic way of life than that provided by the prevailing cultural ethos.

Blighton's death in 1974 lead to a crisis of leadership in the movement. This was resolved in favor of a new leader, Andrew Rossi, who sought to bring coherence to a disorganized and dispirited community by creating greater doctrinal stability and consolidating the group into exemplary Christian communities. The aging of HOOM's membership and the formation of families within the community created a strong internal dynamic toward accommodation to social and religious norms. The deaths at Jonestown and the consequent empowerment of

the anti-cult movement were external forces that hastened HOOM's rush to respectability. This culminated in HOOM's dissolution of its monastic framework, and its association with the Eastern Orthodox Church as "Christ the Savior Brotherhood." (This last stage of their development is also described, from the Orthodox viewpoint, in *Not of this World,* by Damascene Christiansen.)

The Odyssey of a New Religion stands as a marvelous case study of the development of one particular religious group from sect to church. The book deserves a wide reading.

Michael J. Donahue.

Le Defi magique: vol. 1, Esoterisme, occultisme, spiritisme; vol. 2, Satanisme, sorcellerie. Edited by Jean-Baptiste Martin. Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1994. 337 + 364 pages. 150 F each volume.

These two volumes contain papers presented at an international conference on the subject of *Le Defi magique* ("the magical challenge") held in Lyon in 1992 under the sponsorship of the Italian-based Center for the Study of New Religious Movements (CESNUR) in conjunction with the Catholic University of Lyon. The first volume is introduced by François Laplante of the University of Lyon, and the second is introduced by Massimo Introvigne, director of CESNUR. Half of the papers are in French, and the other half are in English.

These essays cover fascinating topics related to the recent history of occultism and Satanism in Europe, North America, Brazil, India, and Japan. A number are concerned with a subtheme of the conference—the Christian, and particularly Catholic, response to Satanism and occultism. Unfortunately, some of these essays deal in generalities or rehash previously published material, developing little in the way of new research. In many cases, however, the presentations have the effect of acquainting Europeans with material most familiar to North Americans, and vice versa. That may have been the case with David Bromley's fine summary paper on the "Satanism Scare" in the United States. I also found Piero Cantoni's "Le place du satanisme dans la theologie de Egon von Petersdorff sur le Diable" fascinating in its introduction of a German explorer of the occult, anti-Nazi, and Catholic lay theologian who, in the context of the horrors he had witnessed in two world wars, developed an elaborate twentieth-century demonology.

Americanists will appreciate Christel Manning's article on Z. Budapest and goddess worship as American religious "primitivism," and J. Gordon Melton and James Santucci's work on little-known nineteenth-century figures Paschal Beverly Randolph, George Henry Felt, and Ezekiel Perkins. The works of Joscelyn Godwin on Hargrave Jennings, and Eileen

Barker's essay on the New Age in Britain are among the many other articles of note.

These two volumes are recommended for research libraries and all serious students of new religious movements and occult history.

R. E.

Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact. By Vine Deloria, Jr. Scribner, 1995. 286 pages. n.p.

Vine Deloria, Jr., has been doing battle with the hegemony of materialist rationalism for nearly thirty years, an intellectual project that has led him through the fields of Indian affairs, history, religion, philosophy, law, political science, and education. His latest book breaks new ground yet again by taking on the high priesthood of secular spirituality—Western science—while relying on familiar weapons in his discursive arsenal: social critique, trickster humor, and an ample supply of common sense. Deloria wants to disrupt the epistemological authority of scientific orthodoxy and recover the historical insights of tribal oral traditions. His ultimate goal is to develop a comprehensive and inclusive approach to understanding planetary history that investigates and incorporates the particular experiences of all peoples rather than subsuming them under a uniformitarian naturalism. "We do not know the real history of our planet," he concludes, "because our scholars and scientists are wedded to an outmoded framework of interpretation and spend their time arranging facts and evidence to fit these old ideas"(p. 251).

