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Racism as an Undercurrent to the American Dream

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INTRODUCTION

The American dream is probably one of the most ethereal concepts ever spoken of throughout all of history. It can be many things to many different individuals. It might be something so intangible and unattainable as "justice." Then again, to most Americans it is probably something so material and available as a house with a twenty year mortgage.

The American dream was alive and thriving prior to the existence of the American Union itself. Clearly, it began with the collective hope of several peoples in exodus from their "old" countries to a new land, abundant in opportunities for themselves and their descendants. For the Englishman, it was a chance to leave behind an island of scarcity for a sprawling nation of innumerable raw resources. For the German, an attempt to escape a homeland immersed in poverty and torn by wars. But, irregardless of the ethnic origin or personal ambition contained within various individual versions of the dream, there have been three factors common to all American dreams throughout all of American history. These have been merit, opportunity, and hope.

Upon these three pillars, the sacred tenets of America were based. The Declaration of Independence encapsulated them into "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The Constitution wove them into a written and binding code

of laws. American writers and essayists celebrated them in voluminous works. Theologians and statesmen exalted them with loud and joyous voices as blessings truly divine.

Yet, for too many Americans, these, the most basic and sacred of human freedoms were denied. For Native-American Indians, ethno-indentured servants, and African slaves, these foundations of the American dream were withheld by the ruling institutions of American society -- for the benefit of the American elites. Through centuries of ignorance and hypocrisy, the Bible and the Constitution were used to endorse, justify, and perpetuate this oppression, this enslavement, this murder of the weak and the powerless.

For two centuries, America wrestled with its conscience, attempting to purge itself from this ignorance and hypocrisy. It fought a Civil War within its borders. It amended its empowering document. It weathered decades of heated debate and civil dispute. In this the post Viet Nam era of America, some significant social changes have been achieved. And, it seems that now, more than any other time in a turbulent American history, Americans should come to see each other as fellow citizens of the same nation, rather than various descendants of several nations. It seems that in this age of America, religious and racial tolerance should reach an apex. It seems that each citizen should be able to enjoy the basic means of merit, opportunity, and hope in achieving the ends of life, liberty, and property that make up the core of the American dream.

Yet, I fear that these ideals shall be eclipsed in a new wave of resentment, fear, and hate that will accompany a renewed era of ignorance and hypocrisy. I fear that violent incidents of racial and religious intolerance, from both ends of the spectrum, shall reach another upsurgence as more and more Americans come to feel alienated by an increasingly complex American society. Many of these who feel themselves disenfranchised by an America they love but do not understand have already taken an active stance in attempting to draw others into their fight against the perceived "enemies" of themselves and their America. Like their predecessors before them, they drape themselves in a flag of patriotism, ensnaring both the Constitution and the Bible in a cause that is the antithesis of all the truths contained within those two documents. That cause is to target, exploit, and destroy the weak and the powerless of other races, other religions, because they are seen as unworthy of the American dream.

AMERICA, THE POLITICAL

"In the view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here."

Justice John Marshall Harlan

"...one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

The Pledge of Allegiance

"In a sense, we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution ... they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes black men as well as white men, would be granted the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Rev. Martin Luther King
I Have A Dream Speech

Colonial America was a bounty of raw resources to be tamed and developed. Everywhere it held sprawling timber and bounteous minerals. Its labor and materials were abundant and cheap. Its port cities were primed to be centers for shipping, manufacturing, and commerce. Its Southern states were a wealth of land for the production of tobacco and cotton. As Paul Kennedy said in his book The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, "by 1776, ... the North American colonies had grown enormously: the population of two million was by then doubling every thirty years, was spreading out westward, was economically prosperous, and was self-sufficient in foodstuffs and many other commodities."

1 For these reasons and others, Great Britain had fought diligently in a war with France to control North America. She had incurred much debt in the process and set about after the war, exploiting America and Americans in order to recover some of that debt.

