

**ENEMIES WITHIN: CHRISTIAN EXTREMISM,  
A THREAT TO THE HOMELAND**

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**MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Homeland Security Studies**

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

ENEMIES WITHIN: CHRISTIAN EXTREMISM, A THREAT TO THE HOMELAND,  
by Major Odessa K Sam-Kpakra, 70 pages.

As technology evolves, so has the ability to reach many through various platforms, subsequently strengthening globalization. These informational platforms constantly provide news to the world, which promotes fear of Muslim radical groups that perpetuate violence in the name of religion, while ignoring the threat Christian extremism poses on American soil. As America's focus and attention shifts to denying violent religious groups access into the homeland, it has taken its eyes away from those within the homeland that threaten the very liberty and freedom intended by the founding fathers for all Americans. This thesis and many more studies like it, is vitally needed, to explore the themes and messages of these growing Christian extremist groups, neutralize their growth, and ensure the safety and freedom of Americans are protected.

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Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my committee: Mr. Mark McManigal, Dr. Cupp, Mr. Porter, and Mr. Jennings for their dedicated commitment to the development of this thesis. Your cumulative experience, knowledge and mentorship proved vital and extremely beneficial to me, as I juggled the requirement of the Command and General Staff College curriculum and an MMAS. I am beyond grateful and privileged to have developed this thesis under the tutelage of such wise leaders and thank you sincerely for a product that will serve as a changing narrative on terror within the homeland.

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## ACRONYMS

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ADL     | Anti-Defamation League   |
| AOG     | Army of God  |
| CCC     | Council of Conservative Citizens                                       |
| CIM     | Christian Identity Movement  |
| FBI     | Federal Bureau of Investigation  |
| KKK     | Ku Klux Klan   |
| PATRIOT | Provide Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism |
| SPLC    | Southern Poverty Law Center  |



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The stronger the group's agenda is framed in religious and totalistic ideas, the more it will be willing or determined to use exceptionally lethal tactics. The growing literature on the new terrorism is particularly supportive of the notion that the last three decades have witnessed not just the rise of religious terrorism, but of more spectacular tactics which aim to maximize the number of casualties.

— Arie Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines, Understanding Americas Violent Far Right*

#### Introduction

As a result of September 11, 2001, an incident where almost 3,000 American lives perished on American soil, the Department of Homeland Security was born and a commitment to never allow violence of that magnitude to occur on American soil began.<sup>1</sup> Soon, discussions among many intelligence agencies on what intelligence failures occurred that could have thwarted the plan to cause destruction of many lives and properties ensued. The disjointed collaboration among intelligence agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency became apparent. They just lacked the ability to work together in the detection, consolidation and analyzing of threats within the homeland.<sup>2</sup> In efforts to combat terrorism, many surreptitious programs were born to collect intelligence and significantly deter the act of terrorism. By using language to frame efforts of combating terrorism as the “war on

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<sup>1</sup> Homeland Security, “Creation of the Department of Homeland Security,” accessed January 5, 2016, <http://www.dhs.gov/creation-department>.

<sup>2</sup> The 9/11 Commission, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, accessed January 5, 2016, <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf>.

terror” President George W. Bush, garnered public support and secured financing from congress. The Provide Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (PATRIOT) Act was signed into law on October 26, 2001, in an effort to unite and strengthen America. The Act had three components to it: (1) roving wiretaps, (2) searching business records and (3) conducting surveillance of lone wolves. Portions of the Act rebuked racial violence and vilification and reminded Americans, “We must seek the guilty and not strike out against the innocent or we become like them who are without moral guidance or proper direction” (PATRIOT Act Title 1).<sup>3</sup>

Has the PATRIOT Act been effective in thwarting homegrown terrorist groups, or is the primary focus of this act positioned on international terrorists that seek to execute acts of terror within the shores of the United States? This thesis will explore why the focus should now shift to include Christian extremist groups within the scope of this policy, as they pose a serious domestic threat to America.

#### Primary Research Question

The primary question of this research will explore why certain individuals on the extreme spectrum of the Christian religious faith are violent.

#### Secondary Research Questions

1. What religious groups within the Christian faith are the most violent and why?
2. What mechanisms of recruitment do they use, how is growth sustained and what activities are representative of these groups?

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Justice, “Highlights of the USA Patriot Act,” accessed January 5, 2016, <http://www.justice.gov/archive/II/highlights.htm>.

## Background

Recent Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)<sup>4</sup> numbers indicate violence actually perpetuated and or planned on killing American citizens has occurred by a growing group of extremist that share extreme Christian views, which permeates with hatred and anger. The SPLC further indicates a total of 1,600 extremist groups operate across the country, presenting a clear and imminent threat to the United States.<sup>5</sup>

Most recently, a group called the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC)<sup>6</sup> incited the attack on nine African-American members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, by a young 21-year-old derelict named Dylan Roof. The group's founding principles are to value and preserve the so-called Christian beliefs of America, keeping its ties to Europe. This means the American population must remain European in its composition and character and every effort must be given to deter and oppose non-European peoples from existing within the borders of America. The CCC constantly called for a race war, and three weeks before the murders, Dylan Roof logged onto their website, and was captivated by a post to lynch black people, "A tall tree, a short rope and a good knot are not an expensive endeavor."<sup>7</sup> The idea to carry out the murder of the Charleston nine was then firmly planted into the mind of the

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<sup>4</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, "Hate and Extremism," accessed January 5, 2016, <https://www.splcenter.org/issues/hate-and-extremism>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Council of Conservative Citizens, "Statement of Principles," accessed March 28, 2016, <http://conservative-headlines.com/introduction/statement-of-principles/>.

<sup>7</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, "Christian Identity," accessed December 29, 2015, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2015/carnage-charleston>.

impressionable Dylan Roof. On June 17, 2015, Dylan Roof joined a group of parishioners to pray in their church. He sat quietly and observed and prayed with them for one hour, after which he took out his weapon and calmly asserted, “you rape our women and you’re taking over the country, I have to do this and you have to go.”<sup>8</sup> In a flash, he killed nine, but spared a 10th to tell the world what happened because he expected to die. Motivated by extreme Christian beliefs, this lone wolf, radicalized by ideologies he found on the internet, carried out one of the most heinous crimes ever to be committed within the sanctuary of a place people cling to for spiritual comfort and solace.

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK), one of America’s oldest hate group founded in 1866 to resist the encroachment of African-American rights, remains strong and thrives, especially as a result of the first elected African-American President, Barack H. Obama. Motivated by the Christian extremist beliefs of the KKK, On April 14, 2014, Frazier Glenn Miller carried out a crime that killed three people in a Kansas City suburb, just outside two Jewish businesses.<sup>9</sup> His motives were to kill Jews, as they prepared to celebrate the Jewish Passover holiday. Unfortunately, as Mr. Miller sought to “kill Jewish people before he dies” none of his victims were Jewish. He killed three Christians, Dr. William Lewis Corporon and his 14-year-old grandson, Reat Griffin Underwood and one Italian American, 53-year-old Terri LaManno.

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<sup>8</sup> NBC News, Gunman Reportedly Said, “I Have to Do This,” June 18, 2015, accessed January 23, 2016, <http://www.nbcnews.com/video/church-gunman-reportedly-said-i-have-to-do-it-467402819802>.

<sup>9</sup> CBS News, “Kansas City Area Jewish Center Shootings Suspect Frazier Glenn Miller; Who is the Man with 2 Names,” accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/kansas-cityshootings-suspect-frazier-glenn-miller-cross>.

The Army of God (AOG) is a Christian extremist group founded in the early 1980's. Due to the loosely structured nature of the organization, its exact origin is unknown. What is known however, is the organization's core belief that abortion is against the will of God and must be stopped by any means necessary, including death. On November 27, 2015, Robert Lewis Dear, entered an abortion clinic in Colorado, killing three and injuring nine others. Mr. Dear, a lone gunman with a profound admiration for the AOG had deep Christian convictions and believed death to be the only solution to ending abortion.

On November 8, 2015, five were arrested for plotting to begin a race war in rural Virginia. Members of this group were not aware of the fact that the FBI was monitoring their actions. The FBI met with the group several times, posing as firearms dealers. As the group strengthened their plans to execute their quest to start a race war, they attempted to purchase firearms and explosives from undercover agents and were arrested as soon as money changed hands. These individuals were affiliated with the Aryan Nation and Aryan Brotherhood, whose core tenet was "an arm of the Christian identity organization Church of Jesus Christ Christians." The organization was founded from the teachings of Wesley Swift, a prominent figure for the Christian identity Movement (CIM) in the 1940s. Those arrested for the conspiracy of orchestrating this war are: Robert C. Doyle, 34, Ronald Beasley Chaney III, 33, Charles D. Halderman, 30 and the parents of Chaney, Ronald Neasley Chaney Jr. 58 and his wife Terry Gun Chaney, 52. These homegrown terrorists groups were essentially prevented from successfully carrying out their plans to kill blacks as they worshipped in their churches, or Jews as they prayed in

their synagogues, because of a heightened level of security within the intelligence and Law enforcement agencies.<sup>10</sup>

In early November 2015, college students at the University of Missouri began to protest their university's reaction to addressing racial tensions on their campus. Tensions grew from racial slurs hurled at black students from white students. It brought to light activities black students deemed as unfair and unequal treatment, to which they sought immediate action. Their protest resulted in the resignation of the schools head, Chancellor Tim Wolfe and brought national interest to the marginalization of African American students on college campuses. Soon, colleges and universities nationwide joined in the protest of injustice, unequal, and unfair treatment on their campuses.<sup>11</sup>

These events are no longer extreme and isolated, they are an everyday occurrence of the current American society. In the wake of murders that polarized perspectives on race, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Eric Gardner in New York and Sandra Bland in Texas, racial tensions have reached a fever pitch in America. Additionally, recent uprising of protests in universities and colleges around the nation with subsequent threats from three unassociated, uncoordinated lone wolves, create an environment ripe for

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<sup>10</sup> Bill Morlin, "In Simultaneous Raids this Week, The FBI has Arrested Five in Race War Plot," Southern Poverty Law Center, November 13, 2015, accessed April 7, 2016, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2015/11/13/race-war-plot-leads-five-arrests-federal-state-charges>.

