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Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press

**SACRED NAME MOVEMENT.** A term collectively referring to a number of Christian organizations that insist on using the supposedly authentic Hebrew names for God and Jesus, such as “Yahweh” and “Yashua.” The Sacred Name congregations emerged from the Seventh Day Church of God in Arkansas, originally under the leadership of Elder Lorenzo Snow (1913–?) and his wife Icie Lela Paris Snow (1912–?). The largest Sacred Name organization is the **Assemblies of Yahweh (2)** (originally the Assembly of Yhwh), founded in 1939 in Holt, Michigan, by C. O. Dodd. Slightly different versions of the Hebrew for “God” and “Jesus” are found in different Sacred Name groups. Thus, Dodd’s Assemblies of Yahweh favors “Yahweh” and “Elohim” as the divine names and “Yahshua” for Jesus, while the Assembly of Yhwhhoshua prefers “Yhwh” and “Yhwhhoshua.” The Assemblies of the Called Out Ones of Yah, founded in 1974 by Sam Surratt (?–1990), insist that “Yah” and “Yeshuah” are the true versions of the names.

The Sacred Name organizations tend to regard the Old Testament as the definitive Scripture, in the light of which the New Testament is to be interpreted. God is regarded as a unity rather than a trinity. Jewish festivals—Passover, Weeks, Tabernacles, and Hanukah—are observed, together with Jewish dietary laws and tithing. Organizationally, the movement emphasizes the practices of the early church, with admission by means of baptism—normally total immersion. Some Sacred Name organizations lay emphasis on receiving the Holy Spirit.

Sacred Name organizations, in addition to those mentioned above, include the Institute of Divine Metaphysical Research (founded by Dr. Henry Clifford Kinley in 1931); the Assembly of Yahvah (founded by L. D. Snow and E. B. Adam in 1949); the Scripture Research Association (founded by A. B. Traina, 1950); the **Assemblies of Yahweh (1)**, also known as the “Bethel Assembly” (founded by Jacob O. Meyer in Bethel, Pennsylvania, in 1969); and the Bible Study Association (founded in 1980 by David B. Northnagel, Sr.). *See also* BRITISH ISRAEL; CHRISTIAN IDENTITY CHURCH; MESSIANIC JEWS.

**From: Encyclopedia of American Religions(7th ed.) Publisher: Gale** **“ASSEMBLY OF YAHVAH:***History. Among the first to accept the idea of the Sacred Name movement were Elder Lorenzo Snow (b. 1913) and his wife, Icie Lela Paris Snow (b. 1912), members of the Seventh Day Church of God at Fort Smith, Arkansas. They affiliated with the original Assembly of Yahweh led by C. O. Dodd, and L. D. Snow was licensed to preach by the church in the early 1940s. In 1945, he began publishing The Yahwist Field Reporter. Four years later, he moved to Emory, Texas, where he and other sacred name believers attending a camp meeting formed the Assembly of Yahvah. They used the spelling of the Creator's name that Snow had come to believe was most correct. Elder Snow served as overseer until 1961, since which time a number of people have served in that capacity including Howard Jefferson, James Pridmore, and Wilburn Stricklin. During this time, Snow served two additional terms. From 1945 to 1961, Snow also served as editor of the Reporter (now The Elijah Messenger). In 1970, he began a second periodical, The World Today, which also serves the assembly...*

**ASSEMBLY OF YAHWEH:***The Sacred Name movement began among members of the Seventh-Day Church of God during the 1930s. Possibly the oldest surviving assembly is the Assembly of Yahweh in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, originally chartered as the Assembly of YHWH. Among its charter members were Joseph Owsinski, John Bigelow Briggs, Squire LaRue Cessna, and Harlan Van Camp, George Reiss, Daniel Morris, William L. Bodine, John M. Cardona, Edmund P. Roche, and Marvin Gay. The original charter allowed some variation in the spelling of the Sacred Name, but Yahweh came to be accepted. It associated with other independent assemblies, in large part through the efforts of C. O. Dodd, an early Sacred Name advocate. Dodd founded a magazine, The Faith, at Salem, West Virginia, in 1937 originally to promote the observance of Yahweh's feasts (as described in the Old Testament) among the members of the Seventh Day Church of God. In 1938 he organized the Faith Bible and Tract Society. Within a few years Dodd had become convinced of the Sacred Name position and began using it on the pages of The Faith. The magazine tied together the growing movement and became a major instrument in its spread.*

