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## 18 Arming for Armageddon: Myths and Motivations of Violence in American Christian Apocalypticism

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How do religious beliefs about the end of the world turn into violent actions? This essay provides an overview of belief about the end times within American Protestantism, evangelicalism, the so-called religious Right, and the radical extremists, the latter often drawing upon and reinterpreting broader Christian doctrines to justify violence and hate. The presentation will hopefully correct misconceptions about the religious beliefs of a large segment of American society, yet also show why some political and religious groups believe their faith requires militant preparation for and participation in apocalyptic events.

No religion is monolithic. There is diversity in every faith tradition and each has a fanatical fringe element that departs from what the majority within the tradition consider normative and orthodox. For a variety of reasons—cultural, social, political, historical, and theological—militancy and violence also may, at times, be part of the dynamics of the radical faithful. Sometimes the violence is a derivative of doctrine, sometimes it arises due to persecution, and, in yet other instances, violent acts arise from political beliefs that are subsequently infused with religious imagery and language.

Christianity has no immunity to such violence and, in recent years, American Christianity has experienced it several times. Attacks on abortion clinics and staff, destructive acts by militia groups, a catastrophic conflict at a schismatic religious compound, and a terrorist act on a federal office building all had religious connections. Thus, a decade ago, Mark Juergensmeyer noted:

What is significant about the recent forms of Christian violence is not so much the violence as the ideology that lies behind it: the perception that the secular social and political

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order of America is caught up in satanic conspiracies of spiritual and personal control. These perceived plots provide Christian activists with reasons for using violent means.<sup>1</sup>

Little has changed since these words were penned, and international events, including a rise in religiously motivated terrorism, have intensified religious convictions for many militants. For some, there is also a strong apocalyptic element that provides theological motivation, meaning, and justification for violence. Apocalypticism as used in this essay is “a belief that at some divinely appointed time in the future, the world as we know it will end through a cataclysmic confrontation between the forces of good and evil, out of which will emerge the righteous kingdom of God.”<sup>2</sup>

Although there are similarities among the participants in violent acts of armed apocalypticism, there are also differences, and an understanding and appreciation of the religious perspectives can aid those who seek to uphold justice, security, and constitutional rights for American citizens in the present and future. Not all militia groups in the United States have religious ties, but some do. Similarly, not all religious minority groups and sects support violence and rebellion against the state. However, there is enough of each, along with confusion about apocalyptic theology, to merit further study.

## **CHRISTIANITY AND THE END TIMES**

“He will come to judge the living and the dead.” These words from the Apostles’ Creed and similar words from other Christian affirmations of faith have been voiced for centuries as public declarations of belief in the yet-future return of Jesus Christ to earth. Likewise have been the words “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Countless times every day for almost 2,000 years, Christians around the globe have voiced this prayer modeling one Jesus gave to his disciples (as recorded in the New Testament, Matthew 6:9–13 and Luke 11:2–4). Why do many Christians understand these statements to be fulfillment of prophecy and part of contemporary and future world events? More specifically, what do Christians believe to be their function in preparation for these events? For the majority of Christians, it is anticipation; for a minority, it is violence.

## **PROPHETS OF DOOM**

Most people have seen cartoons of individuals wearing or holding placards that proclaim, “The end is near!” Occasionally, such prophets of doom can be seen on busy American street corners or in city parks preaching a message of imminent global destruction. Their expressions and sentiments reflect belief in and fascination with apocalypticism and its relationship to current events. Apocalyptic violence is not new in Christian history. Two examples from the past are the populist millennial revolt led by Thomas Müntzer during the 1525 Peasants’ War in Germany and the Anabaptist revolt in Münster during 1533–35. In recent U.S. history, the April 1993 tragedy in Waco, Texas, at the Branch Davidian compound under the religious leadership of Vernon Howell, a.k.a. David Koresh, is a vivid example of apocalyptic faith coupled with armed violence.<sup>3</sup> Such incidents have occurred for centuries.

