

IN THE SHADE OF THE MUSHROOM CLOUDS: HOW CHRISTIAN
FUNDAMENTALISTS SABOTAGED ATOMIC SCIENTISTS'
VISIONS OF UTOPIA

by

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ABSTRACT

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Prior to August 6, 1945, the end of the world had been an abstract concept left to the gods to enact via supernatural means. Yet on that day, humanity saw for the first time the actual mechanism whereby it might end the world. So it was that in the aftermath of Hiroshima, two diametrically opposed messages emerged to give Americans a framework in which to assimilate the advent of nuclear weaponry. The first, articulated by atomic scientists and other intellectuals, reasoned that the threat of nuclear annihilation meant that war must be abolished through the formation of a One World government and that concessions should be made to the Soviet Union rather than risk nuclear confrontation. The second, promoted by biblically literal Fundamentalists, believed that nuclear weaponry was actually the fulfillment of apocalyptic biblical prophecies that heralded the fast-approaching Second Coming of Christ and therefore One World designs and the communism of the Soviet Union should be fervently resisted because they represented Satanic institutions prophesied to emerge during the Last Days.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Obsolete!”

The verdict rang throughout the courtroom. High atop his pulpit, the Chancellor repeated his pronouncement in an low, echoing drone. Before him stood a frail old man—a librarian. As he did with every citizen, the Chancellor had evaluated the librarian’s usefulness to the State and had deemed him to be the most contemptible kind of human—an obsolete one. The librarian, a man named Wordsworth, protested the verdict, knowing the sentence it carried. The Chancellor silenced him, explaining that, “Since there are no more books, Mr. Wordsworth, there are no more libraries, and, of course, as it follows, there is very little call for the services of a librarian.” A hush fell over the chamber as the Chancellor decreed that because the State no longer had any use for the librarian, he would be executed within forty-eight hours. Wordsworth accepted his fate, but made two requests: that he, himself, choose the method of his death and that his execution should be televised. The Chancellor delightedly agreed to both.

The next day, the Chancellor visited the librarian in his apartment just before the scheduled execution. The Chancellor asked the librarian what method of execution he had selected. Wordsworth calmly explained that a bomb was set to go off in the room in just a few moments. The Chancellor became notably uneasy and cautiously moved toward the door. When he found it locked, he began to panic and demanded to know the librarian’s plan. Rather than answer, Wordsworth turned to the mounted television camera and spoke: “How does a man react to the knowledge that he’s going to be blown to bits in half an hour?” Then he removed a Bible from a hidden compartment and turned to the Chancellor. “It’s been hidden here for over twenty years,” he said. “It’s a crime punishable by death, so it’s the only thing I have that has any value at all to me. So I’m just going to sit down and read it until the moment of my death. How will you spend your last moments, Chancellor?”

As precious minutes passed, the Chancellor nervously paced the room demanding to be released. The librarian continued reading, but now read aloud. Moments before the bomb would detonate, the Chancellor began to plead for his life. “You underestimated me,” observed Wordsworth:

You wanted the whole world to see the way a librarian dies. Well, let them see how an official of the State dies too. Face the camera, step into the light! Let the whole country see the strength of the State, the resilience of the State, the courage of the State. Let the whole country see the way a valiant man of steel faces his death. You have Nirvana coming up too. Why don't you sit down? We'll have a little chat. Just you and me and the great equalizer. Because death is the great equalizer. So here you have this strong, handsome, uniformed, bemedaled symbol of giant authority and this little, insignificant librarian, and suddenly in the eyes of God there is precious little to distinguish us.

Now in tears, the Chancellor hysterically begged, "Please, please, let me out. In the name of God let me out!" Instantly, Wordsworth set his Bible down and looked the frightened man in the eye: "Yes, Chancellor, in the name of God, I will let you out!" He then produced the key and handed it to the Chancellor who ran from the room. Seconds later, an explosion filled the room, killing the tranquil librarian before the eyes of the viewing audience.¹

Although the above story is fiction, the television audience witnessing the exchange was not. On June 2, 1961, millions of Americans gathered around their television sets to be unnerved by the latest episode of Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*. In the midst of Cold War tensions, this particular episode preyed upon many people's deepest fears. The abolition of God and individual liberty, the establishment of totalitarian government, and death by a lurking bomb were threats many Americans believed they faced every day. Serling recognized this and crafted his scripts accordingly. Over four seasons, his show featured nine episodes that centered around nuclear war or the threat of it. Several other episodes alluded to communist infiltration.

Surprisingly, for a writer who incorporated several science fiction elements into his writing, Serling took a distinctly negative view of science in his series. This was largely due to his pessimistic view of humanity, believing (and demonstrating in many episodes) that one had only to apply a little heat to turn men into monsters. Because of this, scientific inventions only served to further enable humanity in its self-destruction. Yet his view was not entirely grim, as Serling took an equally surprising positive view of religion. Although Serling's parents had been practicing Jews when they married, by the time Rod was born the family had become largely secular in its practices. This made it quite easy for Serling to abandon

¹ Rod Serling, "The Obsolete Man," *The Twilight Zone*, June 2, 1961.

Judaism for Unitarianism in order to marry his wife.² Yet despite the seeming casualness of his own spiritual practices, he recognized the power of religion, especially as a force of social cohesion in the suspicious times of the Cold War. Whereas he often portrayed scientists as well-meaning individuals whose creations sometimes threatened mankind with destruction, Serling always depicted ministers and religious figures as wise and often used them as the moral compass for his episodes. A scientist might destroy the earth, but a minister had the solution for avoiding ruin—or at least dying peacefully if the world did end.

In Serling's scripts, historians can find a fairly accurate amalgamation of the views of Americans in the early Cold War. Many Americans had begun to doubt that science was inherently progressive or that its discoveries and inventions always led to better things. Scientists had given mankind the atomic bomb, and though it had ended a world war, it now threatened to end the world itself. The options had become frighteningly simple in the eyes of many citizens: either they must unite beneath a One World government and abolish all war or they would inevitably perish in a global, thermonuclear conflict. And such a conflict appeared unavoidable when Americans viewed the aggressive expansion of the Soviet Union and communism in the early postwar era. The responsibility of possessing the greatest weapon in history, coupled with the prospect of engaging an equally equipped enemy whose ideas were antithetical to their own, left many Americans in a terrifying and somewhat helpless position. Yet despite the gravity of their situation, many Americans adopted an attitude of indifference that baffles historians. Following the initial shock of Hiroshima, American concerns about atomic annihilation began to wane until the apocalyptic standoff of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, after which such concerns faded almost completely. Historian Spencer Weart has gone so far as to say the ebbing of popular nuclear terror beginning in the 1960s represented, "the only well-documented case in history when most of the world's citizens suddenly stopped paying attention to facts that continued to threaten their very survival."³ The late historian Paul Boyer, without question the preeminent historian of the American people's perception

² Joel Engel, *Rod Serling: The Dreams and Nightmares of Life in the Twilight Zone* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), 8; Gordon F. Sander, *Serling: The Rise and Twilight of TV's Last Angry Man* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 10.

³ Spencer Weart, *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1988), 262.

of the atomic bomb, has labeled the years from 1962 to 1980 the “Era of the Big Sleep.” Whereas Americans in 1945 believed that they would likely see the end of the world in their lifetime, two decades later these same people and their “profound public apathy toward the threat of nuclear war” initially discouraged Boyer from writing his seminal work on the bomb in American culture. Boyer was so aware of this discouraging effect on historians that he began *By the Bomb’s Early Light* with the speculation that, “If a scholar a thousand years from now had no evidence about what had happened in the United States between 1945 and 1985 except the books produced by the cultural and intellectual historians of that era, he or she would hardly guess that such a thing as nuclear weapons had existed.”⁴

For all of human history, the end of the world had been an abstract concept left to the gods to enact via supernatural means. Yet on that day in 1945, mankind saw for the first time the actual mechanism whereby he himself might end the world. So it was that in the aftermath of Hiroshima, two diametrically opposed messages emerged to give Americans a framework in which to assimilate the advent of nuclear weaponry. The first, articulated by atomic scientists and other intellectuals, reasoned that the threat of nuclear annihilation meant that war must be abolished through the formation of a One World government and that concessions should be made to the Soviet Union rather than risk nuclear confrontation. The second, promoted by biblically literal Fundamentalists, believed that nuclear weaponry was actually the fulfillment of apocalyptic biblical prophecies that heralded the fast-approaching Second Coming of Christ and therefore One World designs and the communism of the Soviet Union should be fervently resisted because they represented Satanic institutions prophesied to emerge during the Last Days.

Historians have offered few theories about why the American people did not react with greater sustained energy towards the nuclear threat. A few attribute it either to a growing sense of fatalism or to the “burn out” factor and the limits of a society’s attention span. Yet by examining the messages competing for attention during the early Cold War, one can see that what historians and other observers have viewed as inaction due to fatalistic resignation among Americans was actually a numinous form of anticipation. The two dominant messages broadcast to Americans at this time exemplified what had been

⁴ Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), xv.

perhaps the greatest underlying tension of American culture for the better part of a century: sacralization versus secularization (in plainer terms, the supernatural versus the strictly natural). At the close of World War II, if any group had the right to lay claim to filling the traditional role of the shaman or the priest in American society, it was the scientist. Citizens viewed the laboratory with the same sense of awe that earlier civilizations had reserved for their temples. These men in white coats had ended the war with their inventions and their deep, mysterious knowledge gave them the appearance of seers. Yet these men of science were afraid. The message they imparted was one of fear. Atomic weapons would soon dissolve the entire globe in a nuclear holocaust if humanity did not make war an impossibility through the renunciation of certain national interests and the formation of a One World government. If such unification required cooperating or even capitulating to the communists of the Soviet Union, scientists believed that this would be preferable to mutually assured destruction. Their call to the “everyman” of America was a high one: it was up to the average person to solve the most complex issues of the world and bring about an unprecedented political shift in order to meet an unprecedented threat. Yet their entire message was predicated upon one factor—fear.

Unknown to scientists, their promotion of atomic fear served to strengthen a message antithetical to their own. The same men whom scientists had displaced as vanguards of American culture—Christian Fundamentalists—were promoting a message that only benefitted from the fear and helplessness experienced by many Americans. These men, who held so tightly to literal interpretations of the Bible that they believed even its fantastic apocalyptic prophecies must have literal fulfillments, were busy persuading Americans that every new development was in lockstep with biblical prophecy and that the end was gloriously near. Although their apocalyptic message could be traced back farther than perhaps any other cultural philosophy in American society, Fundamentalists now benefitted from the work of their scientific counterparts. For nearly six thousand years, Judeo-Christian apocalypses had relied upon supernaturally destructive imagery to convey the earth’s final convulsions before its divine judgment. Yet in 1945, for the first time in history, the mushroom cloud over Hiroshima gave humanity its first tangible glimpse as to how the earth might actually be destroyed. As Americans trembled upon hearing the frightful pronouncements of men like Einstein and Oppenheimer, Fundamentalists capitalized on such

fears. They were able to use the very words that scientists had hoped would lead men towards international cooperation to encourage ultra-patriotism and a nuclear arms race according to their own premillennial dispensational ideology.

Although it may seem alien and hostile to many Americans, Fundamentalism actually drew upon apocalyptic traditions that stretched back to some of the earliest known civilizations. The word *apocalypse*, though often used colloquially to refer to some global catastrophe, is actually derived from the Greek word *apokalupsis*, which means “an unveiling of that which is hidden.” Both the Babylonians and the Egyptians produced literature within the apocalyptic genre and even earlier examples date back to the Ugaritics and Akkadians of early Mesopotamia. The genre’s apex, however, would not occur until the second century B.C.E. when Jewish writers, grappling with the national threat of exile and dispersion, produced a flourish of apocalyptic works. Jewish writings heavily influenced Christian writers a few centuries later when their newly-formed religious sect endured intense persecution at the hands of Roman emperors. The greatest of these Christian apocalypses, the book of Revelation, along with the Jewish apocalypses found in the books of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Daniel, formed an apocalyptic nexus that has continued to exert unrivaled influence upon the eschatology (that aspect of theology concerned with death, judgment, and final state of all things) of thinkers throughout history.⁵

Inherent within all Judeo-Christian apocalypses is the idea of the millennium, in which a coming Messiah will usher in a paradisiacal kingdom that will endure for a thousand years.⁶ Although Christians believe that this Messiah will be the returning Jesus Christ, both early Christians and Jews expected that millennial prophecies would be literally fulfilled. Historian Norman Cohn, in describing such millennialism has written, “This will be the culmination of history; the Kingdom of the Saints will not only surpass in glory all previous kingdoms, it will have no successors. It was thanks to this phantasy that Jewish apocalyptic exercised, through its derivatives, such a fascination upon the discontented and frustrated of later

⁵ Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1992), 21.

⁶ A thousand years is often used in biblical texts to represent the concept of eternity or an unchanging state.

ages—and continued to do so long after the Jews themselves had forgotten its very existence.”⁷ This anticipation of a kingdom, in which the just are eternally rewarded and the unjust cast out forever, served a valuable psychological function. As Cohn notes, “Originally all these prophecies were devices by which religious groups...consoled, fortified, and asserted themselves when confronted by the threat or the reality of oppression.” By the third century, however, the Jews had dispersed and persecution had virtually ceased for Christians. It was during this time that literalistic views of millennial prophecies began to falter as Church fathers argued that literalism was too Jewish and that the coming kingdom would be heavenly, not earthly, in nature.⁸

As the persecution of Christians faded into tolerance and eventually official endorsement by the Emperor Constantine himself, believers lost the need for the comfort and reassurance of apocalyptic literature and its promise of the millennium. Whereas the first Christian theologians, such as Irenaeus, believed the promise of a physical kingdom to be an integral part of sound doctrine, now eminent Christians sought to spiritualize such promises. This strictly spiritual view, known as amillennialism (a-meaning “not” or “no millennium”), allegorized most of the vivid apocalyptic descriptions and placed the coming kingdom either in heaven or within the transformed spirit of believers. Beginning with the influential writings of Origen in the third century, amillennialism culminated in the fifth century with Augustine’s *City of God*. In it, Augustine interpreted the apocalypses and millennialism of the Bible as strictly allegorical and his view quickly became the accepted eschatology of the Catholic Church, delivering an apparently fatal blow to literal interpretations. Yet the tangible millennialism of the Jews and first Christians survived Augustine’s influence and continued to flourish in what Cohn has called the “underworld” of popular religion.⁹ It briefly rose again to prominence in the twelfth century with the teachings of the influential monk, Joachim of Fiore. Joachim interpreted history as divided into three Ages that corresponded with the Trinity—from Creation until near the birth of Christ constituted the Age of the Father, from Christ until roughly the year 1260 constituted the Age of the Son, after which God would

⁷ Norman Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

usher in the millennial-like Age of the Spirit. Several powerful leaders sought out Joachim's prophetic interpretations of the future. It was the monk's prophetic blessing and assurance that the Muslim leader Saladin was indeed the Antichrist that encouraged Richard the Lionheart to continue on with his ill-fated crusade. Following Joachim's death in 1202, literalistic apocalypticism again receded until the Protestant Reformation allowed it to escape the amillennial shadow of the Catholic Church.¹⁰

Once freed from Catholicism, millennialism surged from the religious underworld and its promise of a coming utopia directed the actions of many of the greatest figures in Western history. Theologian Catherine Keller has demonstrated that radical apocalyptic ideas motivated Christopher Columbus during his expeditions and that he believed himself to be the "Christ-carrier." In his *Book of Prophecies*, Columbus believed that his discovery of the Americas fulfilled Biblical prophecy and that he would rescue Christianity by spreading the Gospel to pagan nations, discovering the gold needed to finance crusades, and preparing the world for the advent of the millennium.¹¹ Columbus' interpretation that the world would end in 1650 may have passed unfulfilled, but this did not discourage others from applying literal interpretations to apocalyptic prophecies. By 1700, Isaac Newton was busy writing his *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse* and John Winthrop had already carried his millennial vision of "a city upon a hill" to the American colonies. As these colonies grew, they maintained an apocalyptic outlook that influenced the contours of their development. From the Salem Witch Trials to the expansionism of Manifest Destiny, apocalyptic ideas guided American conduct from its colonial period until it emerged as a new nation.¹² Even the nation's greatest trial, the Civil War, produced apocalyptic visions of good versus evil and one popular song, "Battle Hymn of the Republic," qualified as what historian Chip Berlet has called "an apocalyptic anthem."¹³

¹⁰ Angela Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.

¹¹ Catherine Keller, *God and Power: Counter-Apocalyptic Journeys* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

¹² William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 6; Ira V. Brown, "Watchers for the Second Coming: The Millenarian Tradition in America," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (December, 1952), 441-458.

¹³ Chip Berlet, "Apocalypse," *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 25.

Prior to the Civil War, American millennialism was optimistic that the expansion and progress of the nation and its Christian efforts would improve humanity's conditions to the point of bringing about the millennium through human agency, but as historian Robert K. Whalen has pointed out, "such euphoria did not survive the massive bloodletting of 1861 to 1865." Following the war, a pessimism set in as millennialists began to predict that rather than improving upwards towards millennial conditions, humanity would spiral downward until destruction appeared imminent, at which point Christ would return and bring about the millennium solely through divine agency. Within millennial circles, these contrasting tones earned the the designations of *premillennialism* and *postmillennialism*, with premillennialists believing that creation would only grow more wicked until Christ rescued humanity and established his millennium and postmillennialists asserting that Christ would only return once millennial conditions had been achieved. Although postmillennialism had characterized most of American Protestantism until then, the negative expectation of reemerging premillennialists was similar to the that of the first Christians—believers to whom the idea of constructing the millennial kingdom appeared to be an impossibility in the midst of their persecution.¹⁴

In the decades following the Civil War, there arose a new threat, not only to literalistic interpretations of apocalyptic prophecies, but to biblical literalism as a whole: the adoption of higher criticism by academics. Higher criticism, imported from Germany in the last decades of the nineteenth century, examined the Bible in light of the historical and cultural contexts in which it was written. As historian Kurt W. Peterson has noted, higher criticism addressed "the larger aspects of Bible study, such as authorship, date, cultural context, and authority of biblical books." This new form of study, coupled with the revolutionary acceptance of Darwinism, rocked American Protestantism with controversy. Ministers across nearly every denomination grappled to stem an intellectual tide that appeared confident it could provide a naturalistic explanation for every supernatural claim.¹⁵

¹⁴ Robert K. Whalen, "Postmillennialism," *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 369.

¹⁵ Kurt W. Peterson, "Higher Criticism," *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 220.

Inevitably, American Protestantism began to splinter as ministers decided whether to embrace a more modernistic approach to their theology or to hold fast to traditional, literalistic views. Although American Protestantism had accepted mostly literal explanations of the Bible's supernatural claims, the challenges of higher criticism and Darwinism produced a striking polarization within denominations. Many jettisoned biblical literalism completely and became known as "Modernists," while their opponents held ever more tightly to literalistic interpretations and formulated a doctrine known as "biblical inerrancy." Despite their insistence on literalism, Whalen points out that "biblical literalists never asserted that the Bible must be read in a mindlessly grammatical fashion. They made ample allowance for the nonliteral meaning of its language...They parted company with their liberal counterparts in their belief that the Bible was free of error." Whalen continued to assert that although biblical inerrancy can be "easily regarded as a pigheaded refusal to acknowledge contemporary science, it was at least as much a serious academic endeavor to exposit an alternative approach to sacred literature."¹⁶

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Modernists and biblical literalists were locked in a bitter struggle that would last for a quarter of a century for control of America's Protestant denominations and seminaries. Although they would not receive an identifying moniker like Modernists until 1920 when Baptist editor Curtis Lee Law dubbed them "Fundamentalists," these biblical literalists began reinforcing their position through the adoption of literalistic doctrines. Fundamentalists reaffirmed their commitment to the literalism of the supernatural, six day Creation (as opposed to Darwinian evolution) and the Virgin Birth of Christ, but their greatest unifying doctrine was their belief in the coming physical, premillennial return of Christ. Whereas Modernists adopted postmillennial views that prompted them to promote social justice in order to improve conditions, Fundamentalists believed that a literal reading of the Bible only pointed toward the eventual decay of society and a premillennial rescue by Christ. Fundamentalists developed their premillennial doctrines largely through a circuit of prophecy conferences where preachers gathered to discuss possible literal fulfillments of biblical prophecies. Perhaps the greatest development at these conferences was the dissemination of a literalistic interpretive framework known as *dispensationalism*. This form of hermeneutic attempted to reconcile the theological dilemma of having to

¹⁶ Whalen, "Literalism," *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 283.

explain how God appeared to interact with humans in vastly different ways throughout the Bible by determining that God actually *did* act differently according to eras of time or “Ages.” Dispensationalism held that human history (beginning roughly six thousand years ago with Creation) could be divided into seven Ages, each characterized by a different expectation by God of humanity and each possessing varying methods of salvation. Dispensationalists believed that each Age invariably ended with human failure and divine judgment. The Old Testament recorded the first five Ages, which centered around variations of the Law, and the New Testament with the resurrection of Christ began the sixth Age, or “Church” Age, which dispensationalists believed continued until the present day. This age offered salvation through grace and would be ending soon as indicated by the signs of the times. The final seventh Age would establish the millennial kingdom, but not before God swept away the present Age in a divine judgment far surpassing that of any previous Age. This judgment would be the Great Tribulation alluded to in several of the Bible’s apocalypses and literalists believed it would last for seven years. During these years, wars would wrack the earth, the Antichrist would seize power, global natural disasters would decimate the world’s population, supernatural signs would appear in the heavens, demonic creatures would torment survivors—all of which would climax with the battle of Armageddon. As terrifying as this fast-approaching judgment was predicted to be, dispensationalists did not fear the Great Tribulation because they believed that God would physically remove true believers from the earth before judging it—similar, they believed, to God preserving Noah in the ark before he destroyed the earth with the Flood. This doctrine, known as the Rapture, enabled dispensationalists to view the end of the world without fear. To Fundamentalists, premillennialism and dispensationalism formed the core of their eschatology and provided the chief lens through which they viewed the future and the changing world around them.

In their battle with postmillennial Modernists for denominational control, Fundamentalists initially appeared poised to secure control of Protestant denominations and seminaries. Although science and other academic fields were quickly moving to align themselves according to Darwinism and a strictly natural view of the universe, Fundamentalists offered the greatest resistance to American theology making a similar transition. Their effective resistance was largely due to the movement’s leaders and the

sheer force of their personalities. Men like J. Frank Norris, John Roach Straton, William Bell Riley, and J. Gresham Machen were not only brilliant, but they were master communicators who used the press and radio to propagate their arguments better than any other group in the country. Because many Fundamentalist leaders studied at seminaries prior to the controversy, they were able to engage opponents on the highest intellectual rungs, yet their literalism allowed them to effectively connect with the common listener. They preached with the conviction of men fighting to defend their faith, were able to hold their own in publicized debates, and, when needed, were not afraid to resort to sensationalism. Fundamentalism appeared poised for a final victory over Modernism until a fateful court case in Dayton, Tennessee.

In the summer of 1925, authorities in Dayton charged John Scopes, a local high school teacher, with illegally teaching evolution at a state-funded high school. No one actually believed that a crime had been committed, but rather the case was designed to serve as a battleground between Modernists and Fundamentalists. Modernists supplied famed lawyer Clarence Darrow to defend Scopes. Fundamentalists could have supplied any number of capable men to prosecute, but ironically many of them were busy attending prophecy conferences. Instead, they sent the politically-savvy, but theologically untrained, William Jennings Bryan. This would prove disastrous. On the seventh day of the trial in that sweltering Tennessee courthouse, Darrow called Bryan to the stand and began to question him on the miracles in the Bible. Given his literalistic understanding, Bryan gave simplistic answers, including famously stating that Jonah could have swallowed the whale if that's what the Bible said. Darrow ridiculed him. Given the celebrities involved in the proceedings, nearly every major paper across the country had a correspondent in Dayton and they wired back every ridiculous answer the increasingly flustered Bryan offered. Newspapers found the rural setting of Dayton to be the perfect backdrop for casting Fundamentalists as crude relics of an earlier, unsophisticated time. At the end of the trial, a court found Scopes guilty and imposed a minor fine, but in the eyes of the American public Fundamentalism and its primitive literalism had been found guilty of obsolescence. Their sentence for the condemned movement: exile.¹⁷

¹⁷ Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*, (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

Although it may seem odd that a national movement could falter from a single testimony, Fundamentalists never recovered from their defeat at Dayton. They quickly lost control of their denominations and seminaries as Modernists forced them from the institutions they had helped establish. In the press and in intellectual circles, biblical literalism became an intellectual stigma. Whereas Fundamentalists once had been kings of American culture and enjoyed the influence and respect that came with being seen as intellectual vanguards, they now found themselves cast out. They were pariahs, inhabitants of that Protestant underworld of which Cohn wrote. Although several Fundamentalist leaders were able to maintain large followings, this was due solely to their cult of personality. When that generation passed away, Fundamentalism lost its few remaining voices and virtually disappeared from the American conscious. Yet the movement did not die with the founders, but regrouped. Fundamentalists, much as the oppressed Jews and early Christians, found vindication in their circumstances. They viewed their defeat as confirmation that their premillennial views were correct: it was necessary that evil temporarily triumph as the world grew darker. Guided by their premillennial dispensationalism, Fundamentalists continued on with intense evangelistic efforts, always surveying their world to discern the signs of the times and gauge just how much time remained to save lost souls before the end of the Age.

As they surveyed the world from their lowly vantage point, Fundamentalists identified one particular sign above all else: the rise of communism in Russia. Even before their own fall, Fundamentalists were among the first to identify the ideology as a threat to their faith and to their country and continued to sound this warning even after other religious groups grew indifferent following the initial Red Scare. In their search for prophetic signs, a blatantly godless power arising just as the current Age appeared to be ending could only represent a truly apocalyptic threat. To any outsiders listening to a Fundamentalist sermon from 1920 to 1945, second only to the evangelistic invitation would have been the warnings that the world was nearing its fiery end and the communists would somehow be involved. With this message, Fundamentalism entered into something of an incubation period, awaiting the inevitable moment when its apocalyptic prophesies would begin to be fulfilled and the world would face undeniable proof that the Fundamentalists had been right all along. Their vindication would come in a more earth-shattering form than even they expected.

CHAPTER 2

DETONATING SATAN'S BOMB

I firmly believe, that before many centuries more, science will be the master of man. The engines he will have invented will be beyond his strength to control. Someday, science shall have the existence of mankind in its power, and the human race commit suicide by blowing up the world.

—Henry Adams, letter to Charles Francis Adams Jr., London, April 11, 1862.

In the village of Kokura, the sun did not rise on August 6, 1945. Only a misty gray awaited those who had endured the darkness of another vigilant night spent wondering if the Allied bombs that had so far spared them would fall. Thunder echoed as the Japanese workers, already starved from voluntarily exceeding the required rationing, made their way to the factory to contribute to the staggering war effort. Rain had begun to fall, just as Japanese occupation in the Pacific had, and pelted the workers as relentlessly as the Allied bombs that had reduced many of the once-proud cities of their island to ash. To these devoted citizens in the Land of the Rising Sun, the somber overcast appeared to be depressingly fitting. Yet perhaps never in the history of war had a village been so unknowingly blessed by a dark morning. Fewer than a hundred miles away, the villagers of Hiroshima awoke to the rays of a new sun that appeared to hold all the promise of the war's earlier stages. The clouds did not extend this far to the northeast and the warm morning might have made the trek to their own munitions factory a little easier for the hungry workers. However, just as in Kokura, a dull hum could also be heard signaling the approach of a coming storm. The clear visibility meant that the Enola Gay, an American B-29 bomber carrying in its belly a single uranium bomb, would not need to continue its southward flight along the coast toward its secondary target—Kokura. As the bomber circled overhead, the bay doors fell open, releasing a payload that at exactly thirty seconds past 9:15 a.m. lit the village with the flames of a man-made sun before consuming it like an angry god. News of the atomic bomb reached Kokura and with it an awesome fear. Yet three days later, on August 9, the sun still did not shine in Kokura. As schoolchildren kept watch for the blinding flash that would signal the end of their world, Bock's Car, another B-29, circled three times with its bay doors open waiting for just a moment of visibility, but the clouds never parted and the crew

abandoned their primary target. Instead, they and their much larger plutonium bomb flew farther south and found that the sun was shining over their secondary target—Nagasaki.¹

If it was any consolation to the villagers of Kokura and the souls of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the fear of annihilation largely ceased on September 2 when the Japanese agreed to surrender and the specter of dread retraced its path across the Pacific, settling with a vengeance over the United States. It was now the Americans' turn to know the fear of being the primary target and no clouds could save them. The advent of atomic warfare, almost twenty years to the day of the Scopes trial, thrust upon the minds of America's leaders their first truly existential threat. With survival now in doubt, Americans turning to scientists and other professionals found little hope as they tried to process the danger within their newly-adopted evolutionary framework. The consensus among intellectuals was that the atomic bomb held the potential to be a mechanism for extinction.

Millions of Americans opening their morning paper on August 7 learned not only of the existence of this awful power that would hasten the end of earth's most dreadful war, but that its creation meant that mankind had likely "signed the mammalian world's death warrant and deeded an earth in ruins to the ants."² In lieu of God, readers were told to "consider the ant [who has] lived on the planet for 50 times as many millions of years as man. In all that time they have not committed race suicide and they have not abolished warfare either." Yet even this reporter, lapsing for a moment into biblical imagery, was forced to concede that humanity had "sowed the whirlwind."³ Learning from the insects was futile argued others, such as historian Rushton Coulborn, who viewed the evolutionary process as a juggernaut beyond resistance. Coulborn reinterpreted the evolutionary mechanism in light of "the fact that man himself must in the new crises be the agent to release nature's threat—he must by his own act drop atomic bombs—while in the earlier crises the climatic threat operated without man's agency." The very idea that humanity could choose not to destroy itself was "illusory" because "in the present crises, man is really acting in his

¹ Stephane Groueff, *Manhattan Project: The Untold Story of the Making of the Atomic Bomb* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1967), 80; Nicholas D. Kristof, "Kokura, Japan: Bypassed by A-Bomb," *New York Times*, August 7, 1995.

² "A Decision for Mankind," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 7, 1945.

³ "The Atom Bomb and Future War," by Hanson W. Baldwin, *LIFE*, August 20, 1945, 20.

capacity of slave of nature; he knows with his brain...what the consequence of his act will be; yet he may act to do so, impelled by a culture trait which over-bears the characteristic operation of his brain against doing it." In a despairing summary he concluded, "Nemesis confronts us, not only because we can destroy with this new atomic means, but because we shall do so."⁴

Some thinkers did see an alternative to extinction by imagining atomic weapons as the impetus for the next evolutionary transformation. William L. Laurence, *New York Times* reporter and witness to the initial nuclear detonation at Alamogordo, New Mexico, described the first blast as the moment when "primitive man metamorphosed into modern man" and "an evolutionary period of about 10,000 years had been telescoped." The most popular envisioning of man's next step was in a subterranean direction. As the atomic bomb propelled by rockets would render any standing army or navy vulnerable to vaporization, the transformation of *Homo sapiens* would begin as "an army of moles, specially trained in underground fighting." With no foreseeable defense, soon cities would follow the military's lead as man might be forced to "move his whole urban civilization underground" where it could be warmed and powered by miniature atomic suns.⁵ As rocket technology developed, others looked up rather than down. As atomic confrontations in outer space or the upper reaches of the atmosphere became more attractive, the editors of *Fortune* magazine warned that an orbiting bomb would be a "sword of Damocles weapon" and that "if Damocles were set off in the vacuum of space...the bomb's major effect would be a wide blast of searing heat, that according to some estimates, would set fire to a large part of a continent." In light of such contests, the editors believed that man would have to adapt himself to pilot the "manned interceptors that will be able to remain on steady patrol in space" and to staff the "space-based command posts [which] might be able to reduce to the greatest problem in command and control during a thermonuclear war—the effect of nuclear blasts on radio transmissions." Such cosmic battles were seen as preferable because

⁴ Rushton Coulborn, "Survival of the Fittest in the Atomic Age," *Ethics*, Vol. 57, No. 4, Part 1 (July, 1947), 235-258.