<sup>11</sup> Alia Wong and Adrienne Green, "Campus Politics: A Cheat Sheet," *The Atlantic*, April 4, 2016, accessed March 24, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/03/campus-protest-roundup/417570>.

recruitment into extremist groups.<sup>12</sup> These vulnerable impressionable young men, who are voicing their opinions on race in a violent manner are likely to be associated with groups that provide violent, extreme solutions to preserving a culture and race that is European. They are targets for Christian extremist groups and every effort must be given to immediately intercept these susceptible men and women from affiliating with groups that pose a threat to the United States of America.

### Assumptions

The assumptions of many are that individuals with staunch Muslim radical beliefs have successfully executed violent attacks on Americans. Even as those assumptions remain prevalent, a Rand report released in May 2010 summarized the threat of homegrown jihadism was heavily exaggerated. In fact, official records by the FBI indicated at that time, “only 6% of terrorist attacks on US soil from 1980 to 2005 were committed by Jihadists.”<sup>13</sup> The report further found that out of 83 terrorists attacks committed in the United State “between 9/11 and the end of 2009, only three were clearly connected with the Jihadist cause.”<sup>14</sup> Many of these acts are committed by recent converts to the religion, and tend to have predisposed tendencies of criminality “to fulfill

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<sup>12</sup> Kansas City Star, “Student Charged with Allegedly Making Online Threat Targeting African-Americans on MU Campus,” November 10, 2015, accessed April 7, 2016, <http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/crime/article44216625.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Danios, “RAND Report: Threat of Homegrown Jihadism Exaggerated, Zero Civilian in U.S. Killed Since 9/11,” Loon Watch, May 8, 2010, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.loonwatch.com/2010/05/rand-report-threat-of-jihadist-terrorism-exaggerated/>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



their sense of adventure.”<sup>15</sup> These individuals rarely interact within their community’s mosques or local religious infrastructure, but instead aggressively pursue jihadist virtual information to satisfy their thirst for violence. On August of 2015, a Washington based think tank, The New America foundation, found that 26 Americans were killed by Jihadist, as opposed to 48, who were killed by extreme right wing terrorists. Since then, acts of violent terror committed in San Bernardino, California in December 2015, increased the number of lethal jihadist acts to 45, compared to 48 committed by right wing extremists.<sup>16</sup> The preponderance of domestic violent terror acts, indicate for the past 35 years, violent terrorist activities resulting in fatalities are likely committed by extreme right wing Christian groups, more than any other group.

### Definitions

In efforts to provide clarity to the reader, it is important to understand the meaning of certain words used in the context of this thesis. Department of Homeland Security defines Violent Extremism as “individuals who support or commit ideologically-motivated violence to further political goals.”<sup>17</sup> Right Wing Extremists, therefore, are those individuals with conservative views, who view those of opposing opinions as

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<sup>15</sup> Danios, “Rand Report.”

<sup>16</sup> International Security, “Deadly Attacks since 9/11,” accessed January 23, 2016, <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/extremists/deadly-attacks.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Homeland Security, *Countering Violent Extremism*, accessed January 23, 2016, <http://www.dhs.gov/topic/countering-violent-extremism>.

political enemies, engaged in political warfare.<sup>18</sup> They tend to be deeply rooted in Christian beliefs with “tremendous emotional intensity” and a “by any means necessary,” sense of urgency type of attitude.<sup>19</sup> Merriam Webster defines Jihadist as “a Muslim who advocates or participates in a war fought by Muslims to defend or spread their beliefs.”<sup>20</sup> It is important to separate the jihadists from the Muslim, devout in satisfying the tenets of their religion peacefully. The CIM evolved from the British-Israelism movement and is one of the most influential and popular right wing groups, committed to carrying out violent terroristic acts against those it contends as its enemies.<sup>21</sup> Christian Fundamentalists, embrace a set of specific doctrine and beliefs. Many believe the fundamentalist movement was “a reaction against modernization or the rapidly changing Western Culture of the nineteenth century which includes large technical advances and societal changes.”<sup>22</sup> The five fundamentals of their belief are: “the virgin birth, the satisfaction theory of the atonement, the bodily resurrection, the miracles of Jesus, the Biblical inerrancy.”<sup>23</sup> A common definition for Christian Extremists is one of exclusivity, with strong convictions that those who do not share their religious viewpoints are not real

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<sup>18</sup> James Vega, “What is ‘Right-Wing Extremism?’” *The Democratic Strategist*, April 30, 2009, accessed January 23, 2016, [http://www.thedemocraticstrategist.org/strategist/2009/04/part\\_i\\_what\\_is\\_rightwing\\_extre.php](http://www.thedemocraticstrategist.org/strategist/2009/04/part_i_what_is_rightwing_extre.php).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Merriam Webster Dictionary, “jihadist.”

<sup>21</sup> Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> The Thoughtful Christian, “Understanding Christian Fundamentalism,” Session 1, accessed May 21, 2016, [www.thethoughtfulchristian.com](http://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Christians. As a result of their unique interpretation of the bible, these groups typically use principles within the Christian faith to:

1. Preach segregation,
2. Perpetuate acts of violence on those it considers outside the scope of its principles and
3. Kill, all in the name of their religion.

The KKK is one of America's oldest hate group founded in 1866 to resist the encroachment of African-American rights. It remains strong and thrives, especially as a result of the first elected African-American President, Barack H. Obama. The AOG is an organization founded on Christian beliefs whose fundamental principles call for violence against those who perform abortions. To aid its members in harassing, attacking and killing "their prey," they have constructed a manual that serves as a "how to" to guide the execution of their activities. A Lone Wolf is an individual who commits an uncoordinated act of violence alone, but in the ideological vein to which they subscribe. The CCC is a group formed in the 1950s in response to desegregation efforts in the south. The group's founding principles are to value and preserve the so-called Christian beliefs of America, keeping its ties to Europe. This means the American population must remain European in its composition and character and every effort must be given to deter and oppose non-European peoples from existing within the borders of America. The SPLC defines Hate Groups as those who "have beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics."<sup>24</sup> The FBI's Uniform Crime

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<sup>24</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, "About the Hate Map," accessed February 6, 2016, <https://www.slpcenter.org/hate-map>.

Reporting Program defines Violent Crimes “as those offenses which involve force or threat of force.”<sup>25</sup> It contains four components; murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

### Scope and Delimitations

This thesis will only focus on Christian extremist groups, exploring various ideologies, political and fundamentalist paradigms, which drive these groups to thrive. In an effort to remain relevant and current to today’s environment, this thesis will not extend beyond the boundaries of the United States and will explore in detail, acts of domestic terrorism committed within the last 10 years. To provide further contextual and background analysis in understanding this rather complex issue, this thesis may extend beyond ten years to the extent necessary to draw historical trends deemed necessary to support recommendations and conclusions of this thesis.

### Limitations

The obvious limitation of this thesis is the range of empirical and systematic analysis of domestic terrorism data. Although the Department of Homeland security provides a link to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting statistics of domestic crimes, it does not “analyze, interpret or publish crime statistics based solely on a single-dimension interagency ranking.”<sup>26</sup> Because of limited comprehensive focus on the subject of right

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<sup>25</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigations, “Crime in the United States,” accessed February 6, 2016, <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/violent-crime>.

<sup>26</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigations, “Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics: Their Proper Use,” accessed April 7, 2016, <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr-statistics-their-proper-use>.

wing extremism, this thesis relies heavily on “think tanks,” Rand Studies, The Anti-Defamation League and SPLC as credible experts. These entities actively report, track and maintain data on occurrences of domestic terror within the United States. In addition, time poses a significant limitation in conducting a quantitative type analysis; therefore, a qualitative method suits the feasibility of this thesis.

### Significance

As technology evolves, so has the ability to reach many through various informational platforms and mediums, subsequently strengthening globalization. These informational platforms constantly provide news to the world, which promotes fear of Muslim radical groups that perpetuate violence in the name of religion, but ignore the threat Christian extremism pose to Americans, on American soil. As America’s focus and attention shifts to denying violent religious groups access into the homeland, perhaps not enough attention has been focused on Christian extremists within the homeland who threaten the very liberty and freedom intended by the founding fathers for all Americans. This thesis and many more studies are vitally needed to explore the themes and messages of these growing Christian extremist groups, neutralize their growth, and ensure the safety and freedom of Americans are protected.

### Conclusion

As political candidates vie for the presidential seat in the 2016 United States elections, the message of keeping “Americans safe” seems to be the mantra for all, catering to the fears of Americans. Excessive media coverage focuses on the volatility of violent groups outside of the United States, and the fear that violence, may trickle

through the borders of the homeland. While this fear of others continues to strengthen and gain public attention, groups that follow right wing fundamentalist Christian views, continue to wage war on Americans within the homeland, virtually undetected and undisturbed. Unfortunately, labeling these groups as domestic terrorists, committed to acts of violence in the name of the Christian faith has been infrequently discussed by the American media. Chris Weigant of the Huffington Post, summarized it well when he wrote “when Christians kill because of their religious beliefs, then it is by definition Christian terrorism, whether the news media (or public) wants to admit it or not.”<sup>27</sup> The promise of safety, trumpeted on the campaign trails of the nation, will be far from realized if attention and energy is uncommitted to all those who threaten the homeland; even Christians.

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<sup>27</sup> Chris Weigant, “Christian Terrorism,” *Huffington Posts*, December 1, 2015, accessed February 6, 2016, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/christian-terrorism\\_b\\_8685138.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/christian-terrorism_b_8685138.html).

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Violent crimes committed by Christian extremist groups have risen significantly within the United States within the last 10 years. In fact, the Anti-Defamation League reports 2015 as being the “deadliest year for domestic extremist violence in the past 20 years.”<sup>28</sup> Over 44 percent of killings levied on Americans were committed by groups that identify with Christian beliefs (white supremacy, anti-abortionist), compared to 37 percent of domestic Islamic extremism (see figure 1). This chapter will review various literature that provide a conceptual understanding and background of violent extremist groups in the American society today, subsequently identifying the most violent.