Some apocalyptic groups (Christian or other) may initiate violence because of stressors within the group or may experience leadership dynamics that instigate violence. This

is what happened with the Peoples Temple in Jonestown, Guyana, on 18 November 1978 and with the non-Christian group Aum Shinrikyo in Tokyo on 20 March 1995. Other groups initiate violence in response to external pressures such as confrontation with law enforcement agencies. For example, as a backdrop to the 1992 confrontation at Ruby Ridge between federal agents and the Weaver family was the apocalyptic theology that was part of the Weavers' belief system. Finally, some groups may initiate violence based on their apocalyptic theologies. This was the case with the Branch Davidians from February to April 1993 and also in the 81-day confrontation with the Montana Freeman in 1996.<sup>4</sup> Apocalyptic beliefs were part of each scenario, but were functionally different in each instance. Beliefs may either be a catalyst for violence that is viewed as part of the prophetic plan of history, or condone violence that is not specifically understood as apocalyptic but still part of a larger theological plan.

### PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE END TIMES

In American culture, belief in Bible prophecy has a long and varied history.<sup>5</sup> Within Christian theology eschatology is the study of last things. Eschatology is a detailed field of theological inquiry with many terms and concepts. Failure to understand the definitions and distinctions within it can lead to confusion for the prophecy student and catastrophe for law enforcement agencies when faced with the possibility or reality of armed apocalyptic individuals or groups.<sup>6</sup>

All Christians believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth in an event known as the Second Coming or Second Advent. They also believe in something known as the millennium. According to Revelation 20:1–7, there is a period of 1,000 years during which Jesus Christ will establish a kingdom and reign and rule over the world. However, there is disagreement on the nature and timing of that kingdom in relation to the Second Advent. Some view the millennium as a literal physical kingdom lasting 1,000 years, while others view it as a spiritual kingdom. In answer to the question “What is the relationship of the millennium to the Second Coming?” there are three possibilities: amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism.

Amillennialism teaches that there will be no literal, future 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ on earth. Rather, there is a present spiritual form of that kingdom. Amillennialists (Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox) believe that from the ascension of Jesus Christ in the first century (Acts 1:6–11) until the Second Coming, both good and evil will increase in the world as Jesus Christ reigns spiritually in the lives of Christians. When Jesus Christ returns, the end of the world will occur with a general resurrection of the dead and a judgment of all people. Amillennialism has been the most widely held view throughout the church's history. *Apocalyptic violence is not usually associated with this perspective.*

Postmillennialism teaches that Christ's kingdom is currently being extended spiritually and physically throughout the world through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Its advocates believe that, at some point, a majority of the world's inhabitants will be converted to Christianity, resulting in a Christianization of society and culture. Postmillennialism teaches that the current age is the millennium, but it is not necessarily a literal 1,000-year period. Postmillennialists believe that there will be progressive growth

of righteousness, prosperity, and development in every sphere of life as a growing majority of Christians eventually culturally subdue the world for Christ. Then, after Christianity has dominated the world for a long time, Christ will return. Postmillennialism was the dominant view of American Protestantism during much of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but waned during the first half of the twentieth century. In the latter part of the twentieth century there was a resurgence of it through the Christian Reconstruction Movement, also known as dominion theology.

*Apocalyptic violence is not found with the majority of postmillennial advocates, although it does exist in some militia groups and in isolated instances.* Most postmillennialists reject such violence, believing it to be inconsistent with postmillennial tenets. For example, in published correspondence with Paul J. Hill, the Presbyterian minister convicted and executed for the murder of a Florida abortionist, prominent Christian Reconstructionist Gary North wrote, “you have moved away from biblical law into open revolution.”<sup>7</sup> North rejects Hill’s actions (and the similar actions of others) as “vigilante theology” and instead favors nonviolence and nonviolent resistance.<sup>8</sup> Most postmillennialists are within mainstream American Christianity, but others, such as Christian militia advocates, are outside the mainstream of Christian orthodoxy, distrusting traditional Christian faith communities.