Red Earth, White Lies is the first volume in a planned trilogy that will explore the three areas Deloria considers to be the most significant sites of misunderstanding and conflict between Indians and immigrants: science, religion, and government. As a lawyer, seminary graduate, and avid reader of scientific literature, Deloria is acutely aware of the ways in which these three areas intersect; it is not surprising, then, that he begins this book by highlighting the institutional context of scientific research and framing the philosophy and methodology of Western science as a type of religious theory and practice. Deloria does a nice job of recapitulating the rise of Western science and its challenge to Christian orthodoxy, and he argues that the institutionalization of science led it to take on the form and function of religion in an increasingly secularized society. This meant that "scientists would come to act like priests and defer to doctrine and dogma when determining what truths would be admitted, how they would be phrased, and how scientists themselves would be protected from the questions of the mass of people whose lives were becoming increasingly dependent on them"(p. 17). While it is not Deloria's purpose in this book to engage in a systematic analysis of

Western science as religious tradition, he consistently refers to scientific orthodoxies using religious terminology and clearly intends to suggest a more modest trust in scientific knowledge than is currently fashionable.

Much of this book focuses on two popular theories about the early history of the Americas: the Bering Strait migration theory and the Pleistocene overkill theory. The contemporary political implications here are obvious. The Bering Strait migration theory suggests that Indians did not originate in the Americas (which can be read as the latest in a long history of colonial attempts to invalidate Indian land claims), while the Pleistocene overkill theory blames paleo-Indians for mass extinctions of ancient flora and fauna (which might be interpreted as a more recent effort to discredit Indian environmental practice). Deloria points out that both theories rely on a very limited amount of physical evidence and a great deal of uniformitarian conjecture, and he examines how these theories are deployed in various scientific specialties to show that they are not used in a consistent manner across disciplinary boundaries. In short, comprehensive and coherent accounts of a Bering Strait migration or a Pleistocene overkill simply do not exist, and it would be much more scientifically useful to adopt a more cautious and open approach to interpreting archeological and geological materials.

This deconstructive move is only half of his argument, however, and it is unfortunate—if the early reviews of this book by devout scientists are any indication—that many readers will not get past Deloria's criticisms to the constructive proposals that make up the rest of his argument. Deloria wants to revalorize tribal oral traditions as repositories of historical knowledge; he intends to recover them from the folklorists and literary critics who see in them only naive supernaturalism and mythic symbolism. Using methodological insights from the emerging field of geomythology, Deloria shows how oral accounts that preserve the memory of unusual or catastrophic experiences can be correlated with the findings of experimental science not merely to confirm prevailing theories but to provide new data for consideration as well. Flood stories, for example, need to be "de-mythologized" so that the historical information about physical phenomena contained in their narratives can be analyzed. This is just the reverse of Rudolf Bultmann's approach to biblical accounts.

Unlike many modern intellectuals, Deloria is not embarrassed by religious experiences, but he believes they should be grounded in historical realities rather than imaginative fictions. His provocative interpretations of Western science as myth and tribal myth as science point the way out of "a strange kind of dark ages" and toward an inclusive historicism (p. 231). *Red Earth, White Lies* is ultimately a book about overcoming the false dichotomy of faith and reason, and allowing both the scientific and the religious significance of "mythological" events to be fully realized through a unified practice of observation, reflection,

and (creditable) interpretation.

James Treat, University of New Mexico

I Tell You a Mystery: Life, Death, and Eternity. By Johann Christoph Arnold. The Plough Publishing House, 1996. 153 pages. n.p.

I Tell You a Mystery is a short, non-academic, inspirational work by Johann Christoph Arnold, senior elder of the Bruderhof, one of America's most successful alternative religious communities. The group traces its roots to the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century, and in particular to the communal villages of Bruderhof ("places of brothers") established in Moravia by the Hutterites. The modern Bruderhof organization was founded in 1920, and, despite periods of persecution, has grown steadily into one of the world's largest alternative communities, with over 2500 members at eight sites (seven in the United States, one in England).

