

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS SECTION
COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN IDENTITY MOVEMENT

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CHRISTIAN IDENTITY MOVEMENT
RIGHT-WING TERRORISM MATTERS

For the information of recipients the Terrorist Research and Analytical Center (TRAC) at FBIHQ is producing a continuing series of short, informative articles on a variety of topics relating to FBI terrorism investigations. The following addresses information relating to the concept of Christian Identity (hereafter referred to as Identity), a religious doctrine that is a major factor within the ultra right movement in the United States today. It is recognized that many of the ideas espoused by Identity are offensive, but it is believed that a complete discussion is needed to understand the motivation of the movement.

Identity is an ideology that combines religious concepts with elements of racism.

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The proponents of Identity often quote and provide explanations for Biblical passages; however, these explanations have a racist slant, and they differ significantly from the interpretations of more mainstream religions and religious organizations. The advocates of Identity often cite the Bible to support (or legitimize) their antiblack and anti-Semitic beliefs. The Jews, according to

- Mr. Clarke
- Mr. Otto
- Mr. Revell
- Each Assistant Director

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SEE NOTE PAGE 8

Airtel to All SACs and All LEGATs
RE: Christian Identity Movement
Right-Wing Terrorism Matters

These beliefs, are the enemies of God and natural adversaries of the white race, the chosen race of God; blacks and other nonwhites are usually regarded as unequal to whites.

Its racism aside, the views of Identity often parallel traditional Biblical scholarship. In a religious connotation, Identity is akin to fundamentalism, in that the proponents of each study the Bible extensively and use it as a literal and infallible document for their beliefs. Identity, however, is far more reactionary than fundamentalism. There are no ties between the two despite some similarities; there are, however, significant differences. Foremost of these is racism.

Identity concerns the rise of white Christian nations. It seeks to discover a national as well as a racial identity for white Christians by telling them who they are and where they come from. Many Identity beliefs are rooted in a 19th Century British movement, British Israelism or Anglo-Israelism. This concept claims that Anglo-Saxons and others are the descendants of the Biblical Israelites and that England is the true Israel. Under Identity, these concepts were changed to the view that the United States is the true Israel. Furthermore, other racist concepts that are based upon Biblical interpretations have been added to those of British Israelism by the advocates of Identity. Because these interpretations are speculative, some factions of Identity may be more racist than others, and individual interpretations of the same Biblical passage may differ.

The fundamental resource of Identity is the Bible. This document reveals to the advocates of Identity the spiritual origin and physical history of the white race, as well as the rules and regulations that make life better on earth and which lead to eternal life. The Bible is also used to search out God's words and thoughts in order to understand "The Truth." According to Identity beliefs, this "Truth" is hidden and although it is obvious to those of God's chosen race, the white race, it is not recognizable to all readers.

Identity and the Origin of the White Race

There is no single document or set of documents which set forth the beliefs of Identity. Because interpretations of the Bible can result in a wide range of viewpoints there are often conflicting interpretations within the Identity movement. For example, some Identity publications are almost exclusively anti-Jewish while others are largely antiblack.

One aspect of Identity is its interpretation of the origin of the white race. To the advocates of Identity, the Bible is a history of the white race. It is taught that Adam and Eve were the first white people from whom all other white people descended. God,

Airtel to All SACs and All LEGATS
RE: Christian Identity Movement
Right-Wing Terrorism Matters

it is believed, created Adam "from the dust of the earth," and then created Eve to be his companion. Adam and Eve were placed directly into the Garden of Eden by God. Identity, therefore, views the Garden as having been an actual site, the location where the white race originated. By using numerous geographic, Biblical, and linguistic references, Identity places the Garden in Central Asia.

Another Identity teaching is that Adam and Eve were created only after all other races and peoples existed on earth. These other races, the races of color, such as the blacks, Asiatics, and Latinos, were not, according to some interpretations, created directly by God, as were Adam and Eve. Rather, they developed through a lengthy process of evolution, originating from the ashes of the earth, the residue from the earth's creation. Because the white race is God's chosen race, only whites have immortal souls and/or all others are eternally damned and cannot obtain salvation. Other interpretations, however, reflect that the black race was created by God before God created Adam and Eve and that blacks and whites were the only original peoples that existed. The blacks had a specific purpose on earth, that is, to be servants to whites. Furthermore, it is concluded that all other races are the result of inbreeding between blacks and whites.