*After Dodd's death it was passed to several assemblies until 1969 when the assembly at Eaton Rapids took responsibility for publishing it. The Faith Bible and Tract Society was continued by Dodd's family in Amherst, Ohio. A lengthy statement of faith asserts the assembly's aim to remove the names substituted by man for the true names: Yahweh, the Father, and his son, Yahsua the Messiah. To that end, the assembly has published an edition of Old and New Testament scriptures with the names restored. The assembly upholds the Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath, and practices footwashing, baptism by immersion, and the festivals according to Leviticus 23. The Old Testament food laws are advocated, as are tithing and divine healing. The assembly is non-Trinitarian. Though autonomous, it has fellowship and communication with like assemblies across the United States and in some 30 countries worldwide. The assembly also sponsors a Wellness Center, which conducts two-week programs on the preparation and consumption of "Living Foods": blending, fermentation, dehydration and use of organic foods such as seeds, nuts, grains, fruits, and vegetables.*

**ASSEMBLY OF YHWHHOSHUA:**  
*The Assembly of YHWHHOSHUA is a small Sacred Name groups in Colorado. It differs from other Sacred Name groups in its designation of YHWH (as opposed to Yah, Yahweh, or Yahvah) as the true revealed name of the Almighty and YHWHHOSHUA (YHWH plus HOSHUA) for the name of the Messiah (as opposed to Yahsua or Yahoshua). The Assembly of YHWHHOSHUA is not affiliated with any other Sacred Name body. It also teaches the Oneness of YHWH—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—rather than the Trinity. The assembly teaches that the Roman Catholic Church, along with her daughter churches, are the Great Whore spoken of in Rev. 17 and that the United States of America is modern Babylon (Rev. 18). Out of that belief, members do not pay taxes, and do not pay social security (in accordance with Mat. 6: 19-21). Social Security numbers are believed to be a form of governmental control leading to the mark of the Beast (Rev. 14: 16, 17).*

**Peter Clarke. 2006.  
Encyclopedia of New Religious  
Movements. London:  
Routledge.**



The term designates a number of organizations, originating in the 1930s in the USA, deriving from Seventh Day Church of God in Arkansas, and insisting on the importance of employing the original Hebrew names for God and Jesus (generally, but not exclusively, Yahweh and Yahshua). The Movement views the Old Testament as the key to interpreting the New, and celebrates the Jewish festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, as instructed in Leviticus 23. They reject the mainstream Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter on account of their pagan origins. They are non-Trinitarian, and other tenets include tithing, conscientious objection to military service, and the observance of the sabbath (Saturday) for rest and worship.

In 1937 C.O.Dodd, another early exponent, launched the magazine *The Faith*, which advocated the celebration of the Jewish feasts, and the following year he established the Faith Bible and Tract Society, which was continued by Dodd's family. The first of the Sacred Name organizations was the Assembly of Yahweh, in Eaton Rapids, Michigan—originally founded as the Assembly of YHWH in 1939.

The largest Sacred Name organization is the Assemblies of Yahweh, founded by Jacob O.Meyer in 1969. Meyer moved to Idaho in 1964, where he became Assistant Editor of the *Sacred Name Herald*. He was consecrated for ministry the following year, and began a radio ministry—'Sacred Name Broadcast'—in 1966. This was followed by a television ministry, 'Sacred Name Telecast'.

Other early pioneers of the Sacred Name were Lorenzo Dow Snow (b. 1913) and his wife Icie Lela Paris Snow (b. 1912). Snow joined Dodd's Assemblies of Yahweh, and was licensed to preach in the 1940s. However, following a disagreement about the spelling of the divine name, Snow, together with E.B.Adam, formed a rival organization, the Assembly of Yahvah in Emory, Texas, in 1949. Snow published *The Yahwist Field Reporter*, which he edited from 1945 to 1961. The Assembly of Yahvah set up the Missionary Dispensary Bible Research, which brought out the *Restoration of the Original Sacred Name Bible*, a version of the scripture that restores the Hebrew names for God and Jesus.

Other Sacred Name communities include the Scripture Research Association (founded in 1950 by A.B.Traina), the Bible Study Association (established by David B.Northnagel in 1980), the Assembly of Yhwhhoshua (in Colorado), the Assemblies of the Called Out Ones of Yah (founded by Sam Surrat in 1974), and the House of Yahweh (originally founded in Nazareth, Israel in 1973 by Jacob Hawkins).