The Bruderhof follow a simple, pietistic type of Christianity and practice communal living. Though in many ways resembling the Amish and Mennonites, the Bruderhof are not opposed to the use of modern technology, as illustrated in their impressive website on the Internet (www.bruderhof.org). While living in their own communities, they have also become involved in some larger social issues not typically associated with traditional pietistic Christian groups. One such issue is the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a black activist and author whose murder conviction has attracted national attention. Abu-Jamal writes a brief foreword to Arnold's book.

The book itself contains twenty-three short chapters, each consisting of Arnold's account of how members of the Bruderhof have used their faith to interpret and deal with specific situations of suffering, tragedy, and death. Reading account after account of terminal cancers, infant deaths, and tragic accidents almost creates the impression that the Bruderhof are faced with more than their share of troubles. However, the cumulative impact of these descriptions of simple courage and strength in the face of adversity can be quite moving.

I Tell You a Mystery was not written as a scholarly book for an academic audience. Rather, it is an inspirational work for lay readers. While the book's short afterword contains a brief summary of the community's history and beliefs, this is not a work that would be useful to scholars seeking extensive factual information about the Bruderhof. On the other hand, this book could be very useful to anyone who is seeking insight into the nature of Bruderhof faith and its impact on members' daily lives.

George Adams, Susquehanna University

The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power. By D. Michael Quinn. Signature Books, 1994. 686 + xv pages. $29.95 cloth.

The Mormon historian, D. Michael Quinn, best known for his influential book, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (1987), here offers a detailed explanation of emerging Mormon institutional power from the publication of the *Book of Mormon* in 1830 to Joseph Smith's assassination in 1844 and Brigham Young's subsequent assumption of Mormon leadership.

This is one of the most fascinating stories of institutionalization within new religious movements anywhere, and Quinn gives it an exceptionally close reading. The essential story is relatively simple. The Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, gave frequently contradictory "revelations" about both religious offices and his (or God's) preference for Smith's succession. Although this confusion produced nagging difficulties within Mormonism before 1840, a major crisis erupted when vigilantes assassinated Smith in 1844.

Who now would lead the movement? Smith had confused the issue in three ways. First, Smith failed to plan for his death despite the violence that surrounded the Mormons. Second, Smith sometimes indicated that he favored patrilineal succession by brothers or sons, perhaps not surprising in a society increasingly fixated on race and genealogy. Third, Smith sometimes indicated that leadership would go to different individuals in whom he saw prophet-like qualities. Yet Smith also entrusted considerable authority to institutional bodies after 1830, such as the "Quorum of Twelve Apostles," the "Holy Order," or the "Council of Fifty."

The result was a fierce struggle for power at Smith's death. A dozen men or more claimed Smith's favor through one sign or another. Amidst intrigue, schisms, bribery, and even murder, Brigham Young emerged as the Mormons' principal leader, in part because Young successfully negotiated the authority of the Quorum and Council, a testament to Smith's perhaps unwitting foresight in institutionalizing authority, but also to the continuing importance of charismatic leadership in the movement.

The Mormon Hierarchy gives non-Mormon specialists little quarter. Quinn establishes the factual record through immense documentation and highly detailed narratives (395 pages of notes and appendices compared to 263 pages of text). This may be advisable given Quinn's revisionist interpretation, which stresses confusion and conflict where modern church leaders emphasize historical explicitness and order. Still, greater clarity about the general lines of interpretation, comparisons with other religious movements, and more extended dialogues with broader accounts of early Mormon history, such as Jan Shipps's *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (1985), would have won

the book a wider audience. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, *The Mormon Hierarchy* offers a unrivaled factual account of Mormonism's transformation from cult movement to church, one of the most fascinating stories in modern American religion and, perhaps, in religious history generally.

Jon Butler, Yale University

Les Icariens: The Utopian Dream in Europe and America. By Robert P. Sutton. University of Illinois Press, 1994. 199 pages. $26.95 cloth.