In that time, Americans, of all nationalities, took great pride in being the subjects of the King. To them, it was synonymous with order, law, and freedom. English culture was the richest culture of all the world and, as colonists, the Americans fell heir to that rich culture. Yet, in the years that Great Britain was fighting the Seven Years War with France, she had essentially ignored the colonies. Tariffs to the King that went unpaid, were not pursued. Quotas for English markets that went unmet, were not enforced. Americans had become accustomed to a loose reign over the colonies, and they would not tolerate a new and exacting administration by the King in an attempt to milk the American colonies economically and control them politically.

On July 4th, 1776, America severed all ties with England. Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence in justification of the rebellion, and that document eloquently spoke of the "self-evident truths that all men are created equal -- endowed with unalienable rights of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness." Yet, all American men were not free, and such rhetoric was empty and absurd. Slavery had been introduced in America by the Dutch in the early 1600's and was still a thriving institution at the time of the Declaration of Independence. This was an obvious contradiction and, it began to weigh heavily on some of the colonists. As Edmund S. Morgan said, "the Revolutionists were uneasy about the liberty and labor that

they themselves, in effect, had stolen from their slaves ... and individuals had remarked of the inconsistency of a people holding slaves and at the same time complaining that Parliamentary taxation would reduce them to slavery." *2* These moral standards were carried through the prosecution of the Revolutionary war as more and more people began to question the propriety of slavery. Social institutions, such as churches, came out publicly against the abomination of slavery. The 1780 Baltimore conference of Methodists, for example, condemned slavery as "contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society." *3* Four years later, the Methodists forged their collective conviction into an ironclad ultimatum that all Methodist slaveholders free their slaves within a specific time-frame or face expulsion from the Methodist church. *4* But, these lofty moral principles in opposition to slavery were to be grounded and silenced in the cold deal-making of political compromise that would unduly delay the death of slavery for many years.

In 1787, with the War won, with independence in hand, the Framers were faced with the next logical step of American political and social growth: autonomy. Autonomy could only be gained by an internal movement to draft and enforce a binding, yet empowering set of laws. Many of the Framers were either opposed or indifferent to slavery. Yet, they knew that as a matter of political reality a near resounding consensus would be necessary to create a strong

and successful form of self-government. Another political reality was that five of the voting states that were to be at the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention of 1787 were Southern states. These Southern states were employed primarily in agricultural production and had invested heavily in slave labor. To confront any or all of them on the moral issue of slavery would have been to kill any chance for a ratified Constitution and a successful, autonomous nation.

The resulting compromise came in Article I, section 9, clause 1 of the Constitution. This provision states, "the migration or importation of such persons (indentured servants and slaves) as any of the States ... shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by Congress prior to the year 1808, but a tax ... may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars each." With one mere provision, the Framers not only postponed a decision by Congress upon the issue of slavery for twenty-one years, but also instituted a tax that would serve to benefit the national Treasury during that time period. In Article I, section 2, The Framers had reduced the African-American to be less than human -- "representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned ... according to the whole number of free persons, ... three-fifths all other persons (slaves)." And, in Article IV, section 2, clause 3, they added further degradation and hopelessness to his plight by insuring that slaves could not flee to freedom with the provision's words

that "no person held to service or labor in one state, under laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party whom service or labor may be due."

In addition to the political deal-making that sealed the fate of the slaves, certain economic realities came to bear as well. In 1798, two things happened that served as catalysts for the growth of the American economy. In that year, Thomas Malthus wrote his essay on population explosion in which he contrasted the scarcity and poor economic conditions of England against the wide abundance and marvelous economic conditions of America. In doing so, he brought greater attention by European peoples upon America as a market in which to invest money or as a land in which to build a life. That same year, Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, making mass production of cotton products possible -- making cotton king of the Southern economy. In both of these, the slave was to play no small part. Because slave labor was the chief means of harvesting cotton in the South, Because slave labor was a key economic factor that propelled the American economy overall, slavery was not soon to be abolished.

