that, though marginal, enjoys outsized influence in inserting white identity politics into political discourse, can we not say that it enjoys success to whatever degree it enjoys it because of the salience of racist sentiment in the broader American public? In other words, I want to suggest that the AR matters because a significant number of white Americans are already engaged in thinking about politics in terms of what (they think) may advantage whites over other groups. For me, then, the question that the AR presents to us is the same that white nationalism ultimately presents: Does the appeal of racialist discourse and ideology among white Americans reveal a broader problem of racism in white America? Perhaps, depending how we may feel about this question, we can suggest that the real solution for dealing with the AR is to deal with racism more directly in admitting the problem is just not the Alt-Right or Richard Spencer, or even racist individuals themselves, but a society that has purveyed racist ideas throughout its history.

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Liberal democratic norms came under attack from multiple positions in recent years. In President Donald Trump's presidential campaign, we saw a resurgence of racially charged right-wing populism. Roy Moore's recent bid for the U.S. Senate in Alabama threatened to revive an intolerant brand of evangelical politics. The so-called Alt-Right, which is simply the latest iteration of the American white nationalist movement, seemed to enjoy exponential growth. Viewing these trends from the outside, one might conclude that liberal democracy is under siege from a robust, unified, and confident extreme right.

Although we should not understate contemporary challenges, such a conclusion would be wrong. Liberal democracy's defenders have a long history of overestimating their opponents' strength and cohesiveness.

We saw this throughout the Cold War, when many American observers neglected the divides within the communist world. George W. Bush and his allies exaggerated the degree to which there was a united global terrorist movement. Many of us have similarly misjudged the cohesion of the domestic extreme right.

Damon T. Berry's new book, *Blood and Faith: Christianity and White Nationalism*, provides welcome clarity to the racist Right and where it fits in America's broader religious and ideological milieu. It is true that the first iteration of the religious right grew in response to the Civil Rights Movement and desegregation. It is also true that the Ku Klux Klan presented itself as a Protestant organization. However, it is not true that white nationalism and conservative Christianity are simpatico. In fact, most leading white nationalists have viewed Christianity as a major obstacle to social acceptance and political power.

Berry provides a short but accurate history of the white nationalist movement. Although racism has existed ever since the invention of race as a concept, white nationalism, in the form of a pan-European movement dedicated to white interests across the globe, is a recent creation. Berry correctly describes Francis Parker Yockey as the father of white nationalism in this sense. Yockey considered himself Oswald Spengler's ideological and philosophical heir, and viewed his most famous work, *Imperium*, as a follow-up to Spengler's work, *The Decline of the West.* Whether they are familiar with his work or not, most contemporary white nationalists echo Yockey's talking points.

In his book's first chapters, Berry describes the major figures of the white nationalist movement, as well as their reasons for rejecting Christianity. He begins with an introduction to Revilo Oliver, who at one time was an influential conservative essayist and scholar. Oliver broke with conservatism over its lack of overt racism and anti-Semitism. Berry follows this with a chapter dedicated to William Pierce, author of the infamous racist novel, *The Turner Diaries* and founder of the white nationalist group, the National Alliance. Berry then explores Ben Klassen, who created the so-called Creativity movement, which sought to turn racism into a religion.

Subsequent chapters in *Blood and Faith* focuses on broader movements, rather than specific individuals. He discusses racialized Odinism. Although paganism is not inherently racist, the figures and groups Berry discussed want to both resurrect pre-Christian European religious traditions and use that revival to create a new sense of white racial consciousness. The book then explores the bizarre world of "esoteric racialism,"

explaining white nationalism's relationship with the occult and Satanism. Berry's final substantive chapter focuses on a small group that calls itself the North American New Right.

Throughout the book, Berry's subjects repeat similar themes. Christianity was a foreign religion hoisted upon European peoples, destroying their authentic traditions. Jews have a central place in the Christian Bible, which gives them an extraordinary psychological hold on white Christians and allows Jews to manipulate whites to further their own interests. Christianity is inherently universal, making it more difficult to persuade whites to embrace an exclusionary and ethnocentric worldview. More broadly, white nationalists share Nietzsche's critique of Christianity as a celebration of weakness.

Although all the figures Berry describes viewed Christianity as a central obstacle to their political agendas, they did not agree on how to overcome it. Aside from Oliver, most of the 20th century white nationalist figures and movements Berry discusses thought Christianity needed to be replaced with a new form of racist spirituality. Pierce called his new religion "Cosmotheism," an odd racialized pantheism. Klassen's Church of the Creator went even further, making race itself a religion, but otherwise dismissing all supernatural claims. Others believed resuscitating long dead European religions would revive white racial identity.