The publication of the first full-scale scholarly history of the Icarian movement reminds us just how young the academic study of communal societies remains: only now, in the last five years or so, are we getting standard treatments of some of the most important communitarian movements in American history. Amazingly, the first comprehensive history of the Shakers was not published until 1992, when Stephen Stein produced *The Shaker Experience in America* (Yale University Press). Only a year earlier did we receive the first general history of Fourierism in America, Carl Guarneri's *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cornell University Press). Still other works of comparable importance remain undone.

Robert Sutton has filled one important gap with *Les Icariens.* The Icarians were French nationals who sought to enact a utopian novel, Etienne Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie.* The enactment took place over half a century in colonies in Texas, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, and California under the personal leadership (until his erratic ways led to his deposition) of Cabet himself.

The first third of the book covers the origins of Icarianism, placing founder Cabet within the larger French utopian tradition of the better-known theorists Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier. Sutton certainly does not idealize his protagonist; Cabet is portrayed as not only a social and political radical, but as a difficult and often downright flaky character, one who alienated people as often as he inspired them. Sutton provides a brief summary of the *Voyage,* thus helping those who have not read the inordinately long original.

The balance of the book traces the history of the Icarian experiment from its disastrous first attempt to establish a colony in Texas through the more successful sojourn at Nauvoo, Illinois, and on to the splintering of the movement as the deposed Cabet led his small band of loyalists to a new Icaria in Missouri and other factions built colonies in Iowa and California.

Sutton has mastered an impressive body of data in French and English and has admirably achieved his goal of telling the story of Icaria, warts

and all. His well-written book is a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature recounting the little-known American communal past.

Timothy Miller, University of Kansas

The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation. By Harold Bloom. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992.

This book is an essay conceived in broad strokes. While based on deep learning and composed with penetrating insights, it is not primarily a scholarly work. Nevertheless, Harold Bloom's sharp angular truths may help scholars by prompting thinking in new channels—or by simply provoking through the irritation of his claims.

In this book, Bloom the literary critic continues his new vocation as religious critic, begun with *Kabbalah and Criticism* and *The Book of J.* In these works he identified the literary and religious significance of gnosticism and audaciously claimed that the early books of the Old Testament were composed by a literary—and female—mind, who invented the idea of God. Bloom the religious critic brings his intellectual wares to the study of religion as "spilled poetry" (p. 80)—reversing the romantic aphorism—because he sees in both the manifestation of humanity's myth-making imaginative power. Religion, Bloom argues in another clever twist, "is the poetry, not the opiate, of the masses" (p. 36).

The author wades boldly into the thick growth of American religions and extracts a few essential characteristics that he defines as "the American Religion": enthusiasm, or emotional energy; gnosticism, the belief that humanity has a spark of the uncreated God and can find its way back to a primeval state through an act of knowledge; and orphism, which he describes as the belief in the divinity of the self. Bloom's categories are analytically messy. Enthusiasm is rarely mentioned but it hovers around many of his descriptions; gnosticism contains an ambivalence between an emphasis on uncreated being and on the centrality of knowing; and Bloom stresses gnosticism through sheer repetition, but the core of his argument is that American religion is orphic, that is, the American obsession with the individual self is not just a cultural trait but a profound spiritual orientation which has steered American religions toward a creative heretical defiance of their Old World churchly roots. Here Bloom is aligning himself with scholarly trends that turn attention away from the European bases of American religion, but he does so despite himself, for he also has harsh words for the "politically correct student non-students" who find the study of "all those Dead White European Males of Western culture . . . so unacceptable" (p. 252).