⁵ William L. Laurence, *New York Times*, September 26, 1945, 1 & 16; Baldwin, "The Atom and Future War," *LIFE*, August 20, 1945; "The Atomic Age," *LIFE*, August 20, 1945, 32.

a “kind of hide-seek-and-destroy war game [might] emerge in peacetime, costing lots of money, leading to no political decision, but preventing war on earth.”⁶

The vast majority of speculators, however, were not as hopeful as those at *Fortune*. Even the poets who believed that atomic scientists were “dabbling in the living blood-fluid of the Earth-body” and might “now learn a new reverence for these cosmic powers” feared that such reverence might come too slowly. Pairing Coulborn’s assessment of human nature with the fact that the bombings of Japan were only the “first childish gambols” in atomic warfare, poet George Knight recognized the “certain possibility of its peculiar activity spreading, so that the explosion or incandescence or radio-activity, or whatever we may call it, might one day be used to start a world-conflagration; and we may well suppose that some future nation, on losing its war, might elect to start a process, dragging down themselves and their foes in one grand holocaust.”⁷ Americans did not dismiss such pronouncements as sensational fatalism, as news of the first bombing came with the disclosure that scientists were uncertain about their ability to control nuclear reactions and that a “self-perpetuating chain of atomic destruction” could ignite the atmosphere and, like “a forest fire sweeping before high winds,” incinerate the entire globe.⁸

Such dire forecasts proved of little comfort to the masses who tuned in to hear their secular observers elucidate upon the dawning atomic age. Having replaced the pulpit with the microscope and the microphone, scientists and pundits struggled to salve the fracturing psyche of a nation without the promise of a coming millennium. Looking back on this era, historian Angela Lahr has noted, “In secular apocalypticism, God and hope were absent. Human beings and environmental disasters were the agents in these stories about the end. There was no ‘redemptive millennium,’ so fatalism and despair often appeared.”⁹ According to apocalyptic historian Eugene Weber, not only the premillennialism of Fundamentalists, but all “cyclical myths are optimistic: death is followed by resurrection, cataclysm by a

⁶ “The Space Industry: America’s Newest Giant,” *Fortune*, 1962, 30-31.

⁷ George Wilson Knight, *Hiroshima: On Prophecy and the Sun Bomb* (London: Andrew Dakers Limited, 1946), 11; 33-34. Knight had actually been offered a teaching position at the University of Hiroshima in 1929, but family obligations had forced him to decline.

⁸ “The Beginning or the End?” *Milwaukee Journal*, August 7, 1945, 12.

⁹ Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares*, 33.

new creation.”¹⁰ Yet for the scientifically-minded intellectuals of America, absolute destruction by means of atomic warfare could not be expected to lead to a better world. Their world teetered on the brink, and to plunge into the abyss held no promise of renewal.

Where mainline religion was concerned, Modernists could only offer a feeble prophecy. Their primary focus was in condemning the annihilation of such largely civilian targets without warning or demonstration, calling the bombings “morally indefensible.” But atomic weapons were a genie irrevocably freed from its lamp. Liberal theologians, when forced to confront the potential destruction, could discern no divine deliverance and hesitantly refashioned the idea of “survival of the fittest” into one of “survival of the faithful.” A faith based on allegory and social concern offered little comfort or confidence in coping with the possible destruction of society as a whole. After considering the matter for three months, the Reverend John Sutherland Bonnell declared to the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church congregation in New York that “Man has the freedom and the power to use God’s gifts for his own well-being or his own destruction. If the nations choose death then out of the remnants gathered in from the mountains and the plains it may well be that God will proceed to to build a better human society, obedient to His Divine Will.”¹¹ Other ministers were largely silent on the implications of what self-destruction would mean theologically and instead focused their energies on supporting measures to prevent nuclear war. In this time of uncertainty, intellectual leaders struggled to provide a unified message of comfort to Americans.

Strangely, there was one cultural enclave that did appear to have a definite response to the atomic age. To Fundamentalists, who had spent the previous twenty years helplessly watching their influence sink beneath the rising tide of modernism and secularism, the mushroom clouds over Japan served as heralds announcing their return to relevance in American society. Not only did nuclear technology fit snugly into their premillennial dispensationalist scheme of history, but they were keenly aware of their rivals’ shortcomings in responding to the threat. As one Fundamentalist pastor mockingly cried, “This was to be the century of man! By his own effort, by his mastery over the forces of nature, and

¹⁰ Eugene Weber, *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 40.

¹¹ “Sharing Is Urged In Atomic Energy,” *New York Times*, November 26, 1945, 25.

by the means of production, by the achievements of scientific invention he was to realize his utopia. His tower of Babel was to reach still higher towards heaven...Man in the process of his evolutionary development was to be master of his fate and captain of his soul.”¹²

After hearing of Hiroshima, many Fundamentalists picked up their Bibles and immediately turned to passages such as 2 Peter 3:10. In this two thousand year old letter, the coming “Day of the Lord” is prophesied as a time “in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” Far from being shocked and frightened, these premillennialists took comfort in the news and shared the sentiment of one prophecy commentator who exclaimed, “We marvel at how clearly Peter describes the action of the uranium bomb of which we daily read and hear.”¹³ It was with a sense of vindication that Fundamentalist editor Noel Smith pointed out that “as to nuclear energy, New Testament scholars have shown that Peter wrote of it nearly 2000 years before Einstein was born....”¹⁴ Turning just a few pages further, the book of Revelation’s seemingly fantastic predictions of destruction took on new potency, especially those words in its sixth chapter. Here the exiled Apostle John recorded his vision of a pale horse named Death that would slay a quarter of the earth’s population, followed quickly by more death as earthquakes and tidal waves tear the planet apart and force survivors underground where they will pray for death. Expounding on these verses, the fiery Texas preacher J. Frank Norris concluded that, “one fourth of the population of the world will be destroyed by this horse. One fourth!...Only the atomic bomb or something like that could destroy that many people in a second’s time.”¹⁵ Atomic bombs fit so well into this prefabricated apocalyptic framework that even seemingly irrelevant details were reinforced. Combining the compact size of the new bombs with the prediction of Revelation 6:17 that hailstones weighing a single talent (approximately 130 lb.) would fall from heaven, prophecy commentator James McWhirter rejoiced that,

¹² Dr. Murdoch Macrae in an address to the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, May 22, 1951, reprinted in “Church of God Must Not Wage War With The Goliath of Evil With Borrowed Weapons, Says Free Church Moderator,” *The Fundamentalist*, June 15, 1951, 5.

¹³ Dr. Kenneth M. Monroe, “The Atomic Power of Prophecy,” *Prophecy Monthly*, June, 1949, 9.

¹⁴ Noel Smith, “He’s Still Got The Whole World In His Hands,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, August 10, 1956, 5.

¹⁵ J. Frank Norris, “The Four Horsemen Are Riding Fast,” *The Fundamentalist*, August 11, 1950, 7.

“Whereas the hail may be a figurative description of aerial bombing, the weight of ordinary bombs was getting further and further away from the weight given in this Scripture. But it is remarkable that with the advent of the atomic bomb even the detail concerning weight in this prophecy coincides.”¹⁶

Yet perhaps the eeriest coinciding of headlines in 1945 and ancient prophecies occurred when Fundamentalists reexamined the words of Zechariah 14:12. In describing the fate of the enemies of God, the Hebrew prophet wrote: “Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouths.” It did not take an atomic scientist to note the similarities, as commentators pointed out that “the paralyzing hand of death struck people in a similar fashion on the fringe of Hiroshima.” With a touch of understatement, McWhirter explained that “the atomic bomb has cast a revealing light on certain prophetic statements in the Bible hitherto difficult to understand.” Biblical literalists embraced the bomb because it facilitated prophecies that even they had previously interpreted as symbolic and impossible of literal fulfillment but now were both physically possible and apparently imminent.¹⁷

Fundamentalists scoured reports of the early years of the atomic age in order to better discern the “signs of the times.”¹⁸ Norris perfectly encapsulated the fundamentalists’ habit of classifying data and eschewing the scientific practice of hypothesizing when he admitted: “Now I’m no prophet, I don’t claim to know more than anybody else. I’ve observed a few things...” Such methods of deduction may have seemed anachronistic prior to 1945, but they soon gained new life and allowed Fundamentalists to declare confidently to their congregations that, “His Word stands tonight, it lives, and here the leading daily paper of America comes out with a leading editorial and takes the Word that the scoffers ridiculed

¹⁶ Rev. James McWhirter, “The Atomic Bomb—Sign of the Times,” *Prophecy Monthly*, May, 1948, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3-5.

¹⁸ Historian George Marsden makes a strong case in his book *Fundamentalism and American Culture* that one reason Fundamentalists rejected science’s Darwinian claims is that the biblical literalists still held to Baconian methods. Whereas scientists were formulating theories (most notably that of Darwinian evolution) and then searching for supporting evidence, Fundamentalists eschewed theories and believed that formulations should be derived solely from observable data. Thus the fitting of evidence to an evolutionary model appeared to be backwards science to Fundamentalists.

and says, 'It is prophesied that this should come to pass.'¹⁹ This confidence would allow Fundamentalists to deal prophetically with subjects ranging from Antichrist to Armageddon to UFOs, all in a rational manner made possible by the events of the early Cold War. Even the Fundamentalist instructor who claimed to possess a rock from Mount Carmel containing blue crystals identical to those formed in the New Mexican desert during nuclear tests gave readers pause as they seriously considered his belief that the biblical judgements of "fire and brimstone" were "accomplished through the release of atomic energy at the word of the Creator."²⁰ Fundamentalists were not alone in noticing the parallels. Even forty years later, sociologist Andrew Weigert noted that "one of the great paradoxes of our rational age is that data-based scenarios of nuclear war that have become plausible only within the past few decades are descriptively analogous to faith-based eschatological visions of two thousand or more years ago." Weigert recognized that, despite all odds, a bomb manufactured at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, had enabled biblical literalism to rise from the defeat it suffered just a few miles away in Dayton. Even in the waning years of the Cold War, he was able to summarize that:

In a stunning reversal, the nuclear context, in the historical instant of a few decades, has rendered mythic, cosmic Fundamentalist eschatology closer to empirical projections and more plausible in imagery and calculability than demythologized Liberal versions. Literal reading of the Bible gains prima facie legitimacy in a world with sufficient targeted nuclear throw weight to justify scientists constructing empirical scenarios similar to their ideological enemies' literal applications of ancient apocalyptic writings.²¹

The premillennial apocalyptic framework and Scottish Common Sense approach to hermeneutics were so ingrained within the fundamentalist mindset that the person in the pew did not need to wait for their pastor or favorite radio personality to decipher world events for them. Immediately after hearing of Hiroshima, Hugh Redwood wrote to McWhirter, calling attention to the verse in 2 Peter and excitedly commenting, "A city as big as Bristol wiped out in a second. Think of it!"²² Laypersons across the country recognized the bomb as the fulfillment of prophecy, though they differed over which prophecies it fulfilled.

¹⁹ Norris, "The Earth Also and the Works That Are Therein Shall Be Burned Up," *The Fundamentalist*, November 16, 1945, 4.

²⁰ A. Freeman, "Atomic Forces of 3,000 Years Ago," *Prophecy Monthly*, January, 1948, 11.

²¹ Andrew J. Weigert, "Christian Eschatological Identities and the Nuclear Context," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (June, 1988), 177-178.

²² McWhirter, "The Atomic Bomb—Sign of the Times," 3.

John A. Williams wrote to the *Dallas Morning News* that he believed the bomb's "universally destructive" power would bring about the fulfillment of Isaiah 2:4 in which men would beat their swords into plowshares and "neither shall they learn war any more."²³ Few were so hopeful. Richard Long of Pasadena, California earned the title "doom prophet" through his repeated public warnings of coming destruction. His son Richard went on the record in *LIFE* magazine declaring, "The Lord informed the world through the atomic bomb that atoms can be separated...[soon] he will show us that the atoms of all 96 elements can be split at once."²⁴ Some biblical literalists disagreed that the destruction would be so widespread as that. One lay lecturer declared, "The end of the world will come as an act of God...He is not going to give mankind a chance to use such a powerful force against the earth."²⁵ Still others concluded that atomic weapons would be used, though it would not result in complete destruction, and that their use would serve as further indictment against humanity on the Judgement Day. After devoting a month to "Bible reading," I. A. Crane wrote to his newspaper with prophetic interpretations on several world events. He specifically quoted Revelation 11:18, which stated that God will judge the dead and "destroy them that destroy the earth," and noted that, "Surely, this applies to those who dare today to use these terrible weapons that are said to 'destroy the earth.'"²⁶ It was not the expected ruin via the bomb that they eagerly anticipated, but rather the evangelistic core of fundamentalism caused them all to share the concern of Viola Day who asked, "If We Don't Survive?" She pointed out that "there are many articles in newspapers and magazines on 'What to Do in Case of Atomic Attack,' and 'Atomic Survival.' These are appreciated...But why doesn't someone write alongside each of them, 'How to prepare yourself in case you do not survive an atomic attack.' This is the greatest question today." Such a question was rhetorical and she quickly explained how salvation could be found in Jesus Christ.²⁷

²³ John A. Williams, "Prophecy Fulfillment," *Dallas Morning News*, September 24, 1945, 2.

²⁴ "How World Didn't End," *LIFE*, October 8, 1945, 15-19.

²⁵ "God, Not A-Bomb Will End World Speaker Asserts," *The Abilene Reporter-News*, March 26, 1946.

²⁶ "Letters From Readers," *Dallas Morning News*, December 8, 1947, 2.

²⁷ "Letters From Readers," *Dallas Morning News*, February 4, 1951, 2.

The sacralization of world events following 1945 presented a stark contrast to the opinions of Americans during both world wars. During World War I both Americans and Europeans saw the conflict as the result of secular trends in Western civilization, but did not view it as a divine manifestation or in the dichotomous terms of “good versus evil” that one might expect.²⁸ During World War II, pollsters revealed that the vast majority of Americans considered the war to be strictly a conflict among men over earthly interests and not a religious struggle.²⁹ Neither war produced revivals or awakenings on the scale of previous U.S. wars and, due largely to the pacifism inherent in the new liberal theology, ministers remained largely silent whereas their predecessors had fervently sounded the battle cry from the American Revolution up to the Spanish-American War. No individual embodied this shift as well as Harry Emerson Fosdick. Fundamentalists considered Fosdick to be the single greatest traitor to their cause when he abandoned them in favor of Modernism in the 1920s. In an interview during the early years of World War II, he admitted that previously he had been “ready to declare war...even before the nation was. I, a minister of Christ, went all out for the backing of the fray.” Now, less than a year before the attack on Pearl Harbor, he declared that he would not “prostitute the ministry of Jesus Christ to the sanction and support of war.”³⁰

The use of atomic weapons, however, was an act that respected theologians could not ignore. When the Federal Council of Churches released its report on “Atomic Warfare and the Christian Faith” in 1946, it judged that “the surprise bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are morally indefensible.”³¹ Even the prominent theologian Reinhold Niebuhr confessed in the Calhoun Commission, released the same year, that the United States had “As the first power that used the atomic bomb under these circumstances...sinned grievously against the laws of God and the people of Japan.”³² Staggering civilian

²⁸ Jonathan P. Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle against Communism in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 36.

²⁹ Hadley Cantril, *Public Opinion, 1935-1946*.

³⁰ Harry Emerson Fosdick, “Keeping Christ Above the Strife,” *Christian Century*, January 22, 1941, 14-15.

³¹ William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy*, 33-34.

³² Mark Silk, *Spiritual Politics: Religion and America Since World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1988), 25.

death tolls weighed heavily on these theologians as such an example of total warfare differed wildly from the traditionally approved Christian concept of “just war.” The poet Knight shared theologians’ trepidation when he noted that the United States had removed a valuable psychological barrier by using the bomb first and without demonstration or warning. He argued that, “there is in man a certain inhibition, an inner check, that prevents him doing anything that offends the social conscience for the first time.”³³ Knight’s fear echoed the concerns of both Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam and political activist John Foster Dulles in Knight, *Hiroshima*, 2 their letter to President Harry S. Truman just days after the bombing. “If we, a professedly Christian nation, feel morally free to use atomic energy in that way,” they wrote, “men elsewhere will accept that verdict. Atomic weapons will be looked upon as a normal part of the arsenal of war and the stage will be set for the sudden and final destruction of mankind.”³⁴ Far from the ultimate perfection of man, even the staunchest postmillennialists now admitted the possibility of humanity reaching premillennial levels of crisis.

Atomic scientists shared a sense of guilt along with the added weight of having failed to secure a demonstration of the bomb by the U.S. military prior to its first use. The request for a demonstration had no definite origin, but emerged from several quarters during the Manhattan Project. Physicist James Franck only joined the Project on the condition that once the bomb was completed, he would be allowed to present his views on its use to “someone at the highest policy-making level.”³⁵ Economist Alexander Sachs, the same man who had delivered Einstein’s initial letter on atomic development, publicized a memorandum he had read to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in November 1944 regarding a demonstration. He suggested arranging a “rehearsal demonstration before a body including internationally recognized scientists from all Allied countries and, in addition, neutral countries, supplemented by representatives of the major (religious) faiths....”³⁶ A month earlier, atomic scientist

³³ Knight, *Hiroshima*, 2.

³⁴ Silk, *Spiritual Politics*, 23.

³⁵ Alice Kimball Smith, *A Peril and a Hope: The Scientist’s Movement in America, 1945-47* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 30.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

Vannevar Bush and Harvard University President James Conant had appealed to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson that a demonstration “over enemy territory or in our own country, with subsequent notice to Japan that the materials would be used against the Japanese mainland unless surrender was forthcoming.”³⁷ Following this display, they suggested that all but the most crucial details of bomb manufacturing could be revealed. An even more poignant appeal reached Stimson from Oswald C. Brewster, a low-ranking engineer from a peripheral corporation of the Project and someone with no contact with the high-level atomic scientists. His passionate letter deeply impressed Stimson as he explained that the bomb was too evil for man’s control and that its development should be halted. Unfortunately, as the bomb neared completion, both Stimson’s health and influence faded. Stimson had been a valued advisor to Roosevelt, but Truman was much more inclined to listen the brash, young Secretary of State James Byrnes and there were few other voices outside of the Project to call for the bomb’s preview. Calls for the bomb to be dropped at night over Tokyo Bay were opposed by military personnel fearful that the bomb might “fizzle” or that an unimpressive explosion would rob the weapon of its maximum psychological shock. The deciding moment came on May 31, 1945, during an Interim Committee meeting when President Truman placed atomic scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer on the spot and directly asked for a method of demonstration guaranteed to shock the Japanese into surrender. For ten minutes the scientist and other advisors discussed the proposal, but ultimately Oppenheimer proved unable to come up with a reliable exhibition.³⁸

The American population shared little of this guilt as they—foolishly in the eyes of scientists and liberal ministers—cheered on the bombings as fair play. The United States could not be faulted for hitting back harder when the Japanese had been the ones to strike first and without provocation. Those who opposed the bombings registered at less than two percent whereas both Gallop and Roper polls at the time showed that over three-fourths of Americans approved the action.³⁹ Racial hatred, nurtured by the

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), 162-163.

³⁹ Silk, *Spiritual Politics*, 27.

press since the bombing of Pearl Harbor, led many people to justify the attacks as justified revenge. Earlier in the war, Americans voiced their disgust at a photo of young blonde woman posing with a Japanese skull—a gift from her deployed fiance. Yet just a week after the bombing of Hiroshima, *LIFE* magazine was able to publish a brutal six-photo spread titled, “A JAP BURNS.” Depicting the use of flame-throwers in combat, it received no letters of objection despite its graphic scenes with captions such as: “With liquid fire eating his skin Jap skitters through underbrush,” and “Blind and still burning he makes agonized reach for support, falls.”⁴⁰ Many war-weary Americans reacted to the atomic bombings with laughter. Comedians joked that the Japanese were only suffering from “atomic-ache” and cartoonists wasted no time in finding humorous source material within the tragedy. Japanese soldiers flew through the air in a cartoon titled “Land of the Rising Sons,” while in another, Mt. Fuji replaced the mushroom cloud as it was shown being blown literally off the map.⁴¹ A cartoon in the *Chicago Tribune* perhaps best illustrated American feelings when it traced a line directly from “Jap Sneak Attack—Pearl Harbor, 1941” around the globe to Hiroshima where a dismembered Hirohito apologized while being vaporized by the “Catastrophic Atomic Bomb.”⁴²

Such vengeful frivolity convinced scientists, liberal ministers, and other intellectual elites that the average American was grossly ignorant of the danger they were in. From the first announcements of the bomb’s arrival, those with influence presented the news as an ultimatum. Listeners to CBS Radio’s “Service to the Front” were dramatically informed that: “Tonight we know surely and forever that the choice is good will and human brotherhood—or the end of all things on earth.”⁴³ Less than a week later, Edward R. Murrow presciently assessed that “seldom, if ever, has a war ended leaving the victors with such a sense of uncertainty and fear, with such a realization that the future is obscured and that survival

⁴⁰ “Picture of the Week,” *LIFE*, May 22, 1944, 35; “A JAP BURNS,” *LIFE*, August 13, 1945, 34.

⁴¹ “Land of the Rising Sons,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 8, 1945; “This is the Atomic Bombing Hour,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 1945.

⁴² “The Fellow Who Lighted The Fuse,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 8, 1945.

⁴³ Silk, *Spiritual Politics*, 32.

is not assured.”⁴⁴ The late Paul Boyer, the leading historian on the cultural influence of atomic technology, discerned a uniquely American paradox in that although “physically untouched by war, the United States at the moment of victory perceived itself as naked and vulnerable...Americans envisioned themselves not as potential threats to other peoples, but as potential victims.”⁴⁵

Scientists, editors, and ministers—those most aware of the nation’s vulnerability—accepted it as their duty to inform the masses and harness their energies, by terror if needed, toward developing whatever defense was possible. The threat of atomic bombs coupled with rocket technology meant that the best defense was probably also the simplest. Political analyst Drew Pearson, in a column reprinted across the nation, advised that “either we stop going to war or mankind reaches its own end.”⁴⁶ Abolishing warfare appeared to be the only solution as military personnel assessed the bomb to be “a weapon ideally suited to sudden unannounced attacks in which a country’s major cities might be destroyed overnight by an ostensibly friendly power.”⁴⁷ Watson Davis, who worked for the Society for Science and the Public, and who had been in contact with the Association of Scientists for Atomic Education (founded December 1946), compounded this when he noted: “A nation might even launch a preventative war to anticipate a preventative war.” Because of this, “The fear of war, waged by atomic bombs, blankets the world like a radio-active cloud, unseen but deadly. The atomic scientists, who gave birth to the atomic weapon under the stress of war, are among the world’s most frightened men.”⁴⁸

Given the amount of fear-based literature during this time, it would be difficult to argue with Watson’s assessment of atomic scientists. Boyer described the announcement of the bomb as “a psychic event of almost unprecedented proportions.”⁴⁹ At the behest of scientists pushing for greater public

⁴⁴ Edward Bliss Jr., *In Search of Light: The Broadcasts of Edward Murrow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 102.

⁴⁵ Paul Boyer, *By The Bomb’s Early Light*, 14.

⁴⁶ Drew Pearson, “The Washington Merry-Go-Round,” *Chester Times*, August 13, 1945, 6.

⁴⁷ “National Security,” *LIFE*, September 17, 1945, 40.

⁴⁸ Watson Davis, “Atomic Warfare Is Feared,” *The Science News-Letter*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Jan. 8, 1949), 23.

⁴⁹ Boyer, *By The Bomb’s Early Light*, 22.

awareness, articles with titles such as “Your Flesh Should Creep,” “Mist of Death Over New York,” and “What the Atom Bomb Would Do to Us,” began appearing in dozens of magazines and newspapers nationwide. A week before Thanksgiving in 1945, LIFE published an article, “The 36 Hour War,” which forced Americans to cross security off their list of reasons to be thankful. Americans who had just endured four years of mobilization read of how a sudden bombardment of atomic weapons and German V-2 rockets could result in wars being decided in little more than a day. Beneath a panoramic illustration showing the United States from space during an atomic rocket attack, the cautionary prediction warned of an enemy from equatorial Africa constructing launch sites deep in the jungle to avoid U.N. detection and killing 40,000,000 Americans in an attack that leveled every city with a population over 50,000. Although the article ended with the United States repelling the enemy’s airborne troops, destroying their cities, and the trite conclusion of “The United States wins the atomic war,” the illustrations of soldiers in radiation suits standing in the rubble of New York City conveyed the stronger message that in a nuclear war there would be no “winning.”⁵⁰ Even prior to Hiroshima, atomic scientist Eugene Rabinowitch imagined such scenes as he walked through Chicago. He envisioned “the sky suddenly lit by a giant fireball, the steel skeletons of skyscrapers bending into grotesque shapes and their masonry raining down on the streets below, until a great cloud of dust rose and settled over the crumbling city.”⁵¹ The most famous admission of fear came when scientist Harold Urey wrote to *Collier’s* magazine. His article began with: “I write this to frighten you. I’m a frightened man, myself. All the scientists I know are frightened—frightened for their lives—and frightened for *your* life....”⁵² Paul Meadows echoed this theme in 1949 when he wrote an article entitled, “Leagues of Frightened Men.” Initially, he noted, “The destructiveness of the a-bomb was their evangel; the social responsibilities of science, their psalter.” However, a few years removed from their birth, he was ready to declare that: “These leagues of frightened men have not been the least remarkable aspect of the whole atomic development. In fact, they are almost as phenomenal as the bomb itself. For the self-styled “natural” scientist, hardly known for their social concern, deserted their devotions at the

⁵⁰ “The 36-Hour War,” *LIFE*, November 19, 1945, 27-34.

⁵¹ Eugene Rabinowitch, “Five Years After,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January 1951, 3.

⁵² Harold Urey, “I’m a Frightened Man,” *Collier’s*, January 5, 1946, 18.

shrine of the high religion of indifference to seek converts in the streets of public apathy for the cause of world peace.”⁵³

Boyer found that in attempts to persuade the masses, scientists resorted to the shameless use of fear because they believed it to be the basest of emotions and figured that terror would be more effective than appeals to the intellect. He summarized that, “If the atomic scientists...did not create a pervasive, nationwide terror of atomic annihilation, they did contribute powerfully to sustaining and intensifying it. The public appeals of the scientists’ movement were based almost wholly on fear.”⁵⁴ Such fear succeeded beyond all expectations. By 1955, the “atomic jitters” affected such a large portion of the population that George S. Stevenson, Director of the National Commission for Mental Hygiene, suggested psychotherapy in an effort to stem the tide of fear engulfing the country.⁵⁵ A Canadian psychiatrist went so far as to say that the atomic bomb necessitated the abolition of any belief in Santa Claus. Major-General Brock Chisholm reasoned that the present atomic danger meant that the only hope for survival lay “in teaching children how to think for themselves and reach their own conclusions.” To do so, “their upbringing must be on a strict basis of reality purged of all escapism...[and]...any child who is taught to believe in Santa Claus has had his ability to think permanently injured.”⁵⁶

Both Fundamentalists and liberal theologians recognized the prevalence of terror. The American Prophetic League anticipated Stevenson’s diagnosis by four years when it told its readers that “The world has the ‘jitters’ and the threat and fear of A-bomb attacks keeps both young and old supplied with abundant conversational material.”⁵⁷ Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the world’s most respected theologians, was more specific when he noted that a “very great apprehension” had gripped “the more sober and

⁵³ Paul Meadows, “Leagues of Frightened Men,” *Prairie Schooner*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring, 1949), 72-78.

⁵⁴ Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, 67-68.

⁵⁵ Silk, *Spiritual Politics*, 35.

⁵⁶ Brock Chisholm, “Santa and the Atom,” *Daily Globe*, November 17, 1945, 4.

⁵⁷ Dr. V. C. Oltrogge, “Fission and Fusion from the Biblical Viewpoint,” *Prophecy Monthly*, October, 1951, 1.

thoughtful sections of our nation.”⁵⁸ The same intellectual “underworld” to which fundamentalism had retreated twenty years prior showed concern over the bomb, but displayed little of the neuroticism that afflicted many of the Fundamentalists’ intellectually-respected counterparts. This was due in part to the different messages liberal and Fundamentalist ministers promoted. The refined parishioners of mainline denominations heard few reassuring words from the pulpit on these matters. Most clergy only reiterated the standard ultimatum that one minister defined as “one world of friendly understanding people, or hell and destruction for this our boasted civilization.”⁵⁹

Those who attended the coarser services typical of Fundamentalist churches often sat entranced beneath the spell of preachers who oozed prophetic confidence in the face of such uncertain times. These men did not share the fear they saw as “keeping some of our great educators awake at night” because even such fear was part of a preordained plan revealed through Scripture.⁶⁰ Just two days before the anniversary of Hiroshima, J. Frank Norris directed his congregation of thousands to turn to Luke 21:26 where Christ prophesied to his disciples that one of the signs of his return would be “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth....” Norris connected the dots by pointing out that “literally, there is more heart failure today than ever before... [because] on the surface of things everything is well, but underneath the surface there is a deep anxiety of what may take place in the next month or year....”⁶¹ Surprisingly, the American Prophetic League found itself among the hundreds of organizations to receive a personally signed appeal letter from Albert Einstein in the attempt to rally popular support in uniting for international atomic control. Yet even this was reinterpreted through prophetic passages. The League assured its readers that “prophecy shows that man’s last attempt to save himself will only be prevented from devastating the planet, by the intervention of the Prince of Peace Himself.” Thus, adherents to Fundamentalist interpretations of prophecy had little

⁵⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr, “Our Relations to Japan,” *Christianity and Crisis*, September 17, 1945, 5.

⁵⁹ Dr. Elisha A. King, “The Church’s Role In The Atomic Age,” *The Gleaner*, July 7, 1946, 8.

⁶⁰ “The Last Epoch Before Collapse,” *Prophecy Monthly*, January, 1949, 7.

⁶¹ J. Frank Norris, “The Last Generation,” *The Fundamentalist*, September 20, 1946, 3.

reason to share in the national anxiety, as both the fear and the reasons for it had been foretold long ago and were all part of an end times plan that promised them a better state.⁶²

Despite their warnings and sometimes fatalistic predictions, few of the self-appointed public educators wanted to see *all* forms of splitting the atom abolished. In contrast to military applications, they earnestly believed that the potential peacetime uses of atomic energy would usher humanity into a golden age of unprecedented prosperity. David Lilienthal, who led the Tennessee Valley Authority before becoming the head of the Atomic Energy Commission, repeatedly implored readers to “understand that *atomic energy and atomic bombs are not synonymous*.” He warned: “To continue to think so...is a major fallacy that will make more difficult our efforts to eliminate atomic energy as a weapon of war, and may keep us from the beneficial fruits of this great discovery.” Of these fruits, he astutely predicted that the greatest potential lay in medical research, specifically the use of radioactive isotopes in detecting and treating cancers.⁶³ But others did not share his conservative approach and chose to woo the population by focusing on far more fantastic applications. Even the mastering of the ancient art of alchemy seemed possible in the new atomic world. If humanity could convert matter into energy, would not the reverse be possible? Such possibilities tantalized thinkers who wrote that “atomic energy will be able to transmute base metals into gold, as with the touch of Midas; the ‘philosopher’s stone,’ so long ago sought by alchemy, is all but in our hands.”⁶⁴ After stuffing their bank accounts with manufactured gold, Americans would no doubt desire to travel with their new-found leisure and atomic cars promised unlimited mobility. No other advancement captured the minds of thinkers like the atomic engine. Placed in automobiles, such engines could run for a year or possibly forever on a pellet of fuel ranging in size from a vitamin pill, to a pea, to the tip of one’s fingernail.⁶⁵ And in case the children grew bored in the backseat, on future trips toy

⁶² “What Can Guarantee Human Survival?” *Prophecy Monthly*, July, 1948, 3-5.

⁶³ “Lilienthal Urges Everyone to Become Familiar with Atomic Energy,” *New York Times*, January 11, 1948, 5.

⁶⁴ Knight, 51.

⁶⁵ David Dietz, *Atomic Energy in the Coming Era* (New York: Avon Books, 1945), 12-13.

manufacturers were ready with “Out-Of-World Toys,” including “real” geiger counters, “atomic” laboratories, and atomic rocket ships for the “avant garde of the new era.”⁶⁶

Beyond land travel, atomic planes, propelled by emitting a stream of ion particles, seemed almost a certainty given its overlap with military uses. With atomic defense given the utmost priority, this development took on a sense of urgency as writers theorized that “we may be able to cover the U.S. with a blanket of defensive atomic-powered aircraft, at high-altitudes, and they may be equipped with sufficient detection gear to enable other planes or ground stations to fire an anti-missile with a nuclear warhead to intercept enemy planes or missiles.”⁶⁷ Major Alexander de Seversky, a Russian pilot during World War I, who emigrated to the United States, aimed even higher and told a convocation at Buffalo University that he foresaw atomic powered trips to the moon within fifty years. “Explorers will fly to the moon in three and a half hours at 140,000 miles per hour top speed,” he predicted, adding that “engineers have already developed space ship designs for such a flight...and need only the power plants.”⁶⁸ De Seversky’s predictions gained traction and by the end of the 1950s, General Electric was conducting experiments on “ion engines and nuclear-powered engines that may make space navigation easier” with the hope that “these exotic power devices may someday have practical use.”⁶⁹

A few thinkers did chafe at such wild speculation. Lewis L. Strauss, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, took to the press to refute several popular “atomic fallacies.” He provided a moderating position on the issue of medicinal uses by calling it unreasonable to believe that “atomic energy holds the cure of all ills and that if doctors would only put on pressure they could find a radioactive specific for every human ailment.” He reserved harsh criticism for those who promised that “atomic energy is eventually going to supplant all other sources of power and that the realization of a golden age of cheap power is ‘just around the corner.’”⁷⁰ Strauss was not alone in his criticism as atomic scientist

⁶⁶ “Out-Of-World Toys Ready,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 19, 1954, 24.