Premillennialism, the third and final millennial view, teaches that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ occurs before the 1000-year reign of Christ in a literal and physical kingdom that will be established on earth. Within premillennialism there is also debate over the concept of an event known as the rapture, in which Jesus Christ appears in the heavens and calls Christians to heaven and then later returns with them in the Second Coming. Depending upon one’s view, the rapture occurs either before, during, or after a seven-year period of intense trial and trauma on earth known as the tribulation, as recorded in Revelation 6–19. It is during this time of tribulation that events occur that correspond to such terminology as “bowl judgments,” “seal judgments,” “trumpet judgments,” and “Armageddon.” Thus one hears of eschatological schemes such as pretribulationism, midtribulationism, and posttribulationism—all within a premillennial framework and referring to the timing of the rapture in relation to the tribulation that occurs before the millennium.

Within premillennialism that is midtribulational or posttribulational there is also a view regarding the timing of the prophetic events of the tribulation known as historicism. Historicists believe that the events of the tribulation can be equated with events and periods of history that either have occurred since the first century or are currently happening. Within Protestantism, historicism was common from the Reformation era until about 100 years ago. Most historicist schemes focus on European history, equating personalities such as various popes or political leaders such as Napoleon or Hitler with the prophetic figure of the Antichrist (Daniel 9:26–27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3).<sup>9</sup> However, some historicists (such as David Koresh and the Branch Davidians) have replaced Europe with the United States. *Violent apocalyptic Christians in the United States have usually been associated with historicism because they see past or current events as equating with the events of the tribulation period that culminates in a final conflict known as Armageddon.*

The violence that they initiate or in which they participate is understood to be part of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

The majority of premillennialists (including most American evangelicals) are known as dispensationalists. They hold that there will be a future, literal and physical 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ on earth following the events of the rapture, tribulation, and Second Coming. Unlike historicists, dispensationalists are pretribulationists and futurists, believing that all prophetic events will not occur in the present age. Rather, the events will transpire during the yet-future tribulation, Second Coming, and millennium. Since the 1970s, dispensationalism has been popularized through the writings of authors such as Hal Lindsey (*The Late Great Planet Earth*) and Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins (Left Behind series). *Although they have a strong apocalyptic theology, dispensationalists have no history of or propensity for apocalyptic violence.* This is because they believe that prophecy will be fulfilled in the future in God's timing and without human assistance.

Each of the above views has received extensive theological consideration and propagation by respective proponents in attempts to accurately interpret biblical passages. The views are deeply held and ultimately also affect other Christian doctrines. Although the views may be confusing or bewildering to those unfamiliar with them, they are an integral part of Christian theology. *No millennial view necessitates instigating or participating in armed violence.*

Eschatology is part of every Christian theological framework. Apocalyptic beliefs are not an aberration of theology, but pursuing violence as a consequence of apocalyptic belief *is* contrary to orthodox Christianity. A clear understanding of the end-times framework of individuals and groups participating in apocalyptic violence can greatly assist those trying to combat it.

## **ESCHATOLOGY AND VIOLENCE: FOUR AMERICAN CASES**

For the armed apocalypticist, prophecy matters, and individual acts of violence can even be attempts at "hot-wiring" the apocalypse. An overview of four examples of violence that had apocalyptic connotations helps to show some of the significance, distinctions, and outworking of violent apocalyptic theology.

1. *Militia advocates* with strong religious overtones (and not all groups have these) are usually postmillennial, but they are not motivated primarily by eschatology. They often draw from Christian Reconstructionism's ideology and postmillennial eschatology but move beyond its normal parameters. Some militia advocates are premillennial and view their actions as part of the eschatological era of the tribulation.

