

WHITE HOODS AND KEYBOARDS:  
AN EXAMINATION OF THE KLAN AND KU KLUX KLAN WEB SITES

By

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To my grandfathers, George Kanala and George Selepak, who spent their lives providing for their families and inspired me to achieve. Also to my parents, Ronald and Josephine, who have supported me in all my decisions, and without their love and guidance, I would never have been able realize the honor of receiving a doctorate.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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By

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The Ku Klux Klan is the oldest and most well-known extremist group in the United States with a history dating back nearly 150 years. The Klan has been featured in numerous movies, books, documentaries, and been the center of countless news stories. But, in recent years, the Ku Klux Klan has been all but forgotten by researchers who believed the Klan was a dying organization with a nearly extinct membership of individuals who could not accept the end of segregation and the Klan's defeat during the Civil Rights Movement. But, recent research by the Southern Poverty Law Center shows the Klan is not extinct, nor is the Klan dying. Instead, the Ku Klux Klan is growing with new members joining across the country and the world. Research has shown the recent growth in membership has been caused by the election of the first black President of the United States, a poor economy and high unemployment, and an increase in the minority population of the United States brought on by immigration. In addition, research has suggested the growth in groups like the Ku Klux Klan has been caused by an increase in the number of Ku Klux Klan web sites on the Internet.

This study used grounded theory and a mixed method approach to examine the proliferation of Klan web sites and to achieve a better understanding of the Ku Klux Klan and its recent rise in membership. Using content analysis of current Klan web sites and in-depth interviews with current Klan leaders, this study examined the beliefs of the Ku Klux Klan, the purpose of the Ku Klux Klan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, why the Klan creates and maintains web sites, and examined the membership of the Ku Klux Klan.

Based on analysis of Klan web sites and interviews with Klan leaders, Ku Klux Klan beliefs fall under two general themes. First, the Klan believes white Christians are held to a double standard and not allowed to have pride in their culture and heritage, while at the same time treated unfairly by the media, society, and the government. Second, the Klan believes in racial separation, and the need for whites to either remove themselves from a society perceived as against them, or to combat that society through political and legal involvement. Results suggest the Klan creates web sites not for the sole purpose of recruit, but instead, to inform the general public of the Klan's goals to combat a double standard in society, and to market the Klan to greater segment of the American population, by using the Internet to rebrand the image of the Klan as an organization dedicated to preserving white, American, and Christian culture. In addition, results indicate no one group exists that can claim the title of "Ku Klux Klan." Instead, this study found a variety of Klan organizations exist with competing ideologies and beliefs. Using a mixed methods approach of incorporating quantitative and qualitative data, this study found two types of Klan organizations exist. One Klan is a traditional fraternal organization, while the other is a more radical and extremist organization intent on becoming a paramilitary organization, church or political party. Members of the Klan

were generally observed to be average American citizens with families. More specifically, Klan members were revealed to be white, politically and religiously conservative Christians, many of whom were military veterans and owned their own business, and in general were opposed to a changing world and changing American society.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The history of the United States is defined by tension, struggle, and often bloodshed among different races, ethnicities, and religions (Schafer, 2002). When European settlers first arrived in the New World they encountered Native Americans, who, because of their different skin color, culture, and religion, were deemed savage and inferior, and were therefore killed, converted to Christianity or driven off their land (Vertigans, 2007). The first African slaves brought to the colonies were treated little better. Africans were brought to the New World and forced into labor and kept as chattel to their white owners, stripped of their culture and language, given European names, and abused for any insolence. The Founding Fathers of the world's first modern democracy viewed African males as inferior to whites; three-fifths man and two-fifths subhuman. Signs claiming "No Irish Need Apply," based on the idea that the Irish were not white as they were not Anglo-Saxon, were also common in the nation's early history. The Christian Identity Movement of the mid-1800s claimed that "Jews were the offspring of Satan," and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 specifically suspended Chinese immigration to the United States and prevented Chinese immigrants from becoming citizens (Becker, Jipson, & Katz, 2001, p. 436-437). The history of the United States is a long and often tragic litany of wars against Mexicans, the Spanish and French, Native Americans, blacks, Jews, Catholics, and the people of the Caribbean, all under the guise of White Supremacy and Manifest Destiny.