⁶⁷ “Atomic Plane Next,” *The Emporia Gazette*, December 14, 1957.

⁶⁸ Warren Weaver Jr., “Atomic Trip to Moon in 50 Years is Seen,” *New York Times*, December 8, 1951, 12.

⁶⁹ “The Space Industry: America’s Newest Giant,” *Fortune*, 129-130.

⁷⁰ “Strauss Explodes ‘Atomic Fallacies,’” *New York Times*, March 24, 1950, 6.

Henry Hansteen, who had studied under Enrico Fermi and helped to produce the first nuclear chain reaction, disagreed with fanciful predictions being made. Writing in the *American Scientist*, Hansteen complained that many scientific journals including the one publishing his complaint were contributing to “readers being lulled into a morphean contemplation of the brighter aspects of man’s future” and that more sober thought on the present danger would be needed.⁷¹ Even writers of science fiction, who had been discussing the practical applications of atomic energy since the 1920s, chimed in and pointed out that “if an atomic-powered taxi hit an atomic-powered streetcar at Forty-second and Lex, it would completely destroy the whole Grand Central area.”⁷² Despite these astute observations, physicist Eugene Wigner insisted in 1948: “The years that have passed since the discovery of the nuclear chain reaction have not dampened our high expectations in the future usefulness of atomic energy for peaceful pursuits.”⁷³ Thus the dreams of an atomic utopia continued unabated and some even began to speculate that mankind would assume powers formerly reserved for God alone. David Deitz believed that control of the weather would be possible through “artificial suns mounted on tall steel towers” as humanity will finally have “at his disposal energy in amounts sufficient to cope with the forces of Mother Nature.”⁷⁴

Even beyond controlling the weather, the most ambitious of all atomic daydreams was the physical reshaping of the surface of the earth. Engineers grew excited at the thought of correcting the “awkward parts” of the earth’s topography and the arctic regions struck all as the best place to perfect the methods before they were used on populated areas. Men of considerable prestige threw their support behind atomic terraforming, including Admiral Richard Byrd, the famed polar explorer, who believed that: “the poles would be the best parts of the earth to try out atomic weapons [and that] atomic bombing of the Polar regions would uncover natural resources buried under thousands of feet of ice.”⁷⁵ Other speculators

⁷¹ Henry B. Hansteen, “Tender-Minded Scientists,” *American Scientist*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (July 1948), 426-427.

⁷² John W. Campbell, editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, in “1945 Cassandra,” *New Yorker*, August 25, 1945, 16.

⁷³ Eugene P. Wigner, “Atomic Energy,” *Science*, Vol. 108, No. 2811 (Nov. 12, 1948), 517-521.

⁷⁴ Dietz, *Atomic Energy*, 16-19.

⁷⁵ “Bomb Polar Regions, Admiral Byrd Suggests,” *Racine Journal-Times*, October 30, 1947, 26.

believed that the melted land could provide valuable farming tracts and room to accommodate the world's growing population in comfort, as one headline declared: "Atom May Convert Arctic to Tropics." Even the Rocky Mountains emerged as a nuisance as readers wrote their local editors suggesting that atomic bombs could level the range, opening up more land for farming and possibly ridding the United States of terrible storms caused by the mountains' obstruction of air currents.⁷⁶

One of the most remarkable syntheses of atomic terraforming during this time was the little-known novel by David Meldrum entitled *Builders of Continents*. In it, Meldrum deftly blends the biblical literalism of Fundamentalists, the social concern of liberal theologians, the possibilities of atomic power, and the internationalist dreams of One World advocates to produce a story unlike any other. He begins by explicitly stating that the purpose of his work is, "To stimulate thinking about the beneficent uses of atomic power." To Meldrum, atomic power was the key to literally fulfilling God's first command to Adam, recorded in Genesis 1:28; to "...replenish the earth, and subdue it." Even the Biblical expression that "faith will move mountains" was now "finding practical realization" as "an increase of a thousand fold [in our potential] such as atomic energy provides, leaves us with possibilities beyond our normal vision." Meldrum found it an "astounding thing that in a universe where we find such a seemingly perfect creation, we find a world constructed in such a haphazard and unfinished way..." In such a world containing "errors no engineer would permit if he were planning a place for man," he saw man's final challenge as a divinely ordained mandate to set the continents right. In one grand sweep, he envisioned:

From the civil engineer's viewpoint these new powers, and others which we may be assured will come in their wake, will enable men to become constructors of continents, builders of mountain ranges, reclaimers of waste products from the ocean, tamers of rivers, landscapers of continent-wide areas, and constructors of giant caves. He will bring equal fertility to all lands, banish deserts and icy wastelands, tame the winds and waves to become man's servants, and bring to light for the good of mankind vast stores of wealth that now lie hidden beneath the barren wastes of desert and ice-bound continents.⁷⁷

In Meldrum's fictional account, the protagonist glimpses a future in which a "World Congress" or "Congress of the People" governs the world and every human on earth is free to listen in via radio and cast their vote electronically. It is a world free of war and the only obstacle standing between it and utopia

⁷⁶ "Atom May Convert Arctic to Tropics," *Tipton Tribune*, April 15, 1946, 5.

⁷⁷ David Meldrum, *Builders of Continents: A Fictional Preview of The Use of Atomic Power For Remodeling the Earth* (New York: Exposition Press, 1957), 27-28, 31-34, 37.

is the faulty layout of the earth's geography. In the first step toward remedying this, the World Congress agrees to dismantle Greenland and reconstruct it farther south in the Atlantic between Europe and North America. The Congress is somewhat pressed to remodel the earth by the fear that "in the course of time the weight of the vast ice at the south pole (which is already over 15,000 feet high) will, if unchecked, become so great that the world will topple over on its axis, and as a result...another major flood of the continents will occur similar to those recorded in all the great scriptural writings of ancient times."⁷⁸ But by reshaping the continents, disaster can be averted and equal opportunity for success among all citizens can be realized for the first time in human history. Meldrum saw the future atomic world as a blend of democracy and communism. Capitalism, however, is explicitly banned. "There will be no admission for 'playboys' or those who seek to make a living off the labor of others," he predicts. Instead, he declared: "No longer shall there be the impoverished peasant eking out a scant existence on unproductive land while his neighbors luxuriate in the wealth produced by richer lands...The hindrance to the attainment of the ideal in the past has been the inequalities created by volcanic action."⁷⁹ Karl Marx himself might have been a bit chagrined had he read Meldrum's insistence that "the more people are given freedom to do the things they want to do the more readily, freely and vigorously they will produce the things best suited for the common store."⁸⁰ In the end, the protagonist wonders why he was chosen to see this revelation. His guides tell him it is because he has studied the art of communication and advertising and warn him that all he has seen will remain only a dream unless the people of the world are informed and persuaded to take action.⁸¹

Yet for all the rosy prognostications, atomic energy remained a bogeyman to the average person. In 1947, a library in Baltimore, Maryland, hosted a traveling atomic exhibition, co-sponsored by the Maryland Academy of Sciences, which represented "the most comprehensive effort to date for arousing public interest in atomic energy and the tremendous problems it poses." Those who attended the event,

⁷⁸ Ibid., 129.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 146.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 84.

⁸¹ Ibid., 143.

which would launch a national tour if well received, likely were not imagining a utopian future as they viewed exhibits with titles such as, “While Time Remains,” “One World or None,” and “Don’t Resign from the Human Race.”⁸² Norman Cousins, journalist and prolific writer, did his best to stir up popular interest in the atomic dilemma. His book *Modern Man is Obsolete* emerged as a “central document of the immediate post-Hiroshima moment,” but its title and dramatic ultimatums, typical of early atomic writings, could have only inspired a morbid sense of curiosity if not outright terror.⁸³ Clinton Rossiter, a political scientist, accurately captured the nation’s mood when admitted that scientists and military personnel:

may tell us a hundred times over that the atomic bomb is just another weapon, and other experts may write articles by the dozens to prove that we can defend ourselves against it. But who of us will listen? It takes but one article (or title) like Louis Ridnour’s “There is No Defense,” or one book like David Brandley’s *No Place to Hide*, and we are back where we started in the first myth-making moments after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In laying our plans for defense and survival we must consider the fear the bomb will inspire even more carefully than the damage it will do.⁸⁴

As if the threat of vaporization was not terrifying enough, Americans soon learned that even those who survived the initial blast and resulting fires were still in danger of being slowly poisoned by radiation. Initially, the structural devastation at Hiroshima and Nagasaki impressed viewers, and the effects of radiation hardly entered into the minds of even its creators. Following the blasts, a controversy arose as opinions differed over the lethality of the bomb’s radiation. One Japanese scientist claimed that all persons within one kilometer of the blast who survived were suffering from a sickness, but a Japanese professor of contagious diseases reported that he had discovered no such related illness.⁸⁵ The U.S. military quickly denied that a wartime attack continued to kill civilians and sent scientists back to the New Mexico testing grounds to measure radiation levels. The scientists reported that the levels at Los Alamos were insufficient to harm humans, but just a few days later reports confirmed that of the survivors, “those who had suffered only small burns found their appetite failing, their hair falling out, their

⁸² “Baltimore’s Atomic Education,” *ALA Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (February 1947), 38.

⁸³ Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, 40.

⁸⁴ Clinton L. Rossiter, “Constitutional Dictatorship in the Atomic Age,” *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 4, (October, 1949), 395-418.

⁸⁵ “Opinions Differ on Effects Atomic Bomb to Living,” *Dunkirk Evening Observer*, September 8, 1945, 4.

gums bleeding...developed temperatures of 104, vomited blood, and died.”⁸⁶ Still, a week later, the War Department continued to insist that “most of the Japanese had been killed by blast and heat. A few may have died of radioactive effects suffered at the instant of the explosions but none died from radioactivity afterwards.”⁸⁷

The debate over the effects of radiation remained unresolved during its brief time before the public eye and the preponderance of fears continued to center around the bomb’s knock-down power. All of that changed with the atomic tests at Bikini Atoll. Out in the South Pacific, as microphones and television cameras broadcast the most widely covered explosion in history, the atomic bomb failed to impress its global audience. The blast produced a large spray of water, but was off target and nowhere near the apocalyptic harbinger that descriptions from Japan had made it out to be. For a moment, atomic fears slackened as the bomb became “a problem concerning only the military and nothing for the average citizen to be worried about.”⁸⁸ Then came the reports that decontamination crews were unable to cleanse the target ships used in the testing and that just by sleeping on the decks a man could become violently ill. The atomic bomb suddenly became a weapon whose destructive impact extended not just across the diameter of its blast wave, but through time as well along the slow decay of the radioactive isotopes released in its fallout.⁸⁹

Some prognosticators, like the idealistic Meldrum, optimistically believed that the radiation problem could be overcome through the use of trees and oceanic salt-water as cleansing agents - the sheer size of the latter assuring that global contamination would be impossible.⁹⁰ Those with scientific training took a darker view of radiation—seeing the fallout as a potentially far greater threat than any blast. In 1957, the world’s leading geneticists concluded in the Report of the International Radiation Research Congress that: “a nuclear war would be so destructive that it would take the human race a

⁸⁶ “What Ended the War,” *LIFE*, September 17, 1945, 37.

⁸⁷ “New Mexico’s Atomic Bomb Crater,” *LIFE*, September 24, 1945, 27.

⁸⁸ *New York Times*, August 4, 1946, 3.

⁸⁹ “A-Bomb Targets Still Dangerous,” *The Hayward Review*, August 8, 1946, 4.

⁹⁰ Meldrum, *Builders of Continents*, 117.

thousand years to return to the level it has reached today with intervening centuries of jungle law and brute struggle for survival.”⁹¹ Virginia Snitow, an activist who campaigned for women’s equality and against nuclear arms proliferation, argued that humanity might not be able to return to its present form because, in the aftermath of atomic war, mankind might find itself to no longer be *Homo sapiens* at all. She explained that atoms emit isotopes along with alpha, beta, and gamma rays when split and that all are dangerous depending upon the dose. While many of these emissions decay quickly, some, such as the “bone-seeking” Strontium 90, remain radioactive for years or even centuries. And though the public was aware of the resulting cancers—notably the death of entertainer Red Skelton’s son to leukemia—Snitow pointed out that, “Radioactive fall-out presents still another threat, since it is also responsible for increasing the genetic damage to the human race by speeding up the rate of mutation.” Scientists believed that naturally-occurring background radiation contributed to the evolution of *Homo sapiens*, but she was quick to note that “nature took almost two billion years to do this, and countless billions of harmful mutations died out in the process...Radioactive fall-out speeds up this process of mutation, a process which is irreversible and cumulative.” Considering this, it seemed especially heinous to her that U.S. Senators would publicly admit to “salting” nuclear warheads in an effort to make them “dirtier” and increase the extent of their radioactive fallout. Simply surviving the blast was no longer the only goal of wary citizens—the bomb and its aftereffects called for more extensive defense measures.⁹²

Those who followed atomic developments learned within the first weeks of Hiroshima that the bomb and rocket technology represented the “ultimate triumph of the offense over the defense” and signaled the end of America’s isolationistic safety as “mountains, rivers, and terrain barriers no longer have their ancient meanings.”⁹³ It must have been especially disheartening, then, for readers to open their papers eight years later and see Texas Senator Lyndon B. Johnson declare that “neither our military nor our civil defenses are at a ready stage.” After viewing nuclear tests in New Mexico, Johnson concluded that civil defense required a “complete overhaul” if it was to provide any protection in the event of an

⁹¹ “Report of the International Radiation Research Congress,” *New York Herald Tribune*, August 14, 1958.

⁹² “The Mushroom Cloud,” *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (December, 1958), 875-885.

⁹³ Baldwin, “The Atom Bomb and Future War,” *LIFE*, August 20, 1945, 17-20.

attack.⁹⁴ Speaking only three weeks later, New York City's Fire Commissioner Jacob Grummet warned 2,800 members of the department to remain vigilant against an atomic attack. "We are and will continue to be for some time in a state of emergency...Enemy attack is still a threat and New York City would be a vital target area."⁹⁵ So serious was the perceived threat that several high ranking officials advocated that the United States empty its cities and disperse its population evenly from the Atlantic to the Pacific.⁹⁶

One of the most poignant illustrations of the survivalist mentality that gripped many Americans was television writer Rod Serling's "The Shelter." It aired on September 29, 1961, as an episode of the popular television series *The Twilight Zone* and offered a glimpse into how a typical American neighborhood might react in an atomic attack. As civil sirens begin to sound, families scramble madly to fortify their houses and protect their loved ones. When they discover that one of their friends has a bomb shelter, they frantically begged him to let them in. After he explains that there is only room for his family, the social fabric of the group disintegrates and the previous amicable neighbors turn on each other. In the end, the group breaks down the shelter door (effectively dooming them all), only to hear that the incoming missiles were actually a false alarm. Now standing in the ruins of their friend's basement, they slowly shuffle back to the surface and one of the apologetic neighbors offers to pay for the damages. The owner of the shelter slowly turns toward his neighbors with a vacant stare and asks:

I wonder if any one of us has any idea what those damages really are. Maybe one of them is finding out what we're really like when we're normal. The kind of people we are just underneath the skin. I mean all of us. A lot are naked, wild animals who put such a price on staying alive that they'll claw their neighbors to death just for the privilege. We were spared a bomb tonight, but I wonder, I wonder if we weren't destroyed even without it.⁹⁷

Fundamentalist leaders eagerly engaged the culture of fear surrounding bombs and fallout shelters. Although it is unknown how many preachers constructed shelters for their own families, their sermons and pamphlets betrayed no sense of wavering in their confidence based on Biblical literalism.

⁹⁴ "Johnson Says Civil Defenses Not Ready," *Morning Avalanche*, March 23, 1953, 1.

⁹⁵ "Grummet Alerts Men to Atomic War Peril," *New York Times*, April 13, 1953, 49.

⁹⁶ "Commission Reasons Distance is Best Defense Against A-Bomb," *Lawrence Journal World*, August 2, 1946, 1.

⁹⁷ Rod Serling, "The Shelter," *The Twilight Zone*, September 29, 1961.

Norris displayed an impressive understanding of the atomic situation when he preached a sermon titled, “President Robert M. Hutchins of Chicago University Prophesies World Will Destroy Itself in Five Years--- Simon Peter Prophesied It Two Thousand Years Ago.” He informed his audience that the Greek philosopher Democritus had proposed an atomic theory and the Roman Lucretius had crafted a poem regarding atoms, each thousands of years before modern science, though somehow this did not diminish the divine inspiration of Peter’s prophesy. He then elaborated on several of the scientific theories and manufacturing processes involved in producing a bomb—all to make the point that there was no atomic “secret” the United States could keep and no defense it could rely on. Recognizing the threat of radioactive fallout, Norris asked his congregation, “What refuge can there be from a lethal element which permeates the very air upon which we depend we depend? Could we go underground?” Unlike Meldrum, Norris doubted that man could dig caverns big enough to house the populations of entire cities. Even if they did, it would not solve the problem of “what would we do for fresh air? Sub-basements might shelter us from concussion and fire, but eventually we would have to draw outside air into them.”⁹⁸ Other Fundamentalists may have shared Norris’ concern over their efficacy, but that did not stop them from including advertisements for a “5-Room Underground Cottage, Safe From A-Bombs” in their newspapers. For \$5,500 one could still survive in comfort if his preacher happened to be mistaken on a few details in his doomsday prophesies.⁹⁹ There was no shame in this for Fundamentalists as some hinted that America’s obsession with shelters aligned with the prophesy of Revelation 6:15, which says: “And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.” As intellectual outcasts, Fundamentalists appeared to take satisfaction in the thought of the world’s elites cowering in shelters. Norris explained to his listeners that these men will “pray to the inanimate rocks,

⁹⁸ Norris, “President Robert M. Hutchins of Chicago University Prophesies World Will Destroy Itself in Five Years---Simon Peter Prophesied It Two Thousand Years Ago,” *The Fundamentalist*, February 6, 1948, 2.

⁹⁹ “5-Room Underground Cottage, Safe From A-Bombs, for \$5500,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, September 1, 1950, 8.

they pray to the silent mountains. They call upon these rocks and mountains—to do what? Not to deliver them, but to hide them. Their guilt has come.”¹⁰⁰

Coincidentally, atomic scientists did experience a profound sense of guilt at having created the bomb and this feeling helped to energize campaigns of public awareness. As early as November 18, 1944, scientists advised Roosevelt and his military advisors in a paper commonly referred to as “The Jeffries Report,” that “The moral development necessary to prevent the misuse of nuclear energy can only be achieved if public opinion becomes fully aware of the catastrophic possibilities inherent in the development of nucleonics....” In the report, Eugene Rabinowitch argued that “enlightenment of public opinion on the scope and significance of nucleonics should start as soon as possible....”¹⁰¹ In the interest of wartime secrecy, such requests were understandably ignored until the initial bombing the following year. As soon as the bomb was dropped, scientists quickly began organizing. From Oak Ridge to Los Alamos, soon every location of the Manhattan Project, except the Hartford plutonium plant, boasted an association of concerned scientists. The founding document of the Atomic Scientists of Chicago (ASC) stated that one of the group’s general purposes was: “To educate public opinion to the full understanding of the scientific, technological, and political implications of the new scientific development....”¹⁰² The president of the University of Chicago, Robert M. Hutchins, called for a conference on atomic energy on September 19 and assigned \$10,000 of the school’s special education fund to help the ASC secure an office in Washington D.C. where it could easily reach policy makers. This same group of scientists also began publishing the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which, though it did exert considerable influence among the high-brow, reached relatively few among the general population. When atomic scientists did attempt to reach out through popular publications, they struggled. Alice Kimball, one of the earliest historians of what became known as the Scientists’ Movement, noted that, many expressed dismay that “addressing a mass audience was a kind of indecent public exposure.” For those less well-known

¹⁰⁰ Norris, “The Four Horsemen Are Riding Fast,” *The Fundamentalist*, August 11, 1950, 8.

¹⁰¹ A committee of atomic scientists, including Eugene Rabinowitch, submitted *Prospectus on Nucleonics* or “The Jeffries Report” to Arthur H. Compton on November 18, 1944.

¹⁰² Smith, *A Peril and a Hope*, 93-97.

scientists who overcame this feeling there was disappointment as “editors were really interested only in big names...”¹⁰³ Even the most famous of the atomic scientists, when they were approached, found their warnings being adopted more for commercial purposes than for education. One broadcaster admitted to atomic scientist Robert J. Oppenheimer that: “I think we are both agreed that a sense of fear is probably necessary to break public apathy. I would therefore like to keep the Radioactive Warfare sequence as dramatic and sensational as I possibly can, to the uttermost limit of underlying facts which are true or which could be true.”¹⁰⁴

As shocking as Hiroshima was, the idea of an atomic bomb was not a new one to the public. Some people had grown up reading about them in their science fiction comic books. Several newspapers printed speculative articles on the technology, especially concerning Germany’s possible atomic program. In 1943, readers learned of Dr. Niels Bohr’s escape from the Nazis and his plans for an atomic explosion. Reporter Ernest Lindley did his best to keep readers informed of Germany’s “New Secret Weapons” and published lengthy articles cobbling together all available information.¹⁰⁵ When the United States did drop the bomb, the relief of ending the war, the vindication of punishing the Japanese, and the complexity of atomic science prevented many laypeople from sharing the terror of professionals who were better informed. Initial reactions were, in some cases, even playful. On August 9 a softball tournament in Florida featured a team of GIs playing under the name “Atomic Bombers.” That same day residents in Dallas, Texas, found a kitten with two faces and suggested that the atomic bombs might have had something to do with it.¹⁰⁶ One group that did take matters seriously was high school seniors. Graduation speeches the following year focused heavily on the atomic specter. In Pennsylvania, the Connellsville High School Class of 1946 saw its brightest students give speeches titled “One World or None,” “Peacetime Uses of

¹⁰³ Ibid, 289.

¹⁰⁴ Letter, Francis Vivian Drake to Robert J. Oppenheimer, May 16, 1947, found in Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, 67.

¹⁰⁵ “Danish Scientist Plans Atomic Explosion,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 9, 1943, 3; Ernest Lindley, “Impact of New Weapons in Mass Destruction,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 18, 1944, 2.

¹⁰⁶ “Now Everybody Tries To Get Into the Act,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 10, 1945, 1; “Duplex Kitten Appears, Atomic Bombs Suggested,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 9, 1945, 9.

Atomic Energy,” and “The Atomic Bomb Versus Civilization.”¹⁰⁷ Such successes for scientists were few and far between, as most reacted similarly to a laconic Texan named Jim Milling. He wrote his local paper to say that he for had wrestled “for three days and nights [with] atomic energy, atoms, protons, and molecules....” At the end of struggle he wanted all to know, “My ultimate conclusion, after my research into the unknown, is that it is a dern good way to go crazy if persisted in. Therefore, I have decided to check [sic] the whole thing back to the scientists and go fishing.”¹⁰⁸

Those who spent their Sundays in church instead of fishing received a more satisfactory education than Milling as Fundamentalist preachers were uniquely suited for conveying complex scientific concepts in understandable terms. Liberal ministers may have disdained them for their lack of university training, but most Fundamentalists had built their ministries translating theological concepts into analogies and homespun parables that could be grasped by even the least educated of society. Even the most uneducated person could pick up Fundamentalist booklets like “When God Splits the Atom,” “The H-Bomb and the End of the Age,” “The Atomic Bomb in Prophecy,” or “So Little Time,” and quickly learn everything from triggering mechanisms and the necessity of moderators in atomic bombs to the political histories of each nation involved in the Cold War power struggle. Whereas scientists often struggled to connect with untrained minds, the oratorical skills and showmanship of Fundamentalist revivalists, evangelists, and radio preachers far surpassed all others who attempted to effectively inform the public of the atomic situation.

However, although Fundamentalists educated their audiences out of an evangelical zeal to produce conversion, atomic scientists had a more selfish stake in educating the public. Physicist James Franck likened scientists to “a kind of international brotherhood, comparable in many ways to a religious order” and these priests in white coats sensed an approaching persecution.¹⁰⁹ As the United States attempted to keep its atomic secret, it clamped down on the previously free flow of information and censored scientists who had been accustomed to collaborating with others whenever and however they

¹⁰⁷ “Student Speakers Discuss Atomic Age,” *The Daily Courier*, June 1, 1946, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Jim Milling, “Letter From Readers,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 11, 1945, 2.

¹⁰⁹ James Franck, “The Social Task of the Scientist,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist*, March, 1947, 70.

wished. Meadows noted in 1949 that Army censorship “bothered the atomic scientists as much as the lethal character of the a-bomb itself.”¹¹⁰ Atomic scientists at the University of Chicago were ready to riot against the Army, which could not tell its “isotopes” from its “isotropes,” for instituting a “rule of fear” designed to hinder their attempts at warning the public of atomic dangers. Elsewhere, Alice Smith notes that the fear of military interference was the primary reason why the scientists at Oak Ridge organized. They were even willing to insubordinate as they staged a walk out after being ordered to conduct “business-as-usual” on the day peace was signed.¹¹¹ The most frightening development to scientists was the May-Johnson Bill. This bill proposed that “all sources of atomic energy and all activities connected with research, production, and release of such energy be controlled in the interest of the nation....”¹¹² In hindsight, Smith admits that scientists were “neurotic” in their anxiety over military control, but the perceived threat to their way of life seemed real. In much the same way that Fundamentalists foresaw an apocalyptic ending of the world by God’s hand, atomic scientists feared the ending of their world of scientific brotherhood by military censorship.¹¹³

Scientists were not the only ones who realized what was taking place and several individuals with influence did stand up to defend them. Harold E. Stassen, former Governor of Minnesota, addressed the Academy of Political Science and predicted that: “Here in America, for the first time in peace, we would be restricting the freedom of science. For the first time in peace, we would be departing from that basic liberty and openness of science...and we would begin to establish conditions of a nature similar to those which caused many scientists to flee from Germany....”¹¹⁴ Lilienthal adopted even stronger language when he publicly argued that:

¹¹⁰ Meadows, 76.

¹¹¹ Smith recounts how General Leslie Groves, head of the Manhattan Project, repeatedly made scientists squirm with his inability to grasp or even pronounce basic atomic terms and concepts; Smith, *A Peril and a Hope*, 97-104.

¹¹² *New York Times*, October 12, 1945, 5.

¹¹³ Smith, *A Peril and a Hope*, 129.

¹¹⁴ Captain Harold E. Stassen, “Atomic Control,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 21, No. 4, *European Recovery* (January, 1946), 105.

Nothing could weaken the security of our country in the atomic field more quickly, nor more surely slow up research in cancer control, say, than to permit science and scientists to be kicked around by the organized forces of ignorance and demagoguery and petty politics. There is only one real protection against the harm selfish and ignorant and fanatical men can do and that is an informed public. The people must keep an eye on their public servants; but to do so effectively their views must be based upon some knowledge of the facts.¹¹⁵

Reporters understood the shifting paradigm and also that those doing the most talking were often the least informed. They complained that, "Everyone on the inside has lips sealed by a possible death penalty. Those who talk freely are outside the know."¹¹⁶ Some of these writers challenged the military restrictions they believed were bringing humanity closer to annihilation. Science writer Willy Ley, writing in the journal *Military Affairs*, warned of the danger in having atomic literature written by "newspapermen, commentators, science popularizers, and even priests, in short almost everybody except nuclear physicists." He lamented: "The experts who alone could give the facts, and by giving the facts could possibly provide somebody with a clue to the solution of the atomic dilemma are the ones who are forbidden to speak."¹¹⁷ Many concluded that silencing the scientists only stacked the odds in favor of eventual annihilation, but there were some people who suspected that scientists' concerns were more about means than the end. Hansteen rebutted the idea of the "social mindedness of the scientists" when he contended that they "joined in support of such activities only when it became apparent that their prerequisite freedom for the dissemination of scientific knowledge was being seriously threatened by restrictive legislation."¹¹⁸

Hanteen's charge may have contained a grain of truth, but atomic scientists' initial reactions to the use of their bomb hinted at genuine remorse and a feeling of personal responsibility. Scientists at each nuclear facility had distinct roles in the development and construction of the bomb and thus felt uniquely saddened by the news from Japan. For the scientists at the Met Lab at the University of Chicago, the attack represented the failure of their efforts to find nonmilitary demonstrations of the bomb sufficient to

¹¹⁵ "Lilienthal Urges Everyone to Become Familiar with Atomic Energy," *New York Times*, January 11, 1948, 5.

¹¹⁶ "300-Mile Destruction Area is Possibility of One H-Bomb," *Jefferson City Post-Tribune*, January 19, 1950, 17.

¹¹⁷ Willy Ley, "The Atom and Its Literature," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Summer, 1946), 58-61.

¹¹⁸ Hansteen, "Tender-Minded Scientists," *American Scientist*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (July 1948), 427.

end the war. The question of “What if?” would continue to haunt these men, as Oppenheimer, who had worked with the group, later regretted not exploring demonstration methods that would have highlighted the bomb’s brilliant light—one of its most psychologically striking features. Those at Oak Ridge where the bomb was assembled felt as though their direct involvement meant that vaporized blood was on their hands. The military’s taskmaster approach in dealing with the Los Alamos scientists left little opportunity for reflection. Grief found expression when several parties that had been planned and eagerly anticipated by the scientists were cancelled as most shared the physical reaction of one “level-headed group leader” whom Oppenheimer found vomiting in the bushes after the news. While some found comfort in the justification that Hiroshima had been a necessary act of violence, none could do so with Nagasaki. As Alice Smith, a chronicler of the Scientists’ Movement, noted, “many who accepted Hiroshima were deeply shocked by the second bomb dropped on Nagasaki three days later...” because they believed that “Nagasaki should not have been bombed.”¹¹⁹

Atomic scientists exhibited a keen sense of regret over their involvement in the Manhattan Project and attempted through various means to soothe their consciences. Some had signed on to the project with the same promise that was given to General Leslie Groves: “And when you’re through, the war will be won.” They saw the ending of the conflict as one incentive for their grisly work and to do so they had to beat the Germans to the bomb. There was much debate as to how advanced the German atomic program actually was. Late in the war, some saw the German destruction and shrinking radar program and concluded that an atomic bomb was beyond reach. Others suspected that the Germans were redirecting their remaining resources from radar to atomic research in a final effort to turn the war. Along with this uncertainty, some excused themselves by arguing that no scientist could be held responsible for the consequences of a particular discovery because a scientist only seeks to understand how the universe functions, not to employ those findings. Still, some scientists sought even greater absolution.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Smith, *A Peril and a Hope*, 75-80.

¹²⁰ Groueff, *Manhattan Project*, 6; Smith, *A Peril and a Hope*, 4; J. Rud Nielson in “Our Responsibilities as Scientists” argues that scientists cannot be held responsible for “the laws of nature being what they are.” Because no scientist could possibly know the future, they cannot be held responsible for how others utilize their discoveries.

One of the most remarkable developments among scientists during this time were the religious conversions among them. Whereas twenty years earlier the Scopes Trial had marked a turning from religion to science, Hiroshima proved to be a catalyst in turning some scientists back to God. Several of the scientists grew up in religious households. Both Vannevar Bush and Arthur Compton were sons of ministers and Compton was an active Sunday school teacher, deacon, and chairman of the Laymen Missionary Movement. But for many others, the atomic bomb was a conversion experience on par with Saul's on the road to Damascus. Oppenheimer's famous quote that "the physicists have known sin; and this is a knowledge they cannot lose," summed up the motivation some had in their adoption of religion.¹²¹ At Oak Ridge, Dr. William G. Pollard stood before the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1952 and received his holy orders. He had helped to assemble the first atomic bomb and now as an Episcopal minister, believed that "the more science we have, the more genuine religion is essential."¹²² Engineer Wallace Edwin Chapell worked for Union Carbide during the war and recognized two truths: "Science was winning the war. Science was killing men faster." He wondered if science had become a "Frankenstein" and, after reading a Christian novel, abandoned his career for the ministry. He explained to an interviewer that: "Atomic experts have given us their find with fear and trembling. The Christian ministry proclaims with joy the find of Jesus Christ. Who alone can save the world from itself?"¹²³ Beyond the initial shock, the atomic bomb continued to cause those who studied it to ask more existential questions. In 1957, Glen Stassen, the son of Presidential Disarmament Assistant Harold E. Stassen, gave up "a promising career as a nuclear physicist to enter the ministry." The younger Stassen already had his bachelor's degree and had been preparing for graduate studies in nuclear physics when he decided instead to attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky—a bastion of biblical literalism.¹²⁴

Such conversions were far from the rule, as most scientists continued on with their work. Still, many gained a new appreciation for the supernatural and, spurred on by the atomic bomb, pushed for the

¹²¹ Smith, *A Peril and a Hope*, 77.

¹²² "Atomic Scientist Ordained As an Episcopal Minister," *New York Times*, December 18, 1952, 31.

¹²³ Kenneth Foree, "Young Scientist Meets a Master," *Dallas Morning News*, February 29, 1948 2.