#### Arie Perliger-*Challengers from the Sidelines*

Understanding these groups is as complex as the very thing that brings them together, religion. “Religion is a powerful motivator for both positive social change and mass violence. It is an institution that is protected by civil society, whether by a state’s own constitution or international agreements.”<sup>29</sup> The coalescing force of religion and the protection it enjoys on a global scale inhibits discouraging veiled violent messages projected from the “church.” In Arie Perliger’s book, the author provides a conceptual

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<sup>28</sup> Anti-Defamation League, “2015 Was Deadliest Year for Domestic Extremist Violence in Past 20 Years, ADL Says,” January 5, 2016, accessed February 6, 2016, <http://www.adl.org/press-center/press-release/extremisim/2015-was-deadliest-year-domestic-extremist-violence-past-20-years>.

<sup>29</sup> Amos N. Guiora, “Religious Extremism: A Fundamental Danger,” *South Texas Law Review* 50 (2009): 743.

foundation to understand different far right groups to identify those that perpetuate violent attacks, while tracking trends.<sup>30</sup> Perliger sought to provide this comprehensive study because limited systematic analysis and documentation of American domestic violence currently exists. To gain a comprehensive understanding, Perliger focuses on three core questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of the violence produced by the far right?
2. What type of groups are far more prone to commit these acts of violence based on their characteristics?
3. What are the social and political factors associated with the level of far-right violence?

Perliger categorizes violent far-right movements into three ideological movements: a racist (white) supremacy movement, an anti-federalist movement and a fundamentalist movement.

The first ideology is focused on race. White supremacy groups such as the skinheads, KKK, neo-Nazi groups, comprise the racist movement, centered on preserving and restoring their cultural heritage. This group's ideological foundation is concentrated on attacks on non-Aryan (nonwhites) and their "identifiable facilities (mosques, synagogues, or schools identified with minority communities)."<sup>31</sup> An empirical picture developed by Perliger indicate a key distinction within this ideology is that the KKK is prone to vandalism, while the skinheads and other neo-Nazi groups with extremists

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<sup>30</sup> Arie Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines: Understanding America's Violent Far Right* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2012), 7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.



views, are likely to attack people with the objective of amassing large quantities of casualties.<sup>32</sup>

The second ideology occurred mostly in the 1990s, with an emergence of anti-federalist movements concentrated on “undermining the influence, legitimacy and effective sovereignty of the federal government.”<sup>33</sup> Federalists have a strong belief that the “American political system and its proxies were hijacked by external forces interested in promoting a New World Order, in which the United States will be absorbed into the United Nations.” The movement is generally skeptical of the federal government and is rooted in the belief that corruption and tyranny allows for intrusion into the lives of citizens and their constitutional rights. Most of their violence is perpetuated against the federal government, while promoting self-government and civil activism. Herbert Strong provides a broad perspective of what the Anti Federalist movement stood for in his book “What the Anti-Federalists were for.”<sup>34</sup> Essentially, the movement with a history that spans over 200 years was deeply rooted in religious beliefs and advocated for religion to remain at the forefront of government to ensure moral stature and sufficient character of the people.

The third ideology is the fundamentalist movement, which comprises many Christian identity groups. This movement fuses religious beliefs with white supremacy tendencies, using texts from the bible to promote “nativism, exclusionism and racial superiority.” According to a study conducted by Arie Perliger, an average of 337 attacks

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<sup>32</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 128.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Herbert Strong, *What the Anti-Federalists Were For* (Chicago Press, 1981).

are committed each year by right wing extremists, which caused 254 fatalities since 9/11.<sup>35</sup> Kurzman and Schanzer of the New York Times also indicated “Since 9/11, an average of nine American Muslims per year have been involved in an average of six terrorism-related plots against targets in the United States.”<sup>36</sup> Contrast Perliger’s numbers with acts committed by Muslim extremists, then the picture becomes clear, attacks are more likely to be committed from far right Christian groups than any other group. Still, given this disturbing rise of domestic incidents inflicted by far right Christian extremist groups, the media is reluctant and slow to focus its attention on the threat they present.<sup>37</sup> Identifying the exact number of Christian extremist groups is challenging, however, the SPLC through the use of intelligence reports gathered from hate groups, compiles and tracks extremist groups, ideologies and activities. Thus, the SPLC identified 784 hate groups in 2014 alone, compartmentalized within eight groups.<sup>38</sup> Of note is the far reaching tentacles of the CIM, which crosses through the eight groups precipitously because of the Christian beliefs at its core. Perliger highlights two schools of thought that emerged from Christian fundamentalist ideologies, with the CIM being “the more influential and popular one”<sup>39</sup>. The other is an anti-abortion and pro-life stance, which

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<sup>35</sup> Charles Kurzman and David Schanzer, “The Growing Right-Wing Terror Threat,” *New York Times*, June 16, 2015, accessed December 29, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/015/06/16/opinion/the-other-terror-threat.html?ref=opinion&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/015/06/16/opinion/the-other-terror-threat.html?ref=opinion&_r=1).

<sup>36</sup> Kurzman and Schanzer, “The Growing Right-Wing Terror Threat.”

<sup>37</sup> Mary Zeiss Stange, “Christian Extremists Pose Threat,” *USA Today*, October 21, 2014, accessed December 29, 2015, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2014/10/21/christian-extremists-threat-muslims-homegrown-cliven-bundy-column/17679789/>.

<sup>38</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “Christian Identity.”

<sup>39</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 31.

continues to take center stage, in the absence of other divisive philosophies. The CIM widely promotes white supremacist beliefs and anti-Semitic sentiments.<sup>40</sup> They firmly believe they are the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel, and trace their roots to the 19th century British-Israelis ideology, founded by the Englishman, John Wilson in 1840. Current day CIM subscribes to five basic tenets, which are:

1. That Whites (Aryan) are the Israelites identified in the Old Testament,
2. Jews are descendants of Satan,
3. Adam and Eve are the first White people,
4. Descendants of pre-Adamic races are non-white, and
5. A race war the likes of which would be on a scale of Armageddon is forthcoming.<sup>41</sup>

The CIM is loosely organized and diverse in its structure, which prevents centralized strategy and focus. Many do not subscribe to paramilitary activities, however, a good number adhere to the “American Patriot Movement” whose premise is to prevent government intrusion in their lives, and arm themselves in preparation for the race-war. Due solely to its loosely organized structure, the CIM claims connection to the KKK, the covenant, the Sword and Arm of the Lord, Aryan nation, the Church of Israel and at least 21 other groups.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right*.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Abanes, *American Militias: Rebellion, Racism and Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, August 1996), 155.

<sup>42</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “Intelligence Report,” accessed December 29, 2015, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2015/active-hate-groups-united-states-2014#christian>.

Michael Barkum-Religion  
and the Racist Right

In his book, Michael Barkum illustrates the urgent need to understand the “Under studied phenomenon”<sup>43</sup> that is CIM and its dominance of the far right. Barkum explores the metamorphosis from the British-Israelism belief that Jews were their brothers; “descendants of different but related tribes,”<sup>44</sup> to Jews are direct descendants of Satan. He summarizes that religious texts taken in parts from the bible as well as occult religious beliefs were stitched to form meaningful verbiage after World War II that identified Jews as children of Satan. The metamorphosis of British-Israelism generally occurred in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and became the CIM in America.

With the weakening of the original movement in England, lack of organizational ties and geographical factors, the British-Israelism movement transformed to CIM in California. It was at this time that a doctrinal shift occurred that annihilated Jews from the consideration of kinship. Ties began to appear between right-wing political causes, which Gerald L. Smith strongly drove. Smith’s political career began as Huey Long’s chief lieutenant. After Long’s assassination in 1935, however, Smith began to develop radical ideologies, which were increasingly anti-Semitic. He then moved his headquarters into the city of Los Angeles, which strengthened relationships with significant figures of the identity’s movement on the West Coast. One figure with a more critical significance was Wesley Swift, for he was to become the single most prominent and influential figure, during the 1960s and 1970s. Swift is credited for combining right wing circles, “a

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<sup>43</sup> Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right*, xiii.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, preface.

demonic anti-Semitism and political extremism”<sup>45</sup> into the CIM. He dedicated himself to preaching and writing and had amassed a huge following through his teachings. At the time of his death, the movement vigorously developed in California, and clearly separated itself from its English roots. By the 1990s, two new motifs were clear of the CIM; “the claim that it was neither racist nor anti-Semitic and second, the assertion that the extreme right, far from being radical was in fact the carrier and guardian of mainstream American values.”<sup>46</sup> It aims to link the radical right into the “mainstream”<sup>47</sup> in a non-stigmatizing manner by portraying itself as the “constitutionalists,”<sup>48</sup> whose vested interest to ensure the American value remains intact and unalloyed.

Major Frederick D. Wong-“Christian Extremism  
as a Domestic Terror Threat”

In his monograph, Major Frederick D. Wong explores how an idea defines structure and that structure defines interest and actions in the name of religion. He further highlights the haste in highlighting Islamic extremism as terroristic and dangerous, even as Christian extremists share a “common ideology that advocates violence against Americans.”<sup>49</sup> Wong suggests two underlying themes of Christian extremism, “racism through the use of religion as justification to promote violence and religious terrorism to

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<sup>45</sup> Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right*, 61.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>49</sup> MAJ Frederick Wong, “Christian Extremism as a Domestic Terror Threat” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft Leavenworth, KS, May 2011).

support what is perceived as God's will and law."<sup>50</sup> He recommends four courses of actions to suppress the growth and existence of these groups. They are:

1. Sustainment of negotiation-oriented tactics as the primary option for crisis situation,
2. Enforcement of existing anti-militia laws,
3. Promotion of racial and religious tolerance, and
4. Increased community involvement.

Wong's assessment and recommendations made four years ago are relevant today as racial tensions reach an all-time high. The comprehensive actions of community, legislative and judicial efforts are tirelessly needed to immediately address the critical threat of religious extremism.

