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Justification by Race: Wesley Swift's White Supremacy and Anti-Semitic Theological Views in His Christian Identity Sermons

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This article explores the discourses of Minister Wesley Albert Swift (1913–1970), one of the original and leading proponents of Christian Identity, a racial theology movement which emerged in the United States after World War II. It is not the aim of this study to analyze the discourse of Christian Identity as an isolated element, but to understand its interrelation with the political-religious culture of the country during the 1950s and 1960s. Christian Identity rhetoric may be understood based on its socio-historical context. During the formative years of Christian Identity, nuclear anxieties, along with the fear of Communist infiltration, were deeply present within the white supremacist and their anti-Semitic views. At the same time, the civil rights movement of African Americans stimulated violent white supremacy politics and rhetoric by the extreme right. Combining the white hegemonic fear of minority advances in American society, Christian Identity was created as a cult for the racist right. As such, it attempted to legitimize white supremacy and perpetuate the Judeo-Communist Conspiracy myth. Race — as a biological issue that reflects the spiritual essence of a person — is the central element of anthropology built by Christian Identity, which claims the white race was literally created in the image of God. Therefore, they argue, it is the only race predestined for salvation. As an expression of an extreme Calvinist world view, Wesley Swift constructed a Christian theology that ideologically unified different political strategies of the postwar extreme right, which continues to this day.

Introduction

Beginning with Donald J. Trump's US presidential campaign in 2016, right-wing extremism achieved notoriety as a phenomenon in American politics; however, it has existed since the country's origins. Starting with anti-Catholic and nativist groups during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, continuing with the infamous Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, nationalist Christianity, Christian Identity churches, neo-confederates, and armed militias during the twentieth and 21st centuries; the United States has a long tradition of white supremacist organizations that have found channels of expression and action.

Since the mid-1940s, Christian Identity as imagined by Minister Wesley Swift has played a key role in this process, shaping what can only be described as a racist, anti-Semitic cult-like theology. After World War II, US right-wing extremism synchronized its anti-Semitic dogma with the anti-Communist and segregationist anxieties already existing among the white population. They formed numerous organizations that shared a white supremacist/nationalist ideology which places the figure of the Jew as the main enemy of the United States and the white nations in general (Kaplan & Weinberg, 1998).

The preservation of cassettes containing his sermons and their transcripts — both easily accessible on the Internet — means that to this day Swift's words provide a gateway to the world of Christian Identity for both the curious and potential adherents, regardless of whether they accept all the ideas or not. For this reason, his works continue to be of interest to any researcher interested in the theological-cultural construction of the beginnings and development of both Christian Identity, and white supremacy.

The basis of the Christian Identity theology derives from three basic ideas: the belief in the divine fatherhood of white humanity (indiscriminately called Aryan, Adamic, Caucasian, or Israelite), the belief in the biological satanic fatherhood of the Jews, and racial millenarianism which believes that in the future there will be an eschatological confrontation

between both racial seeds that will result in the triumph of the white race. Unlike Calvinism, which holds that salvation comes only from faith, Christian Identity assumes that those predestined to salvation and those predestined to perdition can be recognized by their racial condition. Therefore, it is race that determines whether a person is worthy of being saved or not.

American politics in general have been influenced throughout their history by a pathology that Richard Hofstadter (1996) calls the paranoid style. What distinguishes this style is that the United States political culture regards a 'vast or gigantic conspiracy as the *motive force* behind historical events' (p. 29).¹ The political expression of this impulse gained extraordinary notoriety among the local extreme right. During the twentieth century the general predisposition of the extreme right was to turn to the Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory to explain all the social changes they perceived as pathological. However, the paranoid impulse also permeates mainstream America. The persistent emergence of enemy conspiracies that threaten the American 'way of life' are constants. There is a degree of tension between the mainstream and the extreme right, which has more to do with style than with content (Diamond, 1995, p. 5). Both the extreme right and Christian Identity, moving away from the center, aim to combat the cultural mainstream and generate something new. The paradox is that they cannot do it outside the limits imposed by the hegemonic culture. In any case, it is important to clarify that anti-Semitism is the main point of separation between right-wing extremism and more conservative politics.

As noted by Michael Barkun (1997), the cult has given rise to six different types of political action during its history. While some of them are inserted within the rules of the political system, others are placed outside them, and occasionally they tend to become violent (p. 200).

In the United States of America racism occupies a specific social function for certain powerful sectors that disseminate it. Even for the poorest whites, who, without obtaining any other advantage from the system, feel privileged just because they are white. Both economically and psychologically, racism has been useful in hiding the true ties of power and in building the idea of American exceptionalism. Richard Perry (2007) argues:

racism is a state of mind that favors those on the strong end of power disparities. And, perhaps more insidiously, racism has also infected those with little power – those who strive to elevate their desperate situation above those who are still lower on the social scale (p. 17).

This article uses discourses analysis to identify the way Swift's discourse is interdependent with the mainstream social and political culture during the 1950s and 1960s, becoming symptom of that historic context. Wesley Swift built a Christian cult based on the local racist tradition by adapting to the American context a fringe and exotic set of revisionist biblical and apocryphal traditions from the Old and New Testaments. Thus, the importance of studying his discourse: beyond its counter-cultural character, Swift's theology is inserted in the cultural parameters from which it was born.

Besides, its importance remains as a fact nowadays, especially after the Capitol Assault in January 2021. As it will be noted, Swift's discourse professed a theocratic mode of government that would respond to the principles of the American Constitution. Therefore, he represented an anti-democratic impulse that paradoxically claimed to defend the Constitution. That those same people who claim to defend constitutional order have assaulted the Capitol is a symptom that rhetoric like Swift's remain active today.

Christian Identity and the Re-signification of the Puritan Imaginary

It is noted by historian of American Christianity, Mark Noll (2008) that in the history of the United States, religion usually works publicly in a Calvinist way (p. 24). In fact, as historian Avi Hu Zakai (1992) states, the Puritans built an ideology that sacralized the historical context of their migration to North America. Inspired by the book of Exodus, the migration to New England 'is wholly apocalyptic in its character. It is based upon a crisis in the history of salvation which could be solved only through God's divine providence acting directly and immediately within history' (Zakai, 1992, p. 66). Through this divine intervention, the elect of God (Puritans) could turn away from sin, embodied by England, and resume the right path to Salvation. The election of John Winthrop as governor of Massachusetts in 1629 was a crucial factor in this process. He was certain that the Puritans were an important instrument within the economy of redemption. Therefore, his conception of the new territory as a *city upon a hill* was closely related to the Puritans' need to redeem Britain through his example of a model theocracy. Thus, the new settlement they would occupy was described as a 'New Jerusalem'. Winthrop proclaimed: 'we are a company professing ourselves fellow members of Christ... We ought to account ourselves knit together by this bond of love and live in the exercise of it if we would have comfort of our being in Christ' (1630). So, he was certain that the Puritans were an important instrument within the economy of redemption.

Wesley Swift used similar terms to define his white audience in the mid-twentieth century: 'we are seed of His seed, we are out of his race, we are out of the children whom he made the covenant with... This great nation of ours is one of the great

¹ Italics in the original text.

nations of Israel' [3].² The essential difference is that for Swift, the Americans' link with Israel is literal and biological (racial), while the Puritans considered their bond with the Israelites as symbolic and metaphorical.