In the accepted light of political and economic realities, the mass of America stood to benefit greatly from the oppression of a few. And, the moral cries of outrage against slavery ceased to be made so loudly. The year 1809

came and went without any action by Congress to abolish the slave trade. Congress lost its opportunity to make good on the eloquent words of the Declaration of Independence and, instead, through its negligence to act, allowed the egalitarian rhetoric of that document to remain meaningless and absurd. By 1816, the same Methodists who had so vehemently ranted against slavery in 1784, whimpered in the report of their general conference that "under the present existing circumstances in relation to slavery, little can be done to abolish a practice so contrary to moral justice" -- (so much for the violation of God's laws and the well-being of society). *5*

Not surprisingly, some men of religion came out to apologize for slavery on the basis of its actual benefits to the community and white society. William Meade, a nineteenth century Evangelical minister, stated, "the institution of slavery, by affording more liesure and opportunity to some for the attainment of the most thorough education has contributed to the well-being of VirginiaWhile we admit and maintain that slavery has its evils, we must also affirm that some of the finest traits in the character of man are to be found in connection with it."

6 This type of thinking reigned through the years of the Civil War and persisted afterward as well. After the enactment of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, the national government no longer engaged in de facto legislative discrimination and oppression. But harmful discrimination was allowed to

persist in the states. One of the best examples of this occurred in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson , when the Supreme Court upheld a ruling that a man who was seven-eighths white was required to ride in a colored coach of a Louisiana train. In his majority opinion, Justice Brown stated, "legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts, or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences" *7* In a sense what he and his colleagues were saying in that opinion was that the national government would no longer sanction nor endorse de facto discrimination, but neither would it act to stop discrimination that took other, more deceptive forms. In the minority opinion of that same case, Justice John Marshall Harlan spoke well for both the Court and the country when he said, "Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among its citizens. In respect to civil rights, all citizens are equal. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful.... We boast of the freedom enjoyed by our people above all other peoples. But it is difficult to reconcile that boast with a state of law which, practically, puts the brand of service and degradation upon a large class of our fellow citizens, --our equals before the law." *8* If more Americans had echoed the logic of Harlan then, if more Americans remembered his logic now, Jefferson's words that "all men are created equal" would carry with them a true and wonderful meaning.

AMERICA, THE RELIGIOUS

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:
continue ye in my love." -- Jesus in John, 15:8

This is my commandment, that ye love one another
as I have loved you." -- Jesus in John 15:12

"You ought to serve God ... Almighty God is your
headmaster ... some he had made servants and
slaves ... your masters and mistresses are God's
overseers ... Whatever you have suffered unjustly
here, God will make amends in heaven."
-- Rev. Thomas Bacon *9*

"This nation, this world is to be Christian --
the supreme-chosen Anglo-Saxon race is the army
which will bring that about."

-- Josiah Strong
Our Country

Even after the national government of the United States had cleansed itself of its racial discriminatory legislation with the enactment of The Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, there were still those people in the several states who looked to continue this country's long legacy of racial discrimination and oppression. To find justification for such intentions, those people did not have to look far or search long. They found ample justification in a book that many, if not all, of them kept in their own homes. They found ample justification in a book that they used regularly to govern their everyday lives. They found ample justification in a

document more sacred, more binding than the Constitution was upon the hearts and minds of most Americans. They found that necessary justification in The Bible.

As Wheless said in the introduction to his book Is It God's Word?, "every nation of antiquity had its national supreme God, maker of heaven and earth, Creator of man, ruler of the national destinies and divine providence in human life, of whom it was the specially chosen people" *10* Early America was no different. The God of its dominating people was the Christian God of the Bible. And, the majority of Christian Americans read the Bible to be the literal word of that God. They believed that he, in concert with his son, Christ, had led them from various lands of Europe like Noah from the flood, through war, plague, famine, and storming sea, to America. For them, America was their prize for diligence in duty to God. They were his pure. They were the American Puritans. As the 17th century theologian Cotton Mather said in his book Enchantments Encountered, "the first planters of these Colonies were a chosen Generation of men New England was a true Utopia." *11* That Christian notion of being the "chosen", the "elect" of God implied by simple logic that there were those whom were not in God's favor. The Bible, as the book of law and guidance for these early American Christians, revealed those whom were not favored by God to be the descendants of Ham (the Canaanites).