The United States was created, grew and prospered under the belief of the superiority of white Christian males. This was not a covert belief. The Constitution, the very document held up today as a symbol of democracy and equality, guaranteed the



practice of slavery. The Supreme Court, established by the Constitution, concluded in the Dred Scott decision of 1857 that blacks were unequal to whites and not citizens of the United States (Foner, 2006). Many of the Founding Fathers owned African slaves, including the first great American general and first President of the country, and the President who wrote the Declaration of Independence, which contained the phrase “all men are created equal,” but with the understanding that this did not apply to African, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, or racially-mixed men, while women of all races were left out completely. Africans and African-Americans remained slaves and property until 150 years ago, and women have only had the right to vote for a mere 90 years, relatively short periods of time compared to the course of human events.

Today, men and women of all colors, races, and religions are able to vote, hold office, and are granted the full rights of citizenship afforded to all Americans. Unlike when the United States was founded, after the Civil War, or during the Civil Rights Era, few Americans believe, or openly profess the belief that non-whites are inferior or less deserving of the full rights of citizenship. However, one organization that has remained steadfast in support of white dominance over economic, social, and political control of the country is the Ku Klux Klan (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). According to the Anti-Defamation League (2007), the KKK is a racist, anti-Semitic organization that uses violence and intimidation to achieve its goals of racial segregation and white supremacy. But in recent years, instead of intimidating racial, ethnic, and religious minorities with white hoods and burning crosses, the new Klan of the Internet Age is using the World Wide Web to recruit new members and spread its message against

what the Klan perceives as an American society changing in the wrong direction (Duffy, 2003).

The Civil War ended the question of whether blacks could be owned as property, but it did not truly free them or make them equal. The Union won the Civil War and ended the practice of slavery, but the Ku Klux Klan won Reconstruction and thus kept blacks in a position of inferiority (Foner, 2006; & Rapoport, 2008).

The Klan was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee, by six former Confederate officers as a secret social club (Becker et al., 2001; & Parsons, 2005). The original Klan was a secret organization that used indirect speech and outlandish names and costumes to intimidate and oppress blacks and white Republicans (Parsons, 2005). Many of the members of the original KKK were former Confederate soldiers who had fought a bloody four-year war only to return home to see their entire society turned upside down in defeat, and they found in the Klan a means to reestablish their pre-war society and dominance (Parsons, 2005). By the end of Reconstruction and southern occupation, the need for the Klan dwindled, and the Klan's numbers shrank as the southern states found ways to limit the economic, political, and social mobility of black men and women. In fact, the Klan had all but disappeared between the end of Reconstruction until just before the United States' involvement in World War I.

After Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws across many regions of the South required segregated public transportation, separate public facilities including schools and bathrooms, and prohibited interracial marriage, thus creating legally enforced racial segregation (Becker et al., 2001; & Vertigans, 2007). But the early 1900s also saw an immigration explosion into the United States from Ireland, Italy, and Eastern Europe.

These new immigrants were not Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and the Klan responded to this wave of Catholic immigration as a threat to American Protestantism (Richard, 2009).

In 1915, “Colonel” William J. Simmons launched a second revival of the Klan, including a cross burning, at Stone Mountain, Georgia (Levin, 2002). During the revival of the Klan in 1915 through the 1920s, the Klan positioned itself as the “defender of the ‘American way of life,’ meaning ‘Anglo-Saxon civilisation (sic),’ by “emphasising (sic) ‘Americanism’ and ‘Christian Civilisation (sic)’ and opposing ‘alien’ groups and cultures” (Vertigans, 2007, p. 643). This Second Klan, expanded beyond its Reconstruction roots of a pro-white, Southern male organization, dedicated to reestablishing white control over the South, into a nationalist organization advocating nativism, Prohibition, and “traditional moral and family values” (Richard, 2009, p. 287). With anywhere between three and six million members in the 1920s, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was one of the largest and most influential grass-roots social movements in the history of the United States (Blee, 1991; Lay, 1994; & Richard, 2009). However, internal scandal, along with the United States’ involvement in a second World War, a booming post-war economy, and entrenched Jim Crow laws, led to a decline in Klan membership. By the 1950s, Klan numbers dropped to about 10,000 members (Becker et al., 2001).