¹²⁴ "Stassen's Son to Enter Ministry," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, August 17, 1957.

fortifying of religion as a whole. Adopting a tone similar to biblical literalists, Arthur Compton said that “Science is the glimpse of God’s purpose in nature...[and] the very existence of the amazing world of the atom and radiation points to a purposeful creation.”¹²⁵ However, Compton and scientists in general shared little in common with Fundamentalists, accepting instead a rudimentary theology similar to liberal theologians. “Let me then give a scientist’s view of the fundamentals of religion,” stated Compton to an interviewer in an article entitled “Science and the Supernatural.” He then compared the idea of God to that of the luminiferous ether. Scientists understood light to behave as a wave. Such conceptualization inherently led to the perception that these light “waves” had to move through something, even though they do not travel through any form of observable medium. Still, such an imagined medium served many useful purposes and was dubbed the “luminiferous ether.” Compton believed that in the same way, God did not actually exist, though the idea of him did allow other beneficial concepts to be more easily imagined. There is no “manlike entity that dwells in the space between the stars,” he stated. Rather, God consisted of the “...friendly, yet disciplinary, aspects of the world that teach you best how to act to meet whatever happens and be pleased that your experiences make you more of a man.” This was the God he believed an atomic world needed as a guiding principle in its conduct. Thus Compton encouraged religion because “a world that has science needs as never before the inspiration that religion has to offer. In a strict, literal sense...magic and miracles and mysticism are of an outlived era. But the other half of the picture is far more important. Beyond the nature taught by science is the spirit that gives meaning to life.”¹²⁶

Robert A. Milikan, a dean of American physicists, moved a step closer to the theology of mainline American Protestantism in his autobiography than Compton’s strictly naturalistic view of God. “Human well-being and all human progress rest at bottom upon two pillars...the spirit of religion [and] the spirit of science,” he wrote in 1950. He agreed with Compton that certain forms of religion had often meant “crude superstition...bigotry and intolerance and wars and inquisitions.” Yet he argued that these things had

¹²⁵ Groueff, *Manhattan Project*, 27.

¹²⁶ Arthur H. Compton, “Science and the Supernatural,” *The Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 63, No. 6, (December, 1946), 441-446.

nothing to do with present religion, as it based itself on the “altruistic idealism” of the teachings of Jesus.

To avoid any ambiguity, Milikan turned the question “Do you believe in God?” upon himself:

I do not see how there can be any sense of duty, or any reason for altruistic conduct, which is entirely divorced from the conviction that moral conduct, or what we call goodness, is somehow or other worthwhile, that there is Something in the universe which gives significance and meaning, call it value if you will, to existence; and no such sense of value can possibly inhere in mere lumps of dead matter interacting according to purely mechanical laws.¹²⁷

Despite Milikan’s concessions to religion, Fundamentalists found little to impress them. The American Prophetic League critically reviewed Milikan’s autobiography, reminding its readers that despite his “favorable statements...it is not what great scientists say about God and the Bible that counts, but what God and the Bible say about great scientists!” In the end they judged him to be no more than an agnostic and his views as part of the “sophisticated, esoteric, pseudo-scientific and pseudo-philosophic ‘spiritualized pantheism’” that they saw as rampant in American culture.¹²⁸

Critical views of scientists and the modern practice of science were common among Fundamentalists. Preachers were eager to integrate the latest scientific developments into their prophetic schematics, but gave little credit to scientists—often depicting them as the blindest of sheep on their way to the slaughter. Even as early as 1924, science found itself caught on the crossfire of the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy as New York’s Dr. William Norman Guthrie, in the midst of a sermon denouncing the Modernists, paused to declare that it was science that had become “dogmatic.”¹²⁹ Animosity increased following the Scopes Trial a year later and the post-World War II focus on science and technology led many Fundamentalists to step up their attacks. In an article entitled “Science Can Be Silly,” Dr. V. C. Oltrogge of the American Prophetic League spoke of the “cult of the men in white coats” and retraced the argument back to the split between Baconian methods and the hypothesis-driven science of the day. “Now the disillusioning truth is that ‘the scientific method’ however pretentious it sounds, quite often means only the patient use of horse sense,” he explained, noting that such a

¹²⁷ Dr. Robert A. Milikan, “A Better World or No World,” *The Science News-Letter*, Vol. 57, No. 19, (May 13, 1950), 298-299.

¹²⁸ Dr. V. C. Oltrogge, “The God of the Modern Scientist,” *Prophecy Monthly*, May, 1950, 5-7.

¹²⁹ “Dr. Guthrie Assails Modernists’ Stand,” *New York Times*, January 28, 1924, 17.

realization caused him to “yearn for more horses!”¹³⁰ Another article, “Bankruptcy of Science,” warned that the world must rediscover “true Christian Religion” or its “fear will turn the world into a series of cave-cities.”¹³¹ Before his thousands of congregants, J. Frank Norris patronized science by pointing out that it “is doing a good job, though it is some three thousand years behind the Word of God.” His observation received a hearty “Amen!” from the crowd. Thus Fundamentalists did not believe that scientists were in error in their findings, only that they were misguided in applying their knowledge and unable to offer any substantial hope about the future.¹³² Five years later, Norris informed his church that scientists had discovered that the universe was expanding and would eventually disintegrate. He said that he agreed with these findings because they aligned with the Bible, but warned his listeners that “that’s as far as science goes, and that’s as far as the wisdom of man can go; that’s as far as all that we know goes—one vast graveyard.”¹³³

Others were not so cordial to scientists. Noel Smith, editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, repeatedly lambasted the scientific profession. His views could be summed up by the title of his article, “How Much Do These Scientists Really Know?” and its subtitle: “‘Unscientific’ Mothers Are Turning Out Best Product.”¹³⁴ Smith went so far as to say of Einstein that it was “astonishing to find that a man of great intellectual power in some directions is a simpleton or even a jackass in others...” He took offense at Einstein’s likening of the restriction being placed on scientists to an “inquisition,” noting that any scientists could claim the 5th Amendment and that many had done so. In a critique that became a mantra among Fundamentalists, he criticized how: “Dr. Einstein, with a magnificent illogicality, refuses to take seriously a communist conspiracy the existence of which has been proven conclusively and is disturbed about about a congressional conspiracy against intellectual freedom, for which there is no evidence.” He concluded

¹³⁰ Dr. V. C. Oltrogge, “Science Can Be Silly,” *Prophecy Monthly*, August, 1950, 5-7.

¹³¹ “The Bankruptcy of Science,” *The Watchman-Examiner*, October 4, 1945, 965.

¹³² Norris, “The Earth Also and the Works That Are Therein Shall Be Burned Up,” *The Fundamentalist*, November 15, 1945, 4.

¹³³ Norris, “The Four Horsemen Are Riding Fast,” *The Fundamentalist*, August 11, 1950, 7.

¹³⁴ Noel Smith, “How Much Do These Scientists Really Know?” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, February 26, 1954, 3.

that, “the great mathematical physicist, outside his own specialties, is a great dunce.”¹³⁵ Fundamentalists had feared Communism and its advances in America since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and Smith used such fears to justify his scathing remarks against science. Writing from Dayton, Tennessee, he outlined an argument that scientists were following a satanic path by inventing the weapons and technologies that would soon end the world. He realized how this might sound to the world, but asked them first to “give some attention to the question of why some of the greatest scientists have such natural affinities for communism, why others have betrayed their countries...”¹³⁶ Science, in the eyes of Fundamentalists, may have offered a glimpse into God’s creation, but in the approaching end times could only serve to lead mankind into the servitude of Antichrist and ultimately destruction.

Beyond the Fundamentalists’ pulpit, some Americans also held doubts as to the promises of science. The journal *Synthese*, while discussing UNESCO’s progress, noted the difficulties the organization had encountered in gaining the support of the American people: “During the 19th century the belief became common that science inevitably and rapidly leads to ‘progress’. This belief was shaken by the utilization of science on a large scale as a powerful tool of modern warfare, so that science, instead of being an essentially ‘progressive’ force, is considered by most people to be a menace to civilization.”¹³⁷ Knight shared this pessimistic view and included religion in it when he wrote that “modern science is no more able to help us than modern religion.” He reasoned that “science is, as its name implies, an eminently mental thing...its dematerializing tendencies have been very aptly symbolized by the Bomb itself, which is not content with melting a metal structure but even, if accounts be true, vapourises it.”¹³⁸ Other thinkers also lumped science and religion together, but did not find them to be as helpless as Knight. In an insightful analysis, arctic explorer Roald Amundsen noted in 1926 that “fundamentalism” existed in both religion and science. With an evenhanded approach that few could bring to the debates centering around religion and science or Fundamentalism itself, Amundsen explained that:

¹³⁵ Smith “Dr. Einstein’s Advice,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, June 26, 1953, 4.

¹³⁶ Smith, “He’s Still Got The Whole World In His Hands,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, August 10, 1956, 4.

¹³⁷ “On UNESCO’s Scientific Work,” *Synthese*, Vol. 6, No. 9/12 (1947/1948), 378-380.

¹³⁸ Knight, 18.

It is not a reproach to science that scientists and those who consider themselves scientists are opinionated and resent the upsetting of their opinions...In fact, "fundamentalism," whether in religion or science, in a kind of reflex arising from sincerity. A man rarely gets desperately in earnest about a thing unless he is desperately certain that "thus saith the Lord," if he is a religionist, or that "all scientists of any standing agree," if he happens to be a scientist. A man of either type may be right on one point and wrong on another and still be willing to stake his life on the correctness of either. Looked at from that point of view, there is something fine about it, seeing that sincerity is a virtue of no mean repute.¹³⁹

Shared sincerity or not, Fundamentalists raced ahead in their efforts to capitalize on science's latest Frankenstein, the atomic bomb. Sermons, radio broadcasts, and tracts abounded in references to the new weapon and crowds flocked to hear preachers seamlessly weave the bomb into their messages. Minister Lawrence Doak preached that the resurrection of Jesus Christ offered the only example of "Atomic Religion" in history.¹⁴⁰ Sermon advertisements shouted in bold headlines, "The Atomic Bomb in the Light of the Scriptures" and encouraged readers to hear preacher R. J. Thomas give his message, "THE ATOMIC BOMB!" Others were urged to "Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!" to hear an evangelist answer the question: "Will Man Finally Destroy Himself?" Not every preacher gave man so much agency in his doom and instead phrased the question: "When Will God Drop His Atomic Bomb On America?" For those patriotic Christians concerned about their nation's prophetic destiny, the Reverend M. F. Gordon offered a message entitled, "United States and the Atomic Bomb in Prophecy." Even African American preachers got in on the act. The Reverend Wyatt T. Walker of the Gillfield Baptist Church spoke on the topic, "An Atomic Jesus For An Atomic Age" during the morning service. Such sermons did not shy away from specifics when it came to using biblical prophecies to predict future events. In Kansas, Dr. Dan Gilbert conducted a six day revival that promised to answer when and where Stalin would strike next and how the Bible set the date for the Third World War.¹⁴¹

One of the few aspects of atomic prophecies that Fundamentalists appeared to have trouble deciphering was who exactly had given the bomb to mankind. Some, such as Carlyle B. Haynes in his

¹³⁹ Roald Amundsen, "Amundsen Meets A Few 'Fundamentalists,'" *Dallas Morning News*, March 14, 1926, 7.

¹⁴⁰ Lawrence R. Doak, "Atomic Power in Religion," *Indiana Evening Gazette*, February 27, 1954.

¹⁴¹ Sermon advertisement, *The Bradford Era*, November 17, 1952; Sermon advertisement, *Twin Falls Times News*, February 1, 1946, 4; Sermon advertisement, *Tipton Tribune*, November 16, 1945, 6; Sermon advertisement, *The Bee*, July 22, 1950, 14; Sermon advertisement, *Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, April 26, 1949, 4; "Colored News," *The Progress-Index*, March 20, 1954, 1; Sermon advertisement, *Hutchinson News Herald*, November 11, 1950, 3.

book, "When God Splits the Atom," asserted that it was God who revealed the principles behind the atomic bomb.¹⁴² Others, such as the studious layman Crane, referred to it as "Satan's Atom Bomb" and reasoned that it "did not originate with the meek and lowly Jesus who suffered..." but rather with the Devil. Satanic influence and communist fears blended as Crane concluded that the Devil "knows all about the atomic bomb and will make it known to whomever he will without the use of a Communist spy..."¹⁴³ Noel Smith directly addressed the question of whether God or the Devil had given the bomb to scientists. In examining the case that it was God, Smith rhetorically asked, "If there be a personal God...can you reason that that God would have led Einstein to discover the basic formula of nuclear energy before that God had led Einstein to a saving knowledge of Himself?" He found the evidence rather to support the alternative because, "The Devil knows more about the universe and its laws than all the Einsteins who will ever live. The Devil led Einstein, just as he had in the meantime led Darwin and Karl Marx."¹⁴⁴

The idea that the bomb was of demonic origin gained credibility among Fundamentalists as they surveyed the tide of sin and vice that bizarrely attached themselves to it. Alcohol and sex proved particularly adaptable to the atomic age. Immediately following the news of Hiroshima, bartenders began mixing "Atomic Cocktails" for their patrons. Pastors were just as quick to adopt atomic themes in denouncing alcohol. Sermons such as, "Alcohol the Atomic Bomb," began appearing in newspapers and one minister argued that an automobile in the hands of a drunk driver was "a little atomic bomb" in its potential for destruction.¹⁴⁵

Sexuality drew an even stronger connection to the bomb as the existential threat encouraged many people to explore their baser desires. Boyer noted that "a complex psychological link between

¹⁴² Carlyle B. Haynes, *When God Splits The Atom* (Nashville: The Southern Publishing Association, 1946).

¹⁴³ I. A. Crane, "Letters From Readers," *Dallas Morning News*, April 16, 1949, 2.

¹⁴⁴ Noel Smith, "He's Still Got The Whole World In His Hands," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, August 10, 1956, 4.

¹⁴⁵ Noel F. Busch, "Week The War Ended," *LIFE*, August 27, 1945, 32; "Alcohol the Atomic Bomb," *Chillicothe Constitution-Tribune*, October 25, 1945; "Pastor Urges Longer Term In DWI Cases," *Dallas Morning News*, February 5, 1951, 1;

atomic destruction and Eros was established very early on.¹⁴⁶ Within days, advertisements heralded the “Atom Bomb Dancers.” Following the nuclear tests at Bikini Atoll, a French swimsuit designer christened his scandalous new suit the “bikini” with the intention that it was to have the same effect on the viewer as an atomic bomb.¹⁴⁷ It certainly affected Fundamentalists, who saw it as another sign of the nation’s spiritual decline. R.E. Hallford, who pastored in the beach-rich state of Florida, asked his congregation if anything but evil could come from “boys and girls, wallowing around like alligators, in a semi-nude condition, on today’s public bathing beaches?”¹⁴⁸ Norris shared this condemnation and preached that the mixed swimming of “all but nude bathers” served only to “murder modesty and sweep away the sanctity of sex.”¹⁴⁹ Even secular observers worried that the saturation of American society with atomic sexuality might have negative or fatalistic consequences. In Boyer’s analysis, some intellectuals believed that “even if the effects of long-sustained fear were not cataclysmic, they could insidiously undermine society, leading to a national orgy of hedonism and self-indulgence....”¹⁵⁰ An orgy of hedonism was exactly what George Knight recommended. Science and religion had already failed in his mind and thus he argued for humanity to resign itself to the “poising of our highest endeavors on those first centres of delight and power that prompt the propagation of the race, with a consequent honouring of such instincts. We want to pay honour to the Greek god, Eros....”¹⁵¹ Thus the bomb gave Fundamentalists both an opportunity to validate their prophetic frameworks and to reinforce their calls for revival by highlighting the moral degradation of society. These opportunities often came at the expense of scientists, as Fundamentalists worked to persuade audiences that humanistic science was without purpose and would only lead to the death of all.

¹⁴⁶ Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, 11.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ R.E. Hallford, “Some Evils of Semi-Nude, Licentious Public, Depraved Mixed Bathing,” *The Baptist Examiner*, April 26, 1947, 1.

¹⁴⁹ J. Frank Norris, “Antichrist,” *The Fundamentalist*, April 6, 1951, 2.

¹⁵⁰ Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, 73.

¹⁵¹ Knight, *Hiroshima*, 31.

Science fiction writers shared a strange connection with Fundamentalists regarding the bomb in that both felt a sense of prophetic vindication with its development and a sense of apathy toward their social responsibilities over it. A day before the bombing of Nagasaki, John W. Campbell, the editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, told reporters that “we’ve covered the atomic bomb thoroughly some time ago. Now, we’re writing about what comes after the world is destroyed by atomic bombs...We were years ahead of everybody else.”¹⁵² One of the reasons Campbell gave for this was that science fiction writers had not been restricted in their communications the same way scientists had. Although they were free to depict the world of the atomic age any way they chose, few envisioned that it would be a utopia. Most, recognizing the destructive tendencies of humanity, believed that mankind would blow itself up and instead focused on the aftermath—an irradiated world of deformed “mutants.” Looking back, some writers regretted that their profession shared such a pessimistic view and had not done more to educate the public. Theodore Sturgeon lambasted his fellow writers for ignoring the dangers and treating atomic energy as merely “a limitless source of power for background to a limitless source of story material.” In an assessment as descriptive of Fundamentalists as of science fiction writers, he said that “they were afraid for humanity, but they themselves were not really afraid, except in a delicious drawing room sort of way, because they couldn’t conceive of this Buck Rogers event happening to anything but posterity.”¹⁵³ Even the legendary science fiction writer Isaac Asimov, who had predicted several atomic developments far in advance, claimed that he would rather have been remembered as a “nut” than to have been “salvaged into respectability at the price of a nuclear war hanging like a sword of Damocles over the world forever.”¹⁵⁴

Unlike scientists or even science fiction writers, Fundamentalists did not share a sense of regret over the technological developments of the early Cold War. This sense of prophetic confidence was a large part of what made the movement so successful in the postwar era and helped it to regain some of

¹⁵² “Editors of Science Fiction Magazines Yawn at Atomic Bomb,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 8, 1945, 5.

¹⁵³ Albert I. Berger, “The Triumph of Prophecy: Science Fiction and Nuclear Power in the Post-Hiroshima Period,” *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (July, 1976), 143-150.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

its national respectability. Historian Angela Lahr has noted that many were drawn to Fundamentalism because it was one of the few messages that was “able to present an explanation of these confusing times that not only accounted for the alarming trends but also appeared to offer some hope to believers.”¹⁵⁵ The terror of the atomic bomb only magnified the comfort found in the literalism of Fundamentalism. The movement which many observers believed had died at Dayton, Tennessee, was resurrected twenty years later and only sixty miles away at Oak Ridge. Now science, which had earlier played the role of Judas in sealing the fundamentalists’ fate, had rolled the stone away from the tomb.

¹⁵⁵ Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares*, 3.

CHAPTER 3

BUILDING ANTICHRIST'S WORLD

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech...And they said to one another, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they all have one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do...So the Lord scattered them...

—Genesis 11:1-8, King James Bible

“A great trial began this week, an event more important than any judging of war criminals. That is one way to consider the first assembly of the United Nations Organization.” Broadcaster Edward R. Murrow solemnly spoke these words to his radio audience on January 13, 1946. Up until the close of the Second World War, Murrow’s reports had been unembellished accounts with few dramatic flourishes, but in the five months since atomic weapons produced an uneasy peace his language had grown more exaggerated. Such a precarious situation warranted exaggeration. To him, the meeting of seven hundred delegates from fifty one nations in London was “the last chance, the beginning of what may be the final test of modern man.” Many Western intellectuals hoped that the survivors of the war would accomplish what those at Versailles had not and establish a just and lasting peace. To this end, the establishment of an international government appeared to be the only means of abolishing war. Internationalism offered the only hope to many thinkers as they surveyed ruined continents and considered the price of nationalism—a price now impossibly steep in a world of atomic warfare. This assessment appeared widespread among intellectuals as Murrow stated that “hopeful idealists agree with Prime Minister Atlee that the atomic bomb was only the last of a series of warnings. And they see at the bar of judgement the intelligence and conscience of mankind.”¹ By placing the world in an apocalyptic dichotomy, with mankind either destroying itself or moving cooperatively into a global utopia, those with influence sought to harness the energies of the masses terrified by atomic weaponry for supporting international atomic control, primarily through the United Nations. Yet doomsday predictions, calls for unification, and an

¹ Edward Bliss Jr., *In Search of Light: The Broadcasts of Edward Murrow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 111.

atmosphere of fear fit surprisingly well within the established framework of another group: Christian Fundamentalists. The relevancy that the atomic bomb granted to Fundamentalists allowed them to influence popular perceptions of the internationalist movement that emerged as, so it claimed, the only salvation for a nuclear world. The proposed unifying of the world did not surprise Fundamentalists, who believed that the Bible predicted such a trend would occur during the Last Days in preparation for the coming reign of Antichrist.

In the early Cold War, many Americans faced a choice that appeared simple: unite or perish. Themes of “one world or none” in television and radio broadcasts, newspaper articles, waiting-room periodicals, and even sermons clamored for attention and pleaded with the audience to take drastic, though unspecified, action. The scientists who brought the bomb into the existence now claimed to have the only solution to the problem they created and promised that failure to follow their instructions would mean the end of the world. Their attempts at reaching out to the public were due to their failures to persuade military and political policy makers to adopt internationalist measures. In 1944, scientists presented the U.S. government with the Jeffries Report in which they warned that: “A central authority would be needed to control the use of nuclear power, and until such an authority could be set up, the United States could only cling to the fragile hope that fear of retaliation by us would act as a deterrent to attack.”² These scientists realized that international atomic control would not exist within a vacuum and that a host of other political problems would have to be solved as well. Thus their report recommended that the United States take the lead and “combine intensive development of nucleonics and all its potential benefits with an effort to solve political problems on a world-wide scale.”³ Less than a year later, in a cautionary report to the U.S. government known as the Franck Report, atomic scientists sternly warned against dropping the bomb without first giving a demonstration and a warning. They believed that a surprise attack would make international cooperation impossible. Instead they lobbied for the United States to demonstrate its new weapon so that it could, according to scientists, tell the world: “You see here what sort of weapon we had but did not use. We are ready to renounce its use in the future if other

² The Jeffries Report.

³ Ibid.

nations join us in the renunciation and agree to the establishment of an efficient international control.”⁴ Despite this somewhat naive hope, scientists still grounded their proposal in reality. If the United States could not refrain from using the bomb for such noble reasons, they advised that it delay as long as possible because if international control talks failed after its debut, “this will mean a flying start toward an unlimited armament race. If this race is inevitable, we have every reason to delay its beginning as long as possible in order to increase our head start even still further.” Although an arms race was the last thing scientists wished to be a part of, they tempered their idealism enough to admit that if such a race was unavoidable, they would rather be on the side winning it. Still, it was a concession they were loathe to make. Scientists were still enamored with the elysian potential of atomic energy and an arms race threatened to vaporize such dreams. Either the world united and enjoyed the bounties this new power source or it remained fragmented and raced itself towards destruction.⁵

Atomic scientists’ petitions to begin laying the groundwork for an international government fell mostly on deaf ears in Washington and so the scientists turned their message outward. Professionals from virtually every field joined scientists and took up the cause of persuading their fellow citizens to relinquish some of their sovereignty for the sake of survival. In his research, Paul Boyer found instances of judges, city planners, doctors, and many others adopting a sense of personal responsibility in solving the bomb’s dilemma without forfeiting the benefits of nuclear energy.⁶ William Malisoff of Essex College of Medicine and Surgery argued that the United States did not possess an “atomic secret,” only the recipe for a kind of bomb and that the true secret—the total understanding of nuclear forces—still evaded scientists. “Let us not get drunk on the invention of uranium power,” he warned, “and thus miss the incomparably more powerful discovery of the nuclear secret. It will take the combined and organized

⁴ The Franck Report, June, 11, 1945, U.S. National Archives, Washington D.C., Record Group 77, Manhattan Engineer District Records, Harrison-Bundy File, Folder #76.

⁵ Alice Smith notes that the lone exception to the atomic scientists’ failures in Washington was Eleanor Roosevelt. The scientists who approached her described her as “very nice” and were delighted by how quickly she grasped their ideas. Being an ardent internationalist, she agreed that any reductions in national sovereignty by the U.S. would be worth it to secure international control and prevent an arms race; Alice Kimball Smith, *A Peril and a Hope: The Scientist’s Movement in America, 1945-47* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 104.

⁶ Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, 151-164.

intellectual power of the entire new 'One World' to bring into existence and to complete the revelation of the so-called atomic secret."⁷ Compared to the number of those promoting the idea of international control, those proposing how such control might actually work were few. The poet George Knight speculated that democratic methods might prevail and a "world-vote" be taken to decide which nations "shall be elected to guard and feed it and do all that may be needed to keep it quiet."⁸

Others proposed more grassroots activity in fostering One World ideas. By 1949, universities in Berkeley, Chicago, and New York City each had an "International House" in which ethnically diverse students lived together with the hopes of learning from each other and becoming "leaders in fighting against prejudices and misunderstandings that separate people." Meldrum must have been proud to see these houses operating under the slogan: "That Brotherhood May Prevail."⁹ Not all One World initiatives involved such pleasant residences. Sanford Bates, the President of the International Penal and Penitentiary Congress, told the Congress of Corrections that he was "eager to collaborate with the United Nations" in establishing international guidelines and that "no divisive or political considerations [would] be permitted to interfere with the most thoroughgoing cooperation."¹⁰ Most, however, focused their efforts on promoting One World concepts to youth. *Boys' Life*, the publication of the Boy Scouts of America, encouraged boys in an article titled "World Brotherhood," to contribute to a World Friendship Fund to help restore scout troops devastated by war in Europe and the Philippines.¹¹ The Hecksher Foundation delighted hundreds of New York children with its "Children of One World" play. Featuring poems, songs, and dances from various cultures, the young audience enjoyed the performance so much that they compelled the cast to sing the climactic number three times before relenting. One stanza of the song

⁷ William Marias Malisoff, "On the Non-Existence of the Atomic Secret," *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (January, 1946), 1-2.

⁸ Knight, *Hiroshima*, 42.

⁹ Gertrude Samuels, "'One World' Under One Roof," *New York Times*, May, 8, 1949, 22.

¹⁰ Sanford Bates, "One World in Penology," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, Vol. 38, No. 6 (March-April, 1948), 565-575.

¹¹ Irving Crump, "World Brotherhood," *Boys' Life*, February, 1946, 7.

assured children: “Dear little brother, dear little sister, we are the children of one humanity and made never for hated envies and cruel vindications, we are born of one world.”¹²

The main thrust of One World education among the youth centered naturally around the schoolhouse. Hanscom insisted that the world was “hanging upon being blasted into infinity at the wiggle of any moron’s finger on the trigger of an atom” and thus the ultimate solution lay in the school. Because international attitudes, political values, and social wisdom were lagging behind science, education had to begin as early as possible because, as Hanscom stated, “To create is easier than to recreate, to form character is far simpler than to reform.”¹³ Within the classroom, educators adapted One World themes to nearly every subject. History teachers insisted on expanded curriculums to cover a more global past. This was especially important in the emerging Cold War. As one educator argued, “How are we to appreciate the viewpoint of the Russians today without a knowledge of the Czars and serfdom?”¹⁴ One World mathematics was also vital because, according to another teacher, man had won the war with mathematics and must “continue the fight for peace—with the aid of mathematics.”¹⁵ Language teachers accepted the responsibility of making One World news exciting for students. Even music teachers promoted an “audio-visual approach to the ‘One World’ concept” known as “Global Music.” The music program began dramatically by telling students that the world was “Faced with the crises created by the atomic bomb, and its implications of the future destruction of civilization....” It consisted of twenty lessons and included posters that proclaimed “Global Music Aims to Foster World Unity” and “Music Speaks a Universal Tongue.” One World education began in earnest as teachers shared Hanscom’s urgency to

¹² “‘One World’ Plea Delights Children,” *New York Times*, December 27, 1945, 15.

¹³ James H. Hanscom, “One Step Toward One World,” *Journal of Educational Sociology*, Vol. 20, No. 9 (May, 1947), 571-576.

¹⁴ Conner Reed, “One-World History,” *The Clearing House*, Vol. 22, No. 9 (May, 1948), 536.

¹⁵ Joseph Seidlin, “Cinderella and the Glass Slipper; or, How Soon Is Midnight?” *The Mathematics Teacher*, Vol. 40, No. 8 (December, 1947), 381-384.

“begin with the children in order that, on the day they inherit the atom bomb, their heritage may not include the thought of using it on one another. We have little time yet.”¹⁶

Regardless of what shape control took, the cataclysmic choice between uniting or perishing confronted nearly every American. Arthur Sweetser, since 1919 an official with the League of Nations and later with the United Nations, asserted that exploration and technological advancements meant that “there is no ‘outside’ from which a surprise can come...[and], whether we like it or not, we have no choice but to be integral parts of ‘one world,’ whether in war or in peace.”¹⁷ Although many internationalists had long dreamed of a world government, “liking” such control was not a prerequisite for supporting it, as fear of atomic destruction provided all the motivation necessary. “Internationally, I was sure [the atomic bomb] meant world government, for that would be the only way to abolish war, which had to be abolished if civilization were to endure,” reasoned broadcaster Raymond Swing.¹⁸ Hanson Baldwin told the readers of LIFE just two weeks after Hiroshima that “man must establish a common brotherhood or die in droves beneath the atomic bombs.”¹⁹ Some intellectuals, fearing for their lives, even lashed out in anger. Mathematician Joseph Seidlin did not believe that the bomb would mean the end of civilization if only because he believed that the reckless United States had behaved in such an uncivilized manner that it did not deserve to be recognized as a civilization. He summarized the atomic situation in 1947: “A pseudo-civilization, because of mass stupidity, cupidity, and a distorted and misdirected selective mentality, misled itself into a scientifically and technologically superb warfare.”²⁰ Educator James Hanscom shared Seidlin’s negative assessment, but added a biblically-tinged hope for human progress when he wrote that “Mankind is Samson without a Delilah, with a blindness self-inflicted, with a crew

¹⁶ Samuel W. Newman, “One World in the School Building,” *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 6 (October, 1947), 347-350; Paul E. Duffield, “Global Music,” *Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 6 (June, 1947), 28; Hanscom, 576.

¹⁷ Arthur Sweetser, “Perspective on the United Nations,” *World Affairs*, Vol. 115, No. 3 (Fall, 1952), 71-73.

¹⁸ Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, 33.

¹⁹ Hanson W. Baldwin, “The Atom Bomb and Future War,” *LIFE*, August 20, 1945, 20.

²⁰ Joseph Seidlin, “Cinderella and the Glass Slipper; or, How Soon Is Midnight?” *The Mathematics Teacher*, Vol. 40, No. 8 (December, 1947), 381-384.

haircut self-administered, and if he brings the temple crashing down about his ears, he must dig himself out of the ruins or perish.”²¹

Although the atomic bomb initially stymied mainline Protestant ministers and their postmillennial view of the world, these ministers quickly embraced the bomb as the impetus for propelling mankind into a millennial-type kingdom. Mainline (or as Fundamentalists would have called them, “liberal”) ministers were so energized and enamored with creating this utopia, that historian William Inboden has written that mainline Protestantism “probably reached the zenith of its foreign policy influence during the campaign of 1945 and 1946 to craft the postwar international order and to mobilize popular support for the United Nations.”²² Protestant support for the United Nations, however, preceded Hiroshima. On April 22, 1945, thousands of churches had observed “United Nations Sunday.” The Federal Council of Christian Churches, the chief body of American Protestantism, had even threatened to have the U.N. Charter read in every church if the U.S. government procrastinated in ratifying it. Yet this support took on a new urgency with the advent of the bomb, and Inboden has noted that, “churchmen’s high hopes for the UN were tethered uneasily to their fears of atomic energy’s awful potential.”²³ By 1948, even after the founding of the U.N., this internationalist urgency prompted 1,550 religious delegates from forty-two countries to meet in Amsterdam and form the World Council of Churches—the spiritual equivalent of the United Nations. This body, along with the FCC, quickly became the primary shapers of mainline Protestant thinking in America. They were not, however, the only religious bodies to support the internationalist movement.²⁴ Diverse religious groups joined in, as Quakers hosted “One World” conferences and rabbis urged their followers to “return to the role of brother’s keeper.”²⁵ Yet it was the FCC and WCC that dominated headlines and thus, along with their large memberships, held the most

²¹ James H. Hanscom, “One Step Toward One World,” *Journal of Educational Sociology*, Vol. 20, No. 9, (May, 1947), 571-576.

²² Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy*, 5-6.