The Davis Dictionary of the Bible lists Ham as the youngest son of Noah. It states that Ham looked upon his father when he was drunk and naked. In doing so, Ham acted undutifully to his father and enangered him. In Genesis, 9:24 -- 27 it says that, "...Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. And God shall enlarge Japheth; and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." In saying that Shem and Japheth should share tents, Noah was saying that they would live together in peace, sharing the privileges of his favor. In cursing Ham (Canaan), Noah condemned him to a life of degradation, servitude, and exile. According to the Davis book, the descendants of Ham were the dark-skinned peoples of Ethiopia, Egypt, and Southern Arabia, and it is apparent from several books in the Bible that the people of Israel waged war upon the children of Ham whenever possible.

The twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy describes Israel's battles to conquer the Canaanites. In Deuteronomy, 20:10 -- 18 it says, "when thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it , then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make answer of peace, and open unto thee, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries (slaves, acknowledging submission) unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will war

against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord, thy God has delivered it into thine hands Thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely ... the Canaanites ...that they teach you not to do after all their abominations." But, the people of Israel did not conquer and decimate the Canaanites. Instead, they captured them and made them slaves. This is related in Judges, 1:28 -- 30 ..."And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them outThe Canaanites dwelt among them and became tributaries." This slavery of the Canaanites is spoken of again in I Kings, 9:20, 21 where it is related that "...all the people that were left ...were not the children of Israel ...upon these did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice (slavery) unto this day." Furthermore, in addition to slaves of Canaan who were captured as the prizes of war, the Bible outlines in the book of Exodus, chapter 21, that it is perfectly lawful for an Hebrew to purchase another Hebrew as a slave, as long as the servant is freed after a period of six years. As the Reverend Cotton Mather said in a sermon to his slaves, "it is allowed in the Scriptures, to the Gentiles, that they may have slaves,All that remains of you, is to become first good servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then of those who have purchased you."

12

If those racist Americans who favored the perpetuation of oppression and slavery after the Civil War needed more

firm evidence in addition to the Scriptures to support the arguments of their cause, they found it in the early efforts of the science of Anthropology. In the early 1800's, laboratories and universities in Europe offered up theories that all men were not descended from a common ancestor.

"They differentiated between the superior Teutonic/ Anglo-Saxon races and the other inferior races by such scientific distinctions as skull volume, brain weight, and skin tone."

13 Many came to believe wholeheartedly that both science and religion deemed all other races to remain inferior and subservient to the Anglo-Saxon race.

The Reverend Josiah Strong was one such man who believed the Protestant Anglo-Saxon man to be God's chosen creature. In his book Our Country, Strong celebrates that "...the two great ideals of mankind ... are first, a pure, spiritual Christianity, and second, civil liberty It follows then that the Anglo-Saxon, as the great representative of these two great blessings, sustain's peculiar relation to the world's future, is divinely commissioned to be ... his brother's keeper." *14* In light of the "brother's keeper" comment, it can only be guessed what Strong actually meant by "civil liberty" and just whom would enjoy its benefits. His projected future of America, however, is undoubtedly one of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant dominance. This is clear in his comment that "the pioneer races (Anglo-Saxon Western Europeans) must be the Western races. And of all the Western races, who that

can read skillfully the providence of God ... who can hesitate in affirming that the signs of divine decree point to this land of ours as the one which is fast gathering to itself the races (again, more Anglo-Saxons) which must take the lead in the final conflicts of Christianity for possession of the world? Ours is the elect nation for the age to come. We are the chosen people." *15*