During the mid-nineteenth century, an age marked by secularization and by the expansion of the West, science started to play an increasingly important role in the explanation of racial issues, especially through its derivative branches of phrenology and comparative anatomy. These scientific models provided a rational reason for American superiority over Native Americans and black people (Horsman, 1981, p. 137). Thus, the primal images of the people chosen by God, and the enlightened deists ideas were transformed but remained alive in the new context. Rationalism thus merged with the religious mentality, giving rise to the hybrid American civil religion, which sacralized Americanism using Christian language as a tool (Bellah, 1991). These characteristics distinguished the white supremacy ideology of black slavery: slave owners believed that breaking the laws of Nature would interfere with divine will. In 1861, Alexander H. Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy, gave the famous Cornerstone speech which clearly reflects how Southern culture and society functioned:

They [North] assume that the Negro is equal, and hence conclude that he is entitled to equal privileges and rights with the white man... Our system commits no such violation of nature's laws. With us, all of the white race, however high or low, rich or poor, are equal in the eye of the law. Not so with the Negro. Subordination is his place. He, by nature, or by curse against Canaan, is fitted for that condition which he occupies in our system' (2008, p. 61).

The southern white supremacy prevented society from forming a free labor system since the 'natural place' of African-Americans was subservience. Exploitation that would instead be a sin if carried out against the whites, as they understand it to be happening in the North due to industrial advancement. To this was added a conservative interpretation of the Bible in the South (Giplin Faust, 1981, p. 10–11). The slave owners often used the story of the sons of Noah to legitimize their mode of production. Genesis 9: 18–27 recounts the curse of Cam, who is condemned to be a slave to his brother Sem. Also, since Genesis 10 was traditionally interpreted as the narrative of the scattering of Cam's descendants around the world and Cam was identified as the father of the African peoples, then it was understood that his curse also included blackness, the mark of slavery which he and his lineage were condemned to bear. In any case, this interpretation was the 'soft' version, since it did include blacks in the Adamic genealogy. There was a second type of biblical interpretation that defended the theory of polygenesis, which asserted that God had created more than one original couple and that Adam and Eve were the progenitors of the Caucasian race only. The theory of polygenesis includes, in turn, the presence of pre-Adamic beings, which explains how Cain had descendants with beings of other races when he was expelled from Eden.

Wesley Swift adapted these speeches and gave new significance to the idea of the exceptional nature of the American people along with the 'scientific advances' that consolidated white supremacy during the nineteenth century. At the same time, he combined these traditions with contemporary anti-Semitism. His role was to perform this task based on the construction of a Christian theology. Thus, he managed to create a kind of religious superstructure capable of bringing together many political tendencies of the extreme right.

Since the late nineteenth century, medieval images of the Jew as a heretic, usurer, sorcerer, and worshiper of the Devil were appropriated by the Euro-American right as images of an international Jewish conspiracy whose secret government sought to attain absolute world economic power and achieve the destruction of Christianity and all Western institutions and values through uprisings — especially the Communist revolution — that would allow them to impose a king akin to the Antichrist. This myth was systematized in *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. Both in Europe and in the United States it became the ideological monopoly of the extreme right beginning in the early twentieth century (Cohn, 1967).

In the beginning, this doctrine was disseminated in the United States by the main antecedent of Christian Identity: the British Israelite doctrine, a branch of biblical revisionism. It was John Wilson, a Scottish intellectual, who in 1840 institutionalized this interpretation with his work *Lectures on Our Israelitish Origins*, where he tried to demonstrate that the lost tribes of Israel migrated to the north of Europe, especially towards Great Britain, where the children of Ephraim (Son of the Hebrew Patriarch Joseph) settled. After Wilson's death in 1871, Anglo-Israelism began to spread in England through the work of Edward Hine. It was he who gave the British Israelite movement its final form, which was carried to the United States. Hine identified this nation with Manasseh, brother of Ephraim. The arrival of these ideas in the United States helped to develop the transition to Christian Identity. This occurred very soon after those notions spread into the country's anti-Semitic circles, especially during the 1930s, under the auspices of the Anglo-Saxon Federation of America founded by Howard Rand in Detroit. His main collaborator was William J. Cameron, Henry Ford's press director. From 1921 to 1927, Cameron was the editor of the *Dearborn Independent*, through which he propagated the Protocols in the United States (Lee, 1980).

After World War II and the defeat of National Socialism, the Euro-American anti-Semitic circles experienced a void that was soon filled with esoteric-religious expressions, such as the neo-Nazi cults of Savitri Devi or Miguel Serrano (Goodrick-Clarke, 2003). Religion contributes to the internationalization of the 'white race' concept by applying its principles through

² The transcripts cited in this article belong to Ella Rose Tucker-Mast. She was a follower of Swift's doctrine after his death.

a generally universalistic claim. Thus, the extended concept of race gave rise to white nationalism, based on the idea that European nations and the United States have a shared racial component (Kaplan & Weinberg, 1998). In this way, Christian Identity, which forged a religious anti-Semitic doctrine under Christian parameters, operates as a spiritual-based anti-Semitism hinging on the idea of a 'chosen nation', not as a metaphorical 'New Israel' but as the *true* Israel.

The first two decades of the Cold War played a central role in the history of the extreme right in the United States. A cultural war was waged that permeated the whole society, enabling the emergence of marginal racist and anti-Communist expressions such as Christian Identity. Communism was considered so dangerous because it represented the opposite of American fundamental values (Ceplair, 2011, p. 13). Thus, it is not surprising that anti-Communism became a religious force as well as a political one. Billy Graham, the greatest representative of evangelical anti-Communism, referred to Communism in eschatological terms. In 1949 he said that 'Communism is a religion that is inspired, directed, and motivated by the Devil himself, who has declared war against almighty God' (Ceplair, 2011, p. 118).

Christian Identity was not spread in a vacuum. It was consistent with both a government and a society which understood the bipolar conflict as a struggle between the forces of good and evil. Swift's speech reproduced these visions:

'There isn't any question tonight, but that the Soviet Union and world Communism desires to rule all the earth... The Anti-Christian devils came into America and regardless of whether they came as refugees, or whether they came as exchange professors, still they came to destroy our way of life' [4].

The main difference between the two ministers, that is, what makes Swift an extremist, is that Swift deployed racist, undemocratic, and anti-statist rhetoric to justify the same anti-Communism. This was unthinkable in the speech of Graham, who was a spiritual advisor to numerous American presidents both during the Cold War and afterwards (Balbier, 2009). As it is noted by the political scientist, Jason W. Stevens (2010),

'new Evangelicals in the fifties were not a revolutionary right-wing movement, nor was Billy Graham attempting to establish a theocracy. He did not, in other words, advocate that the state enforce religious laws or that state funds should be used to establish a national church... He believed that the pedagogical function of the church was not the same as the disciplinary function of the state; these were complementary, but not unified, offices' (p. 71).

It is in this context of paranoia taken to the extreme that Christian Identity emerged. Although it operated at the margins of morality and acceptability, Swift's speeches were framed in the discursive hegemony of his time. Reproducing the official discourse which asserted the religious need of the United States to confront an amoral and atheist enemy through the vigilance of the good citizen, the extreme right was able to invoke for itself a theology that was harshly anti-Communist and anti-Semitic at the same time.