By the 1960s, however, the Civil Rights Movement was challenging the southern order, and federal challenges to segregation and federal integration of schools, once again galvanized the Klan, and membership rose to over 55,000 members (Becker et al., 2001; & Vertigans, 2007). Considered the Third Klan, membership was focused in

the South in opposition to the expansion of civil rights for blacks and other minorities (Richard, 2009). But, unlike the past, the Klan was not successful in pushing back against federal interference, nor did the Klan achieve the comprehensive social movement status of the 1920s, and thus was unable to stop integration. By the 1970s, after the Civil Rights Movement, and subsequent civil and criminal lawsuits by Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center, Klan membership again declined and by 1974, membership was down to 1,500 members (Becker et al., 2001).

The Fourth Klan, much smaller than any of the first three, originated in the late 1970s, but expanded out of the South to include groups in the Midwest and West, and began to target Asians, Mexican-Americans, and homosexuals, along with blacks and Jews (Richard, 2009). This fourth incarnation, expanded beyond its traditional Southern home, and for a time gathered strength. In fact, right-wing extremist groups in general had been growing in strength and numbers since their low point in the early 1980s, at least until the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing which killed 168 people (Vertigans, 2007). The destructive nature and loss of innocent lives from the Oklahoma City bombing forced many to back away from extremist group activity and doctrine, including involvement in the Ku Klux Klan

But, the trend has once again reversed itself. Vertigans claims that right-wing extremism began to build momentum again after President George W. Bush and the Republican Congress failed to “deliver the conservative revolution they promised,” including diminishing the role of government, eliminating affirmative action programs, and overturning “legislation like gay marriages and the right to abortion” (2007, p. 653). This, along with greater American involvement in international affairs, rather than on

domestic issues, and an “economic slowdown in some states, especially in the Midwest, healthcare costs, corruption, sex scandals and immigration” all galvanized extremist groups during George W. Bush’s Presidency (Vertigans, 2007, p. 653). In addition, Blazak argues that because “few politicians advocate for the working class,” and particularly the white working class, extremist groups like the Klan were able to take advantage of the lost opportunities or hardships of poor whites and recruit them into the Klan with the explanation that the Klan is one of the few groups out there protecting the white poor (2001, p. 999). Concern over international capitalism, globalization, the decline of manufacturing and independent farmers, affirmative action programs favoring minorities, and restraints on gun ownership have been a boom for the Klan and all extremist groups in the United States (Vertigans, 2007). Beirich and Potok continue that in recent years, “Economic pressures have borne down on young white workers, the middle class, farmers and workers in heavy industry,” which led some whites to seek out protection and solutions to their problems (2009, p. 258). But, the Klan in recent years has been animated by more than just an economic recession and loss of manufacturing and farming jobs. In addition, the Anti-Defamation League (2007) cautions the Klan has become more active in parts of the country where little Klan activity has occurred since the 1960s or even 1920s. While the Klan remains the strongest in the South and in such Midwestern states as Indiana, the Klan is also growing in Rust Belt states like Michigan and Ohio, Great Plains states like Iowa and Nebraska, and the Mid-Atlantic states like Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and West Virginia (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). The Klan has targeted these new areas by emphasizing issues that most resonate with whites in these states such as

unemployment in the Rust Belt. According to the Anti-Defamation League (2007), in the Great Plains, the Klan has recruited new members concerned with the influx of non-white immigrants, while in the Mid-Atlantic, recruitment efforts emphasize the need for whites to protect themselves from both immigration and black on white crime.

According to Beirich and Potok (2009), the 2008 election of Barack Obama, and an increase in immigration with the potential to bring about a minority-majority population in the United States by 2042, have also galvanized the Klan and are seen as direct threats to white dominance and superiority in American political, economic, and social life. These issues have been used by the Klan to recruit new members as well as promote an ideology of white pride and survival.