**Melton, J. Gordon. 2005.  
Encyclopedia of Protestantism.  
Encyclopedia of World Religions.  
New York: Facts on File, Inc.**



**Further reading:** J. Gordon Melton, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions: Religious Creeds*, 2 vols. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1988, 1994); Charles L. Quarles, "Ordinance or Sacrament: Is the Baptist View of the Ordinances Truly Biblical?" *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 47–57; Ronald F. Watts, *The Ordinances and Ministry of the Church: A Baptist View* (Toronto: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1986); James F. White, *The Sacraments in Protestant Practice and Faith* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1999).

### **Sacred Name movement**

Members of the Sacred Name movement use the original Hebrew names and terms for the Lord, God, and/or Jesus in their translations, prayers, and/or church names. Since the start of the 20th century, Adventist churches have been concerned about the true name of the Lord. The origin of the question is not known, but its first important manifestation was the adoption of the name Jehovah by followers of Charles Taze Russell. In 1931, Russell's successor renamed his Bible student movement Jehovah's Witnesses.

By that time, Bible scholars had come to believe that in the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament), the Lord's name, spelled YHWH, was probably pronounced Yahweh (though Jews do not speak that name when reading the Scriptures). Some Christians now wanted to use that name in English translations wherever it was printed in the Hebrew text, and also to replace the English word *God* and even the Anglicized name Jesus with the Hebrew originals, Elohim and Yahshua. Many were particularly offended by the use of *God*, derived from the pagan German *Gott*.

In the 1930s, leaders in the CHURCH OF GOD (Seventh-day) began to use the Sacred Names exclusively. They formed the Faith Bible and Tract Society (1938), the Assembly of YHWH, a congregation in Michigan, and *The Faith*, a monthly periodical launched by Elder C. O. Dodd (1899–1955). One of the regular contributors to *The Faith*, A. B. Traina, began work on a Sacred

Name Bible, which was published in installments as the New Testament (1950), the Old Testament (1963), and the complete *Holy Name Bible* (1980). More recently several other Sacred Name Bibles have appeared.

The movement has remained relatively small and splintered as individuals disagreed over exactly how the names should be spelled. The largest group is the Assemblies of Yahweh founded by Jacob O. Meyer (b. 1934) in Bethel, Pennsylvania. Meyer began a radio ministry in 1966 and publishes two periodicals, the *Sacred Name Broadcaster* and the *Narrow Way*. The Assemblies fellowship includes more than 75 congregations in the United States and has affiliated members in more than 100 counties.

*See also* ADVENTISM.