Wesley Albert Swift's Audience and Sermons

Wesley Swift was born in New Jersey on September 6, 1913. He was the son of a Methodist pastor and was ordained as a minister of the same denomination at the age of eighteen. He continued his studies in Los Angeles at the L.I.F.E. Bible College of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, a Pentecostal school. There he met Anglo-Israelism through the ideas of the aged Charles F. Parham (Roberts, 2003, p. 12),³ who claimed that:

'Today the descendants of Abraham are the Hindus, the Japanese, the high Germans, the Danes, the Scandinavians, the Anglo-Saxons, and their descendants in all parts of the world. These are the nations who have acquired and retained experimental salvation and deep spiritual truths... while the heathen – the black race, the brown race, the red race, the yellow race, in spite of missionary zeal and effort are nearly all heathen still; but will the dawning of the coming age be given to Jesus for an inheritance' (Kidd, 2006, p. 215).

During the 1940s Swift led several Anglo-Israelite institutions in Los Angeles, such as the Great Pyramid Club, the Anglo-Saxon Christian Congregation, and the Anglo-Saxon Bible Study Group. In April 1946 Swift was associated with an attempt to resurrect the Ku Klux Klan.⁴ The same year, Swift began organizing the Anglo-Saxon Christian Congregation in Lancaster, California, which became the main medium for the dissemination of Christian Identity's doctrine. In 1957, the name of the church was changed to Church of Jesus Christ Christian – it was Swift's most important institution. In addition, Wesley Swift chaired an organization called California Anti-Communist League (1950) and during the 1960s he participated in the

³ Charles F. Parham was the founder and main representative of Pentecostalism until the 1906 Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles relegated him to a secondary role and African American Pastor William J. Seymour became the main exponent of the movement. Parham's segregationist ideas left him out of the religious fervor experienced in that little church, where most attendees were blacks and followed Pastor Seymour.

⁴ Author Unknown. (1946, April 6). Old law key to Klu Klux Klan books. Los Angeles Examiner, p. 13.

California Rangers and the Christian Defense League (Roy, 1953, p. 103–104). These showed themselves as civil organizations charged with defending the United States from Communism. However, they were also vehicles of Christian Identity theology.

Concerning Swift's audience, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) archives report an average of between forty and one hundred people attending his sermons during the 1950s and 1960s in different locations (FBI, 1948–1969). What interested the FBI about Wesley Swift was his subversive potential. The Bureau's attention was drawn to the fact that Swift seemed to possess enough money from an unknown source, which allowed him to afford luxuries such as an important collection of weapons—approximately 150—and several automobiles. At the same time, the FBI considered him as a 'potential suspect in the event of bombings in racial matters' (FBI, 1948–1969). However, he was never charged with any crime.

Although the origins of his different audiences cannot be determined, it is known that the Church of Jesus Christ Christian in Los Angeles held meetings in the Friday Morning Club and the Hollywood Women's Club, both of which were women's clubs. Women's civil organizations became particularly important during the Cold War since it was believed that the family institution was in danger of Communist infiltration, especially through its weakest link: the children (Brennan, 2008). And since the task of childcare fell within the exclusive sphere of women, many of them decided to be politically active. Knowing that situation, Swift described quite explicitly the dangers to which children would be subjected:

'This Jew directed mind, this Jew conspiracy says that they must remove consciousness from your children, removing this idea of right or wrong or they will grow up unsound... Misguided by a glorified dogma and bound by Faith and stunted by loyalties to religion, bedeviled by all of these supposedly correct ideas, confused by the uncertainty of our times, all of these children become mentally defective and retarded. In other words, the principle involved here is that unless you can brainwash these people as children, they will grow up to be mentally retarded' [19].

In short, this speech aimed at women shows that they were central to the anti-Communist effort and the paranoid climate of the time. Thus:

'The reason women embrace the anticommunist cause appears deceptively simple. After all, almost all Americans embraced some form of anticommunism... The women... however, were beyond mere acceptance of the evils of communism; they saw it as a serious and immediate threat to their country and their way of life' (Brennan, 2008, p. 35).

These women adhered to what feminist scholar Glenna Matthews (1987) calls domestic feminism, that is, the idea that their housework gave women a special moral quality and a right to influence American society (p. 160). Specifically, these clubs allowed many of them to find a place of belonging outside the family, but for the well-being of that same family. Hence, among some of them, Swift's speech was not entirely alien to their own interests as citizens, wives, and mothers. The role that Swift's sermons played on his audience should not be underestimated. According to author Larry Witham (2007), there are four themes by which American religious sermons contribute to the upholding of civil religion. These elements constitute four mental habits: the belief in being a chosen people (the exceptionality), the idea that God will always provide the Americans with everything they need, and the attack on individual or collective sin and dualism. In fact, as the author suggests, 'the four habits of mind... can make combinations, and sometimes America can feel the strain of all four impulses at once... The habits of mind make the best and worst of America feelings and actions' (p. 292–295). Indeed, the categories Witham uses are present in Wesley Swift's sermons, albeit in a seemingly dysfunctional and exotic way as he exaggerates them to an extreme point.

Specifically, it can be said that his sermons marked a turn that influenced the extreme right in the United States, which has been radicalizing direct action since the 1980s. Although Wesley Swift was not only influenced by this process, his beliefs also collaborated, either directly or indirectly, with the formation of a type of discourse that enabled the movement of the extreme right towards direct violence in the name of the spiritual need of the white race. As stated by Michael Barkun (1997), '[Christian] Identity's development in the 1970s and 1980s was largely a function of those influenced in one way or another by Wesley Swift's writing and preaching' (p. 49).

It is true that not all the far-right variants that developed from 1970 to the present promulgate the Christian Identity version. However, a huge percentage of this movement is related to Christian Identity either by sharing the imagery that Swift and his contemporaries forged in the mid-twentieth century or by belonging to the circle of characters that were formed with Swift and his disciples. In general, the discourse of the extreme right is plagued, whether they are aware or not, with representations constructed by Christian Identity in its early years. Besides, 'while religion and race can be crucial to the construction of one's individual identity, they can also be used to foster collective identity in various social movements' (Dobratz, 2001, p. 287). So, although a minority of American white supremacists prefer Odinism or Satanism as a religious expression (Goodrick-Clarke, 2003), religion fulfills as such an especially important place when it comes to uniting them against the common enemy.

Whiteness and Predestination

Race as a biological issue that reflects the spiritual essence of a particular being is the central element built by Christian Identity, which believes the white race was literally created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, from a Calvinist theological perspective, it is the only one predestined for salvation.

The Bible is the main source of Christian Identity's theological theories. The book of Genesis was particularly functional to its purposes, since it tells the story of the creation of man and woman, their first offspring, their subsequent corruption and destruction, and their regeneration through the flood in the time of Noah. At the same time, Swift's interpretation contains traditions taken from the Hebrew Haggadah, Gnostic, and apocryphal gospels, Anglo-Israelism, pseudo-scientific racial writings, astrology, and contemporary anti-Semitic literature.

Of central importance for Swift's theological construction were the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, written between the second century BCE and the second century CE. This literature is very dualistic and frequently refers to the fallen angels. The main apocryphal source of these demonological accounts is *The Book of the Watchers* (1 Enoch). In the set of books that make up the Enoch cycle, the history of redemption is equivalent to the Manichean worldview of the paranoid style because, in apocryphal Old Testament literature, evil is not inherent in man but exists on its own, as a product of fallen angels that infiltrate sin into the world (Diez Macho, 1984, p. 127).

In the case of Christian Identity, this idea is added to the belief that the only descendants of Adam are the white men. According to this interpretation, only they have perfection, and the rest of the beings represent the agents of evil because of their direct link with the fallen angels.