But, while the modern Klan is once again growing in numbers, the modern Klan is different from previous incarnations. The modern Klan is less an advocate of white supremacy than in the 1860s, it doesn't pretend to represent the Protestant American majority as it did in the 1920s, the Klan is not protecting segregation and Jim Crow laws as it did in the 1960s, and is not as violent as the Klan of the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bello, 2008; Billig, 2001; Schafer, 2002; & Williamson & Pierson, 2003). This fifth Klan is a politically active and technologically sophisticated right-wing extremist movement spreading old beliefs using new technology. This study seeks to examine how the Ku Klux Klan uses the Internet to recruit new members and share its beliefs with the public and existing members using the Internet.

### **Internet of Hate**

Extremist groups like the Klan traditionally have been very savvy in terms of spreading its message (Duffy, 2003). In the early years, the Klan used newspapers and the sheer image of white-robed figures riding horses in the night claiming to be dead

Confederate soldiers returned from hell to intimidate and recruit (Parsons, 2005). By the 1920s, the Klan used films like *The Birth of a Nation*, and public gatherings complete with burning crosses to make the Klan visible to both members and non-members. At Klan rallies in the 1960s, onlookers and participants enjoyed music and food and could purchase Klan paraphernalia and Klan robes (Cunningham, 2008). By the 1980s, the Klan used public access television (Harmon, 1991), participated in museum donations of Klan souvenirs (Anti-Defamation League, 2007), attempted to erect crosses on public property, and participated in “Adopt a Highway” programs to promote its beliefs and receive media attention (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). But, in all of these attempts, the Klan was never in control of the message nor able to dictate how the organization was depicted to the public.

But, the Internet has changed everything. By using the Internet, extremist groups can shape and package their beliefs, organizations, and ideology in persuasive ways to a vast audience who might otherwise not be exposed to these groups (Duffy, 2003, p. 291). The Internet has become a recruiting mechanism for the Klan and other extremist groups because of the technology’s anonymity and interactive capabilities (Douglas, McGarty, Bliuc, & Lala, 2005; Gerstenfeld, Grant, & Chiang, 2003; Williamson & Pierson, 2003). Extremist groups like the Klan use the Internet to express their beliefs, sell Klan robes and paraphernalia, organize members, educate members and the general public, convey a respectable image, coordinate members from geographically distant areas, and recruit new members (Becker et al., 2005; Bostdorff, 2004; Brown, 2009; Douglas et al., 2005; Duffy, 2003; Gerstenfeld, Grant, & Chiang, 2003; Glaser,

Dixit, & Green, 2002; Lee & Leets, 2002; Levin, 2002; Schafer, 2002; Xu, Chen, Zhou, & Qin, 2006; & Zhou, Reid, Qin, Chen, & Lai, 2005).

Although in America's past, hate speech was explicit and acceptable in social and political circles, in today's society, espousing hate is no longer viewed as acceptable (Lee & Leets, 2002; Rajagopal & Bojin, 2002; & Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock, & Kendrick, 1991). Today, most people see extremist beliefs as counter to their own views, and are reluctant to join, or are entirely against groups like the Klan (Schafer, 2002). The Internet, however, allows groups like the Klan to present their beliefs in more socially and politically mainstream ways, which may make their views more acceptable. Those reluctant to join or follow extremist orthodoxy may become hooked through the Klan's new and more mainstream appearance (Schafer, 2002). Extremist sites often reflect non-racist and mainstream views packaged to resonate with traditional American ideals (Duffy, 2003). Gerstenfeld et al., found that, "In recent years, many extremist groups have shed their white sheets and swastikas in favor of a cloak of respectability," while often maintaining ties to the original Klan (2003, p. 40). The Anti-Defamation League (2007) adds that some Klan groups have actually abandoned wearing their hoods and robes, and instead wear military uniforms, or only use the hoods and robes for ceremonies like cross burnings. Additionally, Gerstenfeld et al. (2003), found many extremist web sites claim their organization is not racist and does not promote hate toward others. The significance of this shift is that as individuals become more hooked to groups like the Klan because of their proposed mainstream appearance, "they slowly come to embrace other dimensions of the group's ideology," resulting in more extreme beliefs on political and social issues (Schafer, 2002, p. 72). In essence, the more



individuals become engaged in mainstream Klan ideology, as their viewing continues, allowing for repetitive exposure to Klan discourse and ideology, the exposure can cultivate an acknowledgement of less mainstream ideologies (Thiesmeyer, 1999).