Absent the divine decree that Strong speaks of, simple physical appearance was held by many to establish superiority and inferiority. The most damning evidence against an African-American was probably his black skin. All that was held to be good was associated with light. For example in the book of John, Jesus says, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." In that statement, Christ established the spectrum of light and darkness, good and evil. And, the African-American, with his black skin, could only be physically associated with darkness and evil. Cotton Mather asserted this in his sermon to his slaves when he said, "do not by fornication, by drunkenness, by stealing, by lying, by running away, make yourselves infinitely blacker than you already are"

16 In his fictional work The Clansmen, in which he glorifies the Reconstruction actions of the Klu Klux Klan, Thomas Dixon records a laundry list of physical characteristics that would serve to cause an air of inferiority upon the African-American. Dixon characterizes them as "...thick-lipped, flat-nosed, spindle-shanked,...

exuding a nauseating animal odor." *17* This characterization is an exaggerated effort by Dixon to cause aversion by whites to blacks. Yet, through viewing it and other examples, the connection between the physical self of the African-American and the badge of inferiority placed upon him by religion and science cannot be denied.

AMERICA, THE RACIST

Onward Christian Soldiers
Marching as to war.
With the Cross of Jesus,
going on before.

In the darkest hour ... of the South, when her people lay helpless under the beak and talon of the Vulture, suddenly from the mists of the mountains appeared a white cloud the size of a man's hand. It grew until its mantle of mystery enfolded the stricken earth and sky. An Invisible Empire had risen from the field of Death ... against overwhelming odds, daring exile, imprisonment, and a felon's death it saved the life of a people and formed one of the most dramatic chapters of the Aryan race.

Rev. Thomas Dixon, Jr.
The Clansmen

"...by the close of the 20th century, the Anglo-Saxons will outnumber all other civilized races of the world. Does it not look as if God were not only preparing ...the die with which to stamp the peoples of the earth, but as if he were also massing behind that die, the power to press it.

Rev. Josiah Strong
Our Country

"Today's black plague is spelled niggers.... We regard them as subhuman.... We declare

everlasting war on the Jews...until we have expelled them from all the lands inhabited by the white race."

Ben Klassen
The White Man's Bible

It is not difficult to understand why early American racist groups, such as the Klu Klux Klan, resisted any changes that would give to all Americans the unalienable rights that Jefferson spoke of in the Declaration of Independence. These racists were undoubtedly American. They were probably Christian. And, as Christian Americans they were knowledgeable and reverent of the two documents that were sacred and binding to all good Christian Americans. These two documents were the Bible and the Constitution, and the literal text of each had not only allowed for slavery and race discrimination, but actually endorsed those actions.

The Constitution was the law of this nation in this world. It could be amended and, it could be ignored. Even after the Civil War had been fought and the issue of slavery had been resolved with the Amendments, racists throughout the nation persisted in their beliefs and continued in their actions by clinging to and hiding behind the Tenth Amendment doctrine of States' rights. It was in this political atmosphere that the Klu Klux Klan first reared its head as a resistance force to Southern Reconstruction. When the Reconstruction era passed, so did the first occurrence of the Klan.

The Bible, unlike the Constitution, was considered by most Americans to be the binding law of not only this land and this world, but more importantly of the next. If there was any set of laws that were superior to the Constitution, greater in authority and scope than the Constitution, they were those contained within the Bible. The absolute and unyielding laws of the Bible were not subject to votes or amendments. The laws of the Bible did not change to meet the demands of a changing society. To ignore those laws was to ignore the literal word of God and face possible damnation. It was upon this firmer argument of the divine providence of a purposeful God that the racists have historically based their cause.