All three authors underscore the urgency and critical need for empirical and statistical analysis of this type of terror, in efforts to understand and prevent their sustained growth.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

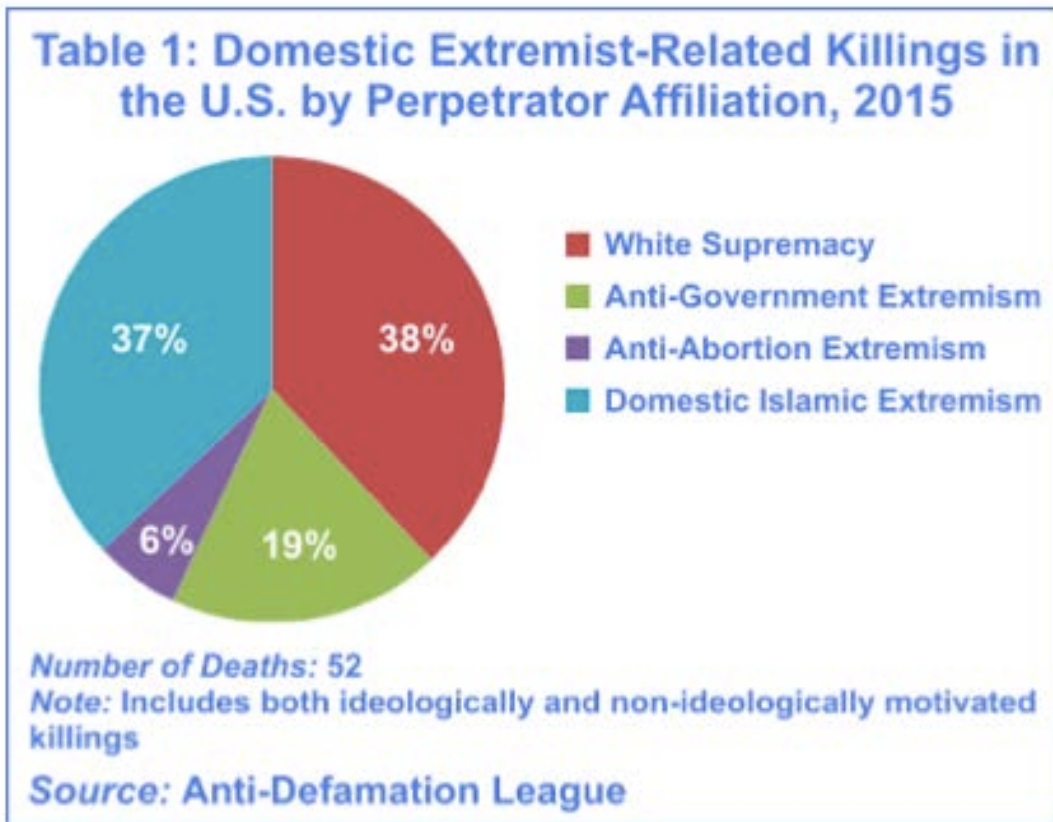


Figure 1. Violent Domestic Attacks in 2015

*Source:* Anti-Defamation League, “2015 Was Deadliest Year for Domestic Extremist Violence in Past 20 Years, ADL Says,” January 5, 2016, accessed February 6, 2016, <http://www.adl.org/press-center/press-release/extremism/2015-was-deadliest-year-domestic-extremist-violence-past-20-years.html>.

Note: Over 63 percent of killings levied on Americans in 2015 were committed by groups that identify with strong Christian beliefs (white supremacy, anti-abortionist, anti-government), Compared to 37 percent of domestic Islamic extremism.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The last chapter discussed the ideology of extremist groups, which essentially defines their structure, and subsequently results in interest and action, all in the name of religion. Of great importance and note, is the far-reaching influence of the CIM, which crosses through the eight groups precipitously because of the Christian beliefs at its core.<sup>51</sup> Two schools of thought define the movement of far right extremist groups, the Christian fundamentalist ideology and the anti-abortion and pro-life stance,<sup>52</sup> which continues to take center stage, in the absence of other divisive philosophies.

To understand the complex issue of Christian extremism, it is important to analyze the nature of why certain Christians on the extreme spectrum of the faith, tend towards violence. Thus, this thesis will utilize the case study methodology to explore bounded system or multiple bounded systems through detailed, in-depth data collection to provide a case description and theme.<sup>53</sup> A constructive research of four case studies within the Christian extremism context will bring forth analysis and comparison of these major incidents. This qualitative method of research is familiar to social scientists because of its popularity in psychology, medicine, law and political Science.<sup>54</sup> To

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<sup>51</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “Christian Identity.”

<sup>52</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 31.

<sup>53</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design, Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 73.

<sup>54</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 73.



achieve a comprehensive illustration of the issue, the collective case study is utilized.<sup>55</sup> Cases identified in this thesis provide an in-depth understanding of extremist groups and the events (activities) associated with their organization. Although Creswell identifies a challenge exists when focus is placed on multiple cases as “diluting the overall analysis,” this study finds value in the purposeful sampling of cases that illustrates different perspective of the issue, with a common theme.<sup>56</sup> To achieve an analysis that is relevant and current to the operational environment, this study focuses on cases between 2009 and 2015, analyzing socio-economic and political aspects that impact the survivability of these groups. Given the changing focus on what is deemed “important” by mainstream media and pundits alike, studies of this nature remain highly relevant, especially because not much has been devoted to highlight the risks posed by these homegrown terrorist groups. Focusing on the Secondary Research Questions of this thesis will provide further analysis of this issue that brings forth a comprehensive understanding of the driving factors that sustains Christian extremism.

In order to identify and differentiate the most violent groups within the far right Christian faith, this study will identify acts committed by these groups that resulted in deaths. A concurrent analysis would further assess the activities most representative of the most violent groups. In addition, an in-depth exploration on the role of the current political, social and economic environment is critical in understanding the trigger for action from violent extremists.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

To that end, the first Secondary Research Question is: What religious groups within the Christian faith are the most violent and why? What activities are representative of these groups? The analysis will then focus on the importance to understand the mechanisms employed to recruit and sustain these extremists groups, highlighting the most effective method. The second Secondary Research Question will then focus on: What mechanism of recruitment they use and how growth is sustained?

The research design uses four different cases. The first two cases delve into understanding the AOG, a loosely structured Christian extremist group whose core belief is that abortion is against the will of God. The analysis will focus on: The murder of Dr. George Tiller, a Kansas abortion physician who was first shot in 1993 and later assassinated in 2009, and Robert Lewis Dear who entered an abortion clinic in Colorado on 2015, killing three and injuring nine others. Then the focus shifts to provide an in-depth understanding of how the AOG perpetuates the idea of continuous violence, maintain an active presence all while remaining an ambiguous strategy centered organization.

The third case highlights the metamorphism of neo-Nazi organizations and their subsequent proliferation into movements that followed the White Aryan Resistance ideology. To this end, the Hammerskins, and their influence on Wade Michael Page who executed the Wisconsin Sikh Temple shooting in Oak Creek Wisconsin will be explored. Page, who was once an active member of the armed services, fatally shot six people, wounding four others.

The final case explores the CCC and its influence on the impressionable Dylan Roof, who on June 17, 2015, joined a group of parishioners to pray in their church and

then turned his weapon towards them to murder them. The group's founding principles are to value and preserve the so-called Christian beliefs of America, keeping its ties to Europe. This means the American population must remain European in its composition and character and every effort must be given to deter and oppose non-European peoples from existing within the borders of America.

### Summary

These four cases vividly describe the current trend of activities Christian extremists employ, especially in recent years. The qualitative methodology selected for this analysis not only provides a comprehensive review of the current operational environment but actively identifies and differentiates the most violent groups within the far right Christian faith. Concurrent analysis also further assesses the mechanisms of recruitment these groups utilize to attract members, in order to maintain growth and sustainability.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an in-depth, systematic analysis in efforts to achieve the qualitative methodology, delineated in chapter 3. As these cases are analyzed, a keen focus concentrates on factors that drive the success of these groups. It is, therefore, extremely important to focus on the level of violence these groups execute, activities typical of the respective groups, recruitment and their organizational structure. Arie Perliger highlights the importance of analyzing violence to ascertain the “the symbolic nature of terrorism and its ability to exploit violence.”<sup>57</sup> Analyzing violence perpetrated by members of Christian extremist groups will assist in understanding the capabilities, effectiveness and goals of these groups, especially as it relates to the volume of casualties sustained. In addition, these groups employ specific operational characteristics that are easily associated with their strategy and intent.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, Perliger again stresses the importance “to evaluate aspects related to productivity, effectiveness and overall operational capabilities . . . and its ability to impact social and political processes.”<sup>59</sup> These groups understand the importance of sustaining their ideology and seek meaningful cooperation and coordination.”<sup>60</sup> Therefore, some groups seek to capitalize on

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<sup>57</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 85.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 137-145.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

contemporary issues in order to “maintain their relevance and expand their ranks.”<sup>61</sup> Finally, this analysis will focus on the impact of organizational structure and its effectiveness. Perliger’s findings indicated “an interesting operational path which, on the one hand ensures the survival of the organization, and on the other hand, allows it to engage indirectly in violent activities.”<sup>62</sup> The variety of organizational structure in the four cases selected allows for a comprehensive analysis of the various groups and their operational framework.

### The Army of God

The AOG is an organization founded on Christian beliefs whose fundamental principles calls for violence against those who perform abortions. Founded in the early 1980s, the group’s first coordinated activity involved kidnapping of an abortion performing doctor, Hector Zevallos, and his wife in 1982.<sup>63</sup> The hostages were later released, but their message of potential violence toward abortion performing doctors and their infrastructure (offices, clinics, personal residence) was communicated. In the 1990s, the group transitioned to bombings, arsons, murder of physicians providing abortions, and preyed on the fear of the public. AOG is a small, loosely coordinated and structured organization, whose members span the nation. The ambiguity of the organization makes it difficult to identify a structure, because members are more enamored and committed to

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<sup>61</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 125.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>63</sup> The New York Times, “Abortion Doctor Disappears, ‘Army of God’ Note Reported,” August 19, 1982, accessed March 23 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/08/19/us/abortion-doctor-disappears-army-of-god-note-reported.html>.

the idea of anti-abortion, than they are to affiliation with an organization. Members range from practicing ministers, mothers, and protestors to government aspirants.<sup>64</sup> Their education, economic and political backgrounds are common enough where identifying a specific “type” of activist becomes a challenge. Individuals who carry out the act of murder firmly believe God as their leader and direct their act of violence to protect the lives of unborn babies. It is this loose structure and lack of hierarchical leadership that prevents members from having structured meetings and interactions, and creates difficulty for law enforcement to conclusively track.

On November 27, 2015, Robert Lewis Dear, who had a history of crimes consistent with bombing (terrorizing) abortion clinics, walked into a Colorado area Planned Parenthood clinic and executed three individuals, wounding nine others. Dear was described as an individual who viewed the AOG as heroes, executing the will of God. The irony of this act is that none of his victims were abortion providers or seeking to end a pregnancy. His victims were in fact law enforcement personnel and innocent citizens, who were merely offering support to women who needed it as they pondered through the decision of ending their pregnancy. In the end, Dear committed murder, an act that contradicts the very teachings of the church and the Christian faith, which he proclaims to uphold and promote.