The web allows extremist groups to define themselves and their ideology, and counter their negative portrayal in the media (Thiesmeyer, 1999). Some Klan groups are using the Internet to rebrand the Klan's image as a non-racist organization, espousing pro-white ideals, while appealing to traditional values (Duffy, 2003) This rebranding has become the method of choice by groups like the Klan to recruit a world-wide audience (Duffy, 2003).

### **Klan.net**

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) there were 64 Klan web sites on the Internet in 2007 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2008). However, this also coincided with a drop in the total number of Klan chapters in the United States from 165 in 2006 to 155 in 2007 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2008). The 155 chapters were included on the SPLC list because they were "known to be active in 2007, whether that activity included marches, rallies, speeches, meetings, leafleting, publishing literature or criminal acts," while "entities that appear to exist only in cyberspace" were not included (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2008, p. 52). By 2008 with the possibility of a black man becoming President became a reality, the SPLC estimated the number of Klan chapters operating in the United States grew to 186, but the number of active Klan web sites had decreased to 52 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2009). By 2009, there were 187 Klan chapters in the United States but only 44 Klan web sites (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). According to the Anti-Defamation League (2007) the Ku Klux Klan is fragmented into different groups with competing ideologies, thus explaining

why there are so many Klan organizations and web sites. But, in light of this growing trend in the number of Klan groups, and the few outlets where individuals are being indoctrinated with Klan ideology, Bostdorff (2004) contends there is a clear need to examine extremist rhetoric on the web as hate activity continues to increase.

Although the total number of Klan chapters has increased, the number does not accurately reflect total Klan strength. Instead, the SPLC cautions some Klans have merged into larger groups such as when the National Aryan Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. merged with the United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, forming a larger and more consolidated organization (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2008). Klan groups across the country are growing in size and have increased their overall activity to recruit new members as well as spread their ideology (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). For example, in the state of Florida alone, the SPLC listed four Klan chapters in 2007: the headquarters of the Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Homosassa Springs, the headquarters of the National Aryan Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Englewood, a chapter of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Silver Springs, and a Klan store in Ocala (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2008). According to the Anti-Defamation League (2007), the Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan formed as recently as 2005, bringing in former members of the Southern White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and from its Florida base, spread across the South and Mid-Atlantic as far as Oregon. By 2008, the SPLC updated the Florida list to the Brotherhood of the Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the Fraternal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Bushnell, and the headquarters of the National Aryan Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Englewood (Southern Poverty Law

Center, 2009). By 2009, the Brotherhood of Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was still in Florida; the Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was back in Homosassa Springs; the Fraternal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan were found in Highland City, Lakeland, and Plant City; the Imperial Klans of American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan had an active chapter in Gainesville; and the United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan had a chapter in Hampton (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). This shift over the course of three years in Florida Klans alone, symbolizes the constant disappearance and reemergence of the Klan along the American landscape as Klan groups morph names, locations and organizational structure. In addition to the groups themselves, Klan web sites also frequently disappear and reemerge on the Internet (Gerstenfeld et al., 2003; & Schafer, 2002).