The Bible spoke of chosen people, and the racists believed themselves and their ancestors to be the chosen. They believed that God had led them to America and deemed that their slaves, who were not the favored of God, should serve them. This view was represented in the words of the post Civil War resolution of the Louisiana state Democratic convention, "we hold this to be a government of white people, made and to be perpetuated by white people, for the exclusive benefit of the the white race and, ... that people of African descent cannot be considered citizens of the United States." *18* Fifty years after that state resolution, the Klan experienced its second birth, a birth founded not upon a firm and fleeting political scenario such

as Reconstruction, but upon the broader and more resilient dogma of Protestant Christianity and White Supremacy.

The plan of the new Klan was to be socially vigilant. Between the years of 1881 and 1910, nearly 18 million immigrants came to America. *19* Unlike in earlier waves of immigration, these people were not primarily from Western Europe. "Many could not speak English, and their ways were foreign to most Americans... some were Greek Orthodox, others Jews, but most were Roman Catholic." *20* Catholics were historically viewed with suspicion, because America was founded predominantly by Protestant Christians in flight from Catholic oppression. Josiah Strong made clear the Protestant suspicion of Catholicism when he said, "representative government is the national government of Protestant populations. Despotic government is the congenial government of Catholic populations." *21* Also, shortly after this time, America engaged itself in World War I, and American people became increasingly suspicious of anything or anyone foreign.

The new Klan exploited these fears and suspicions and promoted itself as an organization whose purpose was to defend the moral principles of white, Protestant America. The Klan seemed to many to be the "defender of the Christian faith and the American way, the answer to stem an uncontrollable tide of alien immigration." *22* The Herrin Herald was a Southern Illinois Klan newspaper in the 1920's. It touted itself as "an American newspaper by Americans for

Americans", and reported its "Klan Katecism" to its readers, saying,

1. Klansmen are better citizen-patriots.
2. Excessive alien mixture is perverting and subverting American thought and life.
3. Only native-born or native-educated Americans can receive and apply "Americanism." *23*

Promotions like these worked well. By the mid-1920's, more than four million had joined the Klan, convincing themselves that "their racism, intolerance, violence, and hatred were somehow sanctioned by the Protestant Church and justified as a defense of their American homeland." *24* They borrowed symbols of the Christian Church for use in their ceremonies and activities. They claimed that their masks were not worn as a protection against arrest and conviction, but instead as a means to maintain humility and anonymity. They claimed that their fiery cross was not used as a fear-tactic against their victims, but instead as a glowing symbol of God's light in Christian civilization. Their Klan chaplains, known as KLUDDs, informed their new recruits to, "be transformed by the renewing of their minds so that they could go forth and prove the perfect will of (a purposeful) God." *25*

In "proving the perfect will of God" they committed terrible atrocities that ran completely contrary to all that God truly stood for. As Christian American soldiers they designated their enemies to be primarily blacks (because they were "inferior"), Jews (because they were "Christ-killers"), and Catholics (because they "bowed to a papal

king"). But, in the fervor of their misguided conviction, they targeted and attacked a myriad of immigrants, "immoral" people, and "traitors" to the white race as well. For example, "in Alabama, the Klan attacked and flogged a divorcee for the crime of remarrying. In Georgia, the Klan gave a woman sixty lashes for the vague charges of immorality and failure to attend church. In both cases, the Klan leaders responsible for the actions were ministers." *26* Overall, "between 1889 and 1941, 3,811 blacks were lynched. These hangings were punishments for crimes like scaring a white woman and attempting to vote." *27* There is no telling how many Jews, or Catholics, or other "undesirables" were hanged as well. But, if that is the worst fate that they suffered, they were lucky in comparison to a black man in Arkansas who was chained to a log and roasted alive in front of a crowd of five hundred people. *28* The man was still alive after his skin had begun to fall off and, he tried to eat hot coals in order to hasten his death and end his terrible pain. The Klansmen present, acting in the perfect will of God, kicked the coals away from his mouth.

Not only has the Klan persisted in this century because of its reliance upon the tenets of Protestant Christianity and white supremacy, but it has also sired, directly or indirectly, other hate-based organizations as well. Among the progeny are the American Neo-Nazis, The Order, the White Aryan Resistance, and the Skinheads.