The actions of Dear are consistent with instructions provided by the AOG. In efforts to communicate a consolidated set of instructions to enable execution of activities against abortionist, infrastructure and sympathizers (pro-life), the AOG developed a

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<sup>64</sup> Jennifer Jefferis, *Armed For Life: The Army of God and Anti-Abortion Terror in the United States* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 76.

manual. This manual essentially synchronizes the AOG's message and provides a blueprint for its followers. It proclaims the AOG to be a real army, with God as the general. Within the manual, 99 covert ways to protect God's children and save the Christian community are systematically identified. The document dehumanizes pro-lifers and almost justifies their execution if warranted. For they have "cut him or herself off from the church and therefore from Christ."<sup>65</sup> The manual also provides information on the layout of buildings, specifically modern constructed buildings, to familiarize "Termites" when they are in buildings to engage in covert activities. Termites are the self-described actors who execute the agenda of the AOG. Although members of the AOG rarely meet in an organized fashion, they claim to share a profound fondness for one another, especially termites that successfully execute acts of violence. Termites are hailed as "Prisoners of Christ"<sup>66</sup> on the AOG's website, with declaration of support for their actions in stopping the murder of babies. This almost glamorizes the acts committed by the group and serves as a recruitment tool, as illustrated in the recent case of Dear.

Linking AOG's "actions" to the "idea" has created a complex response mechanism, the likes of which occur along political party lines.<sup>67</sup> To reject one, means a rejection of the other. Republicans eager to capture the pro-life voting block, found themselves inextricably linked to the Pro-life movement, essentially securing the support of a committed four percent of the populace, nationwide. According to Jefferis, It is further possible that to appease this demographic of voters, there was a reluctance to

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<sup>65</sup> Author Unkown, *The Army of God Manual*, 3rd ed.

<sup>66</sup> Jefferis, *Armed For Life*, 77.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

define acts committed on abortion clinics, as terrorism, but criminal acts. This was evident in 1984 when then FBI director, William Webster classified “bombing a bank or a post office”<sup>68</sup> as terrorism, but adamantly refused to categorize acts of violence against abortion clinics, physicians and patients as such. This reluctance to define AOG as a non state actor, therefore, a terrorist group, gave confidence and emboldened the group to continue its acts of violence strengthening their belief that their actions are legitimate, just and called upon by God. Many claimed President Ronald Reagan’s silence and inaction to react, gave pro-life activists a pass.<sup>69</sup> As evidence of Reagan’s passive support of pro-choice believers, activists who believe he firmly planted the idea that fetuses feel pain while abortion takes place, highlight his support of the movie “The Silent Scream.”<sup>70</sup> The President then wrote an article, which was later published in the book “Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation,” the first and only to be published by a sitting president.<sup>71</sup> In this article, he clearly asserted “abortion concerns not just the unborn child, it concerns every one of us,”<sup>72</sup> and went on to cite the English Poet, John

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 104

<sup>70</sup> Allison Yarrow, “Ronald Reagan, The Silent Scream, and the Slow Rise of Fetal Pain,” *The Daily Beast*, May 30, 2012, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/05/30/ronald-reagan-the-silent-scream-and-the-slow-rise-of-fetal-pain.html>.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ronald Reagan, “Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation,” *The Human Life Review*, February 3, 1983, accessed April 2, 2016, <http://www.humanlifereview.com/abortion-and-the-conscience-of-the-nation-ronald-reagan-the-10th-anniversary-of-the-supreme-court-decision-in-roe-v-wade-is-a-good-time-for-us-to-pause-and-reflect-our-nationwide-policy-of-abortion-o/>.



Donne, “any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” Writings of this sort ultimately invoked a call to action for extremist groups like the AOG. It suggested to some they stood for the right thing and had the endorsement from the highest levels of government. But as bombings and violence continued through the mid 1980’s, Reagan provided a strong condemnation of the activities of pro-life activists calling it “violent anarchist activities.”<sup>73</sup> Even as Reagan offered his strongest repugnance for anti-abortion violence, he refused to acknowledge a coordinated effort existed.<sup>74</sup> Instead he viewed the perpetrators as individuals, which may have stifled an opportunity to focus on an organization that is well coordinated and focused on their mission.<sup>75</sup> It is important to note incidence of violence against abortion clinics dropped sharply, after Reagan’s strong stance in 1985.<sup>76</sup>

This reduction of incident continued on until the early 1990s. The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances, introduced by Democratic Congressman Mel Levin was a catalyst to this reduction. This bill was viewed as controversial to opponents of abortion, but its main tenet was to make obstruction to access an abortion clinic illegal. The timing of the bill coincided with an election year and discussions of abortion was again intensified even becoming polarizing. The subject of abortion became one of many key

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<sup>73</sup> United Press International, “Reagan Assails Bombings of Abortion Clinics,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 1985, accessed April 7, 2016, [http://articles.latimes.com/1985-01-03/news/mn-11134\\_1\\_arbortion-clinics](http://articles.latimes.com/1985-01-03/news/mn-11134_1_arbortion-clinics).

<sup>74</sup> Jefferis, *Armed For Life*, 106.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

platform topics for then candidate William Jefferson Clinton. As the bill was making its way through the House of Congress to become law, opponents ramped up their activities to close abortion clinics nationwide. In Wichita Kansas, Randal Terry and Keith Tucci led such a movement affecting the city of 300,000 at the time. Law enforcement seeking to subvert violence, asked abortion providers to close their clinics for the week of scheduled protests. They obliged. Terry and Tucci, seeing the results of their mission, proclaimed victory and sought to extend their protest beyond their scheduled week. This effort effectively denied and clinics went on to conduct their operations as usual. A clinic owned and operated by George Tiller was targeted. Protesters used their bodies to prevent the physician from accessing his clinic. Initially Law enforcement assisted in the forceful removal of protestors but the city's mayor eventually directed law enforcement officers to stop. This gave rise to an increasingly violent and unsafe environment for providers, patients and employers of the clinic. On August 19, 1993, Shelly Shannon shot Tiller in both hands as he was driving away from his clinic. Shannon was an AOG activist who first came to the organization as she sought the use of force for the anti-abortion cause. Her interest against abortion heightened after she read newsletters from *Americans against Abortion*, which featured an article that described "The Silent Scream" film. She found the AOG list, which hailed executioners as Prisoners of Christ, and provided their addresses to spur communication for new recruits. Shannon began to directly engage in communication with group members and was particularly interested in Michael Griffin, who was responsible for the death of David Gunn. She began to believe her actions were

spirit filled and that God was powerfully in her as she accomplished her feats of vandalism.<sup>77</sup>

Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances was codified at 18 USC.S 248 and enacted as law on May 26, 1994. The bill made it a federal crime to “intentionally use force, threats of force or physical obstruction in order to intimidate or interfere with a person because that person is providing or obtaining reproductive health service.”<sup>78</sup> A penalty of \$10,000 for first time offenders to 10 years of imprisonments for violent offenders, offered strict and harsh punishment which many did not want to bear. A distinction is clearly drawn by the response and attitude of political parties. The mostly Democratic supported bill garnered minor Republican support. But the impact of the bill still remains visible today, for no longer do large bodies of protestors use their bodies as a blockade to prevent access to a reproductive health provider facility. The attitude of the Presidency played a significant role in emboldening or discouraging extreme acts of violence. President Bill Clinton supported his Attorney General Janet Reno implicitly as a result, sought to establishment an interagency against anti-abortionist to aid investigators. This collaboration proved to be effective, as links began to be drawn between acts committed in the name of the pro-life movement to the AOG. The loosely organized structure began to take shape and their ideologies given center stage as the Clinton Administration applied extensive pressure on known affiliates of the group. The environment began to change, as law enforcement began to look at terrorism not as a tightly controlled

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<sup>77</sup> Jefferis, *Armed For Life*, 106.

<sup>78</sup> Lucinda Finley, “Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, May 26, 1994,” Encyclopedia.com, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3407400141.html>.

hierarchy, but as an idea that could be as deadly as the organization.<sup>79</sup> Clinton continued to vehemently denounce and condemn acts committed by activist as “vile and malevolent acts . . . that would be punished to the fullest extent that the law provides.”<sup>80</sup>

After September 2011, it began to be clear that terrorist organizations were no longer hierarchal in nature but were ambiguous, driven by ideology. The discussion of the classification of terrorists in an international and national context became a subject of intense debate. Although then Attorney General, John Ashcroft prosecuted pro-life activist that committed acts of violence under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances, the interpretation of the word remained mangled at the judicial level. This was reflected in the 2003 prosecution of AOG activist Clayton Waagner, who created panic and hysteria by mailing anthrax laced letters to congressional leaders. The judge in the case set a precedent when he interpreted terrorism as acts committed against the federal government. Therefore, Waagner’s act did not fit that classification. Again, the debate over who and what a terrorist remained in dispute at the judicial and executive branches. Waagner himself thought the judge’s interpretation to be ludicrous and espoused, “There’s no question I terrorized these people any way I could.”<sup>81</sup> Whatever the case, the number of cases prosecuted under Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances and under the Bush administration declined significantly.

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<sup>79</sup> Jefferis, *Armed For Life*, 106.

<sup>80</sup> CNN, “Blasts Probed at Atlanta Family Planning Clinic,” January 16, 1997, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/US/9701/16/atlanta.blast.update/>.

<sup>81</sup> Jefferis, *Armed For Life*, 106.

On May 31, 2009, Dr. George Tiller, who had become one of only few doctors to perform late term abortions, was gunned down and killed in his church as he attended service.<sup>82</sup> Many viewed this as a direct attack against women's right, since his death meant few options were now available to women who sought assistance with late term abortion. Tiller's death was the first such killing since the killing of Dr. Barnett Slepian in 1998. Several attempts had been made on Tiller's life, as he became the focal point to those who opposed his profession. His clinic had been protested for years and so were his church and his house. He was constantly involved in litigation, as many challenged his practices, questioning whether he operated outside the scope of what the constitution provided. Scott Phillip Roeder, an AOG member who held extreme cross-pollinated anti-government and anti-abortion views, killed Tiller. It is believed that these views motivated Roeder to commit violence, and ultimately murder. His devout following of the AOG judged his activities to be justifiable homicide.