²³ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ “One World Phrase Is Held Premature,” *New York Times*, June 23, 1946, 2; “Atomic Age Peace Called Possibility,” *New York Times*, October 12, 1949, 35.

influence over Americans. So persuaded were some citizens of the benefit of internationalism that one wrote to his local paper to explain that: “An atomic bomb, properly handled in the hands of a brother, is as harmless as would be an apple.” He then declared that, “brotherhood alone will save civilization,” and closed with an exhortation that would have made many ministers smile. “The kingdom of heaven is within you.’ us—me,” he wrote, “Let us champion the cause of brotherhood.”²⁶

The postmillennial dreams of ministers who sought to reform and reshape the world into their version of the millennial kingdom saw the United Nations and other international bodies as the key to this dream. Because of this, they viewed calls for strengthening the U.S. position in the world or other expressions of patriotism as a threat. In an extraordinary paper title, “Religion and World Order,” the Reverend Walter W. van Kirk of the similarly named Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America gave perhaps the clearest elucidation of mainline Protestantism’s position entering the Cold War. First, he stated that religion remained primary in the effort towards peace:

...political and social endeavor is powerless to achieve international concord except as that endeavor is inspired and sustained by the Living and Eternal God. Once this truth possesses the minds of statesmen, and the reconciling influence of religion is brought to bear upon the political and social disorder of our generation, peace may yet emerge out of the chaos of war’s aftermath to enrich mankind with its countless blessings.²⁷

Second, the morally superior churches would support an international cause over a national one—explicitly condemning the Cold War’s emerging spheres of influence: “A United Nations which takes the offensive in quest of a global peace, and for the furtherance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the progressive development of subject and dependent peoples, is much more likely to receive the sanction of religion than is a regional arrangement which is not universal in character and which seeks to establish a balance of power between two or more groups of states.”²⁸ Finally, churches would endeavor to imbue the United Nations with the same sense of spiritual power that the churches themselves possessed:

²⁶ J. M. Edwards, “Letters From Readers,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 2, 1945, 2.

²⁷ Reverend Walter W. van Kirk, “Religion and World Order,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 264, (July, 1949), 106-111.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

The United Nations deserves and will receive the continued support of the people of our churches...Where the United Nations had succeeded, the churches will rejoice; where the United Nations has failed, the churches will seek to develop the moral environment in which failure can be turned into victory. The United Nations is the only universal body that holds together, however precariously, a world that would otherwise fall apart...But more than that, churches will seek to invest the United Nations with the prestige of moral authority.²⁹

Van Kirk saw such support as nonnegotiable when he argued that, "Religion, by its very nature, must be counted on the side of those who strive to end the chaos of competing and warring national sovereignties by establishing a world body...."³⁰

Socially-conscious postmillennialists now saw their own country, which they previously had viewed as the prime example of a Christian nation, had become a threat to their aim of expanding utopian goals to the entire world. Whereas before their Social Gospel had led them to advocate on behalf of the downtrodden in the United States, they now feared that their country might soon trample others and assume the role of global oppressor. In response, these ministers began heavily promoting the idea of "brotherhood." Meldrum's fictional story depicted a near-future world in which brotherhood and democracy rendered atomic energy subservient to the needs of humanity. Brotherhood, not of a biological sense but of a spiritual one, guided the actions of a "World Congress." As a futuristic guide explained to the hero: "Either I am or am not my brother's keeper. If I am his keeper, then it is my responsibility to see that my brother has full share of all that the Creator provides so abundantly. If I am not my brother's keeper, what was it Christ died to accomplish?"³¹ Even some in the government realized that a degree of altruism would be needed given the U.S. position in the bipolar postwar world. Harold Stassen lambasted his fellow policy-makers when he told the gathering of the Academy of Political Science that, "In my judgement, if the selfish interest of America becomes the official guiding light of our world policy, it will be one of the most tragic phases of our history. The doctrine of 'America First' is purely and simply the extension of the doctrine of 'Me First.'"³²

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Meldrum, *Builders of Continents*, 176.

³² Captain Harold E. Stassen, "Atomic Control," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 21, No. 4, (January, 1946), 103-112.

Yet not everyone could accept such selfless and optimistic views of the world. As Inboden points out, “The war had ended, after all, not with a rainbow but with two mushroom clouds over Japan.” Such a distinction could have described the separate outlooks taken by mainline Protestants with their rosy view of the future and the gritty apocalyptic forecasts of Fundamentalists. The second great aligning of early Cold War events with biblical end time prophecy, immediately after the atomic bomb, was the emergence of the One World mentality. According to prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments, the last days will feature the rise of Antichrist who will institute satanic rule over the earth through worldwide government. In a time when internationalists were arguing for the erosion of American sovereignty, such prophecies offered a degree of comfort to Americans who traditionally had been isolationists because it fit such developments into a coherent framework. As strange as these ideas might have seemed to nonbelievers or even mainline Christians, those who accepted biblical literalism and its accompanying premillennialism did not need to fear the mushrooms clouds they were certain to come because a promised rainbow awaited once the fallout cleared.³³

Although atomic weapons had only recently given literal meaning to previously ambiguous prophecies, clear warnings against the uniting all of mankind could be traced back to the earliest stories of the Bible. In the eleventh chapter of the book of Genesis, the recently created and quickly dispersing people of earth united to construct a tower. Fundamentalists frequently asserted that a demonically-powered man named Nimrod led the people, though no mention of him is made in the passage. Recognizing the potential power of a united humanity, God confused their languages and forced them to scatter across the earth. While the story is not considered to be prophecy, it does fit within the Christian tradition of typology. Typologists find “prophetic symbols” in biblical stories that find literal fulfillment in later stories. The most common form of typology finds Old Testament events that supposedly foreshadow events in the life of Jesus, thereby showing him to be the fulfillment of messianic expectations. Joachim of Fiore, the twelfth century monk, was a typologist who believed that characters and events found in the Old Testament or the “Age of the Father,” were mirrored in the New Testament’s “Age of the Son” and would be repeated again in the coming “Age of the Spirit.” From Joachim to Fundamentalists, literalistic

³³ Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy*, 31;

Christians believed that the key to understanding the future was in not only interpreting prophecy, but in properly identifying types. To Fundamentalists, the Tower of Babel represented a clear “type” of the United Nations and the internationalist movement as a whole.

“The Tower of Babel was a symbol of a world unity, a world monarchy, a world government, a world state,” wrote Noel Smith. More than that, it was a “...symbol of deliberate, premeditated, intelligent rebellion against God.”³⁴ Few Fundamentalists could match the anti-internationalist rhetoric of Smith who used his position as editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune* to sway public opinion towards patriotism and against internationalism. Fundamentalist historian George W. Dollar described him as “able and outspoken” and his paper served as the mouthpiece of the Baptist Bible Fellowship.³⁵ By 1961, this fellowship of independent churches contained 1,200 churches and over one million members, making it the largest Fundamentalist group in the world. But Smith did not merely preach to the choir, for, if letters from readers are any indication, the *Tribune* exerted an influence far beyond its circulation. So it was this expansive audience that heard Smith declare that “Nimrod’s World State has today reached a higher state of development and realization than ever before in the world’s history.”³⁶ The connection of Nimrod to the United Nations (a type of the Tower of Babel) was important to Fundamentalists because, as Smith explained, “Nimrod was the antithesis of Abraham.”³⁷ According to Fundamentalist typology, Abraham was the primary type, or foreshadowing, of Jesus Christ. This meant that Nimrod, as Abraham’s antithesis, was a type for the coming Antichrist. And given Nimrod’s supposed position at Babel, the implications were clear. These comparisons gained even more credence when it became public that linguists were arguing for the formation and adoption of a single, global language.³⁸

³⁴ Noel Smith, “Nimrod: The Rebellious Panther: Part VII,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, March 7, 1952, 6.

³⁵ George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, 218-219.

³⁶ Smith, *Ibid.*

³⁷ Smith, “Nimrod: The Rebellious Panther: Part XV,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, June 25, 1954, 4.

³⁸ Mario A. Pei, “One World? One Language?” *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (January, 1947), 11-14.

Perhaps more egregious than resembling an ancient satanic effort, the United Nations appeared to encroach upon American political sovereignty. As ardent patriots, Fundamentalists had to walk a fine line in defending their country from internationalists and remaining separated enough to effectively preach against an American society they saw as growing exceedingly wicked. Fundamentalists balanced these two objectives by viewing them as parts of the same problem and believing that success on either front could possibly stay the judgement hand of God that appeared soon to fall. A defeated world system or a penitent United States could postpone the end of time and give Fundamentalists extended time to evangelize—their primary activity since the movement began. In the fight against internationalism, Fundamentalists like Smith left little ambiguity as he stated: “I have a righteous hatred of Nimrod and his Babylon, but no more than I have for the...United Nations...Would a real American have fellowship with Benedict Arnold? Benedict Arnold was never as guilty of treachery as this United Nations crowd.”³⁹ Readers could thus easily follow Smith when he combined condemnation of American culture with the warning of a coming subjugation of the country as he did when he wrote:

Why should it seem strange that this One World would want to bring all its religion, science, politics, commerce, licensed adultery, spiritism, Unitarianism and atheism into one great world capital? Hollywood has only a part of it. Radio City has only a part of it. The United Nations is amateurish. The One World needs its own city, with its own king, with its own godlessness. That city will rise up from the ruins of ancient Babylon. It will be Great Babylon. It will be the great whore. It will be the city which “reigneth over the kings of the earth” (including the United States). It will be the Devil’s city.⁴⁰

One of the most disturbing aspects of the United Nations to Fundamentalists was the idea of pledging allegiance to it. Oaths required of employees and proposed versions for world citizens struck these patriots as subversive. Smith warned readers: “None but a traitor to his country could ever take the oath which is required of an employee of the United Nations.” He then stepped up the attack by explaining that: “The United Nations hates the American Constitutional system, and is bent on destroying it. It is a mathematical proposition that the United Nations never can succeed as long as the American federal and state constitutions remain intact.”⁴¹ Fundamentalists decried the raising of the U.N. flag at

³⁹ Noel Smith, “Nimrod: The Rebellious Panther: Part VII,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, March 7, 1952, 6.

⁴⁰ Noel Smith, “Nimrod: The Rebellious Panther: Part XV,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, June 25, 1954, 5.

⁴¹ Noel Smith, “Ominous Rumbblings,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 28, 1952, 4.

Independence Hall in observance of “United Nations Day” as “A DESECRATION.”⁴² They likely would have been sickened to learn that less than a year earlier, a ninth grade class in Michigan had composed their own U.N. pledge. The Detroit students had asked themselves what they could do “to foster respect for the United Nations, to build up the ideal of a world organization for peace such as the United Nations exemplifies?” Rather than abolishing U.S. tradition as Fundamentalists feared, the students based their pledge upon it, reciting in unison: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United Nations and to the world of peace for which it stands, one world indivisible with liberty and justice for all.” Far from being a dry academic exercise, the students responded with great excitement, as one remarked that she felt they were “making history.” Once completed, the class mailed its pledge to several U.N. officials along with the suggestion that every U.S. classroom have both a U.N. and U.S. flag and students daily pledge allegiance to both.⁴³ Fundamentalists mocked such ideas, preferring instead a U.N. pledge of: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United Nations, and to the chaos for which it stands, 60 nations, incompatible, with jealousy and suspicion for all.” For themselves, they believed that such threats required “true Christians and true Americans to stand up, without apologies, and pledge themselves anew to the Christ of the Bible, and to the America of the Constitution and the Flag.”⁴⁴ This conflation of the Bible and the Flag had great appeal to Americans whose government also encouraged them to reclaim their Christian and democratic heritage in the face of the Cold War’s communist threat. The government had little idea to what lengths Fundamentalists were able stretch this message as they applied their apocalyptic conclusions, but it was only a small step for the average person to go from a citizen in “One Nation Under God” to believing they were a participant in that God’s dramatic final act.

Fundamentalists did not view the United Nations as an isolated threat to American sovereignty, but rather as one of many developments stemming from a rebellious way of thinking prophesied to emerge in the last days. Thus they considered most forms of internationalism to be not just misguided,

⁴² Smith, “A Desecration,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 17, 1950, 7.

⁴³ Max Rosenberg, “U.N. Flag Pledge: A 9th-Grade Class Offers Its Project,” *The Clearing House*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (September, 1949), 12-16.

⁴⁴ “Pledge To U.N.” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, December 25, 1953, 6.

but consciously sinful (exceptions were made for their own international fellowships, of course). They believed that this same way of thinking was present at the crucifixion of Christ, as Smith explained that, "When the religious and educational world wanted to get rid of Christ in favor of Barabbas, it was intolerant of any discussion. The 'leading minds' were made up. Christ must die, Barabbas must go free."⁴⁵ Smith's comparison illustrates the frustration Fundamentalists felt at no longer being considered among the "leading minds" of society as they once had. Many of them were old enough to remember the earlier days of influence and, despite their separatist pride, it pained them to be relegated to voices crying in the wilderness. There existed at least a tenuous connection between Fundamentalists' influence and their views on internationalism. William Jennings Bryan favored international arbitration as early as 1905 and considered the League of Nations to be "the greatest step toward peace in 1,000 years."⁴⁶ Yet by the late 1940s, Fundamentalism had firmly rejected the concept. The American Council of Christian Churches, the Fundamentalists' response to the FCC, stated at its 1953 convention: "Be it resolved that the American Council of Christian Churches...repudiate the movement in its totality, and urge the members of the Congress of the United States to steadfastly [sic] resist current pressure in this direction, from whatever source derived, and maintain us a sovereign nation which regulates its domestic affairs without foreign interference."⁴⁷ Fundamentalists were acutely aware of where their ideological position stood in relation to other intellectual trends and were not blindly unaware of how their message was perceived. While Smith considered internationalists to be "putty-heads," he knew the sentiment was reciprocated and that these thinkers had "just one word for any American who protests against their criminal act of sacrificing the blood of this generation of American boys upon the altar of internationalism: Isolationist."⁴⁸ Fundamentalists did not shy away from the isolationist label, but instead pointed out that

⁴⁵ Noel Smith, "The World State," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, February 8, 1952, 6.

⁴⁶ Russell C. Allyn, *Voices of American Fundamentalism: Seven Biographical Sketches* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 167.

⁴⁷ "Dr. Kinney Heads American Council Christian Churches," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 27, 1953, 5.

⁴⁸ Smith, "The Putty-Heads and Mr. Hoover," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, January 19, 1951, 4.

despite U.N. efforts, “We are nearer war tonight than we have ever been, except when we are in an actual shooting war.”⁴⁹

Opposition to international control on the basis of prophecy showed strong signs of integrating into American thought. As one reader wrote to his local paper, “We are hearing a great deal about meetings of the United Nations. What a misnomer!...One is well reminded of the worlds of the prophet Ezekiel, ‘Destruction cometh and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none.’ (7:25.)” This reader even managed to balance this resistance with an admonishment to fellow citizens: “Even in our own fair land we are still spending annually more than fifteen billion dollars for liquor and tobacco, and we know that millions are perishing for a morsel of bread.”⁵⁰ Another criticized popular views of One World in which supposedly the “lion would lie down with the lamb” and “war would be no more” by pointing out that, “Looking at things realistically, the American people understood that if the American and British and other western lambs should lie down with the Russian lion, the former would presently find themselves in the belly of the latter.”⁵¹ Many influential intellectuals believed that mankind should unite out of fear of the bomb and that this fear could overcome the dilemma of containing communist expansion. Fundamentalists, however, were diametrically opposed to such unification, possessing little worry of atomic destruction and rejecting unification out of fear that it was all a communist plot to weaken national sovereignty. This is not surprising. Boyer asserted that “those citizens least informed on world affairs were the most opposed to U.N. control.”⁵² The Fundamentalists, who spent the previous two decades among the cultural backwaters of America, had raised a large constituency which was perfectly primed to reject One World.

Fundamentalists and their followers were not the only ones who doubted One World promises. Many nonreligious sources also remained skeptical. Political scientist Joseph S. Roucek cautioned the American Academy of Political and Social Science that while “it is generally agreed that world government

⁴⁹ J. Frank Norris, “The Battle of Armageddon,” *The Fundamentalist*, October 21, 1949, 2.

⁵⁰ I. A. Crane, “Letters From Readers,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 8, 1947, 2.

⁵¹ “This Ironical ‘One World,’” *The Holland Evening Sentinel*, November 10, 1956, 4.

⁵² Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light*, 57.

is the only alternative to world destruction...we must be extremely careful to recognize that this concept carries implications which can only be fitted into the Anglo-Saxon type of mentality.” Russians and their communist mindset did not fit within One World and instead, Roucek noted, they were promoting their own “Pax Sovietica.”⁵³ Others cynically believed that the U.N. would fail because it was born out of a “mythical sense of comradeship in the face of certain destruction” and lacked a solid impetus for cooperation. Pennsylvania governor Edward Martin took a position similar to the Fundamentalists’ when he told a Philadelphia church: “The world has tried kings, emperors and dictators—now let it try God.”⁵⁴ Political commentator Dorothy Thompson repeatedly doubted One World activity in her regular news columns. One of the greatest mistakes she saw One Worlders making was their failure to define what their utopia would look like. The communists had their own clearly defined version of One World and it was one which she noted was “far more powerful in its appeal to millions of oppressed races and insecure masses.” She even compared a future communist world to that found in the Book of Revelation with a paradise of equality awaiting those who survive the fiery transformation. Thompson concluded that while a global democracy might tickle western ears, “this One World has been knocked out by speeches of Kalinin, Molotov, and Stalin...Russia will never trust a world half-capitalist and half-communist.”⁵⁵ Americans were thus conflicted as to which to fear more: the bomb or the communists.

Among nonreligious thinkers there was speculation that the resistance to internationalism in favor of nationalism might result in a Nimrod-type dictatorship. In the event that an atomic strike killed the existing hierarchy of the U.S. government, the army would be forced to institute martial law. Democratic privileges would be rendered moot, as Edward Fitzpatrick argued, and that, “There will be little time for ‘rights’ in an overwhelming immediate duty.” He begged his countrymen to begin preparing now, namely by raising a peacetime force which would “take active measures against all forms of infiltration by fronts, deceit by fifth columns, and subversion by all forms and degrees of foreign agents and diplomatic

⁵³ Joseph S. Roucek, “One World versus an Iron Curtain World,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 258, (July, 1948), 59.

⁵⁴ Knight, 7; “Governor Martin Speaks,” *Huntingdon Daily News*, April 30, 1946, 8.

⁵⁵ Dorothy Thompson, “Speakers Fail To Define ‘One World,’” *Kingsport News*, February 27, 1946, 4.

duplicity.” This force would punish or deport those not found loyal and would do so without what Fitzpatrick called the “protests of ‘virtue’ by defenders of a naive liberalism.”⁵⁶ Clinton Rossiter took this a step further and advocated that provisions be made to the Constitution to allow for a form of executive-military dictatorship in the event of an attack. Rossiter hoped that by preparing for a dictatorship during peace, the American mind would be conditioned to accept it during war and to engrain a set of “values for democratic survival” that would ensure such a reign was only temporary. He concluded his brutally pragmatic argument by asserting that, “From this day forward we must cease wasting our energies in discussing whether the government of the United States is to be powerful or not. It is going to be powerful or we are going to be obliterated.”⁵⁷ Fundamentalists did not approve such drastic measures, but they saw them as likely being inevitable given the predicted worsening of global conditions. As Norris informed his congregation: “Democracies are at an end. Only dictatorships now can survive.”⁵⁸

As terrifying as these military dictatorships sounded, they paled in comparison to the proposals many had for arming the United Nations so as to give it the authority it needed to enforce atomic control. Scientist Watson Davis wrote that world government meant “so far as war and peace are concerned—a world police force.”⁵⁹ Wilson Woodside agreed that atomic control was urgent, but realized that “there will be no security in which to proceed with such projects until UN has set up its World Peace Force...As yet no visible progress has been made in forming it, and the ticking of the atomic bomb becomes noticeably louder.”⁶⁰ In many ways, mentally constructing a tangible global peace force was an easier task than imagining all the necessary facets of atomic control and thus the subject received a wide spectrum of suggestions. Clark Eichelberger, who served as an advisor to Franklin Roosevelt and devoted his life to

⁵⁶ Edward A. Fitzpatrick, “Manpower and Atomic War,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 278, (November, 1951), 126-136.

⁵⁷ Clinton L. Rossiter, “Constitutional Dictatorship in the Atomic Age,” *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (October, 1949), 395-418.

⁵⁸ J. Frank Norris, “The Four Horsemen Are Riding Fast,” *The Fundamentalist*, August 11, 1950, 6.

⁵⁹ Watson Davis, “Atomic Warfare Is Feared,” *The Science News-Letter*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (January, 1949), 23.

⁶⁰ Wilson Woodside, “UN Progress?” *International Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring, 1947), 118-123.

rallying public support for international government, proposed supplying the U.N. with an air force and making national interests and defense subservient to international goals. As an example, he imagined that, "The United States will go on policing...the Panama Canal not simply for the United States, but in the name of the United Nations..." Somewhat naively he hoped that one could "eventually consider himself a citizen of the United Nations...without in any way losing any feeling of loyalty to the country where he has his oath of allegiance and his citizenship."⁶¹ One reader of *The Scientific Monthly* suggested allowing nations to maintain their stockpiles, but constructing a detection system that would allow the U.N. to identify aggressors quickly and immediately lead a coalition of other nations against the violator. Because no nation appeared willing to disarm, the reader admitted that he could think of no other possible plan.⁶²

One of the most comprehensive and fully developed plans for arming the U.N. came from Harold Stassen. Stassen believed that the world had always needed a single government, but that the bomb now made it "an imperative" because there was "no logical reason why each nation of the world should have the power to destroy other nations." In what must have been a passionate meeting of the Academy of Political Science, Stassen suggested:

that the United States propose an amendment to Article 43 of the United Nations Charter, an amendment granting to the Security Council the right and the duty to establish and maintain a small United Nations Air Force of five bomber squadrons and ten fighter squadrons, manned by volunteers from the United Nations, not more than one fifth of the personnel of any squadron to be of any one nationality background, to be based at five different suitable bases around the world, to be financed by a small tax on all international travel, and that the United States furnish five atomic bombs to each of these five bomber squadrons at the five bases around the world to serve as the stabilization force for world order.⁶³

He also advocated "the United States propose an amendment to Article 26 of the United Nations Charter providing that no nation shall manufacture an atomic bomb, and that the manufacture or possession of such a bomb would be a crime against mankind. The present plants would manufacture the number required for the World Stabilization Force, and then stop." Perhaps even more enlightening than Stassen's proposal was its reception by the academy. As recorded in the meeting transcript, the

⁶¹ Clark M. Eichelberger, "Next Steps in the Organization of the United Nations," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 228 (July, 1943), 34-39.

⁶² H. E. Woodcock, "Atomic Warfare," *The Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 644, No. 3 (March, 1947), 274-275.

⁶³ Captain Harold E. Stassen, "Atomic Control," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 21, No. 4, *European Recovery* (January, 1946), 103-112.

academy's president congratulated Stassen for being "the first articulate spokesman of this point of view which the country has experienced in nigh onto a quarter century. [Applause] You have expressed...what historians have been pointing out unavailingly to mankind for more than three-quarters of a century... [That] the unrestrained exercise of national sovereignty was the serpent in our Paradise."⁶⁴

Other unorthodox thinkers suggested placing the polar regions totally under the control of the United Nations. Laurence Gould believed the Arctic could serve as a sandbox for the U.N. to hone its techniques and administration in preparation for someday expanding that control to populated lands. Gould briefly mentioned the possibility of discovering uranium deposits beneath the ice and hinted at a future where the U.N. possessed atomic weapons through controlling the world's uranium supply.⁶⁵ Alexander Klein proposed disarming everyone including the United Nations. Instead of an air force or stockpile, the U.N. would possess an "Army For Peace" consisting of all the world's atomic scientists and manufacturers, thus maintaining atomic control without having to actually produce any bombs.⁶⁶ Regardless of the requirements, scientist J. Rud Nielson encouraged his peers to "support, and be willing to take part in, any efforts by the United Nations or other international agencies that will increase mutual confidence among the people of the earth."⁶⁷ To Fundamentalists, however, arming an international body would mean the end of all discussion and true democracy. Noel Smith taught his readers that this ending of all debate would lead to the emergence of a single, powerful leader: "He will be the greatest statesmen the world ever produced, the greatest orator, the greatest military genius. He will be a composite of all the Nimrods, Alexanders, Caesars and Napoleons. He will be the man the world is now crying for—the Devil's man, the ANTICHRIST." Even if one ignored Biblical prophecy, Smith believed that "any student of

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Laurence M. Gould, "Strategy and Politics in the Polar Areas," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 255 (January, 1948), 105-114.

⁶⁶ Alexander Klein, "Armies for Peace," *The Antioch Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring, 1950), 117-146.

⁶⁷ J. Rud Nielson, "Our Responsibilities as Scientists," *The Scientific-Monthly*, Vol. 81, No. 2 (August, 1955), 65-70.

international affairs...could see the rise of Antichrist will be the inevitable, logical outcome of this World State.⁶⁸

Similar to Fundamentalists, the study of Antichrist beliefs has suffered greatly at the hands of historians. Eugene Weber has criticized his fellow historians for not only ignoring the lunatic fringe that believes in the coming demonic figure, but for often designating them as the “lunatic fringe” and thus intellectually marginalizing them. In his book, *Apocalypses*, he quotes Antichrist student Wilhelm Bousset as declaring in the pivotal year of 1925 that the legend of Antichrist was “now to be found only among the lower classes of the Christian community, among sects, eccentric individuals, and fanatics.”⁶⁹ It was a verdict familiar to Fundamentalists in many ways. Yet as Cold War developments aligned with apocalyptic prophecies, the emergence of a leader so powerful that he could, if he chose, create a hell on earth for all did not seem as far fetched as it may have in 1925. Even the refusal of the Soviet Union to cooperate with U.N. objectives only strengthened Fundamentalists’ belief because they interpreted Antichrist as only ruling over a union of Europe and likely the Americas. In the Fundamentalists’ complex scheme of apocalyptic events, Antichrist would only be one of four great kings to go to war and to persecute Christians. One of the opening acts in the prophesied “Great Tribulation” during the Last Days was the King of the North—identified as the Soviet Union in the form of a nation called Gog—marching into Israel to do battle against the King of the South—often identified as Palestine. The battle will be divinely decided and roughly seven years will pass before the King of the West—Antichrist and his army, either as the U.N. or a descendant organization—camps in the Valley of Megiddo awaiting the Asiatic armies of the King of the East. This confrontation will be the Battle of Armageddon, with Jesus returning and slaughtering both armies in his glorified return to earth. Thus Antichrist was a figure Fundamentalists looked for with both dread and anticipation. Historian Robert C. Fuller explained the significance and comfort of identifying Antichrist as such:

This concept factors significantly in modern Fundamentalist thought because his appearance is believed to begin the sequence of events that will eventuate in the return of Christ and God’s final victory over evil. Thus, even though Fundamentalism teaches that the Antichrist’s tyranny and deceit are to be feared, his

⁶⁸ Noel Smith, “Nimrod: The Rebellious Panther: Part VII,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, March 7, 1952, 6.

⁶⁹ Weber, *Apocalypses*, 3-4.

appearance is nonetheless eagerly anticipated as it will signal the first stages of the establishment of God's kingdom here on earth.⁷⁰

Thus Fundamentalists remained devoted patriots and still resigned themselves to the eventuality of a world government. So it came as little surprise when, in the midst of an article exposing the evils of a coming world system in which all would be "slave subjects," Noel Smith admitted: "I think the one-worlders are going to succeed. I think we are going to have a world-state, with a world politician at its head, with a world parliament, and a world army and navy."⁷¹ This was not a sign of a lack of faith. Instead it demonstrated the belief of all Fundamentalists that a final time of tribulation was fast approaching and no action on their part could alter (though perhaps it could delay) what had been prophesied. Although the details were subject to change with the next morning's paper, Fundamentalism's apocalyptic outlook offered a sense of certainty in a time when uncertainty appeared to be all that scientists and politicians had to offer.

One organization of the United Nations that drew special ire from Fundamentalists was its scientific branch, UNESCO. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization was the descendant of the League of Nations' Institute of Intellectual Cooperation and was seen by many scientists as a refuge from military censorship. Even Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, the guardian angel of atomic scientists, had proposed an international scientific laboratory under the U.N.'s supervision three years before the formation of UNESCO.⁷² However, by the time the delegates gathered in Paris near the end of 1946, Fundamentalists were already well into their campaign against the United Nations and criticism for UNESCO followed accordingly. Yet unlike its parent organization, UNESCO took a far tougher stance on communism. Its officials recognized that they were working in a world composed of two separate spheres and understood, as observer Byron Dexter wrote, that "the only guarantee that the gap will not widen is for all the world to become Communist." Rather than resigning to this fate, Dexter believed the organization would "work amid danger" in its effort to raise

⁷⁰ Robert C. Fuller, "Antichrist," *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, 14.

⁷¹ Noel Smith, "The World State," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, February 8, 1952, 7.

⁷² Smith, *A Peril and a Hope*, 25.

global standards of living to such a level that the people of Communist nations would be drawn into the One World community through affinity for one of Roosevelt's four Pillars of Freedom: Freedom of Want. Those involved with UNESCO believed they could nip the budding Cold War not through a military solution, but through shared scientific progress.⁷³

However, despite its recognition of communism as a global threat, UNESCO straddled two spheres that deeply disturbed Fundamentalists: Antichrist's One World movement and misguided belief in the progressivism of modern science. Captain Edgar C. Bundy, who by 1955 had become the "sole owner and operator" of the American Legion, gained notoriety from even the largest newspapers for his opposition to UNESCO. Bundy owed most of his fame to his crusade against communism, where few surpassed him in fervency and likely none in miles traveled. It was this anticommunist zeal that led him to attack UNESCO. The *Chicago Sun-Times* denounced him and Fundamentalists praised him for unearthing the "facts" on the organization. The *Baptist Bible Tribune* reprinted his findings, warning its readers that UNESCO would "go to the kindergartens and elementary schools and twist and distort the minds of the children until the seeds of love of country and Flag have been destroyed." Having done this, the "cold-blooded brainwashing organization" would proceed to "mold the thought of the American mind to conform to the universal totalitarian state now being built by the disciples of Karl Marx."⁷⁴ Even more infuriating to readers was the charge that Americans would support UNESCO through a tax. Noel Smith dramatically summarized that: "The American people are not only forced to carry their death warrant to the executioner, they are forced to pay for the paper on which it is written." Hyperbole aside, such attacks were born not only out of a literalistic belief in prophesy, but also an atmosphere in which science with its atomic bombs appeared more dangerous than beneficent and suspicions of communist infiltrations gave any conspiracy theory a hint of rationality. In such an environment, even the most objective mind could find an attractiveness in the confident, though seemingly bewildering, claims of Fundamentalists.⁷⁵

⁷³ Byron Dexter, "UNESCO Faces Two Worlds," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (April, 1947), 388-407.

⁷⁴ Noel Smith, "Captain Bundy In Their Hair," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 25, 1955, 4.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Smith continued Bundy's bombardment, though he usually focused his attacks upon individuals. He may have believed in broad apocalyptic trends in world events, but his style of writing typically reduced these trends down to individual personalities—in this case, UNESCO Director-General Julian Huxley. An outspoken atheist and evolutionist, Huxley was a “sneering infidel” in the eyes of Smith. The editor believed that as an atheist, Huxley held no sacred value for human life and as evolutionist, he would institute cold-blooded “survival of the fittest” policies. Smith even went so far as to endow Huxley with Antichrist qualities when he compared him to Nimrod, saying that, “Huxley and his fellow atheists are...going to work on the minds of men. Like Nimrod, they are going to change those minds. When they are through, there won't be but one mind—the world mind.” Smith may have overestimated Huxley and UNESCO as a threat when he referred to him as the Director-General of a “powerful organization—one of the most powerful ever erected on the the earth.”⁷⁶ By most accounts, UNESCO in its formative years could hardly have been called “powerful.” It struggled so much in gaining recognition and influence that one wonders if such attacks were even necessary. As Forrest Long observed, when UNESCO held its meeting in Philadelphia in 1947, most citizens of the city believed the acronym represented a biscuit or a radio station. Long tried mightily to put a positive spin on the organization, claiming that excitement for it rivaled the initial enthusiasm for the League of Nations and that it held “even greater promise than the United Nations.” Yet even he conceded that such praise was unjustified because “the average student, the average teacher...indeed, the average citizen—hasn't the slightest idea what Unesco is.”⁷⁷ Many, however, did learn about UNESCO—though it was through Fundamentalists' writings that influenced them negatively toward it and robbed the organization of valuable grassroots support it needed.

Although efforts toward a global government, military, and scientific community disturbed Fundamentalists, these movements struggled to attain any tangible results. One aspect of the internationalist movement, however, did take several steps toward fruition: global religion. On this front alone internationalism enjoyed astounding grassroots support. As political forces began to craft a

⁷⁶ Noel Smith, “Nimrod: The Rebellious Panther: Part VII,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, March 7, 1952, 6.