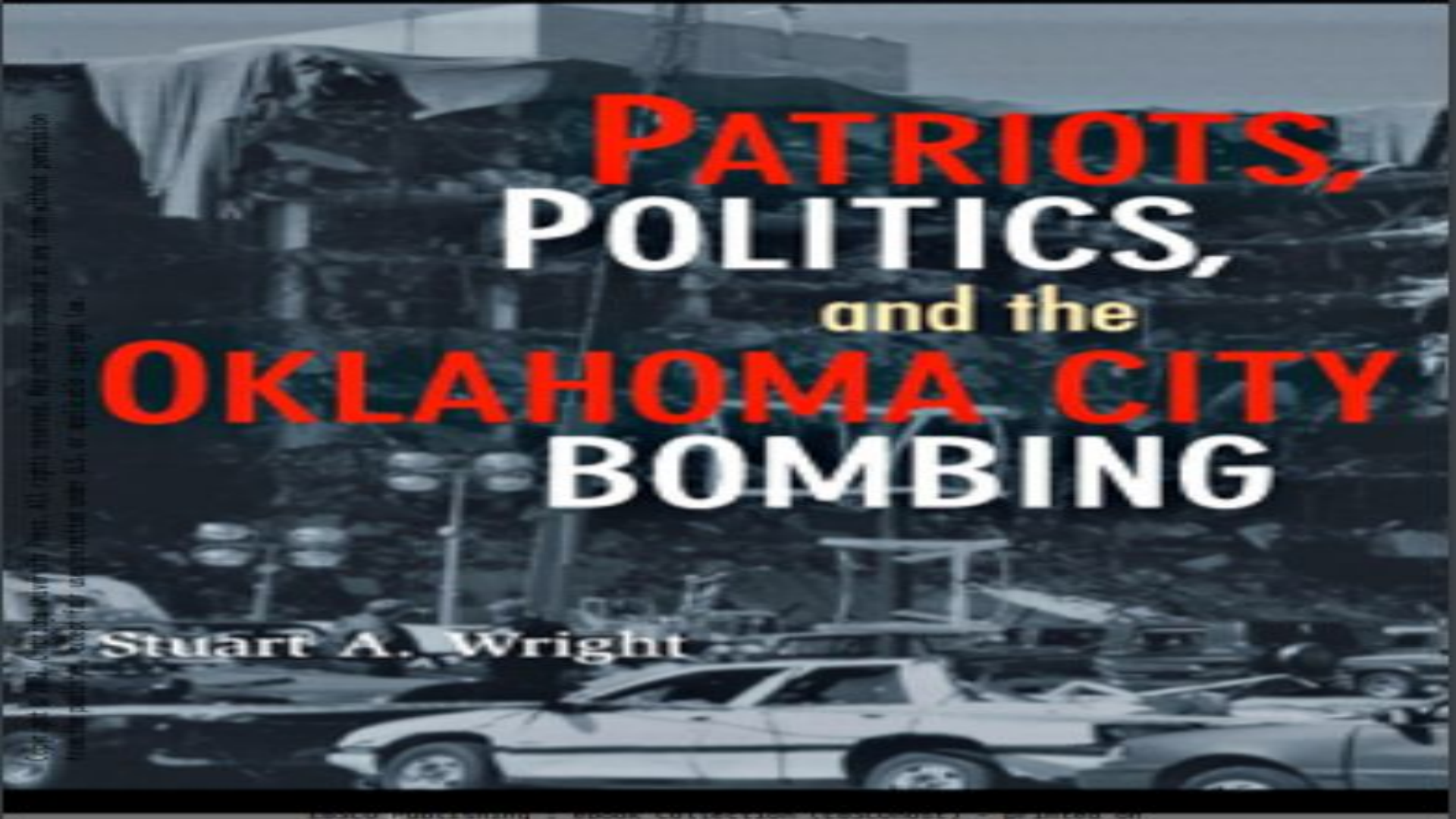
**Further reading:** A. N. Dugger and C. O. Dodd, *A History of the True Church* (Jerusalem, Israel: the authors, 1968); Jacob O. Meyer, *The Memorial Name—Yahweh* (Bethel, Pa.: Assemblies of Yahweh, 1978); Richard Nickels, "Origin and History of the Sacred Name Movement." Available online. URL: <http://www.give-share.org/churchhistory/sacrednamehistory.html>; A. B. Traina, *The Holy Name Bible* (Brandywine, Md.: Scripture Research Association, 1980).

### **St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre**

The massacre of some 20,000 Protestants during the week following August 24, 1572, St. Bartholomew's Day, affected Protestant–Roman Catholic relationships for centuries afterward.

The prior generation had seen a civil war between Catholic and Protestants in FRANCE, but by 1572, a peace had been ostensibly negotiated. The massacre was instituted by the French king's mother, Catherine de Medici (1519–89), shortly after a peace-sealing wedding between the king's sister and Henry of Navarre, a prominent HUGUENOT. The first victims were Henry of Navarre's wedding party and the household of Admiral Gaspard de Coligny (1517–72), a statesman who had championed the Protestant cause.





**PATRIOTS,**  
**POLITICS,**  
and the  
**OKLAHOMA CITY**  
**BOMBING**

Stuart A. Wright

reveals how meanings about Robert Mathews and The Order were adapted and transposed to tropes about Weaver. By utilizing this approach, we can see how state agents reinvoked and reworked narratives about Weaver in ways that shaped the escalating trajectory of contention at Ruby Ridge.

Following Randy Weaver's failure to appear in court and the issuance of the warrant, an incensed Vicki Weaver wrote a threatening letter to the U.S. Attorney's office in Boise addressed to the "Queen of Babylon." The letter cited selected biblical passages and included a quote from Robert Mathews. It stated in part:

A man cannot have two Masters. Yahweh Yahshua Messiah, the anointed One of Saxon Israel is our lawgiver and King. We will obey Him and no others . . . a long forgotten wind is starting to blow. Do you hear the thunder? It is that of the awakened

#### Movement-State Attributions of War

Saxon. War is upon the land. The tyrant's blood will flow. (Department of Justice, 1994: 36)

A second letter from Vicki Weaver was sent to U.S. Attorney Maurice Ellsworth and addressed to the "Servant of the Queen of Babylon." According to an unpublished Justice Department report on Ruby Ridge, the letter stated in part: "The stink of your lawless government has reached Heaven, the abode of Yahweh our Yahshua. Whether we live or whether we die, we will not bow to your evil commandments" (Department of Justice, 1994: 36–7).