The patriot/militia movement in America is a loosely knit network of individuals and organizations with religious and nonreligious convictions. Some claim a Christian orientation and some do not. Both religious and nonreligious patriot/militia advocates share common perspectives that often include an obsessive suspicion of the government, belief in antigovernment conspiracy theories, a deep-seated hatred of government officials, and a belief that the United States Constitution has been discarded by government officials and political leaders.<sup>10</sup>

Blending with these political ideas, there is among the religious advocates a combination of conservative Protestant Christianity, white-supremacist views, and

pseudo-Christian thought. It is a unique political subculture supported by doctrinal distortion, anti-Semitism, and misappropriated apocalyptic beliefs. The result is a complex system of religious and political belief that may have apocalyptic views as its catalyst for violence. Richard Abanes observes:

To complicate matters, large segments of the patriot/militia movement are being driven by religious beliefs and/or racism, two powerful forces that historically have often led to episodes of violence. This raises another disturbing issue: the unholy alliance that has formed between racists and anti-Semites on the one hand, and some conservative Christians on the other. The common ground between these two groups is apocalypticism.<sup>11</sup>

The blending of these ideologies and the distortion of and preoccupation with eschatological themes creates a worldview in which an Armageddon-like racial confrontation is viewed as imminent and desirable. Aberrant social, political, and theological values create a vicious cycle of hatred and violence.

The origins of the contemporary Christian militia movement are found in a genealogy of hatred and anti-Semitism dating to nineteenth-century England and a concept known as British Israelism. This idea, promulgated through a book by John Wilson entitled *Lectures on Our Israelitish Origin* (1840), contends that Jesus was not Semitic but Aryan and that the migrating Israelite tribes of the northern Kingdom of Israel were Aryans whose descendants eventually migrated to the British Isles and were the then-present-day Englishmen.<sup>12</sup> Through the teachings of Gerald L. K. Smith and the writings of William J. Cameron, editor of the *Dearborn Independent* (1919–27), British Israelism came to the United States and from it eventually came the Christian Identity Movement.

The Christian Identity Movement founders were Bertram Comporet and Wesley Swift, the latter a Ku Klux Klan member who, in 1946, founded the Church of Jesus Christ—Christian. This church was the basis for the Christian Defense League founded in the 1960s by Bill Gale and from which came later the Posse Comitatus and the Aryan Nation.<sup>13</sup> Common to all of these groups is the belief that there must be Anglo-Saxon domination and purity in the United States if the nation is to maintain its national and international viability. Such teachings are far from orthodox Christian doctrine and mainstream American Christianity, and, with regard to the genealogy and humanity of Jesus, the views of these groups are heretical. However, this vitriolic political and theological perspective produces a mind-set that accepts violence as necessary and normative.

The postmillennial tenets of the Christian Identity Movement include the belief that there is an impending collapse of worldly institutions and that the apocalypse will include a great racial battle. Coupled with a conspiratorial view of government, these beliefs have fueled intense anti-Semitism, racism, and survivalism. For Identity advocates, part of the postmillennial vision of the present and future entails a coming period of tribulation, conflict, and purging of the races in which white supremacy will prevail.

There are also strands of historicist premillennialism among some within the militia movement, especially those for whom the Branch Davidian episode in Waco is a rallying point seen as part of the tribulation. Philip Jenkins notes:

Some interpretations [of the Waco event] even proposed that the final catastrophe was a massacre deliberately undertaken by federal authorities, who purposely set the fires and machine-gunned survivors. It was this version of affairs that led to Waco becoming an apocalyptic symbol for the extreme right wing. The conflict provided a potent battlecry for white supremacist groups deeply imbued with premillenarian theology, often in Christian Identity guise. Remembering Waco became a basic creed for the militias, survivalists, and paramilitary groups dedicated to resistance against the Beast and One-Worldism. The massive bombing of the federal office building in Oklahoma City occurred precisely two years after the Waco inferno as an act of direct vengeance.<sup>14</sup>

When premillennial, these apocalyptic advocates are posttribulationists, believing that Christians will go through an intense period of cultural collapse and global tribulation. Unlike dispensationalists and other pretribulation premillennialists, who believe that Christians will be saved from the tribulation era because of the rapture, these posttribulationists believe the world is in or very near the tribulation and therefore their acts of violence have eschatological significance.<sup>15</sup>