⁷⁷ Forrest E. Long, “Unesco: The Bright Promise and the Dim Performance,” *The Clearing House*, Vol. 22, No. 8 (April, 1948), 501-502.

powerful form of civil religion that historian Jonathan Herzog has termed the “spiritual industrial complex,” people began to believe that a spiritual revitalization would ensure protection against everything from the atomic bomb to the communists.⁷⁸ Journalist Robert Quillen wrote in an article entitled “Man Must Be Born Again or Die of His Own Knowledge” that “against the atomic bomb there is no defense except the one given to us by Jesus of Nazareth 2,000 years ago.” He dismissed all political and scientific efforts toward peace, flatly stating that: “There is no hope for mankind except in spiritual regeneration.”⁷⁹ Ferris Booth echoed this sentiment when he wrote to President Truman asking him to publicly call on God for atomic protection and lead to an American “spiritual renaissance.” Booth, who claimed no specific denomination or even religion, recognized an untapped spiritual strength awaiting the nation and took out newspaper advertisements calling for “Christian democratic civilization” to combat “Hitler paganism.”⁸⁰ One particularly astute reader of the *Dallas Morning News* illustrated the disparity in grassroots support for religion and all other One World efforts when he wrote:

Did you ever throw a large meaty bone to a pack of hungry dogs? The resulting beastly snarls, greedy fighting is not pretty. But the picture illustrates our “One World today and the miserable way in which we are failing to make a just peace—the one thing for which bright-eyed, chubby-faced boys gave up their lives...Peace? There has been only one Prince of Peace. It might pay those who govern to read this philosophy.⁸¹

Public calls for renewed spirituality excited and worried Fundamentalists. As a movement centered around evangelism, Fundamentalism welcomed new converts as they tried to save as many souls possible before fast approaching end arrived. Conversely, they railed against ecumenical movements, particularly the Federal Council of Churches (later known as the National Council of Churches) and the World Council of Churches, which they believed were leading seeking souls toward damnation. The *Baptist Examiner*, a premillennial paper with a national circulation, traced the ecumenical movement back to the Fundamentalists’ archenemy: “The modernist crowd deliberately play up the

⁷⁸ Herzog, *The Spiritual Industrial Complex*.

⁷⁹ Robert Quillen, “Man Must Be Born Again or Die in His Own Knowledge,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 3, 1945, 2.

⁸⁰ “Booth Gives View On God Vs. Atom,” *New York Times*, October 4, 1949, 4.

⁸¹ C.C. Miller, “Letters From Readers,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 17, 1945, 2.

universal idea in order to deceive, appeal to vanity, and thus shame fleshly, apostate Christianity for being divided and thus further their Satanic purpose of forcing all churches or denominations into one big denominational combine.”⁸² Opposition to ecumenism was not a new development in Fundamentalism, and was an inherent aspect of their premillennial theology. Writing in 1919, Harris Franklin Rall, president of the Iliff School of Theology, examined the practical outcomes of accepting premillennialism and found it fit well with the separatist feelings of Fundamentalists. Premillennialism held that, “so far from being the agent for saving the world, the church itself is to grow increasingly corrupt and end in utter failure...The organized Christian church is to become more and more the Babylon, the Harlot City, of the Book of Revelation.” Even a state-sponsored civil religion would make premillennialists nervous, according to Rall, because while revivals may occur, “only individual salvation is possible. The state in this age lies outside God’s plan of redemption...A Christian state is impossible because God has not included this in his plans.”⁸³ Ecumenism and civil religion upset Fundamentalists because they believed both inverted the traditional roles of God and humanity. Whereas Fundamentalists saw God using man to accomplish his ordained goals, liberal theologies encouraged man to use God for human ends. As early as 1926, the Modernist Reverend William Brown admitted: “In the old religion God judged man. In the new religion man will judge God.”⁸⁴

Fundamentalists saw the confident attitudes of ecumenists as blasphemous and this made it quite easy for them to personalize their attacks. Noel Smith condemned the Episcopal Diocese of California, James A. Pike, labeling him the American religious equivalent of Elvis Presley and one of the “World Church Twins” with Eugene Carson Blake. After dissecting one of the bishop’s sermons, Smith concluded that, “There is no evidence that this bishop has ever been converted to Christ...He is not even

⁸² “Read This And You Surely Will Repudiate All Connections With The Universal Church,” *The Baptist Examiner*, September 27, 1947, 1.

⁸³ Harris Franklin Rall, “Premillennialism. III. Where Premillennialism Leads,” *The Biblical World*, Vol. 53, No. 6 (November, 1919), 617-627.

⁸⁴ Reverend William Adams Brown, “After Fundamentalism: What?” *The North American Review*, Vol. 223, No. 832 (September-November, 1926), 406-419.

a Christian.”⁸⁵ Even John Foster Dulles, one of the most overtly religious policy makers of the early Cold War, felt the pressure of Fundamentalists who criticized his association with the FCC and WCC. The Fundamentalist ACCC charged these organizations as being “cooperative fronts for world socialism” and Dulles as an “effective tool” in spreading their propaganda “for the destruction of a free capitalist order as it now exists in the United States of America.”⁸⁶

Although Fundamentalists had long opposed ecumenism on apocalyptic grounds, communism emerged as a primary accusation against the FCC and WCC during the postwar years. Carl McIntire, founder of the ACCC, devoted much ink to exposing communist links to the organizations. As one article title declared, “World Council Provides Communists with Another Network for Propaganda.”⁸⁷ Other Fundamentalists were deeply suspicious of the delegates who attended WCC meetings, especially those from communist nations. They believed that the meetings were merely ruses to bring “Iron Curtain stooges” onto American soil.⁸⁸ The WCC and communism were so closely linked in the minds of Fundamentalists that at its eleventh annual meeting the ACCC passed two resolutions: a condemnation of the WCC due to communist affiliations and a request that the United States withdraw from the U.N. unless the organization expelled the Soviet Union.⁸⁹ Although Fundamentalists believed that the FCC/ NCC and WCC would eventually collapse, they understood this faltering would be the final harbinger for an even greater evil. Smith warned readers that, “If the United Nations and the National Council of Churches should collapse at about the same time...world-wide anarchy will be accelerated on a scale never before witnessed in the world—the very conditions which will ultimately throw up Antichrist.”⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Noel Smith, “One of the World-Church Twins,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, January 13, 1961, 4.

⁸⁶ George Dugan, “Dulles Attacked By Church Council,” *New York Times*, October 30, 1948, 16.

⁸⁷ Carl McIntire, “World Council Provides Communists with Another Network for Propaganda,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, December 15, 1961, 4.

⁸⁸ Noel Smith, “Iron Curtain Stooges and World Council,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, August 6, 1954, 1.

⁸⁹ “Fundamentalists Hit National, World Councils,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 21, 1952, 6.

⁹⁰ Noel Smith, “Ominous Rumbblings,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 28, 1952, 4.

While Fundamentalists assigned antagonistic roles to organizations like the WCC in their apocalyptic narratives, they had no qualms about gathering themselves together in similar fashion. As early as 1919 with the World's Christian Fundamentals Association, Fundamentalists came together through the common bond of premillennial dispensationalism.⁹¹ Carl McIntire continued this trend in 1941 when he founded the American Council of Christian Churches, a fellowship historian Mark Silk identified as the "ecclesiastical Doppelgänger" of the FCC. Silk concluded that the ACCC "embodied the paranoid style in American politics" and notes that the FCC/NCC and WCC often had to differentiate between themselves and the ACCC to prevent any public confusion.⁹² Fundamentalists were not absolutely consistent in their aversion to internationalist organizations and mimicked the WCC by founding their own International Council of Christian Churches in 1954. The ICCC, which Norris lauded as the "Twentieth Century Reformation movement," began with representatives from forty countries, many of them having previously left the WCC over its acceptance of modernism and "inclusivistic character."⁹³ These Fundamentalist fellowships, though smaller than their mainline counterparts, did not lack for influence. Although the ACCC excluded any churches affiliated with the FCC/NCC, by 1954 it counted over one million members from seventeen denominational bodies.⁹⁴ In addition, historian George Marsden noted how McIntire's "vigorous promotions through publications and the radio and his sensational attacks...gave him disproportional influence."⁹⁵ This influence was on display in 1961 when the ACCC challenged the NCC over radio airtime at a Federal Communications Commission meeting. A Kansas City radio station, one of the nation's largest stations at the time, had a policy of offering free airtime to Protestant groups and the NCC had spent years doing everything in its power to block the ACCC from accessing this time.

⁹¹ George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 57.

⁹² Mark Silk, *Spiritual Politics*, 58-59.

⁹³ J. Frank Norris, "The World Council of Christian Churches," *The Fundamentalist*, October 12, 1951, 5; "40 Countries To Be Represented At ICCC Meeting," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, July 16, 1954, 5.

⁹⁴ "1 Million Members From 17 Bodies Reported By ACCC," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, December 10, 1954, 5

⁹⁵ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 71.

Ultimately the FCC ruled in favor of the ACCC and granted the Fundamentalists a national platform to broadcast their views—a victory they trumpeted across the front pages of their publications.⁹⁶

As much as liberal ministers may have wished to ignore their Fundamentalist brethren, they frequently recognized their successes and struck back with their own condemnations. From its inception, the Federal Council of Churches fought back against Fundamentalists, as Ralls identified how, “By its spirit and its attitude premillennialism thus stands in the way of another of the great movements of today, that which seeks the closer relationship of Christian bodies for the extension of Christ’s kingdom.”⁹⁷ In 1953, Reverend Ralph Lord Roy placed the *Baptist Bible Tribune* and Noel Smith in the “Protestant Underworld” in his book, *Apostles of Discord*. A firm internationalist and supporter of the WCC, Roy also included McIntire in his chapter listing those he considered to be the most prominent troublemakers in American Protestantism.⁹⁸ Ecumenists likely could have easily answered some of the questions that vexed their secular counterparts as to why grassroots support was so slow in coming. Fundamentalists certainly fit the description of the United Nations’ “worst enemies” according U.N. official Arthur Sweetser. The individual Sweetser loathed the most was “the doubter and the cynic, who stands idly aside, with his hands in his pockets, willing to enjoy peace if the United Nations hands it to him, dubious if it will ever succeed in so doing, and ready on failure to say, ‘I told you so.’”⁹⁹ Even more pointedly, Woodside wondered, “What strange perversity keeps people from making a hundredth part of the effort to mobilize public opinion for peace-making as for war-making?”¹⁰⁰ Modernists believed that Fundamentalism and its premillennial outlook could have been labeled a “strange perversity” and they bristled at every Fundamentalist message that undermined their campaigns for popular support of internationalist movements.

⁹⁶ Arthur G. Slaght, “The American Council Wins,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, September 1, 1961, 3.

⁹⁷ Ralls, 627.

⁹⁸ Noel Smith, “Tribune Placed In ‘Protestant Underworld,’” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, September 11, 1953, 1.

⁹⁹ Arthur Sweetser, “Perspective of the United Nations,” *World Affairs*, Vol. 115, No. 3 (Fall, 1952), 71-73.

¹⁰⁰ Wilson Woodside, “UN Progress?” *International Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring, 1947), 118-123.

To many Americans, who may not even have considered themselves to be Fundamentalists (though many did), the message of premillennialism and more specifically the action it required exerted great appeal. Whereas scientists, modernists, and other One Worlders urged everyone to engage their neighbors in discussion and cooperatively contribute to solving global problems that had plagued humanity throughout all of history, they offered few concrete steps one could follow. They believed the common person was progressive enough in their natural inclinations to overcome their vague encouragements and that the knowledge that “something must be done” would inevitably lead someone to the solution. The apocalyptic frameworks of Fundamentalists, however, offered not only a clear assurance that something would be done, but also gave explicit instructions on how the individual was to behave morally to ensure divine protection of themselves and possibly even their country. When faced with the choice of saving the world or saving themselves, many Americans chose to simply say their prayers and trust God to protect them from the bombs.

CHAPTER 4

FIGHTING THE ARMIES OF GOG

There, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal...

—Ezekiel 39:1 King James Bible

On October 23, 1949, a youthful-looking man stepped onto the platform beneath a canvas tent and opened his Bible to Psalms 94:3 and read aloud the psalmist lament: “How long shall the wicked triumph?” The crowd, approaching thousands, had gathered every day since September 25 within the “Canvas Cathedral With the Steeple of Light” at Washington Boulevard and Hill Street in hopes of bringing revival to the city of Los Angeles. On this seemingly unexceptional day, they heard the energetic preacher give an urgent message entitled, “Why God Allows Communism to Flourish and Why God Allows Christians to Suffer.” The message itself was hardly groundbreaking. As with most biblically literal sermons, it focused on evangelism and the saving of lost sinners. To help spur sinners into action, the preacher combined American jeremiads with predictions of doom and downfall—hardly a novel technique. As had Fundamentalists for almost thirty years, he taught his audience that, “The only nation and the only people that has ever declared war on Almighty God is the communists. In the whole history of the world, we have never had a crowd of cutthroats dare to declare war on God except communists.” As he approached the climax of his message, he bellowed a warning to the audience: “War is on the way and it’s a world war that will sweep civilization into oblivion unless Christ comes and stops it...this is God’s last great call to Los Angeles.” He concluded with a prediction that unless the city and the nation repented and returned to God, the Soviet Union would drop atomic bombs upon Washington D.C., Chicago, and Los Angeles. These were frightening thoughts, but nothing that Fundamentalists had not already warned of since the birth of the bomb. Yet, as so often happens, these unexceptional words produced exceptional results.¹

¹ Erlig Jorstad, *Evangelicals in the White House: The Cultural Maturation of Born Again Christianity 1960-1981* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), 13-14.

Sitting in the audience on that warm afternoon was a woman who worked as a maid for the publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst. The predictions of atomic destruction at the hands of communists so unnerved her that she recited the sermon to Hearst the next morning while she cleaned. According to some accounts, Hearst, a recognizable man in Los Angeles, was so intrigued that he attended the next revival meeting in disguise and in a wheelchair. Whether apocryphal or not, he soon telegraphed every editor in his newspaper empire two words: “Puff Graham.” The resulting media frenzy swelled attendance figures and made Billy Graham an overnight sensation. Over 300,000 people heard Graham’s bombastic preaching as the revival stretched to eight weeks—far beyond its scheduled ending. As news of the new preacher with a successful revival spread, Graham received a second boost. Bernard Baruch, who as a U.S. representative to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission had presented his own plan for international atomic control, read Hearst’s coverage of Graham and brought it to the attention of Henry Luce, editor of *TIME* magazine. After having his atomic plan rejected by the Soviet Union, Baruch believed that a fiery anti-communist preacher like Graham was just the voice the nation needed to hear, and Luce agreed. Within five years the evangelist would grace the cover of Luce’s own magazine.²

The meteoric rise of Billy Graham was the convergence of several key developments, most notably the development of atomic threats, the uneasy standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union for ideological supremacy, and the civil religion promoted by many U.S. officials as an attempt to counteract the Soviet Union’s atheistic Communism. Yet perhaps the most crucial development was taking place within American Fundamentalism. After their exile from mainline denominations and seminaries, Fundamentalists had spent the past thirty years developing the idea of separatism into a doctrine and a test of faith. Because biblical literalism could only allow for a single correct interpretation, to tolerate those who disagreed over doctrinal points would mean to tolerate heresy. As historian George W. Dolla, a proud Fundamentalist himself, declared, “Loyalties to religious bodies, schools, and even friends have had to take second place to the convictions found in the Scriptures.” Graham represented a shift in such thinking and signaled to the nation the emergence of a new strand of Fundamentalism—one

² Jason Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, 145; Mark Silk, *Spiritual Politics*, 56.

which still held to biblically literal interpretations, but was willing to cooperate with those who did not: New Evangelicalism.³

New Evangelicalism, or simply “Evangelicalism” as it is popularly called, took the newfound influence that biblically literal interpretations of the tumultuous post-World War II developments afforded to Fundamentalism and used it to exert leverage upon American culture. Evangelicals during the late 1940s began to split from their Fundamentalist brethren and to venture into the mainstream of American society. Although this radical departure from the separatism of Fundamentalism quickly grew into a powerful cultural force, historians and sociologists have often had difficulty distinguishing between the two movements. As political scientist Corwin Smidt has complained: “while the evangelical movement has ‘captured’ both public and scholarly attention, analysts have frequently been insensitive to important differences within that movement...evangelicals have usually been treated as an undifferentiated mass.” This is partially due to the fact, Smidt notes, that “while all fundamentalists are evangelicals, not all evangelicals are necessarily fundamentalists.”⁴ Even George Marsden, one of the leading historians of Fundamentalism, has employed the tongue-in-cheek definition of a Fundamentalist as “an evangelical who is angry about something.” He later defined Fundamentalism more seriously as “a subtype of evangelicals and militancy is crucial to their outlook.”⁵ Yet still confusion persists due to the evangelical nature—the desire to “win souls” and effect conversion among nonbelievers—of both Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism. While Fundamentalism is certainly a “subtype” of evangelical Christianity, many conflate this with meaning that it is a subservient branch of the New Evangelical movement that has dominated so much of American culture in recent decades. New Evangelicalism was an offshoot of what was at the time a much larger Fundamentalist movement. Whereas the defeat and loss of denominational control to Modernists caused Fundamentalists to adopt a militant doctrine of separatism, many within the

³ George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville: Bob Jones University Press, 1973), 188;

⁴ Corwin Smidt, “Evangelicals within Contemporary American Politics: Differentiating between Fundamentalists and Non-Fundamentalist Evangelicals,” *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (September, 1988), 60.

⁵ George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 1.

movement longed for a return to cultural relevance and influence. The eschatological credibility that biblical literalism provided following World War II opened the door for these outcasts. Those who stepped through it, transforming themselves into “Evangelicals” in the process, found a remarkably receptive world waiting for them on the other side.⁶

Yet while many observers outside the movement had trouble telling the two apart, those preachers and educators who held fast to separatist Fundamentalism believed that they were again fighting for the purity of their beliefs. Rather than supporting those who shared their same biblical interpretations and were soon broadcasting them around the world, Fundamentalists saw such men as enemies. “No greater enemy to the separatist strand of historic Fundamentalism has emerged in the last twenty years than New Evangelicalism,” wrote George Dollar in 1973 in a chapter entitled, “An Enemy Within: New Evangelicalism.”⁷ Dollar traced the origin of the new movement to Harold J. Ockenga, pastor of the Park Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts, and president of Fuller Seminary. Much as Curtis Lee Law had coined the term “Fundamentalist” in 1920, Ockenga charged in 1947 that, “Fundamentalism had abdicated leadership and responsibility in the societal realm,” and that he and other “New Evangelicals” would return to addressing both social problems and personal salvation.⁸ This declaration paved the way for the public emergence of Evangelicalism with the crusades of Graham—who viewed repentance as necessary for more than just individual salvation, but as a means of staying the hand of divine judgement upon the nation. As in their earlier contention with postmillennial Modernists, Fundamentalists viewed the efforts of New Evangelicals to improve, or at least preserve, a decaying world as futile and their friendship with it as something akin to idolatry. Coming from within, Fundamentalists viewed Evangelicals as such a threat that Dollar concluded: “[New Evangelicalism has] eroded Fundamentalists’ centers of strength to such a degree as to make the student of our time ask

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, 203-204.

⁸ Ibid.

seriously whether historic Fundamentalism would survive. Schools, seminaries, mission boards, and publishing houses have capitulated to the deceptions and enormous pressures of New Evangelicalism.”⁹

Many Americans at this time, however, were largely oblivious to struggle between Fundamentalists and Evangelicals. Those people who found comfort in biblical explanations of the times cared little whether these came from a Fundamentalist such as J. Frank Norris or the Evangelical Billy Graham. If pressed to identify with one or the other, most would likely have resisted the label of “Fundamentalist” due to its largely negative reputation. As separatism mattered little to the person in the pew in the face of impending global atomic destruction, most would have identified as Evangelicals. Especially since, as Marsden has noted, during this time most people considered an Evangelical to be “anyone who liked Billy Graham.”¹⁰

Yet despite the tension between the two movements, both agreed that the greatest threat to the United States was the existence of the Soviet Union and Communism. Both disagreed with scientists and popular thinkers who believed that atomic weapons posed such a threat that Americans had to find a way to cooperate with communists to create a One World body strong enough to enforce international atomic controls. Instead they viewed these developments through the lens of biblical prophecy and believed that atomic weaponry would serve as the cleansing fire long predicted to immediately precede the Judgement Day, the One World movement as preparation for the coming reign of Antichrist, and the communists of the Soviet Union as the evil nation of Gog that would threaten the destruction of world during the Last Days before ultimately being destroyed by Almighty God. Thus they believed that unification and cooperation were the last efforts the United States needed to make. Perhaps the only distinction to be found between Fundamentalists and Evangelicals on such prophetic matters was that while Fundamentalists believed saving souls and militantly resisting Internationalism to be equal causes, Evangelicals placed slightly more emphasis upon evangelism. One of the clearest examples of each movements’ values came in 1961 when Graham and Fundamentalist Carl McIntire both attended the National Council of Churches’ Assembly in San Francisco. Following the meeting, both men preached in

⁹ Ibid., 187.

¹⁰ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 6.

nearby churches. A report of their sermons recorded that McIntire recommended that “Christians who believe the Bible reject the council’s plans for a one-world church and...enthusiastically support [the House of Un-American Activities Committee’s] efforts to turn the light of exposure on the activities of Communists.”¹¹ Graham, however, “had no word of criticism of the council, any of its activities, or any of its proposals.” Instead he pointed out that “if a crowd can be used for religion, it can be used for political manipulation.” Such permissiveness by Evangelicals rarely extended to communists and both movements ardently promoted a sanctified version of patriotism.¹²

In no other area did biblical literalism align more with American culture during the late 1940s and 1950s than in that of anticommunism. Men such as Edward R. Murrow had reported early in World War II that the communists of Russia were garnering great support for their successes and sacrifices in the fight against Germany (both of which dwarfed the wartime contributions of the United States), by the end of the conflict a clear showdown had emerged between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹³ It was an ideological battle and one in which the Soviets “possessed a weapon more potent than any of the Tsars had wielded...the fountainhead not only of Slav mystique but of the Communist gospel,” assessed Sir Harold Butler. Butler, a British official with the International Labour Office, recognized the present dilemma for internationalists: “Instead of being welded together in one world, mankind is fatally divided into two sharply opposing camps with the fear of another and deadlier war poisoning the air which it breathes.” Attempts to reconcile capitalist and communist spheres within the United Nations only resulted in an organization “crippled by a split personality.” He believed that one or the other must triumph before the world could be “held together by a common faith.”¹⁴ American political scientists such as Rousek agreed with this assessment, noting that, “While the Anglo-Saxon world has its own notions about one world,

¹¹ “Dr. McIntire and Graham at San Francisco,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, January 6, 1961, 3.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Bliss Jr., *In Search of Light*, 49.

¹⁴ Sir Harold Butler, “A New World Takes Shape,” *Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (July, 1948), 604-615.

Soviet ideology is even more precise about its definition of the term...Stalin has written his own *Mein Kampf* [Foundations of Leninism], and we can read his 'secret plans' all for thirty-five cents."¹⁵

With such high stakes, many U.S. thinkers feared the influence of secretive communist efforts within their country. Political scientist Edward A. Fitzpatrick, who advocated the "total mobilization of manpower, including woman-power and even childpower..." in the United States, urged his countrymen to be vigilant for any signs of communist conspiracies. He believed it to be "imperative that the enemy within our gates shall be located and punished or deported now, without any witch-hunting on the one hand, and without protests of 'virtue' by defenders of a naïve liberalism."¹⁶ Frederick H. Osborn, a U.S. representative to the UNAEC, saw Communism as the "gravest threat" not only to the United States, but also the world. He argued that every civilization in history had possessed some form of religion, but that now, "for the first time in history, a group of men who control...the bodies, and, to a large extent, the minds of 10 to 25 percent of the world's peoples deny these beliefs."¹⁷ Some thinkers refuted the idea that communists lacked any form of religious background. The anarchist writer Abba Gordin interpreted the Soviet system as one that simply replaced Jesus with the laboring class, the proletariat, to create a "Collective Messiah."¹⁸ Even more strikingly, the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev saw in communism's anticipation of the approaching overthrow of the bourgeois by the proletariat the belief that "mankind stood upon the edge of apocalypse from which all of humanity would be redeemed."¹⁹ A few theologians even argued that communism was a descendant of Calvinism because it accepted a preordained and unalterable process of transformation. Yet to the vast majority of citizens and policymakers, the atheism of communism appeared antithetical and incompatible with a "Christian nation"

¹⁵ Joseph S. Roucek, "One World versus an Iron Curtain World," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 258 (July, 1948), 59-65.

¹⁶ Edward A. Fitzpatrick, "Manpower and Atomic War," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 278 (November, 1951), 126-136.

¹⁷ Osborn quoted in Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, 118.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

like the United States. Defending one's faith and one's country soon became synonymous and in such a fight, biblical literalists were eager and ready to supply both ammunition and leadership.²⁰

Compared to organizing for One World, scientists had few answers for how to resolve U.S. and Soviet tensions. Virtually every argument for cooperating on some level with the Soviet Union began and ended with avoiding atomic annihilation. While such arguments did little to reconcile the two vastly different ideologies, nuclear war was much more adaptable to the public's imagination than complex theories. Scientists soon found an ally in spreading their dramatic ultimatums in movie studios. The first atomic drama (excluding *Flash Gordon* serials and other early science fiction films) was *The House on 92nd Street*. Released in September 1945, it originally featured FBI agents tracking Nazi spies, but was hastily altered after Hiroshima to show the spies as seeking secret plans for an atomic bomb. The film won an Oscar for "Best Original Motion Picture Story" and Hollywood realized it had struck gold in adapting the scientists' warnings to the big screen. One of the most highly acclaimed movies of the 1950s was Stanley Kramer's *On the Beach*, in which the last few remaining survivors of an atomic war are a U.S. submarine crew and a few hundred people living in Australia. In one scene, as they painfully await the coming radiation that has ended all life elsewhere, the characters begin discussing who should be blamed for the end of the world. A drunkard turns to the last remaining scientist and says what is on everyone's mind—that science and its practitioners were the guilty parties. The scientist rebukes the man by stating angrily that: "Every man who ever worked on this thing told you what would happen. The scientists signed petition after petition, but nobody listened. There was a choice. It was build the bombs and use them or risk the United States, the Soviet Union, and the rest of us would find a some way to go on living." To this the drunk replied, "Ha that's wishful thinking if I ever heard it." Scientists could have hardly asked for a script that better explained their fears, their recommendations, and what they saw as their reception by the public. By the end of the film, with the death of the remaining survivors now imminent, the scientist lamented, "Who would have ever believed that human beings would be stupid enough to blow themselves off the face of the earth..." A young submariner then asked him who it was

²⁰ Ibid.

that started the war and the scientist, in a response that perfectly encapsulated the fears of every atomic scientist, explained:

The trouble with you is you want a simple answer and there isn't any. The war started when people accepted the idiotic principle that peace could be maintained by arranging to defend themselves with weapons they couldn't possibly use without committing suicide. Everybody had an atomic bomb and counter bombs and counter-counter bombs, but the devices outgrew us. We couldn't control them. I know—I helped build them...Somewhere some poor bloke probably looked at a radar screen and thought he saw something. Knew that if he hesitated on thousandth of a second his own country would be wiped off the map. So he pushed a button and, and the world went crazy...²¹

Not every cinematic adaptation of the scientists' warnings succeeded as well as *On the Beach*. One of the more bizarre attempts by scientists to spread the word was the production of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film, *The Beginning or the End*. A congratulatory letter to Oak Ridge atomic scientist Edward Tompkins in 1945 from a former high school student, the Hollywood starlet Donna Reed, led Tompkins to ask jokingly why a movie about the development of the bomb was not already in the works. Reed's husband and agent, Tony Owens, pitched the idea to studios and soon atomic scientists found themselves facing their greatest opportunity to preach their atomic warnings to the public and to garner grassroots support for the cause of international atomic control. Scientists were so excited by the film that many even began contributing scripts, most of which concluded with pleas for the adoption of a One World government. One scientist proudly declared that his draft featured a "nuclear holocaust and the subsequent reversion of civilization to 100,000 B.C. with a positive flair for the banal." Both the director and producer joined their enthusiasm and went so far as to secure a meeting with President Harry S Truman to discuss the film. Truman both blessed and titled the film when he told them, "Make your film gentlemen, and tell the world that this is either the beginning or the end." Yet it was not long before scientists grew dismayed at the treatment of their subject by the studio and many left the project in disgust when the studio decided that the film would end on an optimistic note. Atomic scientists believed that conveying only the fears of atomic wars without any sense of personal responsibility or individual action to the audience would only undermine their hope that people would rise up and insist on a world

²¹ *The House on 92nd Street*; Stanley Kramer, *On the Beach*, 1959.

government to regulate atomic energy. Overall, *The Beginning or the End* was a sorely missed opportunity for atomic scientists to rally popular support.²²

The movie industry aided more than just those who believed that humanity should put its trust in a higher form of government. It also served as a mouthpiece for those who believed that security lay in trusting God. While atomic scientists experienced great difficulty in grappling with the communist dilemma in their plans for world government, leaders across the country, from Hollywood to the White House, began promoting a potent blend of civil religion that called upon ordinary citizens to fight the communists with their faith. Although not as dramatic as nuclear holocausts, many of these religious ideas found their way into movie scripts. The most explicit of these films was undoubtedly the United Artists' production, *Red Planet Mars* in 1952. Directed by Harry Horner, it took a negative view of science and its capacity for destruction. Its plot revolved around the United States and the Soviet Union racing each other to make radio contact with an advanced civilization discovered on Mars. A U.S. scientist reaches them first and asks how they have been able to survive so long without destroying themselves. The Martians respond with a biblical sermon and encourage Earthlings to abide by the teachings of Jesus. Stunned, the scientist relays the message to the president and, in a tense Oval Office scene, various advisors urge the president not to release the Martians' message to the public. One hawkish advisor cautions: "we can't hitch our wagon to that star." The president instead listens to the advice of his wife and states: "We've switched stars, Mr. Secretary. Now we're following the Star of Bethlehem." Such a religious reorientation was not just the imagining of fictional writers. An equally extraordinary shift was occurring across the nation and its epicenter was undoubtedly Washington D.C..²³

In the face of the early Cold War's existential threats, U.S. officials beginning with the president turned to religion, not science, to find both comfort and strength to wage an ideological battle. According to historian William Inboden, these influential men "believed that human rights and freedoms were endowed by God, that God had called the United States to defend liberty in the world, and that Soviet communism was especially evil because of its atheism and its enmity to religion." In response to this

²² Smith, *A Peril and a Hope*, 314-318.

²³ Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, 160-161.

threat, he explains that they crafted a civil religion or “public theology” which they used to “mobilize domestic support for Cold War measures, to determine strategic boundaries of containment, to appeal to people of all religious faiths around the world to unite against communism, and to undermine the authority of communist governments within their own countries.”²⁴ U.S. officials sent a clear message to citizens supporting national religion and were quite explicit in their own statements regarding God’s role for the United States. In an address to the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in 1951, Truman declared that, “God has created us and brought us to our present position of power and strength for some great purpose.”²⁵ President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the first president to be baptized while in office, placed a float entitled “God’s Float” and displaying the motto “In God We Trust” at the front of his inauguration parade. Soon, U.S. stamps and currency bore the float’s words and the Pledge of Allegiance was expanded to include the words “under God.”²⁶

Politicians, not the public, often pressed for these changes and the sacralization process continued as the Congressional Prayer Room opened in 1955. Elected officials sent a clear message to the public in numerous speeches. Attorney General Thomas C. Clark gave a bold warning in 1947 to the International Sunday School Convention as he assessed the communist threat: “Never in the annals of time has the matter been reduced to such terrifying simplicity...It’s a choice between God and Mammon...We must accept the teachings of the Nazarene - or else...Let us build for the future on the rock of religion.”²⁷ His words were not confined to the small Iowa crowd as major newspapers including the *New York Times* published his words across the country. J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, contrasted the United States with the atheistic Soviet Union when he declared that, “Americanism finds its most lofty expression in terms of spiritual development...The Ten Commandments cannot be improved upon, nor can the Sermon on the Mount be surpassed as a guide for ethical conduct.”²⁸ George F. Kennan, a U.S.

²⁴ Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy*, i.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁶ Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, 93.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

diplomat, State Department official, and one of the most influential men shaping U.S. policies during the Cold War, even hinted at biblical literalism in 1959 when he gave a layman's sermon at the First Presbyterian Church in Princeton, New Jersey. Kennan classified communism as an "abomination to God" and viewed the proliferating nuclear arms as "the truly apocalyptic dangers of our time, the ones that threaten to put an end to the very continuity of history." In light of these perils, he pleaded with the congregation to understand that "our main concern must be to see that man, whose own folly once drove him from the Garden of Eden, does not now commit the blasphemous act of destroying, whether in fear or in anger or in greed, the great and lovely world in which...he has been permitted by the grace of God to live."²⁹ Even classified government documents carried strong religious overtones. Perhaps the most influential U.S. document of the Cold War, NSC-68, recognized communism in spiritual terms when it declared that the Soviet Union "is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world."³⁰

Political and military officials recognized the valuable role of religion and deemed it necessary in a world that appeared to demand militarization. Immediately following World War II, universal military training captured both political and popular imaginations, but many politicians worried that a nation of soldiers would lose all moral grounding. To quell such fears, the U.S. military began its ambitious Fort Knox training program in late 1946. The program's goal was to create perfect Christian soldiers. Recruits who arrived at the camp deep in the woods of Kentucky received spiritual as well as physical training. Along with basic drills, the soldiers attended mandatory religious meetings, held religious discussions, and regularly visited with chaplains. Surveys taken after the training stint revealed the program to be an undeniable success. Only thirty-seven percent of those soldiers who entered the program considered themselves to be religiously devout, yet after only a few months that number rose to over ninety percent, with many conversions along the way. Herzog summarized the program as a means whereby the "U.S.