In summary AOG utilizes articles, newsletters and their website to lure recruits. Its loose organizational structure allows for "members" to remain anonymous, only to come forward after acts of violence are committed. Termites commit acts of violence to seek the badge of honor that publicizes their names on the Prisoners for Christ list. This list also serves as an effective recruitment technique for the organization. AOG members trend towards even more violent acts, often times culminating in murder. Followers are so profoundly intertwined into the ideological fabric of their cause that they cannot decipher between the physical and the spiritual realm. They are emboldened by the

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<sup>82</sup> Joe Stumpe and Monica Davey, "Abortion Doctor Shot to Death in Kansas Church," *The New York Time*, May 31, 2009, accessed April 2, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/01/us/01tiller.html>.

Republican Political Party, and their activities increase each time a Republican President is in office. Democrats appeared to display a strong disdain for their actions, adopted a pro-choice platform and devoted money to the sustainment of operations, which tends to dispel the strengthening of the organization. This was evident in the proposed White House budget in 2000, which included \$4.5 million towards the security of abortion clinics.<sup>83</sup> The challenge will continue to be the definition of what is right and wrong and the right of individuals to gather in ideological discussion under the first amendment. In addition, deciphering between the motivation behind violence, actions against ideas, and intention or an idea of the crime as much as the actions itself will remain a huge challenge in the demolition of this group.

#### Wisconsin Sikh Temple Shooting

The widely promoted and influential CIM fuses religion with white supremacist beliefs, and serves as a springboard for neo-Nazi groups. As the neo-Nazi group evolved, it began to adopt and absorb “significant national social elements.”<sup>84</sup> Their propensity for violence and increased cooperation with other far right organizations rose significantly since their formation in the early 1980s. By the mid 1980s, outreach operations like the White Aryan Resistance spearheaded by Thomas Metzger ensured the group’s main efforts were to forge connections with “dominant figures from the European skinheads and white power music scene and introducing them via White Aryan Resistance to

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<sup>83</sup> Jefferis, *Armed For Life*, 106.

<sup>84</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 57.

American skinhead groups.”<sup>85</sup> Metzger further focused his efforts on the distribution of literature, which came in the form of magazines, speeches, and electronic bulletins with constant promotion of white punk music, combined with white supremacy and national socialist messages. To maintain a young viable population of recruits, Metzger maintained a relationship with skinhead groups on colleges and universities nationwide, which strengthened connections with local communities.

While their main focus was on defeating “Jewish controlled government institutions, skinheads attacks were usually aimed at different representation of outgroups, such as minorities and people with alternative life styles.”<sup>86</sup> White Aryan Resistance however was short lived and stumbled by the end of the 1980s, as it struggled to create a nationwide organization and following. Soon, a similar organization emerged from the Dallas Texas area that fulfilled White Aryan Resistance’s efforts to establish an organizational structure with nationwide appeal. Consolidated from the Confederate Hammerskins, the Hammerskins Nations (HSN) were a more violent group of skinheads who were well funded and extremely efficient at recruiting and engaging their communities. HSN, as they are commonly known, engaged in aggressively publicizing their activities, a move that is credited for their nationwide expansion and appeal. By the early 1990s the group’s growth was rapidly fast as they consolidated with other ideologues following the skinhead philosophy, and boasted of regional offices that spanned the nation. A major force that unified the group both culturally and geographically was white power music. This music mobilized the group to action,

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

inspired potential recruits and propagated a language, culture and attitude that solidified a “cohesive ideological framework.”<sup>87</sup>

It is this attraction and draw of white power music that caught the attention of Wade Michael Page to join the Hammerskins in 2007. On August 5, 2012, the 40 year-old Page entered a Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin and fatally shot six people, wounding four others. Page was an active member of the Hammerskins, whose past included six years of military service with the United States Army. The strong appeal of White power music serves as the first encounter for many recruits into a skinhead culture and ideology. It is the catalyst from which an operational blueprint is provided that legitimizes the violent tendencies of the group. So enamored was Page with white power music that he played in several bands and subsequently founded one of his own (End Apathy) in 2005. The social, political and economic environment also played a role in the promotion and expansion of far-right extremists groups. The Hammerskins, like other far-right extremist groups, capitalized on the political environment of 2012 and sought to shape their message by exploiting violence and controlling the narrative to fit a political discourse agenda.

According to Arie Perliger, groups that promulgate a far right ideology are more apt to escalate the level of violence during a presidential election year (see figure 2). Research has shown violence by far-right groups intensifies and increases significantly “the more competitive a presidential election is, the more right wing violence emerges.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 57.

<sup>88</sup> Maoist Rebel News, “Study on Sources of Right Wing Violence,” January 21, 2013, accessed March 24, 2016, <http://maoistrebelnews.com/2013/01/21/study-on-sources-of-right-wing-violence>.



These groups use this period to convey a message of violence activism to a public that is seeking knowledge and understanding of the various political candidates. The political environment becomes ripe for opportunities of expansion and promotion of ideologies unique to the group. A decrease in attacks tends to occur after the elections are over, according to Perliger.<sup>89</sup> For example, after the 2004 elections, a decline in attacks reflected an 80 percent drop in 2005 and in 2009, a decline of 30 percent was visible after the 2008 elections. An additional political indicator correlates to the political parties in control of the legislative and executive branches. Christopher Hewitt's' chronology tracked bombings, shootings and attacks that helped to shape a political narrative from 1954 to 2005.<sup>90</sup> This chronology drew a negative correlation between the numbers of attacks that occurred in a democratic controlled senate; however, a positive correlation was detected when an increased number of Republicans are in the legislative branch. One explanation of this spike is the perception that far-right groups are strengthened and confident their activities are far more accepted and tolerated by conservative political figures.<sup>91</sup>

Perliger's correlation of the executive branch reveals virtually the same outcome as the legislative branch. Analyzing the period between 1990 and 2011, Perliger surmises "two Republican presidents and two Democratic presidents held office; the former for 10 years and the latter for 12 years. The average number of incidents per year during the

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<sup>89</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 57.

<sup>90</sup> Christopher Hewitt, *Political Violence and Terrorism in Modern America: A Chronology* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security, 2005).

<sup>91</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 95.

terms of Republican presidents was 243.6, in comparison to 163 during the terms of Democrat Presidents.”<sup>92</sup> Essentially, conclusions from both Hewitt and Perliger indicate a positive correlation of an increased violence when the environment is dominated with a conservative political voice.

The social and economic aspect of the environment cannot be overlooked. A natural draw of individuals who are frustrated with their social and economic conditions serves as a means for recruitment into far-right extremist groups. Hammerskins’ rise is attributed to the decline of the inner cities in the mid 1980s and the economic collapse of industry, which forced unemployment in high numbers around the 2008 economic crisis. The group also reaches out to prison systems, bringing in young violent men, who are deemed to be on the fringes of societal spectrum.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) identified the Hammerskins as “the most violent and best organized neo-Nazi skinhead group in the United States.”<sup>93</sup> They are known and feared by their communities for violent beatings, vandalisms and murder of minorities. In 2003, Metzger promoted a new form of violence, described as “revolutionary actions.”<sup>94</sup>

This strategy called for silent operations, which allowed for the blending into society by attaining professional jobs in order to execute “lone wolf” activities. Many of

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>93</sup> Anti-Defamation League, “The Hammerskin Nation,” accessed March 23, 2016, [http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext\\_us/hammerskin.html](http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext_us/hammerskin.html).

<sup>94</sup> Anti-Defamation League, “Racist Skinhead,” accessed March 28, 2016, [http://archive.adl.org/racist\\_skinheads/skinheads\\_groups.html](http://archive.adl.org/racist_skinheads/skinheads_groups.html).

the crimes associated with the Hammersteins have been conducted in this manner, to include the 2012 shooting at the Wisconsin Sikh Temple.

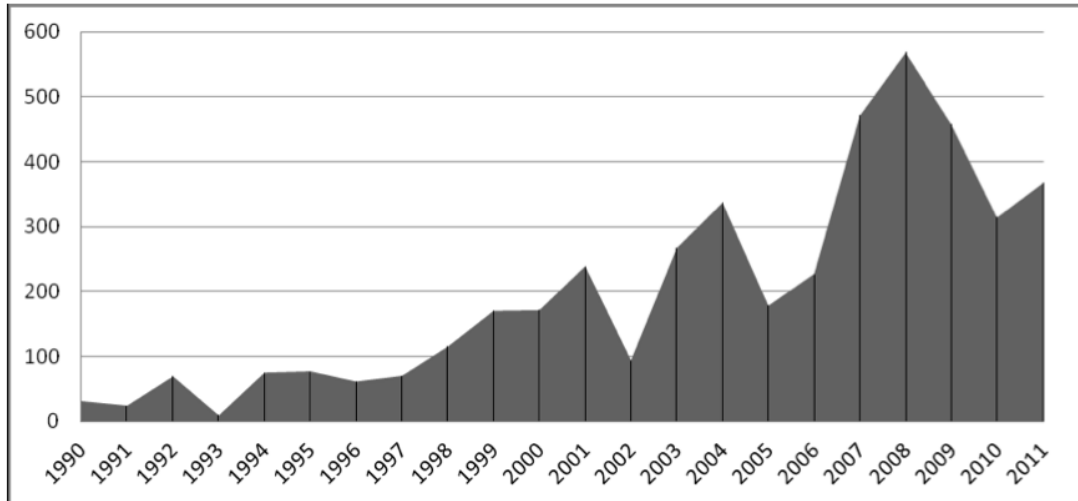


Figure 2. Trends indicate an increase in the number of attacks with a noted spike in 2008 (a Presidential Election Year)

Source: Arie Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines: Understanding America's Violent Far-Right* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2012), 87.