2. *The Oklahoma City bombing* was committed and supported by individuals with a postmillennial perspective, but it was not motivated primarily by that eschatology. Instead, the eschatology blended with and supported racial and political ideas along with some militia influence. Timothy McVeigh was not the lone terrorist, as some believe. Rather, he had ties to the Christian Identity Movement.<sup>16</sup> Acting in revenge against the U.S. government, frequently called the Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG), and inspired by the fictional work *The Turner Diaries*, by William Pierce, McVeigh killed 168 people when he bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on 19 April 1995. Although he was raised as a Roman Catholic, many of his ideas coincided with Christian Identity theology and politics.<sup>17</sup> Common with other acts of violence stemming from the militia movement were his anti-Semitism and a conspiratorial view of government.

3. *The Branch Davidians* in Waco, Texas, were historicist premillennialists and motivated primarily by eschatology. The explosive ending of the 51-day standoff between David Koresh and federal agents and the tragic fire in Waco that killed 79 people was the culmination of a theological perspective wherein Koresh believed he was, and was accepted by others as being, “the Lamb” of Revelation, a title understood in Christianity as referring to Jesus Christ.<sup>18</sup>

Under the leadership of Koresh, the Branch Davidians were an eschatologically confident community that had long expected that the American government, whom they identified as the Beast of Revelation (mentioned over 30 times in the book), would one day arrive seeking to destroy them—God’s righteous remnant people. Fire also played a major part in the eschatology and teachings of Koresh.<sup>19</sup>

Revelation 6:1–8:6 refers to seven seal judgments that are the first of a series of three divine judgments (seals, trumpets, bowls) consisting of seven parts each that occur during the tribulation. Believing himself to be the Lamb of God, Koresh declared that he was opening the sixth seal and the one that is most severe (Revelation 6:12–17).<sup>20</sup> The end result, the fire, must be seen in this context. The armed violence of the Branch Davidians throughout the siege was historicist premillennial in its eschatology and motivated primarily by that eschatology.

4. *Attacks on abortion clinics and staff by Christian militia advocates and others* have frequently come from those who are postmillennial in eschatology. Although their actions have been supported by their eschatology, they are motivated primarily by the desire to save the unborn. They view their violent actions as defensive actions that are necessary and more effective than the nonviolent protests of other antiabortion activists.<sup>21</sup> One of the most prominent of these attacks was that by Paul Hill, a former Presbyterian pastor who shot and killed Dr. John Bayard Britton and his security escort in Pensacola, Florida, on 29 July 1994. Hill, a Christian Reconstructionist, argued that he was not using violence, only force, and that he was justified in killing the doctor because it was the doctor who was perpetuating violence by performing abortions.<sup>22</sup> Postmillennial in eschatology, Hill declared, “Christ’s kingdom and principles will ultimately prevail. God is in control—and he will bring about victory—we must obey him. Sooner or later America will become a Christian nation. Only Christians will be elected to public office. No false worship allowed.”<sup>23</sup>

Some violence from abortion opponents and militia and Christian Identity advocates comes from a concept known as the Phinehas Priesthood, articulated by Richard Kelly Hoskins in his book *Vigilantes of Christendom* (1990). These individuals take their name from the Old Testament personality who killed an Israelite and his Midianite wife (Numbers 25:1–18). These Old Testament deaths are interpreted as occurring because of racial mixing (rather than idolatry as stated in the biblical text) and used as justification for violent acts against others, including abortionists. Though not necessarily postmillennialists, the actions of the Phinehas Priesthood share with Christian Reconstructionists an emphasis on Old Testament events and teachings.

## HEAVENLY WARFARE ON EARTHLY BATTLEFIELDS

Acts of apocalyptic violence are committed because its perpetrators believe the violence is morally acceptable, divinely sanctioned, and fulfilling a divine prophetic plan. They believe that the world and society are in chaos and disorder and that their actions are key moments in which they are bringing sacred order and structure on secular society. For them, a spiritual battle is taking place on earth with violent physical manifestations as human history draws to a close. There is a dualistic view of the world, not dissimilar to Manichaeism and Gnosticism, in which there is an oversimplification of good and evil.