Identity also states that Jews were neither created by God nor did they evolve. According to this view, the Jews are the children of Satan and the enemies of God. During the period before God's creation of Adam, Satan interbred with the races of color to produce the Asiatic Jew and the black Jew. The white Jew was created when Satan interbred with Adam's descendants. The Jews are often referred to as the "children of darkness," because they are the children of Satan and there exists a battle between them and the white race, the "children of light," for supremacy on earth.

According to Identity, the white race arrived on earth more skilled and sophisticated than any preceding race; it was agricultural as opposed to the others which were either nomads or hunters. Only after God's creation of the white race was civilization begun, writing skills developed, and technological progress made.

The followers of Identity believe that God had intended to keep the white race separate from the other races. This is why Adam and Eve were placed into the Garden of Eden. Each race was made separate and distinct and each has a specific place in God's order of things on earth. Before the creation of the white race, God's influence was missing on earth and Satan roamed free. God created Adam and Eve to be the forebearers of a race to command all others and to be the instrument through which He (God) would fight Satan on earth. For this it would be necessary that the white blood line remain racially pure.

Airtel to All SACs and All LEGATS
RE: Christian Identity Movement
Right-Wing Terrorism Matters

Segregation of the races, therefore, is viewed by Identity as one of God's Divine Laws. Race mixing by whites (or to use Identity terminology, mongrelizing) is in conflict with these Laws and is tantamount to murder in the eyes of God. Identity contends that race mixing is a means by which Satan seeks to destroy the white race in the battle between good and evil.

Identity and the U.S. Constitution

Identity contends that the Bible is the basis upon which the United States was founded. This theory is in keeping with the view that the Bible contains God's Laws for governing nations and governments. These Laws, however, are only meant for God's children, that is, Israel.

Identity teaches that throughout history God has given to his chosen race important documents that contain His Law concerning nations and governments. These documents include the Magna Carta (England, 1215), the Mayflower Compact (Massachusetts, 1620), and the Declaration of Independence (American Colonies, 1776).

The Articles of Confederation, according to Identity, was a contract between the states; the states represented "the people," who were, in fact, Christian people, that is, the chosen people of God, the white race. This contract is considered by Identity proponents to have been made irrevocable ("perpetual") and unchangeable. When our founding fathers saw the need for a more effective governmental organization (the Articles, that formed the 13 American colonies into a union, did not provide for sufficient central authority), the Constitution was written. According to Identity, the principles for this document were taken from the Articles of Confederation since the Articles could not be revoked. Identity teaches, therefore, that because the U.S. Constitution was taken directly from the Articles of Confederation, which was based upon God's Laws through the Bible, the Constitution is a divinely inspired document. And just as Identity views the Articles of Confederation as having been irrevocable and unchangeable, so too does it view the U.S. Constitution.

Identity teaches that through the Constitution, the states created an agency, the Federal Government, to which they allotted central powers. These powers are set forth in the Constitution and are the only powers given to the central government. The states, however, did not wish to grant certain powers to this Federal authority and added ten amendments to the Constitution. These Amendments are known as the Bill of Rights.

Airtel to All SACs and All LEGATs
RE: Christian Identity Movement
Right-Wing Terrorism Matters

Ratified in 1791, they are, according to Identity, part of the original contract that comprised the Constitution. Since this contract is irrevocable and unchangeable, Identity views any subsequent Amendments as being illegal and unconstitutional. Identity contends that because of the Jewish anti-Christian conspiracy, the U.S. Constitution has been illegally and unconstitutionally subverted from its original intent and design. The only portion that is legal is the original text and the Bill of Rights. Any subsequent inclusions to the Constitution that alter the original meaning of the document are not valid and need not be obeyed.

Identity contends that Jews (sometimes called "alien internationalists") have increasingly gained control in the media, industry, and Government in the United States (the Zionist Occupational Government, or ZOG). Moreover, this is part of a Jewish conspiracy to destroy the United States as a white Christian Nation. Because of this increasing influence, Jewish interests have been responsible for the passing and/or supporting of laws specifically designed to subvert the Constitution and change the United States from that which it was originally intended to be. As a result of these acts, wars, debts, and other Jewish-conspired evils have befallen white Christians in the United States.