### “Charleston Nine”–South Carolina Massacre

On June 17, 2015 Dylan Roof joined a group of parishioners to pray in their church. He sat quietly to observe the congregation and prayed with them for one hour, after which he took out his weapon and calmly asserted, “you rape our women and you’re taking over the country, I have to do this and you have to go.”<sup>95</sup> In a flash, he killed nine, but spared a 10th to tell the world what happened because he expected to die. As the

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<sup>95</sup> NBC News, Church Gunman Reportedly Said, “I Have to Do This.”

impressionable Roof perused through the website of the CCC after the murder of Trayvon Martin in Florida, he was angered by the websites publication of murders purported to be committed by blacks against white. Roof writes in his manifesto, “pages upon pages of these brutal black on white murders. . . . How could the news be blowing up the Trayvon Martin case while hundreds of these white murders got ignored?”<sup>96</sup> He was oblivious to the CCC’s methodology to utilize mainstream stories to convince its followers that “black-on-white crime is a real menace”<sup>97</sup> Motivated by extreme Christian beliefs, this lone wolf, radicalized by ideologies he found on the internet, carried out one of the most heinous crimes ever to be committed within the sanctuary of a place people cling to for spiritual comfort and solace. There is no doubt the source of Roof’s radicalization was the CCC. Created in 1985 as a modern day reincarnation of the White Citizens Council’s, the group’s founding principles are to value and preserve the so-called Christian beliefs of America, keeping its ties to Europe.<sup>98</sup> This means the American population must remain European in its composition and character and every effort must be given to deter and oppose non-European peoples from existing within the borders of America. The White Citizen Council was formed in 1950’s to protest all efforts of mixing races by desegregating schools. Its efforts were unsuccessful, and once segregation was ruled illegal by law, the organization effectively disintegrated and lost

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<sup>96</sup> David Graham, “The White-Supremacist Group that Inspired a Racist Manifesto,” *The Atlantic*, June 22, 2015, accessed April 7, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/06/council-of-conservative-citizens-dylann-roof/396467/>.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “Council of Conservative Citizens,” accessed April 7, 2016, <http://www.slpcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/council-conservative-citizens>.

many members.<sup>99</sup> Mr. Gordon Baum, a workers compensation attorney, summoned a group of thirty white men to form the CCC. This group of 30 included Georgia Governor Lester Maddox and future Louisiana Congressman John Rarick.<sup>100</sup> The CCC sought far-reaching abilities and established local chapters many of which are active in the affairs of the community and the nation at large. They disguised their meetings as “Rotary club type events, which lured politicians to participate as keynote speakers.”<sup>101</sup> Its members continued to be society’s finest professionals, which were bankers, merchant’s lawyers, judge and politician. These individuals commanded attention because of their respectable professional position and affluence. Due to its prominence in the civic environment, the group carried an inherent respectability, which propelled it to thrive on a national stage. They sustained their growth through integration of the resources they influenced within their political and financial realm. So influential was the group that Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall referred to them as the “uptown Klan.”<sup>102</sup> While it operated under the radar for approximately 12 years, it was not until 1998 when media attention first focused on prominent southern politician’s ties to the racist group. Republican Congressman Bob Barr and Republican Majority Leader Trent Lott had both served as keynote speakers for the group, appearing a combined five times to fulfill that role. The Republican National Committee Chairman immediately asked all members of the GOP to resign from the CCC and initiated a resolution “condemning the racism and bigotry

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

espoused by the Council of Conservative Citizens.”<sup>103</sup> The resolution failed to pass and many southern politicians and lawmakers continue to plead ignorance until this day and constantly meet with the group, pandering to their mission. The SPLC highlights that the scandal of 1998 stripped the “varnish” off the intentions of the group, which now boldly publicizes its extremist views, unfiltered in its newspaper (the Citizens informer) and on its websites. The group’s mantra is to use mainstream stories to incite its followers to action, as they lament the decline of the white race. Many of these calls to action have resulted in violent acts, even murder. The CCC is currently the nation’s largest white nationalist group, according to the SPLC.<sup>104</sup> They remain an active voice against immigration, holding many rallies against non-white immigration and the perceived threat they pose to the homeland. Because of the influential nature of the group, it is able to raise funds and spread funds to support political candidates who will continue to promote their agenda. On June 22, 2015, the Guardian reported CCC President Eric Holt donated a total of \$65,000 to Republican campaigns over the years. More recently, presidential hopeful, Senator Ted Cruz received a hefty donation in support of his campaign.<sup>105</sup> That same day, the *Washington Times* reported Ted Cruz acknowledged

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “White Nationalist,” accessed April 7, 2016, <http://www.splc.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/white-nationalist>.

<sup>105</sup> Jon Swaine, “Leader of Group Cited in ‘Dylan Roof Manifesto’ Donated to Top Republican,” *The Guardian*, June 22, 2015, accessed April 7, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jun/21/dylann-roof-manifesto-charleston-shootings-republicans>.

receipt of Holt’s donation in the form of \$8,500 and had made plans to return all donations received from CCC.<sup>106</sup>

The CCC has successfully projected an image of an upstanding organization, poised to influence political affairs within their communities. Given the true nature and beliefs of this organization, it is incumbent upon the Republican Party to aggressively denounce this organization and sever all ties. Additionally, it must regain the confidence of the nation by aggressively seeking out members that are actively engaged in the activities of the CCC and admonish them in a public forum. This would clearly communicate to the nation at large a message of intolerance for separatist racist ideologies, holding those who perpetuate them to task.

Summary

| <b>Factors</b>         | <b>AOG Robert Dear</b>   | <b>AOG Scott Roeder</b>                               | <b>WI Sikh Temple Wade Page</b>   | <b>CCC Dylan Roof</b>                             |
|------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Violence               | Death Justified to protect babies–3 killed, wounded 9                        | Killed physician Dr. George Tiller                    | 12 Killed. ADL designated most violent                                      | 9 Killed  |
| Activities             | Bombings, arsons, murder   | Bombings, arsons, murder                              | Violent beatings and murder, lone wolf encouraged                           | Beatings, lynching, murder                        |
| Recruitment            | Appeals to broad base of individuals with prolific education and backgrounds | Appeals to broad base-prolific, educated, backgrounds | College campus, local community and prisons-maintains young viable recruits | Appeals to prolific politically influential group |
| Organization Structure | Loosely structured and ambiguous–Political ties to                           | Loosely structured and ambiguous                      | Best organized and structured, National appeal                              | Very well structured, CCC has the                 |

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<sup>106</sup> Jessica Chasmar, “Ted Cruz, Rand Paul Returning Donations from Head of Supremacists Group Linked to Charleston Suspect,” *Washington Times*, June 22, 2015, accessed May 11, 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jun/22/ted-cruz-rand-paul-returning-donations-from-leader/>.

|  |                  |  |  |                                 |
|--|------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|
|  | Republican Party |  |  | Largest white nationalist group |
|--|------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|

Figure 3. Factors that Drive these Extremist Groups

*Source:* Created by author based on analysis of the cases.

This study revealed the most dangerous and violent ideology is the fundamentalist ideology, embraced by the CIM group. The ideology fuses religious beliefs with white supremacy and preservation teachings. As indicated in the literature review section of this study, Perliger further has this ideology broken into two schools of thought; the anti-abortionist and the CIM. The analysis of the four cases reveal the CCC and the militia Hammerskin Nations to be the most violent groups as indicated by the actual casualties sustained from their attacks. These groups subscribe to a specific tactic especially as it relates to firearms and explosives and are prominent because they skillfully craft religious and totalistic ideas to gain determination and lethality from their actors.<sup>107</sup> The well-structured organization allows lone wolves to independently execute uncoordinated acts of violence with their ideology at the backdrop. Economic and political factors between group members and their communities creates social distance which provides an opportunity for radicalization and a willingness to engage in violence as they become further alienated from society.<sup>108</sup> The analysis also revealed a distinction is clearly drawn by the response and attitude of political parties. The attitude of the Presidency plays a significant role in emboldening or discouraging extreme acts of violence. A terse change

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<sup>107</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 144.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*



in tone to address violent acts will communicate intolerance for these acts, which will discourage rather than further embolden and strengthen these groups. The CCC is currently the nation's largest white nationalist group, according to the SPLC. Because of the influential nature of the group, it is able to raise and spread its funds to support political candidates who will continue to promote their agenda.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

The ideological differences of extremist groups explored within this thesis may vary slightly, but the fundamental commonality among them all is hate. The irony is that religion that should normally promote unity, love for all and inclusion, also leads to the parallel teaching of hate, division and death. It is, therefore, a powerful contradiction in and of itself. In any case, religion has been essentially hijacked to support an alternative agenda. Some scholars have summarized, “the stronger the group’s agenda is framed in religious and totalistic ideas, the more it will be willing or determined to use exceptionally lethal tactics.”<sup>109</sup> Therefore, as solutions are sought, it is important to understand the ideological platform that propels these groups. Once that understanding is gained, dialogue must occur that allows for an expansion of their views to a more inclusive message, which will only serve to strengthen rather than further fragment the nation.

#### Recommendations

As we seek to minimize or in fact eliminate the issue of Christian extremism, proactive mechanisms must be aggressively sought and implemented. This study recommends a need for further research for solutions to this complex issue where evidence leads, but are currently inconclusive:

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<sup>109</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 144.

1. A focus on communities,
2. Ensure continued interoperability among law enforcement agencies,
3. Focus on economic, political and social factors,
4. Find venues to resolve and communicate the inherent differences that are driving these tensions, and
5. Every effort must be placed on eliminating radicalization in prisons.

Utilization of an approach that is people centric in nature is optimal in the community approach. The community's involvement in a solution is usually always the most fundamental means to deterring extremism. As we have seen in recent years, terrorist attacks are less coordinated among groups, but done on a lone wolf basis, in the name of a cause. A community that accepts the responsibility of contributing to efforts that deter extremist activities will actively engage in communicating abnormal and unusual activities to Law enforcement. It is therefore extremely important for Law enforcement to build trust within this domain to enable this exchange and foster the sense of community. Homeland Security has created a catchy jingle to address the community's responsibility for input with the jingle "When you see something, say something" public announcements. It is recognizable and resonates well with the general public. It becomes useless; however, when information submitted to law enforcement isn't actually pursued or is left unchecked because of the status of the individual within the community or a lack of criminal history. In the case of Robert Dear, his ex-wife revealed in a 1993 court document that he was abusive, "claims to be a Christian and is extremely evangelistic . . .

and obsessed with the world coming to an end.”<sup>110</sup> After Robert Dear shot and killed three people at planned parenthood, however, the picture that emerged after speaking with those who knew him was one of an “angry . . . violent man who seemed deeply disturbed and deeply contradictory.”<sup>111</sup> He was deeply religious, but sinned openly, enjoyed extreme solitude, but also enjoyed the constant companionship of a female and “frequented marijuana sites, but also engaged in heated religious screed.”<sup>112</sup> Had these interviews been conducted when Dear’s ex-wife first revealed the violent tendencies of her ex-husband, it could have resulted in early rehabilitation of an individual who is deeply disturbed and possibly mentally unstable.