Unlike the original Hebrew tradition, for Christian Identity the divine covenant is not made with a nation, but with a race – the 'white Israelites'. Following the evolution of the tribes of Israel from Seth to the present, Swift assumes that the Anglo-Saxon races of England and the United States come, respectively, from the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh (both sons of patriarch Joseph). Thus, he assures his listeners that the 'Anglo-Saxon people are of the House of Joseph in the world today. And you came out of the House of Abraham thru Joseph and the Sethite lines of Enoch, which had existed in Egypt before the days of the Flood' [24]. Regarding the descendants of the tribes of Israel, Swift identified them as follows:

'The House of Judah today is the Germanic people. The House of Issachar in Finland... the House of Zebulun is found in Romania and some of the Slavic nations like Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia... today Reuben is found in Holland and Belgium... The people of God are to be found in Italy today. And the great Lombards, the White Italians are the people of the tribe of Gad... The great white Basque and the people of Spain are the Simeon of the Bible... There is Dan's land – Denmark... There is Norway and Sweden, so Naphtali and Asher are not gone... And Benjamin from Iceland to Greenland is not gone... No one is gone. For every called minister is a Levite' [17].

To give a new meaning to white supremacy and the puritan imagery, Swift states that God chose a 'white New Jerusalem': 'His great New Jerusalem is Christian civilization and all the nations which constitute it in which the spirit of God lives' [1]. According to him, the mission of the white race is to be an earthly instrument of God to build his Kingdom in the material world and defeat every expression of evil: 'He not only determined that He was going to conquer evil, but that He was going to conquer it in a physical world. For this purpose, He embodied His children' [9].

To build this kingdom, the destiny of the Adamic progeny is to 'measure up to the fullness of the stature of Christ, His Glory, and His power, for your hope is the Christ in you, and you are going to reach that level' [8]. It can be observed, then, that the Christian Identity's Christological concept differs radically from the canonical Christian concept. For Swift, the category of Christ includes all Caucasian men and women. The difference between the white man and Jesus Christ is that Jesus was the incarnation of God himself. Swift explains, then, that 'Christ was not his name... This was Yahshua or the Eternal Yahweh embodied in a physical body. The world Christos itself means the embodiment of the Spirit of the Eternal' [14].

This perspective implies a modification of the mission of Jesus, limiting it to the redemption of the Adamic/white race only. A racist Calvinist soteriological conception accompanies this Christology. Christian Identity professes an extreme doctrine of the Calvinist double predestination,⁵ in which those predestined to salvation and those predestined to perdition can be recognized only by their racial status. It is not, then, faith that saves, but race: justification by race. Salvation, then, is freely given to and reserved only for the white race:

'You were predestined before you came into the world, with the exact timing of that birth... and He did not ordain that He was going to lose any of you. He ordained that He was going to perfect, even the errors which would occur in this physical body... Not a single one of your race has been predestined to flaming fires and perdition' [10].

⁵ According to the doctrine of Calvinistic double predestination, God randomly chose one group of people to be saved and others to be eternally damned. For Calvin, faith is only one possible sign of salvation.

Christian Identity believes in polygenesis. According to Swift, whites were the last race to appear on Earth, although the race already existed spiritually in heaven. It was because of Lucifer's rebellion that these 'saints' voluntarily agreed to incarnate on earth to reproduce there the cosmic conflict between God and the devil. Therefore, Swift describes his audience as 'strangers and pilgrims in the Earth' [13]. To maintain this purity, then, the 'children of God' must avoid mixing with the races from the Earth – the pre-Adamites, which Swift called Enosh:

'The concept that Adam was the first man to walk upon the earth, and which some believe to be Biblically supported, requires the knowledge of who Adam was, and what the Word Adam means. For in the Hebrew foundation from which our Old Testament is obtained, the language which refers to Adam points out that Adam is a white man, the first white man in earth history. The Enosh, or beings, or races make up the world orders and have nothing to do with Adam' [7].

Swift argues that pre-Adamic beings are the races that were created 'out of the elements of the earth' [37] and not from the divine essence:

'The first people God put upon this planet were the Turanians or the Asiatics... And they went forth and populated the earth and that was what they were supposed to do... this was the ancient Turanian people and the remnants of it are still to be found in the people of China and a great number of other Asiatic races' [10].

Thus, the first people on earth were the Asian race, whose ethnic varieties he describes as the result of the racial mixture produced between them and black people. In Swift's speech, blacks are qualitatively distinguished from Asians by linking them with the devil since he claimed they were brought to earth by the fallen angels: 'the Negroid race came to earth in a distinct and unusual way... Lucifer, in that rebellion, gathered people from within the Milky Way to be his ax-men and swordsmen' [10].

On the one hand, Swifts links African-Americans to Lucifer. On the other hand, he assures that they are not a problem, except if they mix with a different race, especially the white one. He said: 'there isn't anything wrong with being black, but there is something wrong when you try to mix that black species with the white man, that is a violation of God's law, that is wrong' [4]. It is worth noting that Swift dehumanizes black people referring to them as 'species', instead of 'man' or 'woman'. Thus, the task of the 'children of God' is not to integrate them, but to make them aware of their real nature to prevent them from continuing to commit the sin of interracial procreation and abandon their false cult of Lucifer. Therefore, Swift said to his white audience:

'Do not worry about these other races. You teach them to worship the right God and you set them free... He says He will go to the end of the earth and that eventually, all of these people, all of them, shall be saved and justified according to His purpose and His plan. There are a lot of people who are going to leave this earth and go back to where they came from' [18].

A central point in the narrative about the relationship between the 'races of the earth' and the 'children of God' is found in the biblical story of the Flood. Swift says that the Flood was an isolated phenomenon that only affected the area of the Tarim Basin in China. Therefore, the pre-Adamic beings continued to live on Earth, since the will of God was only to destroy the corrupted offspring of His Adamic progeny:

'So when we tell you that the Flood did not drown everybody on the face of the earth and, we tell you that the Negro did not come out of the family of Noah, because there were Negroes on the face of the earth long before Noah... The Asiatics did not come out of the family of Noah... the Flood did not cover all of the earth. It just covered the Upper Tarim Basin, then down thru the mountains into the areas of China and on to the west into the land covering Ur of the Chaldees' [24].

In this way, the 'children of God' continued to reproduce only through Shem, Ham, and Japheth, sons of Noah. However, the Adamic seed was corrupted again among the descendants of the last two, having been absorbed by African and Asian peoples. This is explained by Swift:

'We know that Shem had two brothers: Ham and Japhet. In the race lines of both was an ancient violation of Divine Law. One was absorbed in the later days by the people of Africa and the Middle East, and the other [Japheth] was absorbed by the Asiatics. Therefore, their posterity could not fulfill the destiny of the White race and establish God's Kingdom' [15].

Therefore, only through Shem did the white essence of the white man remain alive. According to this vision, it is always interracial integration that corrupts the Israelite progeny, which leads Wesley Swift to claim that segregation is a divine law: 'God is not only not an integrationist, but God's plan for the world is segregation and a preservation of Kind' [23]. By respecting segregation, white men will be able to fulfill their destiny, which is ultimately philanthropic since, according to Swift:

'you will restore the Negro to being good negroes worshiping the right God, and you will restore Asiatics to being good Asiatics, as God created them when they were first placed in the earth, but you will restore white men unto Glory as sons of the Father equal in Glory, except He being above all as Administrator' [23].