Those who participate in apocalyptic violence identify personally with the spiritual struggle that they believe is occurring in the world. Their actions are integral to the cosmic conflict as spiritual warfare becomes physical warfare. Because the struggle in which they are engaged is seen as primarily spiritual in nature, their acts of violence have spiritual as well as temporal effects. What may be literally earth-shattering ramifications are believed to receive applause and approval from God.

## POLITICS WITH PROPHECY OR PROPHECY WITH POLITICS?

Every circumstance is different but some questions to consider regarding violence and armed groups include

- What is the primary ideological force—politics or prophecy?

- Are the rhetoric and actions of the group grounded in political ideology fused with theology or is the foundation theological commitments fused with politics?
- What is the eschatological framework of the individual or group?
- What prophetic terminology and symbols are being used?
- What is the history of the group?
- What other organizations or ideas are affiliated with the group?
- What books or writings are used for ideological or theological support?

Understanding the actions and motivations of individuals and groups supporting apocalyptic violence can be elusive. Mixed motivations, eclectic theology, acceptance of conspiracy theories, anti-Semitism, racism, and a variety of other political and theological aberrations may be woven together to create a tapestry of terror and violence. Yet to claim the actions as irrational can also be detrimental. What is needed, in part, is an understanding of the apocalyptic actors' worldviews and theologies.

### TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR THE CAUTIOUSLY CONCERNED

What can be done? There is no single solution, but there are common errors that can lead to oversimplification, stereotyping, and misidentification of apocalyptic advocates and, thus, exacerbate specific incidents of violence.

1. *Don't underestimate religious fervor.* People will kill and die for their faiths. The power of religion to promote peace and violence is enormous and should never be ignored. In a democratic society and culture where the separation and compartmentalization of the sacred and the secular are prized, it is easy to forget that there is no unanimity of worldviews. For some, separation and compartmentalization are a threat.

2. *Don't confuse political violence and religious violence.* Although the two types of violence often overlap, understanding the core motivation for each type is essential to combating it. The religious militant and religious terrorist act first and foremost in response to a perceived divine mandate. They are acting for an audience of one—God.

3. *Don't confuse doctrines.* Understand the theological terminology used in Christian eschatology. Words matter. An appreciation of the historical and doctrinal distinctions within Christianity can be a great asset in understanding rhetoric and beliefs. Words such as *Armageddon*, *Beast*, *millennium*, *seal judgments*, *bowl judgments*, *trumpet judgments*, *premillennialism*, *postmillennialism*, *historicism*, and others, have specific and different meanings depending upon the theological traditions of those who are using them.

4. *Don't mistake the part for the whole.* The vast majority of Protestant conservatives, including evangelicals and the “religious Right,” vociferously reject religious violence as immoral, illegal, and unbiblical.

5. *Don't dehumanize people who practice different or unusual religious values.*<sup>24</sup>

6. *Don't promote actions toward, and communication with, apocalyptic militants that can be perceived as persecution.* Persecution will confirm apocalyptic beliefs and strengthen religious resolve and resistance. Although that is impossible to completely control, every effort must be made to minimize and alleviate religious language and ideology in law enforcement actions and media presentations.