Many discussed intelligence failures as a reason the act of 9/11 ever occurred. The disjointed collaboration among intelligence agencies became partly to blame for the lack of detection across agencies in the 9/11 murder of Americans. Since then, aggressive efforts were instituted to ensure constant interaction, collaboration and consolidation of intelligence is evident, to deter and combat terrorism within the homeland. It is therefore extremely critical to ensure continued resource, training, and research development that is technologically intensive be devoted to assist in this effort. The evolution of technology and the critical need for law enforcement agencies to maintain dominance and strength cannot be understated. It would serve to further ensure law enforcement is proactively evolving with the current environment, collaborating and consolidating all efforts to deter

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<sup>110</sup> Richard Fausset, “For Robert Dear, Religion and Rage before Planned Parenthood Attack,” *The New York Times*, December 1, 2015, accessed May 2, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/02/us/robert-dear-planned-parenthood-shooting.html>.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

further acts of destruction on the scale of the September 11 event, to ever occur within the shores of the United States.

Furthermore, examination of the economic, social and political domain must occur, for these elements are an inevitable force that drives religion. Identifying those variables within each domain that link to violence would result in a significant reduction if not a total elimination of violence as it relates to religion. Many groups become extreme in their view because they are generally disenfranchised, based on their economic, cultural or religious status within society at large. This creates a “social distance between members of the group and mainstream society.”<sup>113</sup> It then becomes the basis from which individuals are radicalized and “facilitate a stronger sense of alienation towards the mainstream culture and willingness to engage in harmful activities.”<sup>114</sup> The social and economic aspect of the environment cannot be understated. A natural draw of individuals who are frustrated with their social and economic conditions serves as a means for recruitment into far-right extremist groups. Hammerskins’ rise is attributed to the decline of the inner cities in the mid 1980s and the economic collapse of industry, which forced unemployment in high numbers around the 2008 economic crisis. In addition, these internal and external factors contribute significantly to the political aspect of the tri-factor. Perliger’s data set study, which this thesis attempted to capture, indicates that “a contentious political climate and ideological political empowerment play important roles in increasing the volume of violence”<sup>115</sup> The 2016 Presidential election

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<sup>113</sup> Perliger, *Challengers from the Sidelines*, 144.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

serves as prime example of this “contentious climate” and the violence it tends to brew. Mr. Donald Trump’s message of isolationism, deportation of immigrants, and military aggression resonates with many Christian extremist groups whose ideology closely aligns with the presumptive nominee’s. In fact, the Republican nominee’s 2016 Indiana primary win, is credited by some to the evangelical Christian vote, many of whom are not church going, but hold “Christian” values dear.<sup>116</sup> These voters are driven by economic anxiety, which Trump passionately focuses on, as well as social, moral, and political issues like marriage, abortion, religious liberty, and support for Israel.<sup>117</sup> His general appeal to a group of people who believe their economic prosperity is tied to the loss of jobs taken by Mexicans, ineffective and unbalanced trade policies with China, Japan, and Mexico, and the inability to stop Isis, a radicalized muslim terrorist group in the Middle East is dangerous and careless, and stimulates extreme violent acts from his supporters. As a result, Trump’s rally’s have been the subject of increased violence which he himself spurs on with remarks like “I’d like to punch him in the face”<sup>118</sup> to which the crowd explodes with cheers and laughter. It is, therefore, inherently important that a

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<sup>116</sup> NPR, “With Cruz Out, Will Donald Trump Be Able To Capture Republican Evangelical Vote?” May 7, 2016, accessed May 14, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2016/05/07/477141237/with-cruz-out-will-donald-trump-be-able-to-capture-republican-evangelical-vote>.

<sup>117</sup> NPR, “GOP Mystery: Why do Many Evangelicals Back Donald Trump?” March 14, 2016, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2016/03/14/470347740/gop-mystery-why-do-many-evangelicals-back-donald-trump>.

<sup>118</sup> Todd Gitlin, “No One will be able to Stop the Political Violence Donald Trump is Unleashing,” *Washington Post*, March 18, 2016, accessed May 7, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/after-1968-nixon-helped-end-political-violence-this-time-trump-cant/2016/03/18/78a47cdc-ebd9-11e5-a6f3-21ccdbc5f74e\\_stroy.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/after-1968-nixon-helped-end-political-violence-this-time-trump-cant/2016/03/18/78a47cdc-ebd9-11e5-a6f3-21ccdbc5f74e_stroy.html).

comprehensive approach that includes the economic, social and political realm, be fully explored, as we seek to address the issue of Christian extremism. For ignoring one aspect of these elements will render all efforts to be futile.

It is extremely important to aggressively find ways to resolve differences or the issue will persist. Now that we know and understand what these group's ideological beliefs are, it is crucial and equally important for trained mediators to bring about dialogue between groups with varying ideologies, social integration through community programs and activities that promote strength to the community in which they live. As the ideological belief of these group's moves further and further away from the center, the risk of violence remains and must be addressed to squelch the level of violence seen on the extremist spectrum. Understanding differences and acceptance of those differences must be the key goals, and outcome of these programs and mediation. There is an inherent risk to leaving the groups to operate without the subtle intervention of local and federal agencies serving as mediators. A sense of urgency exists now within our communities, which beckons addressing this issue. A proactive mechanism rather than a reactive response would be one that is regrettably violent.

Finally, there has to be a concerted effort to prevent radicalization in prisons, as they simply become the sustainment mechanism for many extremist groups. Prison breeds hate and discontentment and given the high rate of incarceration within the United States, urgent focus must be devoted to the prevention of prison radicalization.<sup>119</sup> For

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<sup>119</sup> Michelle Ye Hee Lee, "Yes U.S Locks People up at a Higher Rate than any other Country," *Washington Post*, July 7, 2015, accessed May 14, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/07/07yes-u-s-locks-people-up-at-a-higher-rate-than-any-other-country/>.

skinheads, Hammerskins and CIM it is an active recruitment source that allows for sustained growth. In prison, after freedom is snatched away from those incarcerated, their sole focus becomes a search of spiritual freedom for comfort and strength. This typically leads to a search for “spiritual meaning to interpret and resolve discontent.”<sup>120</sup> A study conducted by Mark S. Hamm indicated “the potential for ideologically inspired criminality, particularly in overcrowded maximum-security prisons where there are few rehabilitation programs, a shortage of chaplains to provide religious guidance and serious gang problems.”<sup>121</sup> Individuals in this environment are susceptible to the radicalization process. To combat this recruitment pipeline, it is critically important for the ratio of prisoners to be proportionate to chaplains who serve them. A reduction in budget countrywide has seen an increase of leaders who are themselves inmates within the correctional facilities, creating their own subset religious activity to satisfy the spiritual needs of prisoners. A study conducted in 2007 revealed the extreme nature of this crisis, indicating in “California there is one chaplain for every 2, 000 inmates, and in some Texas prisons the ration is one to 2,500.”<sup>122</sup> The recommendation of the study called for “one chaplain per 500 inmates.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> John Lofland and Rodney Stark, “Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Religious Conversion,” *American Sociological Review* 30, no. 6 (December 1965): 862-874.

<sup>121</sup> Mark S. Hamm, Ph.D., “Prisoner Radicalization: Assessing the threat in U.S correctional Institutions,” *National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Journal*, no. 261.

<sup>122</sup> Vance L. Drum, “Professional Correctional Chaplains: Fact and Fiction” (Presentation at the American Correctional Association 137th Annual Congress of Corrections, Kansas City, MO, August 13, 2007).

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*



### Further Research

As we explore this issue in its entirety, proactive measures are vital. To this end, an urgent need exists to perform further studies to understand the Anti-Federalist movement and their linkage to Christian extremism as well as evaluate the effectiveness of the PATRIOT Act. The anti-federalist movement is generally skeptical of the federal government and is rooted in the belief that corruption and tyranny allows for intrusion into the lives of citizens and their constitutional rights. Most of their violence is perpetrated against the federal government, while promoting self-government and civil activism. Herbert Strong provides a broad perspective of what the Anti-Federalist movement stood for in his book “What the Anti-Federalists were for.”<sup>124</sup> Essentially, the movement with a history that spans over 200 years is deeply rooted in religious beliefs and advocates for religion to remain at the forefront of government to ensure moral stature and sufficient character of the people.

Finally, further exploration needs to be devoted to evaluating the effectiveness of policies and laws that constitute the PATRIOT Act. Unfortunately, the PATRIOT Act in all its grandeur focuses on external variables committing acts of terrorisms within the borders of the United States. The arbitrary application of the terrorist label needs to end, and a clear definition that includes internal and external actors aggressively sought. This act must go further and not only focus on internal threats, but include within the lone wolf provision language dedicated to early detection and ultimately destruction of any potential plans these enemies within may have.

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<sup>124</sup> Strong, *What the Anti-Federalists Were For*.

## Summary

In late 2015 and the early months of 2016 the narrative that has taken center stage focuses on radical Islamism and their access to the United States. Political aspirants have seized the opportunity to prey on the fear of Americans and perpetuate a story that promotes fear and hysteria of others, especially the Muslim faith. A study conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute in December 2015, indicates a sharp increase in the number of Americans who are actively worried about terrorism and fear Muslims would likely commit it.<sup>125</sup> As the focus shifts to denying access to external groups, Internal groups (Christian extremists), continue to operate virtually undisturbed. Recommendations provided within the body of this thesis would serve to thwart the continued growth of Christian extremist groups, potentially eliminate their violent and deadly activities and ultimately strengthen the very fabric of our nation, as we seek to understand and embrace the melting pot that is the United States of America.

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<sup>125</sup> Phillip Bump, “Americans are Twice as Willing to Distance Christian Extremists from their Religion as Muslims,” *Washington Post*, December 20, 2015, accessed May 14, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/12/10/to-many-christian-terrorists-arent-true-christians-but-muslim-terrorists-are-true-muslims/>.

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