Although he focuses on white nationalism, Berry's book provides some useful insights into mainstream conservatism. Revilo Oliver is conspicuously absent in most books on the conservative movement, especially those written by conservatives. Despite his prominent role at *National Review* and the John Birch Society, conservatives have effectively airbrushed him out of their own history. I always found this odd, as mainstream conservatives, and William F. Buckley in particular, always took pride in instances in which they drove an open racist or anti-Semite from their ranks. *Blood and Faith* provides a clue as to why Oliver was such an embarrassment to the movement. Oliver was not kicked out of mainstream conservatism; he left on his own, and Buckley and his colleagues could take no credit for purging him from their ranks. Berry provides the best scholarly treatment of Oliver I have seen to date.

Berry only touches briefly on the Alt-Right, the latest expression of white nationalism. Galvanized by Donald Trump's presidential campaign, the Alt-Right is the most notable expression of white nationalism since David Duke's political campaigns. One of the more curious aspects of the Alt-Right is the degree to which it is uninterested in the characters in Berry's narrative. Studying the history of white nationalism in the

20th century, one can trace the ideological and organizational lineages of various groups and individuals. Disagreements led to splinters, and the remnants of one collapsed organization spawned another.

The Alt-Right is different, however, and does not neatly fit on the white nationalist family tree. Although driven by the same sentiments as the figures in Berry's study, much of the Alt-Right shows conspicuous contempt for what it derisively calls "white nationalism 1.0." Andrew Anglin of *The Daily Stormer*, who proclaims George Lincoln Rockwell of the defunct American Nazi Party his model, is one of the few notable exceptions. Most people that identify with the Alt-Right either mock their ideological forbearers, or they have never even heard of people like Ben Klassen. The North American New Right (NANR), which is primarily associated with a single website and can scarcely be described as an independent movement, is now the main connection between the Alt-Right and 20th century white nationalism. That website's editor mostly publishes pieces by contemporary white nationalists, but also posts essays by older figures such as Pierce. Otherwise, the white nationalist organizations that caused so much violence and racial discord in the 20th century—the Church of the Creator, Aryan Nations, the National Alliance, etc.—are defunct and mostly forgotten. Rather than being a mere continuation of the older white nationalist movement, the Alt-Right developed its exclusionary ideology through other means.

Berry's discussion of the NANR is particularly important because its views on religion are mostly consistent with those of the broader Alt-Right. Whereas Pierce, Klassen, and Oliver viewed Christianity as an implacable enemy that must be destroyed, the Alt-Right generally sidesteps religious questions altogether. They do so despite today's Christian leaders taking stronger stands against racism than they did during the religious Right's peak of success. Few of the Alt-Right's most prominent figures identify as Christians, but neither do they apparently view it necessary to attack Christianity. This pragmatic approach, which does not involve creating cartoonish religious cults, may be one reason for the Alt-Right's comparative success. Anti-Christians on the racist right have another reason to ignore this issue: Christianity is declining on its own.

For some time, mainstream religious conservatives such as Ross Douthat and Rod Dreher have warned that a post-religious Right will be far more dangerous to liberal democracy than the religious Right ever was. Although conservative Christians contested progressive victories in the so-called "culture war", Christianity also provided a degree of unity

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that transcended racial boundaries. Some liberal commentators such as Peter Beinart have reached a similar conclusion. In some ways, these commentators echo the white nationalist complaints about Christianity.

I think this argument overstates Christianity's role as a hindrance to racism, both historically and today. Although we can reasonably argue whether Trump supporters were primarily motivated by racial anxieties and animus, Trump's overwhelming support from white evangelicals challenges the thesis that Christianity inoculates against racism. In my own work, I find scant evidence for a strong relationship between religiosity and racial views. Nonetheless, religion was long a massive schism in the American extreme right, and this divide hindered the creation of a united right-wing assault on liberalism.

Many 20th century white nationalists argued that their political goals would remain unattainable as long as whites remained beholden to Christian ideals. Once Christianity's spell is broken, they argued, racial consciousness could fill the breach. As Christianity wanes, we will see if they were right. We should not overstate the current danger, as the extreme right remains small and fractured, but they are closer to a major breakthrough than they were a decade ago.

I enthusiastically recommend *Blood and Faith*. Berry provided an admirable dispassionate analysis of some of the most loathsome ideas ever expressed. It is natural to recoil from expressions of genocidal hatred, but we cannot ignore them. Although most of the figures Berry analyzed are now deceased, imprisoned, or elderly, many of their ideas have experienced an unexpected resurgence, though they are now presented in an updated package. Those who would combat these ideologies need to know what they are up against. Berry's book is an important contribution to that end.

Response to George Hawley

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I am extremely grateful for the insightful and generous comments made by Professor Hawley, as I am for the gracious offer by Professor Lewis to have this exchange take place. I have learned much from it, and in