According to Identity, state governors were and remain the chief law enforcement officers in the states. Because the states, through either the governors or state legislatures, have failed to control elements (Jews) within the Federal Government from subverting the Constitution, it falls to the people to do so. This is known as posse comitatus (power of county or, more specifically, power of the people of the county). The county is subservient to the state in terms of jurisdictional responsibilities; however, when the state fails to act in accordance with the law (the Constitution), it becomes the duty of the county to act. In Christian Identity, "duty of the county" is interpreted as "duty of the people of the county." Under this, the sheriff, the highest law enforcement officer in the county, can use males between 18 and 45, who are under no military obligation, as a posse. The sheriff has no control over the posse's existence, only whether it will be used. A movement largely known for its tax protest activities, known as posse comitatus, has arisen based upon these principles.

Identity And Armageddon

Another aspect of Identity is its view of the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. Identity, to be sure, is not unique in its belief of this issue. Christians of many faiths believe that the world will eventually end. The last book of the Bible, The Book of Revelations, or The Revelation of St. John the Divine, describes a period of great suffering known as the Tribulations, the

Airtel to All SACs and All LEGATS
RE: Christian Identity Movement
Right-Wing Terrorism Matters

Final segment of which is Armageddon - a great battle between the forces of good and evil - that will precede the Second Coming. Many Christians believe they will be spared or enabled to survive the Tribulations and Armageddon because of their faith. Identity, however, teaches that white Christians, as the chosen race of God, have a specific role to play in these events and that they must be physically and spiritually prepared.

Identity views the events leading up to the Second Coming of Christ as inevitable. It is believed that these are part of a cleansing process that is needed before Christ establishes His Kingdom on earth. During this, the forces of evil (nonwhites and Jews) will attempt to destroy the forces of good (whites) using any means. The result will be a violent and bloody struggle - a war, in effect. The view of what Armageddon will be varies in Identity. Some contend it will be a race war in which millions will die; others see it as an economic or social collapse that will lead to a communist attack or takeover led by the Jews as representatives of the anti-Christ.

Many followers of Identity believe, therefore, that they are among those chosen by God to fight the forces of evil during Armageddon. These people contend that they will be the last line of defense to save the white race and/or Christian America from either the soon-to-occur race war or communist takeover. To prepare for these events, these individuals engage in survivalist, paramilitary, and self-defense training; they practice weapons use; and they store foodstuffs, ammunition, and other necessities of survival. They often reside in remote areas on isolated and enclosed compounds.

Conclusion

The Identity message is one of racial hatred behind the guise of religion. ~~"The Aryan Nations (AN) Church of Jesus Christ Christian" in Idaho, "The Covenant, The Sword, The Arm of the Lord" (CSA) in Arkansas, and Elohim City in Oklahoma~~ are some of the organizations that have followed Identity's teaching. Members or associates of some Identity groups, particularly the AN and CSA, have been investigated for their involvement in criminal activities, including bombings, murders, robberies, and weapons violations. All of these activities have been carried out in furtherance of white supremacy, the basis for which is contained in Identity.

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Several members of this group were involved in an organization known as "The Order," founded by Robert Mathews, an AN member. Mathews was killed in December 1984 on Whidbey Island, Washington, during a gunfight with the FBI. "Order" members were responsible for counterfeiting, armed robberies of more than \$4 million, assaults on Federal officers, the murders of

Airtel to All SACs and All LEGATs
RE: Christian Identity Movement
Right-Wing Terrorism Matters

a Missouri State Policeman and a Denver, Colorado, Jewish talk show host, and other crimes. Thirty-eight "Order" members were arrested between October 1984 and March 1986 and convicted of charges relative to these acts. Several fugitive "Order" members were captured at the CSA compound in Arkansas in April 1985. Following a several-day standoff with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies, the compound was surrendered. Military surplus equipment, weapons, ammunition, money, and other such items were found stored at the compound.

AN members were also responsible for several bombings in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, during September 1986. Four persons were convicted in September 1988 and were sentenced to prison terms in October 1988.

Another leading proponent of Identity was the late William ~~Potter~~ Gale of Mariposa County, California. He apparently was the person who coined the term "Identity" in approximately 1962. Gale was also a major figure of the tax rebellion movement. Gale and members of a group, "Committee of States," were arrested in Arizona, California, and Nevada in October 1986 for making threats against Internal Revenue Service agents. Gale and 4 others were convicted on charges stemming from these threats in October 1987 and were sentenced to prison terms. b7c

There are, all totaled, relatively few Identity proponents in the United States. Although exact numbers are not available, there are probably less than 2,000 nationwide, and possibly far fewer. Nevertheless, as the acts of terrorism committed by Identity followers attest, these people are fanatics about that which they believe.

Airtel to All SACs and All LEGATs
RE: Christian Identity Movement
Right-Wing Terrorism Matters

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