And by performing the redeeming and restoring task of divine order, Swift assured his white listeners that 'one of these days there will be no Negroes on the earth. They will be back where they came from' [31]. In this way, the Christian Identity pastor theologially reconstructs the most extreme of the segregationist variables, that is, the desire to send black people back to Africa.

Christian Identity theology, as its name implies, strongly focuses its discourse on the description of the spiritual identity of the Adamic/White race and through such arguments, it endeavors to demonstrate its superiority. This anthropological notion is intricately linked to the divine identity. Hence Swift states that 'racism is self-deification' [24].

Swift's Anti-Semitism

If Christian Identity theology is primarily a racist theology, the demonology of the cult establishes its anti-Semitic bases. As Michael Barkun (1997) states, this anti-Semitism was the synthesis of a set of separate elements existing since the late nineteenth century, which were not essentially anti-Semitic until Christian Identity brought them together and systematized them in their demonology. This set of theories includes beliefs in the existence of pre-Adamites; the idea that the snake that tempted Eve was the Devil or a being associated with him; that the original sin was Adam's sexual intercourse with Eve and that, therefore, Cain was evil and transmitted such evil to his descendants (Barkun, 1997, p. 150). While this set of ideas might appear in certain Hebrew traditions and both canonical and Gnostic gospels, it is necessary to keep in mind that:

'This Gnostic literature was almost certainly unknown to the Identity writers who put this anti-Semitic theology together, since they tended to be either autodidacts or the graduates of small Bible colleges. There is no evidence that they knew of or used these ancient sources. To the extent that Gnostic precursors had any influence at all, it was in highly mediated form, through untraceable layers of intervening texts' (Barkun, 1997, p. 150).

There were mainly two sources that served as intermediaries. One of them was the work published by Charles Carroll in 1900 under the title of *The Negro a Beast*. The second source was a British book published in 1927 by Mrs. Sydney Bristowe entitled *Sargon the Magnificent*. The first of these books was one of the main works of the transition from the American nineteenth-century to twentieth-century racism because of its combination of typical arguments of white supremacy and the spiritual anti-Semitism of Christian Identity. Carroll (1900) affirms that Cain had an evil nature and that his main sin was to have sexual intercourse with a female pre-Adamite, breaking the divine laws:

'When Cain committed fornication with this female of strange flesh, he at once outraged the design of God in creating man and violated that Divine law given man in Creation – "Have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth". "Dominion" means control, and control is the very opposite of social equality; and social equality... is inseparable from sexual intercourse... Cain's wife being a Negress, it follows that her offspring by Cain were mixed-bloods' (p. 145–150).

On the other hand, *Sargon the Magnificent* aims to be an academic study of Assyriology meant to demonstrate the literalness of Genesis. Therefore, Bristowe (1927) shows her conclusions as the result of an archaeological investigation confirming that Sargon of Akkad was the first murderer in history, Cain (p. 55). According to the author, 'Cain was the human originator of idolatry, but its instigator must have been the Prince of Darkness' (Bristowe, 1927, p. 55). Thus, the link between Satan and the generations of Cain, although not biological, was already established during the 1920s among the underground American Anglo Israelites circles that influenced Swift.

Swift associates Satan with the symbolism of the Serpent, linking him directly with the Jews: 'They [Jews] are the Children of Darkness and they operate out of this Darkness... they identified themselves as the children of the evil one... children of the Viper, and the Serpent' [30]. Based on a mechanism like that used by Bristowe, Wesley Swift links the pre-Adamites with Cain through idolatry and, in turn, identifies them with the snake since 'Lucifer seduced Eve and the child that was born

was called Cain because he was the serpent son' [30]. Thus, Christian Identity identified Cain with the devil and the pre-Adamicites (Barkun, 1997, p. 159). Then, this demonological construction claims that before the birth of Cain, Lucifer and his fallen angels had already begun to mingle with the races of the earth producing hybrid progenies whose existence violated the 'divine laws of racial segregation'.

The books of Enoch developed in depth the theme of fallen angels and the corruption of the earth because of their intermingling with human females. While these arguments are not racist, they have served Christian Identity as a justification for their exegesis. The Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch: 6–36) recounts the fall of the angels who leave their posts in Heaven and take human females as wives with whom they beget giant children (Nephilim). Swift adjusts this tradition to his conception of the international Jewish conspiracy whose goal is to destroy the kingdom of God on earth:

'If you were to go back to the book of Enoch or take extracts from here and there in Scriptures, you would discover that the power of evil was trained by Lucifer and other fallen angels. The book of Enoch... tell us how the people who dwelt in earth were taught all the rituals and mysteries and all the devices with which the powers of evil sought to capture the earth. It included the making of weapons, and instruments that would be used against the people of God's kingdom, all this a part of satanic design' [6].

The fact that a tradition of Biblical exegesis has interpreted interracial mixing as the origin of evil in the world is of fundamental importance to the construction of a cult with anti-Semitic intensities and racial segregation. Hence the utility that Swift finds in the Enoch tradition when classifying the Christian Identity demonology. Swift says that giants lived on earth in a past he does not specify [25]. On the other hand, Swift also mentions that part of Lucifer's racial mixing plan included the intermingling of the Adamic race with blacks, which explicitly resembles American integrationist politics. Swift concludes that as in Noah's time, there are still giants on the Earth since not all were eliminated [25]. In July 1967, he stated that 'our Civil Rights Act was conceived 100% by the Luciferian forces' [38]. Swift thus determines that 'the conspiracy of world Communism is to destroy you, to mongrelize you, and to subordinate you... Because they cannot compete with you and they are afraid of the spiritual impact of your destiny' [24]. Consequently, this demonological conception is linked to the concept of anti-Americanism. As Max P. Friedman (2012) notes, throughout the twentieth century, Americans interpreted the hatred that foreigners profess for them as the result of their envy of American freedoms (p. 19). The concept of anti-Americanism, then, took on radical importance during the period of Christian Identity's emergence to define Communist traitors. Swift found in ancient Hebrew traditions the cosmic mirror of the reasons why he perceived his country as being threatened by foreign forces. Following such an idea, Swift claimed that when Adam incarnated, Lucifer decided to infiltrate his seed also among white men:

'The devil knows. And more than that, so do all of his children. They know that your race is specifically different than any other people on the face of the earth... They know that if the White race specifically as a people or a nation, ever wake up and discover who they are and what they are for, that they will be run out of every White nation on the face of the earth' [21].

Consequently, once God placed his chosen ones on Earth, Lucifer decided to beget a son with Eve. So, Cain was the product of Satan's seduction of Eve. According to Swift, this act was the original sin:

'Eve never ate an apple... the serpent is none other than Lucifer. And when Eve said "the serpent beguiled me", this was the seduction of Eve by Lucifer to try to destroy your race by his evil mongrelization... and Cain then is his offspring' [21].

The belief in the satanic paternity of Cain is one of the central elements in Christian Identity theology. From this notion arises the doctrine of the two seeds, which assumes that two spiritually different offspring were born from Eve. One of them is the seed of Adamic fatherhood, that of Abel and Seth. The other one is the Serpent seed, the descendants of Cain. This is how Cain is described by Swift:

'Cain was a son of Lucifer, born of Eve. And Abel was a son of Adam, born of Eve. So therefore, we see that in the catastrophe, Cain killed his brother Abel. And then was driven out of the land which was east of Eden into the land of the Akkads. Here, among the Akkadian people, a pre-Adamic race of people, then Cain intermingled and mongrelized himself with this people, and finally, became their leader' [32].