²⁹ Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy*, 311.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

Army demonstrated on a small scale the means for creating a force of holy warriors ostensibly immune to vice and imbued with religious zeal.”³¹

Although invocations of God were nothing new in the American resistance to communism (in 1936 politicians had briefly pursued plans to erect a giant statue of Christ in Washington D.C. as a symbol of anticommunism), this strategy took on a redoubled urgency as the Cold War set in. To scientists who hoped that a deeper understanding of the nuclear threat would move them to action and world government, this was a heavy blow - though most failed to realize it. While few scientists at this time excluded the idea of God completely from their outlooks and many actively promoted Christian ethics and morality, all were unaware of how such promotion undermined what they believed to be the only true measure of security. To the listening public, the civil religion promoted by scientists, politicians, and military leaders served to return what had been a straying nation to at least the appearance of spiritual respectability, though it left many citizens with unanswered questions that biblical literalists were more than happy to answer. Herzog notes that religion was “one of the most potent arrows an the quiver of domestic security,”³² but few leaders could have imagined how deeply that arrow would pierce and to whom much of the public would turn to. While most promoters of civil religion certainly expected that citizens would attend mainline Protestant churches, many people found liberal Christianity, with allegorical interpretations and a focus on improving earthly conditions when newspaper headlines declared that the earth might not exist tomorrow, to be unfulfilling. To people facing existential threats, literalistic interpretations offered firm direction and a more tangible sense of hope for the future than vague homilies. Ostracized for decades, Fundamentalists now found their views again credible in light of atomic developments and a seeking audience that had been encouraged from the highest offices to return to God.³³

Both strands of biblical literalism must have appreciated the social mandates to explore religion, but Fundamentalists and Evangelicals severely differed in their reception of the new civil religion.

³¹ Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, 113-116.

³² Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, 59.

³³ *Ibid.*, 6.

Evangelicals, having abandoned separatism as a test of faith and believing that the primacy of evangelism allowed for partnering with any entity that could amplify their voice, embraced the nationalistic theology and would ride the rising tide of religious revitalization for the next several decades. Most notable was the success of Billy Graham, who, after being thrown out by Truman for his excessive showmanship, enjoyed the privilege of counseling every other president since that time—although his prophecy of atomic bombs falling on U.S. cities never did come to fulfillment. Although they rarely partnered with the NCC or WCC, Evangelicals did not make a habit of disparaging such organizations like their Fundamentalist brethren and largely ignored them as they continued their quest to save souls. This tide of support would have its moments of ebbing, but overall the willingness of Evangelicals to combine biblical literalism with evangelism-focused cooperation allowed them to rise to a position of dominance in American culture by the 1980s—a dominance equal or perhaps even surpassing that enjoyed by Fundamentalists before their fall.³⁴

Fundamentalists, however, rejected both civil religion and many of the men who promoted it. The fact that the president and other high-ranking officials would support a religious movement was highly suspicious to separatists who believed that nothing that was truly of God's will could ever be tolerated, let alone endorsed, by the powers of the world. As an editorial writer in *The Baptist Examiner* explained, any blending of "politics and religion together...constitutes a devil's brew." The article argued that civil religion could only lead to eventual persecution of true (literalistic) Christians because "greed, corruption, and wickedness unspeakable" were the only possible results of such a mixture.³⁵ Another reason Fundamentalists rejected the budding civil religion was because of the rejection they faced on the few occasions when they did offer support. Whereas Evangelicals such as Graham enjoyed access to the White House beginning with Eisenhower's administration, Fundamentalists and their organizations were invariably turned away. One particularly revealing incident occurred in 1958 when representatives from the ICCA (the missionary agency of the American Council of Christian Churches), including five Chinese

³⁴ Ibid.,76.

³⁵ "Here's Why Each Baptist Church Should Be Separate, Distinct, and Free," *The Baptist Examiner*, May 24, 1947, 1.

converts, attempted to present Eisenhower with a silver sword on behalf of his loyalty to the people of “Free China” and his determination to fight communism. The president initially declined their offer, ostensibly due to a scheduling conflict, but the Fundamentalists would not be deterred. Their persistence soon drew the ire of several White House officials and Inboden has recovered several candid internal memos regarding the organization. One official warned: “Extreme caution should be exercised in dealing with leaders of [the ICCC]...this organization does not command the confidence of other religious councils and associations.”³⁶ Another assessed the situation: “STATE is dead set against this outfit. Its leader, Dr. McIntire, is a discredited Presbyterian minister with a big log in one eye and a beam on his shoulder.”³⁷ Although these memos underestimated the influence and membership of such Fundamentalist organizations—referring to the ICCC as only “230,000 humorless souls”—the point was clear. Inboden suggests, “as anticommunist as they may have been, American fundamentalists were too strident, too divisive, and too marginal to be included in the Eisenhower Administration’s Cold War civil religious program.”³⁸

Fundamentalists during the early Cold War appeared to take almost as much pleasure in attacking their own political leaders as they did those in Moscow. Norris told his congregation that Franklin D. Roosevelt had failed the country at Yalta and referred to Harry S Truman, a fellow Baptist (though not of the Fundamentalist strand), as the leader of a “crowd of Communists in Washington.”³⁹ In another sermon, he said he had lost faith in both Republicans and Democrats and that General Douglas MacArthur was the only man remaining with any sense.⁴⁰ Truman drew especially harsh criticism from Fundamentalists, not for the use of atomic weapons upon Japanese civilians, but for his encouragement of ecumenism in the fight against communism. When he appointed the first U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, Carl McIntire wrote that the president had violated the Constitution and “thrown an atomic bomb

³⁶ Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy*, 274-275.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism*, 41.

⁴⁰ Norris, “The Four Horsemen Are Riding Fast,” *The Fundamentalist*, August, 11, 1950, 6.

at Protestants.”⁴¹ Noel Smith went even further, likening Truman to Nimrod. In a scathing editorial, Smith charged that to bring about Truman’s “world civilization,” true Christians would have to “sacrifice our loyalty to the Virgin-born Christ of God, give up our quibbling about Rome trying to make a Mussolini Italy and a Franco Spain out of our land, no longer seek to ‘preserve our great religious heritage,’ and accept a Nimrod for our political prophet and a Cain for our religious prophet.” Rather than accept what they saw as politically-motivated spirituality, Smith, speaking on behalf of the *Tribune* staff and other Fundamentalists, emphatically closed the article with: “WE WILL HANG FIRST.”⁴²

Truman was not the only official that Fundamentalists saw as conspiring against national and divine interests. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles faced criticism for his involvement with the NCC and WCC. His predecessor, Dean Acheson, drew harsh remarks for supposedly furthering the communist cause. Smith, ever the prophetic watchdog, believed he had exposed Acheson in 1952 when he wrote: “Nineteen years ago Dean Acheson became one of Stalin’s paid American lawyers. From that time to this day, Dean Acheson has espoused the cause of Stalin, either as his hired lawyer or as Secretary of State.”⁴³ Even women were fair targets to Fundamentalists. By 1952 Eleanor Roosevelt had earned the title of, “Madonna of the Crooked Deals and Mother Superior of that organized greed, atheism, and materialism masquerading as the United Nations.” Not only did they believe that she had “sacrificed the Constitutional sovereignty of the American people upon the bloody altar of the United Nations,” but they found it especially appalling that she publicly disregarded biblical literalism and the Bible’s stories as fables.⁴⁴ Shocking as such attacks may seem, they were born not from personal vendettas, but from Fundamentalists’ distrust of politicians as a whole. An editor at *Prophecy Monthly* accused the whole lot of Washington of employing “scare-psychology” upon the American people to strengthen their power.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Carl McIntire, “Truman Violates Constitution and Appoints Ambassador to Rome,” *The Fundamentalist*, November 23, 1951, 1.

⁴² Noel Smith, “Mr. Truman Now Turns To Religion,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, October 19, 1951, 1, 4.

⁴³ Noel Smith, “A Picture of Dean Acheson: Stalin’s Gangsters Are Like ‘Little Boys,’ He Thinks,” April 25, 1952, 1.

⁴⁴ Noel Smith, “Eleanor Roosevelt Bounces,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, January 18, 1952, 4.

⁴⁵ “What Can We Believe About Russia?” *Prophecy Monthly*, February, 1951, 4.

Smith summarized Fundamentalists' view of politicians during the Cold War: "Today our Babylonian politicians are talking to us about freedom and the higher life for everybody on earth; tomorrow they are yelling that we will be classed as traitors if we so much as think of enjoying normal freedom. Like the smart Alecks of ancient Israel, they have bartered away our national sovereignty, and they are now leading us into slavery."⁴⁶ Both politicians and their initiatives were suspect in the eyes of Fundamentalists.

Surprisingly, mainline Protestant denominations did not fully embrace the mantle of leading the United States' somewhat contrived spiritual renaissance. Instead, many of its liberal ministers displayed a greater affinity and interest in the Soviet Union's communism than their own country's developments. Herzog has noted that liberal Protestants admired communism largely because "the aims of the Soviet experiment were, at least on paper, consanguineous with the larger objectives of the Social Gospel movement—namely the application of spiritual energy to the disquieting problem of modern society."⁴⁷ Liberals' fondness for communism began concurrently with the Bolsheviks' victory in 1917 and was so great that historian Doug Rossinow has pointed out: "A trip to Russia became almost a rite de passage for left and liberal Protestant clergy in the 1920s and 1930s...."⁴⁸ A few notable Fundamentalists also toured the Soviet Union during the early Cold War, such as Detroit pastor G. B. Vick, but they reported hearing no mention of God in the atheistic land. To Fundamentalists, modernism and communism made a natural pair. "Modernism is like Lot with his tents pitched toward Sodom, the camp of Communism," wrote Norris.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Noel Smith, "An Era of Sorrow," October 6, 1950, 4; One politician did earn the praises of Fundamentalists. J. Edgar Hoover's anticommunist fervency matched Fundamentalists' and many regarded him as a national hero.

⁴⁷ Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, 54.

⁴⁸ Doug Rossinow, "The Radicalization of the Social Gospel: Harry F. Ward and the Search for a New Social Order, 1898-1936," *Religion and American Culture*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter, 2005), 79.

⁴⁹ Noel Smith, "Vick Heard No Mention of God While in Moscow," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, September 21, 1962, 8; J. Frank Norris, "Siamese Twins of Modernism and Communism," *The Fundamentalist*, December 12, 1947, 8.

Because Fundamentalists viewed separation as a crucial doctrine, whom one associated with was just as important as one's own behavior. And given the link between modernism and communism, Fundamentalists could then link those who cooperated with mainline protestants, including Evangelicals, to Moscow. Even Louie Newton, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Joe Dawson, the organization's publicity director, garnered editorials linking them to Stalin via their association with men like Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam or other NCC leaders. The kindest assessment of Newton that Norris could offer was to say that "either he is naive beyond the imagination of man, or he is a cold-blooded propagandist for the Russians and their American Communist fifth columnists."⁵⁰ So great were the Fundamentalists' communist suspicions that some even openly questioned Norris' own loyalties! Of course, these preachers and editors were not the only ones who discerned a link between mainline Protestants and communists. In 1948, the House Un-American Activities Committee published a booklet entitled, "100 Things You Should Know about Communism and Religion."⁵¹ Five years later an investigation subcommittee under Senator Joseph R. McCarthy found, unsurprisingly, that the "largest single group supporting the communist apparatus in the United States today is composed of Protestant clergymen" and that "clergyman outnumber professors two to one in supporting the communist-front apparatus of the Kremlin conspiracy."⁵² Given such apparent apathy towards developing civil religion, liberal ministers failed to capitalize on the opportunity as they instead sought, much as the atomic scientists, to reconcile communist goals with Western ideas. As a result, much of the nation's spiritual momentum, which originated in White House and Pentagon meetings, fell to the only Protestant movement eager to accept it—Evangelicals—and spurred their growth for the next several decades.

Oddly enough, Fundamentalists did have a religious ally in the fight against communism: Catholics. The execution of a Catholic priest in 1923 exposed to the world how brutally opposed to religion the Bolsheviks were. Newspapers around the globe printed the story of how Soviet officials had

⁵⁰ J. Frank Norris, "Is Louie Newton Stalin's Front Man in United States?" *The Fundamentalist*, April 18, 1947, 1.

⁵¹ Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares*, 46.

⁵² J.B. Matthews, "Reds and Our Churches," *American Mercury*, July, 1953, 3.

arrested Konstanty Budkiewicz, vicar general of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia, before they marched him into a cellar, shot him from behind, and then denied him a Christian burial.⁵³ In America, Catholics scored several victories against Communism, not through defiance or oppression, but by converting many among them. Certainly the most effective of these anticommunist Catholics was Bishop Fulton Sheen, whose radio programs and television show, *Life Is Worth Living*, reached millions and made him one of the leading Catholic voices in the country.⁵⁴ Virtually all of the most dramatic conversions from communism came under his guidance. Among his prize converts were Connecticut Congresswoman and former communist Clare Booth Luce, the notorious communist “spy queen” Elizabeth Bentley, and Louis F. Bundenz, editor of the communist newspaper *The Daily Worker*.⁵⁵

In spite of these successes against their mutual enemy, Fundamentalists devoted nearly as much energy towards attacking Catholicism as they did communism. Even before Truman announced the formalization of diplomatic relations with the Vatican, the *Baptist Bible Tribune* ran a front page article in 1951 asking, “WILL THE POPE MOVE VATICAN TO AMERICA?” It perceived that communism would likely continue unchecked across Europe and concluded that, “The Third World War is likely to bring us—among other things—the Vatican.”⁵⁶ Norris came to the same conclusion when he told his congregation: “If the Communistic scheme of Moscow shall prevail, and Communism is atheistic, then the Roman Catholic Church will be wiped off the map of Europe, and you and I may see the time when the Pope will pick up his duds and move to America for safety.”⁵⁷ Lest Catholic victories overshadow their own anticommunist efforts, Fundamentalists sought to publicly reaffirm their commitment to the cause. In an article entitled, “The Pope Is Not The Only Foe of Communism,” McIntire reminded readers that, “Our

⁵³ Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*, 47.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Alfred Tyrnauer, “Will the Pope Move Vatican to America?” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, December 15, 1950, 1.

⁵⁷ Norris, “He That Sitteth In The Heavens Shall Laugh,” *The Fundamentalist*, November 22, 1945, 3.

hope is in God, not the Papacy.”⁵⁸ A month later he announced a march on Washington to demonstrate that biblically literal Christians would not “unite” with the Vatican. McIntire’s ACCC encouraged its members to join the Washington Protestant Pilgrimage on January 24 and demonstrate to policymakers “something of the historic Protestant spirit,” affirming that “the testimony of the Reformation is still very much alive in the good old U.S.A.” Channeling the early defenders of Fundamentalism, McIntire even challenged Francis Cardinal Spellman to a public debate regarding the appointment of a Vatican ambassador. This challenge went unanswered, but that did not stop McIntire from publishing what would have been his positions in such a debate.⁵⁹

The most surprising aspect of Fundamentalists’ attacks on Catholicism was that they were not born out of the traditional Protestant-Catholic tension, but rather out of Fundamentalists’ apocalyptic frameworks that lumped Catholicism together with “corrupt” Protestantism and other religions as the coming “Harlot” or World Church predicted in Revelation. According to premillennial interpretations, the Bible warns of two evil, symbiotic organizations that will arise during the last days, a religious power referred to as “The Harlot” and a political power referred to as “The Beast.” The Harlot will serve Antichrist’s political machine, the Beast, before ultimately being destroyed when Antichrist decrees that the world must now worship him as God. Not only did Fundamentalists believe they knew the fate of Catholicism, but part of that certainty derived from their belief in its origin. Rather than originating in the third century, they believed the Catholic Church could be traced back to the Tower of Babel. “I want to say to you that Rome actually began in the tenth chapter of the Book of Genesis,” preached Dr. Harvey H. Springer, informing his congregation that “Nimrod and his profligate wife...put in a great deal of what we see today in what is called the Roman Catholic Church.”⁶⁰ According to Fundamentalists, the Roman Empire was the direct descendant of Nimrod and his tower and that empire, contrary to popular

⁵⁸ Carl McIntire, “The Pope Is Not The Only Foe of Communism,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, October 5, 1951, 1.

⁵⁹ “We Will Not ‘Unite’ With The Vatican,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 16, 1951, 1.

⁶⁰ Premillennialists believed that the ultimate end of all the world’s religions is found in Revelation 17:16 where it predicts that the world’s political leaders will, “...hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.”; Dr. Harvey H. Springer, “Vatican Appointment Sure Sign of Christ’s Coming,” *The Fundamentalist*, February 22, 1952, 2.

consensus, never fell. Rather, it lived on in another form. As Noel Smith explained: "The Roman Catholic Church is a continuation of the Roman Empire. The Empire never died; it underwent a transformation. The Pope and his cardinals are the continuation of Caesar and his provincial governors. The Roman Catholic Church is a legal system of government as well as a religious system. It would seem that any serious student of history would know that."⁶¹ By linking the Pope to Caesar and Nimrod, Fundamentalists sought to diminish some of the Vatican's religious power because they believed that to designate the Roman Catholic Church as the sole participant in the coming World Church would be to give it too much credit. There were many other "false prophets" that they wished to fit beneath the umbrella of the Harlot.

Perhaps no other prophetic element of Fundamentalism represented the alienation that biblical literalists felt from mainline Protestantism than their ability to include their Reformational brethren within the global apostate church that they believed would lead millions of souls into damnation during the last days. Whereas traditional Protestant interpretations had always identified the Catholic Church as the Harlot, Fundamentalists altered this apocalyptic narrative to include most of mainline Protestantism. As Smith explained to readers: "The Roman Catholic Church is not 'The Harlot'; it is a harlot...The Roman Catholic Church, one of the religious harlots—along with corrupt Protestantism and the majority of Baptistism—is going to become integrated into the World Church."⁶² The ecumenical attempts of the NCC and WCC and even willingness of Evangelicals to cooperate with such organizations convinced Fundamentalists that only separatism and biblical literalism were the marks of a "New Testament" church. "The desperate efforts of Protestantism to merge itself into a World Church is convincing evidence that Protestantism has had its day," Smith wrote.⁶³ Strangely, this amalgamation of Catholicism with all other "heretical" sects made Catholics somewhat less hostile and permitted, on some level, polite discourse with them—especially as communism posed an even greater immediate and prophetic threat. Norris sounded almost friendly when he told his congregation, "You may cuss out the Roman Catholic Church all you want to but in this hour we are allies to Rome, or they are allies with us. War makes strange

⁶¹ Noel Smith, "The Coming World Church," *The Baptist Bible Tribune*, July 19, 1957, 5.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

bedfellows.” He then recounted a recent meeting with the Pope in which he candidly told him, “There is one common ground of interest between us. I admire your stand against Communism.”⁶⁴ Yet such amiable words were few and far between as Fundamentalists continued to regard Catholics with much the same disdain they had for modernists, politicians, and scientists.

The only force on earth that could produce even tolerant statements from Fundamentalists concerning Catholicism was the atheist threat of communism. However, because Fundamentalists fervently believed that God would always preserve a remnant of true believers on earth, their opposition to communism stemmed not from fear that all religion might be eradicated, but rather from their sense of divine duty to oppose all forms of error. And none promoted a greater error according to Fundamentalists than “godless” communists. Soviet ideology set itself against the idea of God on every front as Grigory Zinoviev, a communist politician, declared: “We shall grapple with the Lord God in due season. We shall vanquish him in the highest heavens, and whenever he seeks refuge we shall subdue him.”⁶⁵ This was hardly an exaggeration, as Zheya Sveltilova, a professor at Moscow University, discussed the developing space race and asserted that, “When man conquers the universe, he will learn to believe in himself...People who now believe in God will reject him. Such belief won’t be logical or natural. Man will be stronger than God.”⁶⁶ Back on earth, A. Guryev of the Soviet Academy of Sciences directly attacked the very foundations of biblical literalism. He stated that scientific communism would gladly accept the “task of the teacher to show that the world was not created by some kind of ‘out of this world’ power...It therefore rejects the idea of the supernatural, and along with it the ancient fantasy concerning the beginning and the end of the world.”⁶⁷ Fundamentalists warned their audiences of how communists now offered “civil baptisms” for their atheist citizens and had eliminated the word “Christmas” from the Soviet vocabulary along with any expressions of the religious celebration. Communists even established that

⁶⁴ Ibid; J. Frank Norris, “Germany Will Head Federation,” *The Fundamentalist*, December 9, 1949, 5.

⁶⁵ W. E. Dowell, “Why We Should Immediately Sever Relations With Russia,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, January 19, 1951, 6.

⁶⁶ *The Space Industry*, x.

⁶⁷ “Religion vs. Science Debated in Soviet Newspaper Articles,” *The Fundamentalist*, June 22, 1945, 7.

marriages could be annulled due to religion if one party made a formal declaration that their partner was “incapable of educating children according to the democratic spirit.”⁶⁸ After a Fundamentalist held an anticommunism convention in its city, the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* ran a cartoon that summarized Fundamentalists’ views. In the illustration, two communist soldiers, standing in “The Dread Black Void of an Atheist World,” attempt to pull down a giant cross emblazoned with the words, “Symbol of an Enduring Faith.”⁶⁹ One of the more dramatic ways that Fundamentalists tried to convey the gravity of the communist situation was by staging “It Could Happen Here” demonstrations for their communities. Actors, dressed in Red fatigues complete with prop guns, would board up church doors and hang banners declaring such properties “CLOSED BY ORDER OF THE STATE” before standing guard. Local papers typically carried reports and photos of such exercises which proved effective in capturing the public’s attention.⁷⁰

Fundamentalists’ opposition to communism was not a reaction to the onset of the Cold War. Biblical literalists had warned against the movement even before they fell from prominence at the Scopes Trial. As historian Robert K. Whalen has noted: “The 1917 Russian Revolution was militantly antireligious. For a time, early in the 1920s, all things ‘red’ were suspect in America...This helped set a recurrent pattern among Fundamentalists of ascribing social unrest to communist infiltration, rather than social injustice, and prompted others to regard them as uncaring.”⁷¹ For over two decades, Fundamentalists continued, mostly unheeded, to warn the public of the coming danger until the setting in of the Cold War—much as the atomic bomb at Hiroshima—gave them the appearance of prophets. Suddenly, many Americans began paying much closer attention to the words of biblical literalists. One of the clearest examples of this newfound attention occurred in 1952 when the American Council of Christian Laymen, a Fundamentalist laymen’s group, began promoting a social game called “Are You A Communist?” The

⁶⁸ “Communists Have ‘Civil Baptisms’ For Atheists,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, December 27, 1957, 2; “Behind the Iron Curtain Christmas is not Christmas,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, January 8, 1954, 8; “Says Communists Establish New Divorce Ground,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, February 8, 1952, 3.

⁶⁹ Cartoon reprinted in *The Fundamentalist*, October 14, 1949, 2.

⁷⁰ “Freedom of Religion?” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, February 16, 1962, 4.

⁷¹ Robert K. Whalen, “Communism,” *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, 108.

game's designer, Verne P Kaub, believed it was a valuable activity because every person was "communistic in some areas of our thoughts and actions," and by playing one could identify and remedy such character flaws.⁷² Historian Angela Lahr is quick to point out that the "ACCL believed wholeheartedly in what they saw as a very real and dangerous threat that was infiltrating the homes of ordinary Americans...However extreme and distasteful their belief system, they sincerely imagined that Americans were in harm's way because of a communist threat."⁷³ An even more dramatic example of the absorption of Fundamentalists' blend of biblicism and anticommunism on the grassroots level was the career of Johnnie Mae Hackworthe. Hackworthe, an ordinary citizen who ran for governor of Texas several times and also briefly led her own religious cult, believed that communists had already infiltrated the United States and were killing people. These communists were supposedly able to crash automobiles and airplanes by sprinkling "atomic dust" within their wheels and other machinery and then, using "magnetized beams," take control of the vehicles. She linked the U.N. with the Tower of Babel and stated that the United States should withdraw its membership. Ultimately, she believed that the United States should initiate a third world war as a "holy war" against communism. When asked by journalists how she came to her conclusions, she replied, "The Holy Bible tells me so as I study it."⁷⁴

Among those who spread biblically-tinged anticommunism to the masses, few reached more people than J. Frank Norris and Captain Edgar C. Bundy. Norris, who oversaw the nation's largest pastorate for many years, devoted much of his ministry to educating the public about the true nature of communism and the inroads it was making in the country. In 1945 he boasted of how as early as 1920 he had preached a message entitled, "The World-Wide Sweep of Bolshevism and its Relation to the Second Coming of our Lord."⁷⁵ His greatest moment as an anticommunist came on September 10, 1950, at LaGrave Field in Fort Worth, Texas, where over ten thousand people attended the service to hear his

⁷² Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares*, 41-42.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ "Woman Asks for Holy War, Says Reds Cause Accidents," *Dallas Morning News*, January 29, 1952, 14; "Johnnie Mae Hackeworth, perennial candidate, dies," *Dallas Morning News*, April 16, 1980, 16.

⁷⁵ J. Frank Norris, "The Earth Also and the Works That Are Therein Shall Be Burned Up," *The Fundamentalist*, November 16, 1945.

message, “The Coming Conflagration And Why Russia Is Doomed.” Edgar Deen, the city’s mayor, introduced Norris, who had just returned from a tour of Europe and the Holy Land, and radio stations rebroadcast the message for weeks afterward. In his message, Norris used biblical prophecy, mostly from Isaiah chapter 34 and recent developments, especially concerning oil production, to show why he believed that a war between the United States and the Soviet Union was inevitable. Urging both military and spiritual preparedness, he told the audience, “We didn’t get ready for World War II. We wern’t [sic] ready for World War I. We are not ready for World War III. My fear is that this may be the end of this civilization.”⁷⁶ Although some prophetic interpreters haphazardly assigned Antichrist roles and qualities to the Soviet Union and its leaders, Norris was careful to distinguish between the two. In accordance with Fundamentalist consensus, he believed that communism would be destroyed early in the Great Tribulation and that it would be Antichrist—the head of the UN or some other European alliance—who would lead the last great military force (possibly containing a remnant of the destroyed Soviet Union’s army) into the battle of Armageddon. As he explained to his congregation, “This final Antichrist, Beast of Hell, this Man of Sin...knows what’s going on behind the Iron Curtain; he knows what’s going on in the capitals of the world; he’s moving them like a Master Chess Player...”⁷⁷ In 1950, Leonard’s Department Store took out a full page notice in Norris’ own publication to congratulate the preacher for forty-two years of service and lauding him for “pioneering a long and energetic fight against the influence of Communism and Communistic thinking in America.”⁷⁸ Between his sermons, radio broadcasts, and publications, few men spread the anticommunist message to more Americans than Norris, who based every warning upon strict, literal interpretations of biblical prophesy.

⁷⁶ “Over 10,000 Hear Dr. Norris In Ft. Worth Ball Park,” *The Fundamentalist*, September 22, 1950, 1; Norris, “The Coming Conflagration And Why Russia Is Doomed,” *The Fundamentalist*, September 29, 1950, 1.

⁷⁷ Norris, “The Battle of Armageddon,” *The Fundamentalist*, October 21, 1949, 7; Premillennialist commentator Dr. Arthur I. Brown often lamented the confusion between Gog’s destruction and Armageddon, going so far as to write an entire article listing the differences (see: “What of Ezekiel 38 and Armageddon” in bibliography); Ironically, despite Norris’ great knowledge of Antichrist, his paper often carried advertisements for a “666” cure-all and he had an eight foot tall brass statue of himself commissioned—two items frequently attributed to Antichrist himself.

⁷⁸ “Congratulations Dr. J. Frank Norris,” *The Fundamentalist*, September 8, 1950, 9.

Whereas Norris could effortlessly attract large crowds, Edgar C. Bundy made a career out of going to where the crowds were. During World War II, Bundy had served with General Claire Chennault's "Flying Tigers" and afterwards became Chief of Research and Analysis for Alaskan Air Command. He testified before the joint Senate Foreign Relations-Armed Services committee regarding the Truman-MacArthur affair before stepping down to pursue a ministry as an evangelist and lecturer. A tireless traveler, Bundy reported logging 150,000 miles during an eighteen month period while speaking up to five times a day.⁷⁹ For those whom Bundy could not reach, his book, *Christianity or Communism?* was available for only a quarter and promised to teach "the facts about Communist infiltration into the pulpits and seminaries of the nation." Although Bundy was usually well received (he was the only repeat speaker at the Chicago Rotary Club in 1951), his bombastic attacks on communism and the internationalist movement in religion drew the ire of several publications. In 1955, the *Christian Century* and the *Chicago Sun-Times* labeled the captain an "isolationist" and published critical articles when it became known that he was now the sole owner and operator of the American Legion. Yet even his detractors admitted that Bundy "has a loud baritone voice and its range is increasing."⁸⁰ Norris and Bundy were not alone in their crusade, as other Fundamentalists such as Billy James Hargis, Gerald L. K. Smith, Carl McIntire, and the John Birch Society helped to spread a biblically-literal, apocalyptic system that identified communism as the greatest threat to millions of Americans.

The Fundamentalists' anticommunist message was the culmination of an apocalyptic worldview that stood in stark contrast to the outlook of most other cultural leaders. Atomic scientists and other intellectuals called upon Americans to undertake an extraordinarily complex set of actions—solving all of the war's unresolved tensions including the communist dilemma and uniting together in an unprecedented form of government—based upon a simple motivation—survival or destruction. Biblical literalists, however, offered Americans a simple set of actions—convert, or at least live morally, and be a good patriot—based upon an extraordinarily complex set of premillennial interpretations of apocalyptic

⁷⁹ Douglas Liefield, "Capt. Edgar C. Bundy Will Address Youth Conference," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, June 8, 1951, 1, 8.

⁸⁰ Noel Smith, "Captain Bundy In Their Hair," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 25, 1955, 4.

prophecy. While it is impossible to know which portions of the American population reacted to concerns over atomic destruction or to fulfilled prophecies or were apathetic to the whole situation, given the phenomenal growth of evangelicals and other premillennialists beginning in the late 1940s, it would appear that the majority chose the simpler course of action.

While the complex prophetic framework of Fundamentalists underwent several alterations following the Second World War, Fundamentalists grounded their sometimes extravagant predictions in a premillennial tradition that originated with the first Christians. Even the specifics of their interpretations, for the most part, dated well before World War II began, giving these commentators the appearance of true prophets. Fundamentalists prided themselves on correctly identifying Bolshevism as a threat immediately following the Russian Revolution, but even this development only cemented the antagonistic role they had already believed the Bible assigned to the people of Russia. As Boyer noted, “The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia added fresh cogency to a long-established tradition in prophetic interpretation that identified Russia as Gog, the mysterious northern kingdom whose end-time destruction is foretold in the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel.”⁸¹ This somewhat obscure chapter declares that God will set Himself against the land of Gog, its cities Meshech and Tubal, and its chief prince, Magog, as well as the legion of nations that ally themselves with Gog. At some future time, this alliance will sweep down from the north to wage a fierce battle in Israel before the Lord intervenes and destroys the invaders. Many of the earliest Jewish interpreters believed that Gog symbolized any nation hostile to Israel (as most all symbolic passages denote invaders as coming from the north) and the promise of God’s protection. Historian William M. Clement, however, points out how, beginning in the fourth century, commentators began assigning specific identities to Gog. First the Scythians and later various Muslim nations, mostly the Ottoman Turks, assumed the title of the wicked kingdom soon to be destroyed. In the early 1800s, English translators began to favor a different translation of the title of Magog—the Hebrew phrase *nesi rosh*—not as “chief prince,” but as “prince of Rosh.” They quickly began to suspect that “Rosh” was indeed an early form of “Russia” and further examination convinced many that the cities mentioned in the

⁸¹ Boyer, “The Growth of Fundamentalist Apocalyptic in the United States,” *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism Volume 3: Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 156.

passage, Meshech and Tubal, referred to the modern cities of Moscow and Tobolsk.⁸² As Norris informed his congregation, “Russian Sovietism, with the zeal of crusaders that outdistances Peter the Hermit and his ten million crusaders—they are going forth with two flags, one the red flag of Sovietism, and the other the black flag of atheism prophesied by Ezekiel.” Further cementing the designation of Russia as Gog, especially among laymen Christians, was the Scofield Reference Bible which sold by the million and that, in its commentary notes, left no room for discussion by linking the two absolutely.⁸³

Although complex, premillennial interpretations regarding conflict between nations (as opposed to those predictions involving either global judgements or events affecting the individual) revolved around two large-scale battles. The names for each participant in these conflicts often varied from commentator to commentator, but all adhered to a similar theme: a battle between the King of the North (Gog) and the King of the South signals the beginning of the end and a final battle between the King of the West (Antichrist) and the Kings of the East closes history. The perceived preparations for such battles determined many of the premillennialists’ views of foreign policy. According to their apocalyptic framework, most biblical literalists believed the first of these battles would occur shortly after the beginning of the seven year period referred to as the Great Tribulation—though a few entertained the possibility that this battle occurs later as the fulfillment of the sixth “Vial Judgement.” As life on earth continues on in relatively normal fashion (most of the divine judgements were not believed to befall the earth until the final three and a half years), the alliance of Gog/Russia will launch a surprise attack on Israel and quickly be destroyed by God. Some interpreters disagreed as to whether the Soviet alliance would actually be attacking the Jews of Israel or fighting another southern power such as Palestine in Israel for control of the land (and its valuable oil). Regardless, most all agreed that despite the divine deliverance of Israel, the battle would expose their vulnerability and convince them to sign a peace accord with Antichrist’s western kingdom. This agreement between the Jews and the UN or some other European confederation will last until the midpoint of the Great Tribulation when the Antichrist will reveal

⁸² William M. Clement, “Evil Empire,” *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, 161-162.