7. *Don't equate apocalypticism with armed violence.* Apocalyptic beliefs do not imply support of apocalyptic violence.<sup>25</sup>

8. *Don't confuse individuals and groups, assuming similarities or distinctions that do not exist.*

9. *Don't assume everyone in a group or organization will act the same way.* Even if a group supports apocalyptic violence or violence for other reasons, its members may or may not act in unison. "Individual operatives can have their own reasons for turning to terrorist violence unrelated to the group's purported goals."<sup>26</sup>

10. *Don't assume millennial expectations and the potential for violence is limited to Protestant Christianity.* Roman Catholicism as well as non-Christian religions can also uphold apocalyptic perspectives (such as the concept of the Mahdi in Islamic eschatology). Aum Shinrikyo devotees involved in the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin gas attack blended tenets of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and New Age spirituality, and believed that the world would be destroyed in an Armageddon scenario after which their leader, Shoko Asahara, would reign in a millennial kingdom.<sup>27</sup>

## CONCLUSION

For the apocalyptic militant, Chicken Little was right—the sky is falling. Civilization and the world as we know it is on the verge of collapse and catastrophe, and it is the duty of the faithful to prepare for that end, or, depending on the theology, initiate it as part of the divine plan of history and in response to a divine mandate. Every field of study has foundational principles and specialized vocabulary. Theology is no different. An understanding of the concepts, distinctions, and terminology of Christian apocalypticism can aid scholars, journalists, law enforcement agents, and other interested parties in dealing constructively with the dynamics of millennial groups. In so doing, it may also help to minimize or alleviate apocalyptic armed violence.

## NOTES

1. Mark Juergensmeyer, "Christian Violence in America," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 558 (July 1998): 89.
2. Richard Abanes, *American Militias: Rebellion, Racism, and Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 3.
3. For a summary history of the movement, see Kenneth G. C. Newport, "The Davidian Seventh-day Adventists and Millennial Expectations, 1959–2004," in *Expecting the End: Millennialism in Social and Historical Context*, ed. Kenneth G. C. Newport and Crawford Gribben (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 131–46.
4. Catherine Wessinger, "When the Millennium Comes Violently: A Comparison of Jonestown, Aum Shinrikyo, the Branch Davidians, and the Montana Freeman" (Yamauchi Lecture in Religion, Loyola University, New Orleans, 2 March 1997), 7–14. See also her book, *How the Millennium Comes Violently: From Jonestown to Heaven's Gate* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2000), 12–29. While Wessinger sees the Waco event as violence initiated due to confrontation with authorities and thus places it in the second group, I understand it as more theological and therefore in the final category. Either way, this shows how the theology and violence blend.
5. For an overview history, see Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press), 1992.
6. For a simple guide to Bible prophecy, see the author's work coauthored with Thomas Ice, *Fast Facts on Bible Prophecy from A to Z* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers), 1997.
7. Gary North, *Lone Gunners for Jesus: Letters to Paul J. Hill* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1994), 11.

8. Ibid., 25.
9. Ice and Demy, *Fast Facts on Bible Prophecy from A to Z*, 83–84, 98–100.
10. Abanes, *American Militias*, 2.
11. Ibid., 3.
12. Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 7.
13. Juergensmeyer, “Christian Violence in America,” 97.
14. Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 218.
15. Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 17–19.
16. Mike German, “Behind the Lone Terrorist, a Pack Mentality,” *Washington Post*, 5 June 2005, B01, available at [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/06/04AR2005060400147\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/06/04AR2005060400147_pf.html) (accessed 5 November 2007).
17. Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, 27–29.
18. Kenneth Samples et al., *Prophets of the Apocalypse: David Koresh & Other American Messiahs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 68–69.
19. See *ibid.*, 78–88, and Abanes, 55–58, for specific teachings of Koresh pertaining to fire and eschatology.
20. Samples et al., *Prophets of the Apocalypse*, 79–80.
21. Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, 152–53.
22. Ibid., 169.
23. Paul J. Hill, interview by Jessica Stern, 27 April 1999, cited in *ibid.*
24. Wessinger, “When the Millennium Comes Violently,” 3.
25. For example, after more than 30 years of studying Christian eschatology, the author knows of no acts of religious violence stemming from dispensationalism, the eschatological perspective popularized in the writings of Hal Lindsey and the best-selling Left Behind religious novels of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.
26. Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, 164.
27. See Manabu Watanabe, “Religion and Violence in Japan Today: A Chronological and Doctrinal Analysis of Aum Shinrikyo,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 80–100.