One aspect of Swift's demonological discourse is that he considered that Jews exist in all races, since for him being Jewish is a spiritual category which implies having been begotten on Earth by fallen angels. Therefore, 'the Jews are the seed of the

evil one... they are the offspring of Lucifer, and that is why they are black ones, red ones, yellow ones, and white ones, for this mongrel seed has been sown into every race' [12]. Thus, Christian Identity's anti-Semitism is of a spiritual kind.

The interpretation of the Cainite lineage as a product of a seed infiltrated by the Devil among the Adamic generation operates as a mirror of the fear of Communist infiltration in American society, since in both cases the fear focuses on the capacity of the foreign forces to corrupt from within. On this Jewish-Communist satanic conspiracy, Swift said that 'when you talk about Communism it is World Communism, and it is Jewish Communism... the children of Lucifer, guiding and directing the program of anti-Christ for the overthrowing of Christian nations' [20].

Although this theology belongs to the margins of the extreme anti-Semitic right, during the first decades of the Cold War most of the population shared the fear of Communist infiltration in all areas of American socio-political life (Whitfield, 1996, p. 10). In the case of Christian Identity, these elements are reorganized around a theology inspired by both marginal and mainstream traditions within the local racist tradition. Even though its right-wing extremist style places Swift at a considerable distance from the official way of understanding and combating Communism, Christian Identity's perspective is rather closer to official logic than Swift would care to admit, since its theology reproduces the same fear of anti-American enemies. Of course, from the perspective of an anti-statist and anti-Semitic extremism that separates it considerably in the way of the mainstream way of understanding Communism.

Swift's Sermons and the Rationalization of Racial Violence

Wesley Swift's demonology is linked to the eschatological-political call of Christian Identity. Swift's call to Jewish extermination is explicit: 'I tell you that we need a lot of mighty men of today to show up these cunning geniuses of evil today. That is the kind of Giant killers we need in this country' [26]. Just as God originally used the Flood to eliminate corruption among his progeny, Christian Identity also turns to the mechanism of sacred extermination. The difference is that now such a mission must be undertaken by the children of God. Christian Identity doctrine upholds the need to destroy the satanic enemy through direct armed warfare. This war would represent the Armageddon that must precede the establishment of the Millennium of Christ. Therefore, according to this vision, white humanity is heading toward its millenarian destiny and the final battle must be carried out through an armed confrontation between the progeny of both sides. In this sense, Christian Identity is post-millennialist, meaning that it believes that the Second Coming of Christ will occur after the Millennium is established on earth thanks to human effort. Hence, Swift states the need to undertake a campaign of direct violence:

'You are not going to get out of this without fights. You are going to fight all the hordes of red China, and all the Soviet Union, and all the pagans of the earth before you are thru. But instead of being destroyed or hurt by it, you are going to bring a hundred percent crushing defeat on the powers of darkness' [22].

Swift incorporates the idea that the United States must be the nation that leads the battle. His interpretation of the book of Revelation derives from the idea of American exceptionalism. Accordingly, Swift said that 'the United States of America, the great land of the outstretched wings of the Eagle, is portrayed in the 12th chapter of Revelation... as being the opposition to the powers of evil and the forces of Lucifer' [27].

The nuclear fears that the United States experienced during the Cold War was linked to the Christian eschatological illusion. As sociologist Andrew J. Weigert (1988) suggests, nuclear weapons, that is, the weapons of the 'end of time' were now in the hands of man (p. 188), which fueled the Identity motivation that it is human effort that brings Tribulation. According to Swift:

'The Scripture cites that this is the way that the dragon hordes, the power of Lucifer, and all of these forces are going to be defeated. They may be using atomic bombs and all the fire and smoke, but the masses of the hordes of Lucifer are going to be defeated. They will be toppled by the hosts of God' [2].

On the other hand, Swift claimed that black people were brought to the Earth by Luciferian spacecraft:

'He [Lucifer] rebelled against the Throne of the Most High God. He gathered out of the Solar System, fast space fleets. And in his perversion, he saw things that he could turn around and use as weapons of war... and he gathered dwellers from various planets, and they became his ax-men and swordsmen. And it says these dark and curly headed ones became his ax-men and swordsmen. So, he filled his crafts with Negroes that were out of the Milky Way and they degenerated and feel out of a higher order under the debasement in which Lucifer mutated their society' [33].

Thus, the effects of atomic energy are shown to be transcendent since, according to Swift, 'nuclear explosions and elements dissolving in fervent heat and powers of darkness seeking to destroy you with that threat, shall be destroyed by the armies of the Most High and with the nations of His Kingdom, as they rise up' [34].

The eschatological battle thus seems to be a space war that manifests itself on the Earth, where the leader of the white nations would be the United States. Swift built a predestined image of the destiny of American white men because he assumes that the millennial restoration of Israel will not be in Palestine but in the United States. In this sense, the impulses of American exceptionalism, associated with the idea of national messianic predestination, are ideologically manipulated, and dangerously combined in the eschatological construction of Wesley Swift.

A White Theocracy for the Saints

Swift's construction allowed the formation of different experiments that are linked in one way or another to the speech of the Californian pastor, who calls for the white citizens of the country to move politically to the most extreme right: 'A right winger is one who wants to see the preservation of his race and his nation and does not wish to see them mongrelized or taken over by the powers of evil. A right winger is one who is opposed to Communism' [27].

According to Michael Barkun (1997), Christian Identity has given rise to six different types of political action, of which two are inserted within the rules of the system, two are placed outside them and two remain at the limit between the two tendencies. The first one is a rhetoric that urges the legal system of the United States to adapt to biblical law. The second is the insertion of candidates into the official political system. Illegal trends involve the organization of terrorist campaigns against the State and territorial secession movements, a style also called white separatism, which is ultimately nothing but a new form of traditional rhetoric and segregationist practice. Finally, intermediate styles consist in the formation of communities which are self-sufficient and isolated from the rest of society, and in the development of radical localist policies that decry the authority of the federal and State governments (Barkun, 1997, p. 200).

The rhetoric of Wesley Swift can be traced, to a greater or lesser extent, to each of these tendencies. His main proclamation regarding politics is a justification of the theocratic system:

'I am interested in only one thing: Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven". It is considered a practical thing by the Liberals of the World Order that we accept the program of a World order. That we accept the program of the United Nations for a super World government, that is also Democratic. Or that we redispense a given income to everybody in the world whether they produce anything or not. And then enslave the producers, the creators in order that this might be done, this is also supposed to be Democratic. In fact the whole Socialist policy operates with this area of confiscation, this idea of re-distribution, and this grinding down of those with creative vision. Yes, I am not interested, strangely enough, even in what some people call democracy. I am interested in Theocracy, and I am interested in American Liberty' [35].

Swift said that the importance of building a theocracy resides in the fact that the Church is the depositary of the political leadership role of the kingdom of God: 'The Church of Jesus Christ is a living institution. It is an organism which God has established among the peoples of His Household' [11]. It can therefore be observed that Swift's proclamation was mainly related to the notion that the

'American legal system must adapt to the laws of the Bible. Therefore, he states that America's salvation lies in our Constitution, in our culture, and in faith and in the laws of God... [It] lies in the identity of God, as master of our nation, which our Congress has placed in this our flag, and has now declared that this nation is now under God' [28].

In fact, Swift believed that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were written based on the needs of the Adamic race in the United States because he thought that 'the [American] Constitution was inspired' [29].