⁸³ Norris, “The World-Wide Sweep of Russian Communism And Its Relation To The Second Coming of Christ,” *The Fundamentalist*, December 18, 1953, 5-6.

his Satanic nature and seek to destroy the Jews. God will continue to preserve a remnant of the Jewish people in spite of Antichrist's holocaust, culminating in Antichrist marshaling all of the armies of the West to meet the armies of Asia in the valley of Megiddo in Israel. Again, prophecy commentators wavered on the motivation of the Kings of the East—whether they were also there to exterminate the remaining Jews or to defeat Antichrist—and most either said little or attributed their marching to demonic possession. All did agree though that this battle, called Armageddon, would feature the combined fighting forces of the entire planet and would be the last great human activity before the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. At the very moment the battle is to begin, premillennialists predicted that Christ would appear, defeat Antichrist, slaughter the armies, and sit down to deliver sentence to every soul on the Day of Judgement.⁸⁴

Whereas biblical literalists opposed much of the internationalist movement because they believed it to be in preparation of Antichrist's kingdom, they opposed communism because they believed that it would instigate many of the coming tribulations. As prophecy commentator, A. Reilly Copeland, wrote: "Communitic Russia [will serve] as a bridgehead between Asia and Europe to egg the Asiatics against the white race while 'Gog' (Rosh) Russia plans to invade Palestine—Ezek. 38-39."⁸⁵ Yet premillennialists did not believe that the Soviet Union would act alone in its defiance of God, but would be joined by a host of nations that would not join the U.N. or any European unification. The thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, in addition to Gog, lists Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and the house of Togarmah as comprising the northern force. In determining the identity of these nations, premillennialist Bertram Hall argued that the original Hebrew words from which Ethiopia and Libya are translated, *Cush* and *Phut*, do not refer to the modern political boundaries of these African countries, but refer more broadly to all the nations in the

⁸⁴ Virtually every biblically literal prophecy commentary for most of the twentieth century adhered to this apocalyptic narrative or some slight variation of it. After the fall of the Soviet Union, greater variations were introduced as biblically literal apocalypticism has continued to adapt and evolve. The following are just a few of the literally thousands of books that comprehensively outline this narrative: Charles E. Bray, *Glimpses of Prophetic Truth* (Reidsville: Evangelistic Crusaders, 1954); C. Leslie Miller, *Goodbye World* (Glendale: G/L Publications, 1972); Harry Rimmer, *The Coming War and the Rise of Russia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1940) W. Norman Greenway, *When The Vultures Eat The Dictators* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1941).

⁸⁵ Copeland quoted in Bertram Hall, "Russia In End-Time Prophecy," *Prophecy Monthly*, July, 1949, 6-7.

Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions. Other commenters accepted the translations as they were and, overall, relatively little attention focused on identifying the first three allies. Gomer, however, drew substantial interest as many interpreted it to be modern Germany. Hall noted that the name Gomer also appears in Genesis 10:3 as the father of Ashkenaz, whom biblical literalists linked to the early Teutonic tribes.⁸⁶ Norris, a master of recognizing the prophetic significance of world events, explained to his audience that the Western powers were in a lose-lose situation with Germany. Because a defeated Germany was especially vulnerable to communism, he noted that “it will pay the United States and Great Britain to put Germany back on her feet, and that is what now is taking place.” However, this strengthening will ultimately be counterproductive given Germany’s prophetic role of the ally of Gog. So crucial was this prophesied “Gomer” that Norris ventured to say: “Germany holds the peace or war, the destiny of Europe in her hands. All the surrounding countries like Holland, Belgium, The Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, all the Balkan countries, Czechoslovakia—as goes Germany so will they go.” Regarding the “house of Togarmah,”⁸⁷ Hall showed that the same name is mentioned earlier in Ezekiel 27:6 as a land producing fine horses and mules. Based upon this, he concluded that this represented Turkestan and that the region would supply Soviet invasion forces with cavalries.⁸⁸ To help his listeners remember the broad outlines of such interpretations, Norris often quoted a “modern translation” of Ezekiel 38 given by preacher J. R. Graves in the nineteenth century:

Son of Man, set thy face against Gogue, the emperor of Germany, Hungary, and Autocrat of Russia, Muscovy and Tobolski, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord, behold, I am against thee, O Gogue, Autocrat of Russia, Muscovy and Tobolski, and I will turn thee about, and put a bit into thy jaws...all of them handling the sword, among whom shall be Persians, Ethiopians, and Libyans; all of them with shields and helmet. French and Italians, Circassians, Cossacks, and the Tartar horses of Usbeck, and many people not particularly named besides.⁸⁹

Not only did this prophetic framework direct how biblical literalists viewed international developments, but it gave them a unique, if not reckless view, of the U.S. role in the coming apocalyptic drama. While many premillennialists found no mention of the United States in the Bible’s final prophecies,

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Norris, “Germany Will Head Federation,” *The Fundamentalist*, December 9, 1949, 2.

⁸⁸ Bertram Hall, “Russia In End-Time Prophecy,” *Prophecy Monthly*, July, 1949, 6-7.

⁸⁹ Norris, “Lecture on Russia,” *The Fundamentalist*, June 18, 1948, 2.

some did believe the nation could play at least a minor part in frustrating Satan's scheme. Revelation 12:14 states that a woman (believed to symbolize the Jewish remnant) will be "given two wings of a great eagle...." which some speculated could refer unsubtly to the United States.⁹⁰ Most, however, who used prophecy to determine the United States' future often turned to Ezekiel 38:13. The same chapter which describes the kingdom of Gog also describes it as being antagonized by "Sheba, and Dedan, and all the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof." With Gog representing the communist nations, some premillennialists believed that its opposers could only be the United States and Great Britain. Dr. M. R. DeHaan came to this conclusion in his book, "Signs of the Times." The *Baptist Bible Tribune* positively reviewed DeHaan's book and added, "The Chicago Tribune will snort if it reads that the United States is one of Britain's 'cubs', but...it cannot deny the historical fact that the United States, along with Canada, Australia, etc., came from Britain. Is there scriptural significance in this, and is Britain and her robust family connected with 'Dedan,' 'Sheba' and 'Tarshish'?" Bertram Hall was less optimistic about his country's fate. Hall believed Eastern Germany would soon fall into communist hands and this would rapidly accelerate the formation of a "Western Union" in which deteriorating conditions "may well lead to an overriding dictatorship ready to the hand of anti-Christ." The best that anticommunists could hope for in this situation is that "Russian schemes may be checked for a time by this confederation, supported by their African dependencies, by the British Commonwealth, the United States, and Latin America." As ultra-patriotic as Fundamentalists and Evangelicals were, literalistic interpretations of prophecy left little room for them to imagine their country among the principle participants of the apocalypse.⁹¹

The absence of the United States in biblical prophecy meant that premillennialists had to explain why God would bring the nation into such a powerful position during what appeared to be the last days only to have it disappear completely once the Great Tribulation began. Faced with this dilemma, biblical literalists concluded that the United States should oppose communism for as long as it could prior to the Great Tribulation and by whatever means it could—even to the point of initiating an atomic war. Because apocalyptic prophesy precluded the destruction of the earth by human agency, Fundamentalists were

⁹⁰ "Books—M. R. DeHaan's 'Signs of the Times,'" *Baptist Bible Tribune*, October 12, 1951, 3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

able to discuss atomic war with the Soviet Union without the same fear (some might say rationality) that affected the discussions of others. In his study of what he refers to as the “Fundamentalist Apocalyptic,” Boyer made two statements regarding biblical literalists and their advocacy of atomic war. First, that, “As with thermonuclear war, these popularizers did not advocate an actual attack on the Soviet Union,” and second, that these popularizers conceded that, “The prophesied destruction of Russia and godless communism...would ultimately be by divine intervention, not by human means.”⁹² Boyer’s second statement was universally true among Fundamentalists, but his first statement is challenged by several explicit statements made by Fundamentalists. As a whole, Fundamentalists opposed any effort to disarm the U.S. nuclear arsenal and actively encourage nuclear proliferation in preparation for what they saw as an inevitable conflict. In 1962, the Baptist Bible Fellowship, with its reported national membership of 1,250 churches as well as churches in 27 other countries, passed resolutions supporting the development of nuclear weapons. A summary of the meeting reported: “In a resolution adopted at its annual meeting, the fellowship said it assured ‘our government that we are favorable to every measure necessary to the security of the free world against the international Communist program of imperialism which would destroy individual freedom from this earth.’...’This includes,” the resolution pointed out, “the further development of adequate nuclear deterrents, essential to the preservation of peace.”⁹³ Evangelist Charles W. Dyer made the same point eight years earlier when he preached at the Central Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, and declared:

as long as Christ remains by the Father and as long as Satan is out of the Pit, “I AM NOT IN FAVOR OF DISARMING.” I want to go on the record as saying that...You are dealing with a bunch of cutthroats that are inspired by Satan; led by him; their program is of Satan; they hate God; they hate righteousness. You take a bunch of the red birds who have infiltrated our country, are seeking with a great noose to get hold of all the nations of the earth, and as long as Satan is out of the Pit to inspire this bunch of gangsters I say, “Stay armed to the Teeth!”⁹⁴

⁹² Boyer, “The Growth of Fundamentalist Apocalyptic in the United States,” *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, Vol. 3, 170.

⁹³ “Fellowship Wants Nuclear Weapons & Doesn’t Want Communist Propaganda,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, September 21, 1962, 6.

⁹⁴ Charles W. Dyer, “God’s Plan For The Ages,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, March 5, 1954, 4.

To Fundamentalists, preparation for war was not just a precautionary measure for the *possibility* of war. They believed that such weapons should be used. In the same sermon in which Dyer opposed disarmament, he told the audience: "Some of you are not going to like this. Create all the atom bombs we can. As far as my part is concerned drop one on Moscow tomorrow." According to the transcript of the meeting, this was the only phrase to produce a loud "Amen!" from the crowd.⁹⁵ Another evangelist, W. E. Dowell, told the people at High Street Baptist Church in Springfield, Missouri, that atomic war would come even if the United States refrained from a first strike because the Soviet Union already had "a map of the United States in Moscow that has has been redrawn and the names of our major cities changed." He warned the audience: "we are on the verge of a world-wide war against Soviet communism. What shall we do? Say, 'Joe, you go jump in the creek. Russia, use your atomic bombs or whatever you have. We are going to turn back to God...God has more power than all of the atomic or hydrogen bombs that have been invented or can be invented.'"⁹⁶ Even those who believed that a straightforward war with the Soviet Union might not occur astutely recognized, as did the editors at *Prophecy Monthly*, that the United States could quickly be "bled white" if drawn into proxy wars in Asia by the communists. They pointed out that atomic bombs would be of little use in Asia due to the lack of centralized targets, but did note that a "chain reaction of bottlenecks" could completely halt Russian industries if even a small number of factories were destroyed.⁹⁷ Norris believed he had solved both the problem of fighting in Asia and the manpower needed to invade the Soviet Union when he told his audience, "I'll hazard something for you to think about...you and I may see the day when five or six million Japanese soldiers will be on the mainland marching against Russia under Douglas MacArthur's command."⁹⁸ Whether begun by the United States or the Soviet Union, atomic war was not a subject from which Fundamentalists shied away nor a step they hesitated to call for.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ W. E. Dowell, "Why We Should Immediately Sever Relations With Russia," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, January 19, 1951, 6-7.

⁹⁷ "What Can We Believe About Russia?" *Prophecy Monthly*, February, 1951, 4-5.

⁹⁸ Norris, "He That Sitteth In The Heavens Shall Laugh," *The Fundamentalist*, November 23, 1945, 3.

The apocalyptically-emboldened Fundamentalists of the early Cold War were far removed from their predecessors who had managed to be both patriots and pacifists. William Jennings Bryan, who had resigned his position as Secretary of State over President Woodrow Wilson's alleged hawkish handling of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, illustrated just how far Fundamentalism had come. When confronted about his pacifism, Bryan responded: "Those who advocate the policy of 'fighting the devil with fire' seem to overlook two important facts: (1) the devil is better acquainted with fire than his adversaries; (2) being at no expense for fuel he has an economic advantage which tells powerfully in any prolonged contest."⁹⁹ Yet by the late 1940s, Fundamentalists had largely adopted a premillennial willingness to fight the devil with man's new atomic fires. This willingness to fight entrenched itself so deeply into the Fundamentalist mindset that even in 1991, as the Cold War ended, social scientist Stephen Kierulff found a strong correlation between premillennialism and the willingness to engage in nuclear war. In surveying a wide spectrum of individuals, Kierulff looked for common factors among individuals who believed not only that Russia would attack the United States before the year 2010, but who also were confident that they would survive such a war and were thus willing to support the use of nuclear weapons in such a war. The resulting data confirmed his belief that "pro-nuclear sentiment stems (among other sources) from premillennialist Christianity, which affirms that Jesus will return to Earth in order to save the human race after a cataclysmic war." Conversely, he found that belief in traditional Christian teachings that treated the resurrection and other End Times prophecies in a generalized or allegorical manner did not affect one's attitude about nuclear war. His analysis concluded that this was because pro-nuclear attitudes derived "not only from dispensationalism, but also (in part) from the political ramifications of one of the central tenets of fundamentalism, that everything in the Bible is literally true."¹⁰⁰ In fact, Kierulff found that premillennialism and other biblically literal doctrines outperformed all other demographic indicators in relating to pro-nuclear attitudes—even political conservatism.

⁹⁹ William Jennings Bryan quoted in Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism*, 171.

¹⁰⁰ Stephen Kierulff, "Belief in 'Armageddon Theology' and Willingness to Risk Nuclear War," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (March, 1991), 81-83; Although he conducted his research before the fall of the Soviet Union, Kierulff used the term "Russia" as opposed to "Soviet Union" in survey due to its prevalence in "Armageddonist literature."

Whereas atomic scientists and other intellectuals cowered before the atomic bomb and pleaded with anyone who would listen that mankind must unite beneath a One World government or perish in flames when the United States or the Soviet Union inevitably triggered the Third and Final World War, Fundamentalists showed no such fear. These biblical literalists believed that scientists' fears were misplaced and that by forfeiting national sovereignty and attempting to cooperate with communists, Americans would be actively accelerating God's prophetic timetable. Noel Smith aptly described Fundamentalists' opposition to the message of atomic scientists in an article entitled, "Man Is Not Going To Destroy This Planet," when he wrote:

Today the majority of the scientists, politicians, theologians, and radio, television, and newspaper pundits are delirious. They have one theme: Man is about to destroy the planet with nuclear weapons. Any day now, by design or accident, the button will be pushed, there will be a chain-reaction series of explosions; and when they are over, not a sob or a whimper will be heard on earth...And because man is about to destroy this planet and everything on it, we are being told by the Bertrand Russels—in Washington as well as in London—that we must face the fact that it is "better to live Red than die."...We are being told that when Nikita Khrushchev pulls off a shoe and begins pounding the desk with it, we are to stand by in as deep and reverent a hush as savages in the presence of a witch doctor going through his ritual...Any Biblically literate person knows that the Bible never heard of this frenzied idea of Man destroying this planet with nuclear weapons, or in any other way...The Bible says that this Gospel age is going to end with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ—suddenly, in mid-air—for His redeemed and regenerated people—not with a nuclear explosion, or a series of them.¹⁰¹

In a very real way, the Bible that Fundamentalists held to be literally true allowed them to make peace with the atomic bomb, internationalism, and communism. With their prophetic guidebook, they were able to identify each of these events as just another development in a rapidly changing world that was still proceeding exactly according to God's plan.

¹⁰¹ Noel Smith, "Man Is Not Going To Destroy This Planet," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, October 13, 1961, 4.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

On October 25, 1962, at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time, the world held its collective breath. The Cold War standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union appeared to have finally reached its breaking point. Ten days earlier, on October 15, U.S. Intelligence had presented President John F. Kennedy with photos taken by a U-2 spy plane of Soviet intermediate-range ballistic nuclear missiles being installed on the island of Cuba. A naval blockade of the island and demands by the United States to cease installations and dismantle existing missiles had little effect and by the 24th the military had gone to DEFCON 2, its highest level of alert in U.S. history. Now, as the hour of Kennedy's deadline to the Soviets approached, it appeared that the worst fears of atomic scientists, whose movement had drastically faded after the 1940s as public indifference to nuclear threats set in, had come to pass. The world watched to see if the Soviets would strike first or force the Americans to be the agents of atomic destruction. Perhaps never in human history had the combined civilizations of man been so close to annihilation as in that moment. Historian Paul Boyer recalled the moment as a student when he saw the clock "creep up toward 11...half expecting a cataclysmic flash when the hour struck." It appeared that the cause of extinction for the species *Homo sapiens* might indeed be its own hand.¹

Yet the hour passed and world did not end. Kennedy and Russian Premier Nikolai Krushchev were able to negotiate an arrangement through back-channel communications. On October 27, the two secretly agreed to remove nuclear weapons from offending territories: the Soviet missiles from Cuba and U.S. missiles from southern Italy and Turkey. Both leaders publicly announced the agreement the following day, effectively ending the crisis and resuming the cool standoff between the two nations that would last another thirty—though it never again produced such an apocalyptic dread.

Despite their apocalyptic nature, both Fundamentalists and Evangelicals reacted to the crisis in Cuba, not with wild-eyed expectation, but with apathy. The greatest single moment in which the world seemed poised to either end itself or usher in the final stage of God's plan for humanity produced little

¹ Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light*, xvii.

more than yawns from apocalyptically-minded biblical literalists. Perhaps this was because the crisis flared up and then resolved faster than weekly sermons or monthly publications could disseminate any interpretation of the event by Fundamentalists. One factor in the disinterest was certainly the death of J. Frank Norris in 1952. The passing of the ardent anticommunist robbed Fundamentalism of one of its loudest and most influential voices. With his propensity for giving his audience the prophetic scoop on world events, Norris would have likely embraced the crisis. Still, among those Fundamentalists who remained and even within Evangelicalism there was a conspicuous silence surrounding the event. Noel Smith, despite publishing two issues of his *Baptist Bible Tribune* during the course of the crises, wrote nothing of the situation, prophetic or otherwise. The only allusion to the nuclear watershed came on November 9 when the paper ran a cartoon depicting Kennedy sitting in a rocking chair and holding a shotgun. In the background, a Soviet ship bearing Khrushchev's image retreated and the caption read, "And Khrushy Turned Back." Few other Fundamentalist publications gave the crisis more than the *Tribune*, with most giving it no mention at all.²

Such indifference might seem contradictory or even hypocritical given that no identifiable group of Americans anticipated the end of the world more than biblical literalists. Yet this indifference was in keeping with the ultimate priority of both Fundamentalists and Evangelicals—evangelism. The desire to produce conversions surpassed any sense of prophetic excitement for these Christians. Billy Graham, who was leading a revival campaign in Argentina during the Cuban Missile Crisis, perfectly encapsulated the relation between apocalyptic anticipation and winning souls when he said on the final day of the crises: "The world crises has added interest [in the revival]. And the people of Argentina have been willing to listen to the gospel as never before...We believe this is a glorious day of opportunity in the midst of a

² "And Khrushy Turned Back," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 9, 1962, 1; Ironically, the U.S. military put more prophetic stock into the Cuban developments than biblical literalists. Lahr has showed that during Operation Mongoose—a U.S. attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro—General Edward Lansdale had proposed convincing Cubans that Christ would return once they overthrew their government. She has quoted Lansdale as suggesting that once the rumor spread, "...a U.S. submarine was to fill the night sky with star shells, thus convincing the natives that Christ was arriving, leading to the final overthrow of Castro." The plan did not address how Cubans might react to seeing Americans and not angels landing, but it was based heavily on the idea that premillennial ideas were adaptable and could quickly gain traction on a popular level.

crumbling world.”³ To Graham and other premillennialists, signs of the end were a glorious opportunity. They did not relish the idea of supernatural tribulation and the destruction of the earth, but rather they valued the perceived signs for the utilitarian purposes they served. Not only did fulfillments of prophecy reaffirm their own personal faith, but they injected a sense of urgency into evangelistic and missionary efforts. If the world could end tomorrow then there was no time to waste and no sacrifice too great to make in the effort to save souls from a literal, eternal hell. In addition, fulfillments provided persuasive evidence for biblically literal Christianity to prospective converts. A nonreligious person might reject the Bible, but the newspaper headlines and government reports that now littered Fundamentalists’ sermons added a new, compelling element. Because of their apocalypticism, premillennialists did not share the same kind of fear that atomic scientists did, yet this did not mean that they had no fears. In one sense they were indeed a “league of frightened men”—afraid for the millions of souls they believed would soon perish without Christ in the approaching apocalyptic judgements.

The fact that evangelism and apocalypticism cannot be separated within the Fundamentalist mindset resolves some inconsistencies that have puzzled historians. Angela Lahr asserted that the patriotism of Cold War premillennialism contradicted itself: “If the Cold War was really the beginning of the end and the United States won the Cold War, would God’s kingdom be established on the earth before Christ’s return, as postmillennialists claimed? The implications of such rhetoric contradicted evangelicals contentions that only God could end the Cold War...”⁴ Yet what Lahr failed to account for was Fundamentalism’s disdain for American society and politicians, as well as the movement’s intense missionary zeal. Fundamentalists perceived U.S. politicians as too corrupt and society too morally depraved to usher in the millennial kingdom in the event of a U.S. victory. Rather, premillennialists hoped that their revival efforts would produce sufficient conversions to ensure God’s blessing on the country and a Cold War victory *in order that* the apocalypse might be delayed and lost souls be given more time to accept Christ. If the United States were to fall, either from communist infiltration or atomic war, then surely the final hour of judgement would strike and the window of salvation close forever to every remaining soul

³ Graham quoted in Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares*, 117.

⁴ Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares*, 40.

on earth. Evangelism dominated Fundamentalists' actions, but their apocalypticism meant that they had to be patriotic to have the chance to fulfill their highest calling.⁵ Graham explained this motivational cycle when he told a revival crowd, "You say, 'But Billy, I'm only one person.' Ah yes, but when you make your decision, it is America through you making its decision." With every soul saved, the United States enhanced its ability to win the Cold War. Historian Dean C. Curry has said, "It is not, I believe, an oversimplification to say that early twentieth-century fundamentalism occupied itself with saving souls, period."⁶ The Fundamentalists of the early Cold War were little different.

Other historians have attributed premillennialists' apocalyptic zeal to a judgmental or vengeful quality of character. Eugene Weber has described the mindset of those (typically lowly and oppressed) souls awaiting a literal, coming kingdom as: "Liberation is sweet; bloody vengeance is sweeter; ruling the unrighteous will be sweetest of all."⁷ Yet Fundamentalists rarely expressed any delight at the thought of communists or modernists or any other ideological foe being eternally damned. While they may have militantly opposed these groups, an evangelistic sense of compassion almost always prevailed. As the world neared its end, Fundamentalists may have been doubtful at the prospects of converting their opponents, but they always held out hope. Anticipating the punishment of their enemies was far from the minds of Fundamentalists because the seriousness of the coming judgment meant that they had to evaluate their own souls before all else. Noel Smith warned his readers of this in 1950:

The judicial judgment of God is beginning in this earth. Good men have been amazed that the Divine patience has been extended over so long a period. And this is especially true of our wicked land. For the Christian this suffering can only mean one thing—discipline. God is going to burn up our dross...The way of escape is to judge ourselves before God judges us. We had better take inventory of ourselves. We had better be sure that we have something more than an abstract orthodoxy...If we are real Christians we have nothing to fear. We are to lift up our heads. The buds are appearing, which means summer is nigh.⁸

In addition to their own personal salvation, premillennialists had one other reason to rejoice on the eve of the Great Tribulation: their doctrine of the Rapture. Although a few premillennialists disagreed over whether this event would occur at the midpoint or the end of the seven year tribulation, the vast

⁵ Graham quoted in Silk, *Spiritual Politics*, 67.

⁶ Dean C. Curry, "Biblical Politics and Foreign Policy," *Evangelicals and Foreign Policy*, 43.

⁷ Weber, *Apocalypses*, 32.

⁸ Noel Smith, "An Era of Sorrow," *Baptist Bible Tribune*, October 6, 1950, 4.

majority believed that the literal rapturing, or “catching up,” of the Church would precede any of the predicted earthly horrors and signal the beginning of the end. Although the Bible never used the term “rapture,” premillennialists took comfort in believing that they would be spared the coming trials based upon verses such as 1 Thessalonians 4:16 & 17, which declares: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” In a moment (what 1 Corinthians 15:52 calls a “twinkling of an eye”), biblically literal Christians believed that God would give an audible signal before instantaneously lifting their physical bodies from the earth and into his presence. Fundamentalist excitement in awaiting the Rapture was on par with that of evangelism. For what could surpass leading others to Christ except for seeing him for one’s self? Unfortunately, this pivotal doctrine and its effect upon modern American society has received little study from historians. Historian Gary Wills observed in 1990 that historians seemed oblivious to the fact that one third of all Americans believed in the Rapture, noting that, “It seems careless for scholars to keep misplacing such a large body of people.”⁹ The certainty of a pre-tribulation rapture gave premillennialists the confidence to call for nuclear stockpiles and even first strikes while atomic scientists and other intellectual elites cowered. This confidence even neutralized fears of the coming Antichrist and global conflagrations. As Norris preached just a few months after Hiroshima, “I don’t know when the Anti-Christ is coming. I don’t know when the battle of Armageddon will be fought. I don’t know when the great tribulation will burst forth on the earth with all its fury. But one thing I do know, I know that before one of these things happens or comes to pass, I know that the Lord Himself will come in glory and power and call his own to meet him in the air.”¹⁰ With such an escape clause—one not afforded to those who took a strictly naturalistic view of the universe—Fundamentalists could find comfort in a world which both secular and sacred sources believed was nearing its end.

⁹ Gary Wills, *Under God: Religion and American Politics*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

¹⁰ Norris, “The Earth Also and the Works That Are Therein Shall Be Burned Up,” *The Fundamentalist*, November 16, 1945.

Premillennialism's apocalyptic narrative, with its hopeful doctrines of rapture and renewal along with its remarkably coherent interpretation of a rapidly changing world, proved to be the springboard that launched biblical literalism back into national prominence and helped it to regain much of the influence it had lost in 1925 at the Scope's Monkey Trial. By 1959, one Gallup poll revealed that over half of Americans believed that Jesus Christ would literally return to the earth. The average response for when this event would occur came to within the next hundred years. The rise of premillennialists, especially Evangelicals, began with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and crescendoed in the 1980s when the movement became one of, if not the most, dominating forces in American culture. Weber has summarized the early Cold War as producing "a mood the West had hardly known for more than a hundred years, and the trickle of apocalyptic predictions was turning into a flood. Prophecy flourished."¹¹ Thousands of prophecy commentaries churned from obscure presses in places like Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Waco, Texas. Hal Lindsey's "The Late Great Planet Earth," which offered a premillennial view of recent events and predicted events soon to occur, topped the *New York Times* bestseller list and became the best selling nonfiction book of the 1970s. The credibility that seemingly fulfilled prophecies lent to biblical literalism enabled Fundamentalists and Evangelicals to swell their numbers into the tens of millions.¹²

Yet despite such phenomenal growth, historians and social scientists have often overlooked Fundamentalism and its accompanying premillennialism as culture factors worthy of study. Marsden has gone so far as to say that, "Fundamentalism remains the largest self-conscious minority group in American culture that has not been extensively studied or historically defined."¹³ To present day scholars, the study of biblical literalism and its implications serves as more than an explanation of several historical anomalies, but has potentially far-reaching implications regarding foreign policy and nuclear decisions in the near future. Sociologist Andrew J. Weigert recognized this in 1988 when he wrote, "Eschatology is, in my judgment, a profoundly important aspect of social life and one that is underdeveloped in the social

¹¹ Daniel Wojcik, *The End of the World As We Know It: Faith, Fatalism and Apocalypse in America*, (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 102.

¹² Weber, *Apocalypses*, 203.

¹³ Marsden, "Defining Fundamentalism," *Christian Scholar's Review*, Winter, 1971, 141.

scientific study of religion. Furthermore, it appears to tie into beliefs about the nuclear arms situation.” He further explained his concern:

The world exists today as a totally new historical paradox. The nuclear context presents us with the threat of total extinction from our own actions. For the first time, the greatest threat comes, not from natural forces, but from the human use of natural forces; not from God acting through nature, but from God, or no one, acting through humans. For the first time, humans can "end the world" themselves; persons of all ideological persuasions have a totally new and shared responsibility for eschatological action. This new responsibility demands new interpretations and plans.¹⁴

In a world in which tens of thousands of nuclear weapons remain in stockpiles and desperate nations race to join the ranks of nuclear-armed powers, the study of literalistic beliefs, which hold that the earth cannot be destroyed by mankind, and influence the thoughts of millions must be encouraged. Any underestimation of such a potent ideology could have truly apocalyptic results.

Because Jesus did not return during Cold War and the world has (so far) managed to avoid nuclear war, it is often difficult to sympathize with the anxieties of both Fundamentalists and atomic scientists. It is even impossible to say that either side was mistaken, given that each would defend that it was their actions that prevented doomsday. Yet despite this ambiguity, one must never forget that during this time the world had begun to rapidly change and even the most astute observers often failed to predict where such changes were leading. Although the traditional definition of *apocalypse* is “an unveiling or a revealing,” historian Thomas J. J. Altizer has proposed a more straightforward definition, one which is strikingly applicable to the Fundamentalist. He writes that, “Indeed, the very advent of modernity can be understood to be an apocalyptic event, an advent ushering in a new world as the consequence of the ending of in old world.”¹⁵ In this time of uncertainty, the possibility that not every change was for the better was a powerful one and the utopian visions of atomic scientists and the premillennialism of Fundamentalists filled a great void in the nation’s psyche. Weber has noted the comfort that even apocalyptic visions can provide, noting that such visions are optimistic because, “If nature presents a compelling picture of recurrence, why should the world’s fate not be part of it? Crops, humans, and

¹⁴ Andrew J. Weigert, “Christian Eschatological Identities and the Nuclear Context,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (June, 1988), 178.

¹⁵ Thomas J. J. Altizer, “Modern Thought and Apocalypticism,” *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism Volume 3*, 325.

kingdoms do not last indefinitely. Nor can the universe. Everything decays and ends, but decadence is preliminary to renewal and revitalization.”¹⁶ The scientists’ message suffered because it argued that revitalization must occur or else destruction would be permanent. Fundamentalists countered that even absolute destruction could not derail the ultimate promise of renewal. Their message echoed Weber’s summary that apocalypticism always taught that “death is followed by resurrection, cataclysm by a new creation.”¹⁷ And so many Americans chose to wait. They carried on with their lives, always aware of the nuclear specter, but reassured that even if Doomsday came, all would end well. A parable printed on the back cover of a prophecy booklet entitled, “So Little Time,” perhaps best summarized the outlook of all forward-thinking individuals in the late 1940s. The opening words of “Darkness and Dawn” encapsulated the threats and possibilities which both atomic scientists and Fundamentalists believed confronted the world following the Second World War:

“What is that?” cried a terrified traveler in the Alps, as in the twilight of early morn he suddenly heard loud crashings and rumblings. “Never fear,” said his guide, unafraid, “’tis but the rising sun warming the snow at the peak, causing it to hurtle into the valley.” The thunder of the avalanche betokens the dawn of a new day. So now, as the sound of the earth’s final convulsions bursts upon our ears, we may know that it marks not only an end, but a beginning.¹⁸

¹⁶ Weber, *Apocalypses*, 38

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Arthur S. Maxwell, *So Little Time* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1946), back cover.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Robert Fuller received a B.S. in youth counseling in 2008 from Baptist Bible College. Before beginning his pursuit of an M.A. in history in 2011, Mr. Fuller worked as a Youth Care Specialist at several residential treatment facilities for troubled youths. Influenced by the biblical stories about the End Times he heard growing up in church and an avid fan of any Doomsday fiction, Mr. Fuller quickly discovered his interest in apocalypticism during his studies. Mr. Fuller's future plans include further writing projects on how biblical literalism has and will continue to influence U.S. culture. In particular, he will examine how Christian ideas of "dominion" affect the current environmental debate. Mr. Fuller lives in Waxahachie, Texas with his wife Cynthia and her two cats.