Bloom derives his insights about the "American religion" not by

looking at the majority of American faiths but by examining a potent minority of "heresiarchs," the inspired creators of new religious stories, and their institutional followers. Of the eight traditions he examines—Mormonism, Christian Science, Seventh-Day Adventism, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostalism, New Age spirituality, the Southern Baptists, and African-American spirituality—he is most interested in their founding and especially in their leaders. His methodology is frankly elitist —it is tempting to say orphic—in his declaration that "religious history, like literary or any cultural history, is made by genius, by the mystery of rare human personalities" (p. 95). Bloom most admires Joseph Smith's "religion-making imagination," especially his uncanny recovery of the ancient Jewish finite god who interacted personally with his people. Bloom respects Mary Baker Eddy's force of will, but is otherwise dismissive of Christian Science's "narcissistic mirror" (p. 140). He praises Baptist E. L. Mullins for developing "the idea of the competency of the soul" (p. 200) that is the basis of Southern Baptists' "singular relationship with Jesus" (p. 205). Bloom's regard for the elite leaders takes on a bizarre twist in his admission that he is a "sincere and ardent fan" of none other than Jimmy Swaggart. His earnest statement, "I try never to miss one of his broadcasts," reads like the hip irony of Diane Keaton's enthusiasm for professional wresting, but Bloom professes genuine admiration for the "aggressivity" of this "superb performer" (p. 177-78).

Bloom shows interest in religious innovators the way he respects literary geniuses: for their imaginative creativity; and so, for different reasons, his approach is much like that of the dispassionate scholar of religious history. But he attempts to go further. He makes pains to say he is not holding his subjects up to ridicule, and in fact, he even identifies with them, stating that he himself is a "Gnostic Jew" (p. 22). But his admiration steadily wears thin, especially for the institutional followers of his religious heroes. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses "propose a theocratic fascism" with "dreams of seizing power [themselves], so as to share in the majesty of the great theocrat, Jehovah" (p. 160 and 163). The "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been edging away from Joseph Smith's extraordinary spiritual originality" as they have become ultra-mainstream Republicans (p. 112). Bloom reserves his sharpest scorn for the fundamentalist wing of the Southern Baptist Convention, which has rejected the gnostic originality of Mullins for a wooden, anti-intellectualist worship of the Bible as an unread icon of absolute authority. Moreover, he shows a fatalistic dread about the American future, which he predicts will be increasingly in the grip of these perverted forms of the American religion. These are an essayist's musings, which will surely make careful students of these religious movements reel back at the simplifications of his stances.

Reading through Bloom's insights and fears about the power of the

American religion, it is easy to forget that he is basing his discussion on a decided minority of the American faithful. Finding in these the core of American religion is like calling Romansh "the Swiss language." This Alpine derivative of vernacular Latin is spoken by only a few percent of the Swiss people, yet it is more characteristically Swiss than German, French, or Italian, which are the primary languages of the vast majority in Switzerland. This outlook defines the essence of a culture not by its majority expression but by its expression in the purest and most distinctive form.

The grounding of his arguments in the exceptions as the way to define the whole is what is most significant about this book for students of new religious movements—especially with his point that the mainstream has been swayed by the eccentrics. Professed Christians, Jews, and Muslims are, he suggests, only followers of the ancient faiths on the surface. They are actually practicing forms of heretical gnosticism and orphism. This gives new religious movements a decidedly high platform: they are important not only in themselves and for their innovations, growth, and diversity, but also as bellwethers of the direction of religious change. In particular, trends that most scholars routinely describe in theologically neutral terms, such as American individualism and the adaptations of churches to native conditions, Bloom reads from the point of view of the religions being challenged. On these terms, and strictly speaking, most Americans are heretics, challenging their religious traditions. He presses the implications of these trends in predicting that these heresies are heading toward a new religious constellation, a post-Christian new American religion. His argument is, of course, audacious: it ignores the professed faith commitments of the vast majority of Americans; it assumes that European traditions are fixed entities and does not allow for their inevitable evolution, short of calling those changes heresies. Bloom is so bold that he may very well be wrong. But it is a tantalizing suggestion for students of American religion in general, and especially for watchers of new religious movements.