The second trend framed within the legal framework is a derivative of it since some worship-related sectors have preferred the strategy of participating in electoral politics. The best known among them were David Duke and Tom Metzger, a Christian Identity Minister during the seventies. These two figures are linked to the Swift tradition because of their admiration for the Ku Klux Klan. Swift explicitly stated that 'I personally like the KKK. And I wish that every White man in these United States was a member' [36].

Swift's support of the KKK understood as a community organization is related to one of the intermediate political trends mentioned by Barkun: radical localism. This is a response against the power of the federal government that often arises in rural areas. The largest group in this category related to Christian Identity is the Posse Comitatus. Organized by William Potter Gale and Henry Beach in 1971:⁶

'The Posse extended the Christian Identity doctrine into a complex theory of constitutional government based on the notion that the United States is not a democracy but a Christian republic, lawfully governed by so-called Christian common law rather than legislative statutes and court decisions' (Zeskind, 2009, p. 72).

⁶ Gale was a minister in Swift's church.

This results in not recognizing any authority over the sheriff of the county. Consequently, they refuse to pay federal taxes and to abide by the state and national laws. Swift also opposed the payment of such taxes: 'The income tax is one of Karl Marx's design for a captive Christian state and is a great tool in the hands of the enemy with its graduated scale of taxation, with its confiscatory policies' [26].

This tendency can be associated with the other intermediate category: survivalism. This consists in the formation of self-sufficient millenarian communities who wait for the Tribulation away from mainstream society. The notion of the need to get away from urban centers is also present in the rhetoric of Wesley Swift. He said:

'They aren't going to resurrect everybody at that time, just the children of Adam. Where would you put them? Don't worry about that. There will be plenty of room. In fact, I traveled over the great waste space of Nevada the other day, and the Eastern portion of California, and I know that with technology and wisdom of heaven which will descend on your race, this land will blossom like a rose. You could start giving those areas to your society' [2].

Like all these inclinations, this trend is not exclusive to Christian Identity. However, those who adhere to Christianity Identity have a post-millenarian vision that stimulates the transition from pacifism to violence due to the delay in the arrival of the last days. One of the main Christian Identity experiments was the Church of Israel, founded in 1972 by Dan Gayman in Schell City, Missouri. As is often the case among these movements, some members of the Church of Israel became radicalized and in 1987 they staged a series of violent incidents in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Finally, Identity's path towards violent political practice is marked by two illegal experiences. First, white separatism had its main exponent in Aryan Nations, a theopolitical community organized by the Church of Jesus Christ Christian after the death of Wesley Swift. Richard Butler, the official successor, moved the Church from Los Angeles to the state of Idaho in 1973. In Hayden Lake he established an enclave that constituted a 'white bastion' for all who wanted to settle there. The community lasted from 1982 to 2000.

White separatism adopts a secessionist attitude concerning the Federal government and enacts its own legislation, which regulates community life based on certain biological principles that are considered proper to the white race and are supported by biblical authority. Although at some point the tendency of white separatism is akin to survivalism and radical localism in its need for isolation, it is also linked to the political form consisting in the adaptation of human law to biblical law. In that sense, Aryan Nations' action was essential in shaping the link between the different groups of the extreme right. The organization of annual congresses on the Church grounds during the 1990s brought together neo-Nazi speakers, Christian Identity believers, members of the Klan, Holocaust deniers, skinheads, anti-Semitic groups in general, survivalist groups, gun enthusiasts and anti-abortion Christian sectors (Aho, 1995, p. 59).

The second illegal trend that was largely motivated by the version of Christianity promoted by Christian Identity was the organization of militias, which has resulted in domestic terrorism against the federal state. Swift encouraged militia formation among some of his audiences:

'Someone said: Dr. Swift, what is the best thing to do about evil? Do you think that we ought to have prayer meetings to wipe it out? No, I think you ought to form Militia meetings all over to stamp it out. Every day we pray this prayer: 'Deliver us from evil'. But God did not send you down here to hide. He sent you down here to conquer evil' [16].

Two important early militia groups were the Montana and Michigan Militias, both formed in 1994. The Montana Militia was ideologically linked to Christian Identity, since its founders – the Trochmann brothers – had frequently attended Aryan Nations meetings. Following this model, Militia groups spread throughout the country, but they have a greater presence in the western region and, above all, in rural areas. Although not all militias are explicitly anti-Semitic, the ideology behind this trend continues to be fueled by the myth of the international Jewish conspiracy, which is considered to have completely infiltrated the government and the political class of the United States, thus leaving in the hands of the citizens the mission of undertaking the extermination of this threatening force (Crothers, 2003).

The political discourse of Christian Identity is, in some way, the result of Swift's theology, which, due to its significant millenarian content, is an example of the paranoid impulse. Swift's rhetoric oscillated as the political styles inspired by Christian Identity. If at times his discourse called to wait for the right moment, at the same time it affirmed that such a moment was imminent and that the Jewish victory was almost complete. The response to this discourse was the emergence of both extremes after Swift's death, survivalist communities and armed militias.

In any case, it is necessary to emphasize that the six political styles analyzed here are not necessarily linked exclusively to Christian Identity or clearly interconnected with each other. On the other hand, these tendencies seldom appear in a pure state; rather, they combine, intermingle, and oscillate constantly, causing the members to shift from one to another. Nonetheless they are tendencies that emerged alongside and were rationalized by the sermons of Swift.

It is important to observe that, beyond the differences, the tendencies that the extreme right has been adopting over the last four decades have been the reflection of political radicalization. The political practices of Christian Identity had evolved almost in parallel with the New Christian Right, which grew along with the mainstream shift to the right signified by the election of Ronald Reagan as president. This New Christian Right is fundamentally evangelical and although it is not homogeneous, it also strongly promotes economic liberalism, social traditionalism, and militant anti-Communism (Himmelstein, 1983, p. 15). Consequently, the scenario in which Swift produced his theopolitics evolved until it found a favorable framework during the nineteen eighties, which allowed the second Christian Identity generation to undertake their political experiments.

Discussion: Donald Trump, Capitol Assault, and the Contempt for Democracy

The importance of analyzing Swift's speech today is no less important. On January 6, 2021, the persistence and danger that the fiction associated with the conspiratorial thinking of right-wing extremism can acquire became evident. Although the violence unleashed during the taking of the Capitol belongs to a vastly different historical context from that of Wesley Swift, the timelessness of these types of speeches and the way in which they are permeated among certain sectors of American society is evident. The government of Donald Trump could be considered a trigger for this type of violent, discriminatory, anti-statist and undemocratic rhetoric.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), extremist groups increased considerably during the Trump administration. If at the end of 2016 there were approximately 623 groups in the country, by the end of 2020 they reached 838. Consequently, Heidi Beirich, the director of the SPLC Intelligence Project, stated that:

'We have seen, since he started his campaign in 2015, a sea change among white supremacists. Before that time these groups had no interest whatsoever in politics. They didn't like the Democrats because they think that is the party of ethnic interests basically, and they didn't like Republicans, they called them the stupid party, because they felt the Republican Party didn't appeal directly to white interests. But when Trump came out that first day in Trump Tower and talked about Mexicans as rapists, the white supremacist movement in this country felt like had found their guy, and he continued to cater to them by tweeting material that comes from these folks, like from a white genocide account, something about black crime, anti-Semitic images, etcetera etcetera. All of that made the white supremacist world feel like they were very lucky, they actually began to call Trump «glorious» leader" in many circles' (Taylor, 2017).