Robert Mathews, of course, was well known among federal authorities in the Pacific Northwest. U.S. Attorney Ellsworth was alarmed by the Mathews quote and requested a "threat assessment" from Ron Evans, chief deputy with the U.S. Marshals Service in Boise. Evans had been chief deputy in North Dakota in 1983, when the marshals became engaged in the deadly shootout with Gordon Kahl. Evans also found the language of Vicki Weaver's letters to be disturbing and believed they were intended to send a message. Soon after learning that portions of the letters were quotes from Mathews, Ron Evans reported back to the chief of enforcement operations at Marshals Service Headquarters in Washington "that BATF sources believed Randy Weaver had the potential to be *another Bob Mathews and his homestead another Whidbey Island standoff*" (Department of Justice, 1994: 38; emphasis mine).

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# RELIGION

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## and the **Racist** Right

The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement

Michael Barkun

REVISED EDITION



Identity leaders and groups have sought to assert local primacy in both symbolic and concrete ways. The former includes rhetorical statements of political, moral, and religious principles given the appearance of legality by being registered with county clerks. The latter has consisted of setting up local law-enforcement organizations deemed to be more legitimate than those of state and national governments. Both rest upon a naïve contractarianism that assumes politically and legally valid decisions may be taken by the mere fact of agreement, even if the agreement takes place outside constitutionally mandated channels.

On July 11, 1982, fifty-nine members of right-wing organizations met in northern Idaho to sign a document entitled the Nehemiah Township Charter and Common Law Contract. In certain respects it prefigured William Potter Gale's 1984 Compact, but where the Compact attempted to resuscitate the Articles of Confederation, the Nehemiah Township Charter concentrated on the legal arrangements to be instituted in a local community of "Aryan Freemen." Where Gale's political fundamentalism was directed toward the text of the Articles, the charter adopted a legal fundamentalism in its attempt to reconstruct ancient Anglo-Saxon law. The document was replete with references to "socage," "scutage," and "wergild." The signatories included figures well known in Identity circles, including Richard Girnt Butler, Thom Arthur Robb, and Robert Miles. Randolph Duey, later a prominent member of the Order, and Carl Franklin, Jr., who eventually succeeded Butler as head of Aryan Nations, also signed. The charter drafters set a pattern repeated with the Compact and with the "Remnant Resolves" (considered below) by filing the document with the recorder of Kootenai County. This gave it the appearance of official recognition, while also connecting the charter with the one jurisdiction the Identity right has always acknowledged to be valid, the county.<sup>34</sup>

The charter signers professed the desire to "covenant and combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic for our better ordering and preserva-

tion under and by GOD'S Law." They did so in clear Identity fashion by invoking "our Father and God, YAHWEH, YAHSHUA, JESUS THE CHRIST, the only rightful originator of Law." The polity envisioned was for "the preservation, protection and sustenance of our Aryan Race." Only "white freem[e]n" could be members. Much of the document was devoted to describing the community's legal system, which was to have sole jurisdiction over the conflicts among its members. While these provisions sometimes appeared to be no more than a private, alternative dispute-resolution mechanism, other articles made clear that the township's courts would brook no opposition from existing units of government.<sup>35</sup>

Any conflicts between the claims of Nehemiah Township and the county, state, and federal governments would have to be resolved in the township's favor. Thus, the township would determine for itself whether and when it was "subject to 'equity' enforced by municipal governments or federal governments." If these demands violated "GOD'S Law," they would be rejected. The township would decide for itself whether the laws of any governmental unit would be enforced within its boundaries. "No member of this Association or Guilds shall be bound by State, Municipal, local, or Federal statute, ordinance, usage, or taxation except as he himself may will." Lest this implied claim of sovereignty appear ambiguous, the charter gave the township the right to "conduct diplomacy for peace, [and] declare and wage war against the enemies of our Race and our God."<sup>36</sup>