George Lincoln Rockwell, founder of the American Neo-Nazis, forged ties with the Klan in the years following World War II. Rockwell's chief disciple, William Pierce, a former professor of physics at Oregon State University, succeeded Rockwell after his assassination. Pierce (under the pen-name Andrew MacDonald) wrote a prophetic, yet completely fictional, book called The Turner Diaries in which he depicted an all-out American race war of the future between the white army and the armies of the blacks and Jews. A man named Robert Mathews, whom was killed in a gun battle with F.B.I. agents in the Pacific Northwest after a string of armored car robberies, read the book and formed a hate organization called The Order around its philosophy and prophesy. Ben Klassen, a retired Florida real estate developer and author of the White Man's Bible, based much of his philosophy upon Pierce's book. Klassen adopted the Skinheads and forged an alliance with them, calling them "courageous, enthusiastic, and determined young white warriors ... the last best hope of the white race." *29*

"The evil in this world always comes of ignorance,... the most incorrigible ignorance is that which fancies it knows everything and therefore claims for itself the right to kill."

Albert Camus
The Plague

America is country without one, single culture. It is a country, instead, of many different cultures. Those

separate cultures have never really mixed that well. This is evidenced by the fact that even now, after its two hundred years of existence, America's people do not speak of themselves as only Americans, but, instead, as "German-Americans, "Polish-Americans", and so on.

In early America, these racial differentiations and discriminations were endorsed, justified, and perpetuated by the Bible and the Constitution, the same two documents that empowered and guided America as a whole. The Civil War, and its resulting Amendments to the Constitution, served to end the national government's legacy of oppression of minorities. Yet, racial discrimination in all states of the Union and all areas of life continued. This perpetuation was brought on by deep-seeded beliefs in people that one race, the white Anglo-Saxon race, was the chosen race of both God and nature, and that all other races were inferior and subservient.

These views became the standard of a collection of hate groups, beginning with the Ku Klux Klan. American history implies that religious and racial intolerance increases when American society weathers a change or undergoes a crisis. This was the case when the Klan was founded in the Reconstruction era; it was the case after America experienced huge waves of immigration and involvement in World War I; it was the case when America faced the change of desegregation. Few would disagree that American society today is undergoing many changes and crises, both at home

and abroad. America has overextended itself in debt. America has slipped economically on the world market, and, as a result, America's domestic market has seen large decreases in manufacturing job opportunities. With this decline in opportunities comes the perception by many that the elements of the American dream are scarce. Resentment, anger, and hate soon follow, carrying with them a basic distrust and intolerance for any group of people who are seen as infringing upon a "rightful" American's pursuit of the American dream, for any group seen as "unworthy" of the American dream.

But, the basic tenets of the American dream are merely merit, hope, and opportunity. They were protected and furthered by a Constitution that should have recognized no color, no class. They were inspired by a Bible that held as its true doctrine that of love and compassion. They cannot be encapsulated in one race, nor in one religion.

NOTES:

1. Kennedy, p. 93
2. Morgan, p. 95
3. Cone, p. 49
4. Cone, p. 48
5. Cone, P. 50
6. Washington, p. 436
7. Ducat, p. 637
8. Ducat, p. 638
9. Washington, p. 437
10. Wheless, p. x
11. Garraty, p. 47
12. Washington, p. 184
13. Turner, p. 47
14. Strong, p. 201 -202
15. Strong, p. 253
16. Washington, p. 184-185
17. Dixon, p. 290
18. Turner, p. 9
19. Levy, p. 678
20. Turner, p. 45
21. Strong, p. 75
22. Turner, p. 45
23. Jackson, p. 1
24. Turner, p. 44
25. Turner, p. 68
26. Turner, p. 17
27. Turner, p. 27
28. Turner, p. 35
29. ADL, p. 1-2

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