It is important to note that Trump did not create this sector of society, as exemplified by the case of Wesley Swift and Christian Identity. What the former president did was relax the tension between right-wing and mainstream extremism. For this he explicitly appealed to this group of voters as a support for his nationalist and protectionist rhetoric. Although there have been presidential candidates whose main bases were right-wing extremists, such as was the case of Barry Goldwater in 1964 and George Wallace in 1968, with Donald Trump it is the first time that a politician of these characteristics came to the presidency with the support of a majority party, in this case Republican. What is new is the open and explicit way in which an elected president flirted with the radical right, expressing himself in populist, nativist, and quasi-conspiratorial terms.

The year 2020 was particularly active for white supremacists due to backlash against the Covid-19 pandemic quarantine and the Black Lives Matter movement. In addition, the year closed with the presidential elections in November. These factors aroused an antidemocratic maelstrom on the part of certain sectors of Donald Trump's voters, especially among those closest to right-wing extremism. Faced with the defeat against the Democratic candidate, Trump publicly affirmed that the elections were stolen from him through a complex electoral fraud that he claimed to have evidence to present to the Supreme Court. Thus, he encouraged mistrust against the Democratic Party, accusing Democratic candidate Joseph (Joe) Biden of illegitimacy and calling on his voters to defend 'by force' the democracy that was supposedly in danger.

As a result, on January 6, 2021, numerous supporters of Donald Trump marched in Washington DC, entering the US Capitol building with the apparent intention of attacking Congressmen, all of which resulted in a major riot that killed five people and multiple arrests. Trump's attitude to the events was not entirely pacifist, asking the protesters to go home, despite continuing to confirm that the election was stolen from them (Haberma & Martin, 2021).

Trump's accusations were a trigger for the country's right-wing anti-government organizations who took advantage of the institutional crisis to unleash their conspiracy theories and deploy their anti-statist violence. Behind these movements is a new conspiracy theory that is all the rage on social networks, called QAnon. It emerged in 2017, at the beginning of the Donald Trump government, being publicly exposed on the controversial website 8kun (ex 8chan). There, an anonymous user who used the pseudonym Q – identified by his followers with a member of the government who has first-hand information – accused the Democratic party of campaigning against Trump with the US deep state. Today, QAnon conspiracy theories have become dominant among the discourse of American white supremacists, who combine contempt for opposition to Trump with their traditional conspiracy ideas, such as anti-Semitic, Satanist, nativist, anti-LGBTQ theories and, currently,

others related to the coronavirus pandemic, which they consider an instrument of the deep state conspiracy to eliminate individual freedoms, reduce population and overthrow Trump.

Faced with this interpretation of reality, the adherents of QAnon define themselves as a resistance of digital soldiers. As such, they would be responsible for ensuring that politicians and other people in high positions of power are judged by society. They call this the Great Awakening – in clear reference to Christian eschatological terminology. The movement defines itself as follows:

‘We are not a political party. There is corruption on both sides of the aisle. Most of us are Independents in some sense. We think for ourselves. Instead, we are a movement of awakened individuals working together to discover and reveal the truth that has been hidden from us and to eliminate evil and corruption’ (WWG1WGA, 2019: 257).

Followers of QAnon assume that the Federal government has already been fully infiltrated by globalist forces – a term that has become practically synonymous with ‘Jewish interests’ among white supremacists. While anti-Semitism is less explicit in QAnon, it is present among many of its followers, especially in the allegations of pedophilia, and ritual murder of children against the Democratic Party. Traditionally, accusations of murders of children for ritual purposes were commonplace among medieval anti-Judaism, and later among contemporary anti-Semitism. In addition, the English bankers Rothschild, Bill Gates and George Soros would be, according to these theories, the visible faces of the international Jewish conspiracy.

The fact that Trump has accused the last presidential election of fraud only stimulated these theories among a significant sector of his voters, aligned with the long tradition of paranoid right-wing extremism in the country. As could be seen in Swift’s speech, he openly declared an apology for theocracy as a mode of government that would respond to the principles of the American Constitution. As such, he was a representative of a strong anti-democratic impulse that paradoxically claims to defend the Constitution. The analogy with today is no coincidence. That those same people who claim to defend constitutional order have violated the Capitol is a symptom that rhetoric like Swift’s remain active today in a very perceptible way. Although conspiracy theories have been changing, it can be observed that QAnon shares with Swift certain constants that have endured over time, such as the image of an enemy infiltrated in the US government, which is managed as a puppet by transnational invisible powers. At the same time, it is a speech permeated by Christian eschatological fiction that is capable of violently mobilizing those who consider that the enemy is a demonic agent that must be fought and eliminated.

Conclusion: Wesley Swift’s Paranoid Style and Present-day Politics

Wesley Swift adapted different Hebrew and Euro-American Jewish-Christian traditions along with an eclectic set of racist writings of different types and origins. In pursuing his objective of becoming a state cult, he built a theopolitical doctrine that remains within the system of significance imposed by the common sense of white Americans, the hegemonic sector of the country. In any case, the theology of Christian Identity remains on the margins of acceptability, in tension with it but reproducing it when carrying out the process of hegemonic traditions.

Specifically, Swift summarized traditional racist arguments and combined them with Judeo-Christian theology, mainly based on Calvinism, to explain that race is a biological issue that materially reflects the spiritual essence. Swift radicalized the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination and overstates the spiritual essence of the white race, considering it the only one is predestined to salvation. In this way, the cult radically reproduces the messianic social imagery of exceptionalism and its anti-Communist crusade during the Cold war years. Anti-Communist fears permeate Swift’s theology, which is riddled with biblical quotes justifying the fear of infiltration and nuclear holocaust. At the same time, in a context of African American civil rights activism and white resistance, racial segregation was represented as sacred because it complies with the divine will to keep its elect pure in pursuit of a racist millennium.

All in all, paranoia is active in this theological construction, which recovers the vision of otherness as diabolical, immoral and, above all, anti-American. Therefore, the nature of the cult becomes essential within this discourse since, to ‘clean’ the state of conspiratorial and treacherous elements, it is essential to materialize the eschatological struggle in concrete radical policies.

Today this is of fundamental importance since, as could be observed during the Trump administration, and especially during the assault on the Capitol in January 2021, the paranoid style is a constant that has become increasingly anti-democratic and anti-statist. QAnon as a current expression of conspiracy theories should not be underestimated. Not only is it the product of a Trumpist sector, but it forms a broad social base that continues to sustain destructive minds of the need to combat the federal government and anyone who is considered a potential conspiratorial agent in an endless struggle between good and evil. Strategies and sermons that can be traced back to the period when Wesley Swift built his views have tirelessly demonstrated their disruptive potential. Supposedly defending the Constitution, the Founding Fathers and Christianity, certain sectors seize the opportunity to generate political chaos, violence, and division in society.

Wesley Swift's Sermons

All the Wesley Swift's sermons cited in this article are retrieved from www.christogenea.org/projects/wesley-swift

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Funding Information

I would like to acknowledge the support of the University of Buenos Aires via a Doctorate Fellowship.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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How to cite this article: Bochicchio, A. (2021). Justification by Race: Wesley Swift's White Supremacy and Anti-Semitic Theological Views in His Christian Identity Sermons. *Journal of Hate Studies*, 17(1), 35–51. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.183>

Published: 05 October 2021

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