Paul Jerome Croce, Stetson University

The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History. By Rodney Stark. Princeton University Press, 1996. 246 pages. $24.95 cloth.

One certainly has to marvel at the confidence with which sociologist Rodney Stark enters into conversation with scholars in as parochial a field as Biblical and Antiquarian studies—and to do so in such a commanding way. In this masterful study by a maverick social theorist, Stark approaches the nagging question of how the Christian Church succeeded in converting a significant portion of the Roman Empire

within four centuries of its founding in the backwaters of Judea, thereby subverting and then supplanting Greco-Roman paganism. "Although this is the only question," Stark tells us, "it requires many answers—no one thing led to the triumph of Christianity" (p. 3). To solve this vexing puzzle, Stark applies tested sociological principles on the dynamics of new religious movements to the paucity of known historical facts. In the first and second of ten clearly written and carefully argued chapters, Stark looks at the "arithmetic of growth" to determine if it was truly possible for the Early Church—which, we discover, was essentially a middle and upper-class urban movement—to grow as quickly and strongly as it did. Comparing its growth to that of Mormonism, Stark convincingly shows that early Christians were properly poised to take advantage of their vast social networks. This was possible, he argues, because of the large populations of Hellenized Jews who readily embraced Christianity as a way to escape their culturally marginalized position in the Roman empire. In the remaining chapters, Stark pieces together a profile of the Greco-Roman world and Christianity's favorable position in light of the ancient world's sometimes overwhelming social and economic distresses. Indeed, this chapter (3), and his chapters on martyrdom (8), on Christianity's ability to cope with natural catastrophes (4), and on the weaknesses of a diverse and unresponsive religious marketplace (9), are by far his best argued and best documented chapters, giving the most convincing explanations for Christianity's success.

No book is entirely perfect and this is modestly the case with the present work. While the book is theoretically and historically sound, its repetition of quotations, examples, and theoretical points is an annoying problem. This is especially noticeable in chapter 5 and in a few of the later chapters. In addition, the reader will notice that some works are cited without specific page references. Since some of the works referenced are nearly 1,000 pages in length (e.g., Gibbon and Frend), this modest addition would have been helpful to historians.

Notwithstanding these and other minor problems, Stark's book is creative and engaging. It is not only a good read, but a fun one as well. As with Stark's other superb theoretical works, *The Rise of Christianity* will no doubt serve scholars for decades to come as a useful model of the proper application of theoretical propositions to historical data.

Jon R. Stone, University of California at Berkeley

Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation. By Andrew Weeks. State University of New York Press, 1996. $21.95 paper.

Paracelsus (1493/4-1541), like many a major historical figure, has been

pressed into service to support agendas entirely different from his own. Andrew Weeks writes: "There is something particularly disconcerting in watching Paracelsus don one costume after another, first the Romantic Faustian trappings, then the staid vest of the positivistic scientist, then the brown khakis of a Storm Trooper ranting about folk and race, then the somber cloth of an Evangelical missionary for Christian ethics, and at last the green sweatshirt of an ecological activist and advocate of homeopathic medicine" (p. 191-92). As this book demonstrates, Paracelsus was none of these. He was a dogmatic theologian who tried to practice medicine and got caught in the wheels of the Reformation. His personal theology made him neither Lutheran, Catholic, nor Humanist. His medicine (and this is one of the main points of the book) was not so much empirically as theologically based. Ousted in turn from Salzburg, Basel, and Nuremberg, where he had hoped for patronage and recognition, he expressed his frustrations in all but unreadable tracts.

Andrew Weeks has read these works and weighed them with the impartial judgment of a historian of ideas. As a Germanist whose books include *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* and *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein* (both published by SUNY Press), he is neither shocked by Paracelsus's occultism nor excited by his originality. Weeks explains Paracelsus's theology and the cosmology and medical theory that derive from it. By correcting the accepted chronology of Paracelsus's works, he shows how closely they responded to the concerns and controversies of their dates. He explains why Paracelsus added a feminine fourth to the Trinity; why he needed the "spiritus" as a mediator between soul and body; why his macrocosm and microcosm correspond; how the Book of Scripture relates, in Paracelsus's system, to the Book of Nature; and what role is played by the imagination. I have never seen this set out as clearly before.

People do not always like it when a familiar painting is cleaned; it looks so different from their memories of it. There will be mixed reactions to Week's scouring of the icon of Paracelsus, too long obscured by dirt and garlands alike. But scholars owe him nothing but gratitude for placing this image firmly in its historical context. Together with Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke's anthology, *Paracelsus: Essential Readings* (Wellingborough: Crucible, 1990), it marks a fresh era in English-language studies of the rebarbative magus.

Joscelyn Godwin, Colgate University

Book Notes

Odyssey with the Goddess: A Spiritual Quest in Crete. By Carol P. Christ. The Continuum Publishing Company, 1995. 173 pages. $18.95 cloth.

This is the book by Carol Christ for which we have been waiting. It belongs to a genre that happens to be a personal favorite of mine: a story of travel and exploration on the earth plane which entails at the same time inner journeys of personal and spiritual discovery. Christ, one of the founding mothers of the goddess spirituality movement in the United States, has been a resident of Greece since 1988. After opening the topic with seminal edited books such as *Diving Deep and Surfacing* (1980), she commenced to know the goddess better in her ancient Grecian heartland through experiences recorded in *Laughter of Aphrodite* (1987). In *Odyssey with the Goddess*, she continues in the tradition begun in *Laughter* of rich, almost Augustinian, spiritual autobiography.

In simple and utterly honest language one reads here the inner life—often deeply troubled, often visionary—of a lonely woman seeking both the goddess and herself, alone and in the company of other seekers. In the geographical background lies rugged scenery, relics of an ancient civilization that strike some feminist scholars as close to ideal, Orthodox churches and convents honoring the Mother of Jesus as *Panagia*, All-Holy, and the harsh peasant life of today's Crete. In the foreground for much of the narrative are Christ and a group of North American women touring the island's spiritual sites, worshipping, laughing, singing, struggling with themselves and a strange land, and finding the hand of the goddess touching them in unexpected ways.

While *Odyssey* is not explicitly about a new religious group, it illumines the spiritual background of contemporary seeking that drives more than a few of them, especially goddess paganism. It is also a wonderful read. Recommended highly.

Robert Ellwood, University of Southern California

Japanese Journal of Religious Studies. Volume 22, Numbers 3–4 (Fall 1995): "The New Age in Japan." Guest Editors: Haga Manabu and Robert J. Kisala. Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture. Pages. 233–461.

It seems worthwhile to call the attention of scholars of new religious movements to this special issue of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* on "The New Age in Japan." The issue gives the non-specialist as well as the specialist an excellent opportunity to catch up with the latest in that classic homeland of new religions. The reader will quickly find that while the familiar new religions such as Tenrikyo and Soka Gakkai are still there, attention has moved to a newer set. These are frequently compared to the "New Age" faiths in the West, with their eclectic emphasis on healing, self-help, and spirit communication. Despite these comparisons, they are still deeply rooted in Japan's traditional religious culture, displaying not a few traits of shamanism, Shinto, and esoteric Buddhism, as well as modern psychology and, increasingly, nationalism.

Articles in this special issue include Suzuki Kentaro, "Divination in Contemporary Japan"; Yumiyama Tatsuya, "Varieties of Healing in Present Day Japan"; Haga Manabu, "Self-Development Seminars in Japan"; Nagai Mikiko, "Magic and Self-Cultivation in a New Religion: The Case of Shinnyoen"; Peter Knecht, "The Crux of the Cross: Mahihakri's Core Symbol"; Trevor Astley, "The Transformation of a Recent Japanese New Religion: Okawa Ryuho and Kofuku no Kagaku"; Shimazono Susumu, "In the Wake of Aum"; and Robert H. Sharf, "Sanbyokyodan: Zen and the Way of the New Religions." Readers of this issue will also receive a memorial article by Jan van Bragt on the late Father Heinrich Dumoulin (1905–1995), well known to generations of scholars as the premier Western historian of Zen Buddhism.

R. E.

The Book of Solomon's Magick. By Carroll "Poke" Runyon. 232 pages. $19.95 paper. *The Magick of Solomon.* VHS Video, 75 minutes, written and narrated by Carroll "Poke" Runyon, $29.95. Both published 1996 by The Church of the Hermetic Sciences, Inc.

This book and accompanying video, from the magister of the oldest continuously operating ceremonial magick order in the United States today, the Ordo Templi Astartes or O.T.A., will give the curious outsider comprehensive insight into what contemporary ritual magick looks like and does. While broadly in the tradition of the Goetia texts, the Golden Dawn, and the Ordo Templi Orientis of Aleister Crowley, "Poke" Runyon's magick is not identical with these; he has developed a distinctive Jungian-based "neo-romantic" theory of hypnogogic

archetypal evocation that is adequately explained in the book and video. However, the O.T.A. employs the old ritual texts together with the colorful robes and accouterments of the tradition, in part to create the powerful atmosphere conducive to the ends of self and cosmic discovery believed to be the ultimate goal of magick as a spiritual path. Spectacular the theatrical "art" of this craft certainly is, with its cubic altar, its swords, wands and incense, its magick circle, and its evocation of gods and goddesses, or angels and spirits, into a dark mirror, or mediumistically into a participant in the rite acting as "receiver."

The Book of Solomon's Magick commences with a personal narrative by Runyon of his involvement in magick, including an initiatory near-death experience. In the usual way of magicians, there are intriguing and trenchantly expressed accounts of magical and personal rivalries. The bulk of the book, however, is the clearest exposition I have ever seen of the meaning of ritual magick, the complex systems of spirits invoked, and the practical set-up of a magickal temple. The book and the video can be enjoyed and studied with profit separately; together they offer a truly unique experience and an exceptional insight into a much-romanticized but little understood facet of alternative spirituality.

R. E.

The Spirit of Black Hawk. By Jason Berry. University Press of Mississippi, 1995. 158 pages. $20.00 cloth.

The African-American Spiritual churches of New Orleans represent a fascinatingly comprehensive syncretism as well as an authentic religious experience. They offer combined aspects of Spiritualism, Pentecostalism, Voodoo, the Roman Catholic cultus of the saints, and traditional Black spirituality. The movement has increasingly attracted the attention of scholars of religion. One thinks of Hans Baer, *The Black Spiritual Movement* (1984); Claude Jacobs and Andrew Kaslow, *The Spiritual Churches of New Orleans* (1991); and David Estes, "Ritual Validation of Clergywomen's Authority in the African American Spiritual Churches of New Orleans," in Catherine Wessinger, ed., *Women's Leadership in Marginal Religions* (1993). Now Jason Berry's book is added to the list.

While giving a comprehensive overview of the movement's history and activity, Berry concentrates on one aspect of it, the cultus of the Native-American spirit guide, Black Hawk. This is in itself an intriguing and significant matter. Spiritualists, as is well known, have long found an affinity between their religion and the shamanism of Native Americans; this convergence has been expressed through an emphasis on Native-American spirits as "guides" for mediums seeking to make contact with the other world. Among these guides, none was or is more

popular than Black Hawk, the Sauk chief from the Midwest who was defeated by white settlers in what came to be known as the Black Hawk War of 1832. Berry explores the process by which Black Hawk was turned into an "Indian" curiosity and hero, and then considers the particular appeal of this poignant figure for African Americans.

Berry, a writer and music historian who has also produced a video on the Spiritual Church, has here presented a brief, readable, colorfully-illustrated, and well-documented account of Black Hawk's posthumous existence as a saintly guide and healer. It will be of interest to both general readers and scholars of African-American religions.

R. E.

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