### **World Wide Klan**

The Anti-Defamation League (2007) estimated there were 5,000 Klan members and associates in the United States in 2007. According to the SPLC, there were between 5,000 and 8,000 active Klan members in the United States in 2008 (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.). This means that by 2009, nearly 8,000 Klan members were getting their information from 44 Klan web sites (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). But, according to Nielson/NetRatings, by the end of 2007, there were more than 216 million Americans using the Internet, all of whom have access to these 44 sites, in addition to the millions more around the world using the web (Jones, 2009). Thus, the creators of the content on these 44 sites have a great deal of control and power over the messages people receive about Klan ideology and activities. Significantly, Thiesmeyer argues the constant repetition of users accessing “the same few pages repeatedly... can take on the function of indoctrination” (1999, p. 119). In essence,

individuals can gradually become more radicalized and indoctrinated by viewing messages from the same limited number of sources (Vertigans, 2007). How web masters of Klan sites frame Klan issues and beliefs on race and politics in the United States, can potentially exert a great influence over web viewers and Klan members' "perceptions of the issues and, ultimately, the opinions they express" (Nelson et al., 1997, p. 576). Previous research, however, has focused on the messages and content found on hate and extremist web sites, but little research has been centered on how these messages are created by those who run hate and extremist sites.

Researchers have rarely studied the actual individuals in charge of these sites and instead have examined the sites for content alone, or have focused on the propaganda produced by these sites but not the individuals. Blee concludes, "Scholarship on the far right generally analyzes right-wing extremism from a distance," but adds it is impossible to use data gathered from external sources to draw conclusions about why individuals are attracted to these groups (2007, p. 120). Instead, researchers have focused heavily on primary material and publications, to portray and understand extremist groups, which Goodwin (2007) argues are inadequate to understand fully their function or the beliefs of members. Blee contends that many studies focusing on extremist groups rely either too heavily or solely on "publicly available data such as propaganda from newsletters, flyers, and Internet sites and postings; police and criminal records; newspaper accounts of public events; speeches of self-proclaimed leaders; and pronouncements by spokespersons" (2007, p. 120). In addition, Blee (2007) continues that these forms of public data may not accurately reflect the beliefs or goals of members of extremist groups, because the statements and outward representations of the groups made by

group leaders, may not match the ideologies and beliefs of individual members. In other words, research is lacking on both the senders and receivers of Klan messages, and instead focuses too heavily on the messages.

In a study by Zhou et al. (2005), the researchers acknowledge the danger posed by domestic hate and extremist groups in the United States, adding that these groups are using the Internet to recruit, link to other hate groups, reach a mass audience, and spread their message. They continue that, "Researchers need better tools to monitor, analyze, and predict changes in extremist and hate groups' Web use and influence," in order "to better understand how domestic extremist groups use the web infrastructure so that we can develop a comprehensive understanding of the extremist themselves" (Zhou et al., 2005, p. 44). The researchers, however, acknowledged that research on how social movements use the Internet is "in its early stages, and little work exists on extremist and hate groups" (Zhou et al., 2005, p. 44). In their study they examined extremist messages by "studying automatic and semiautomated (sic) procedures and systematic methodologies for capturing extremist groups' Web site data" (Zhou et al., 2005, p. 44). However, they did not go to the source of the message, instead arguing that, "Because hate groups are volatile and often associated with illegal activities and violence, they pose difficulties for researchers to understand their structure and dynamics" (Zhou et al., 2005, p. 44). A study by Xu et al. (2006), was similar to the one by Zhou et al. (2005), in that it too only monitored and studied the content of extremist web sites in the hopes it would better understand the groups and possibly predict future terrorist attacks. Xu et al., analyzed "the structural characteristics of terrorist websites" by conducting "topological analysis to compare hyperlink structures" (2006, p. 367). But,

research must do more than simply observe the messages and content of these sites in order to understand the purpose of extremist web sites. To understand the goals and messages of extremist sites, it is imperative to understand the goals and beliefs of those who create the sites. But, many researchers appear unwilling to ask.

Goodwin (2007) contends that some researchers avoid engaging with extremist members directly because of the difficulty gaining access to them. Goodwin maintains researchers claim members of extremist groups, because of the secretive nature of their organizations, are unwilling participants, or are unwilling because members of extremist groups see research as a task of the very establishment they oppose, conducted for the purpose of undermining their organization (2007). Goodwin however argues that although some researchers claim extremists are “unwilling to engage with academic research,” this assumption is not only misplaced but false (2007, p. 33). In his research of the far-right British National Party (BNP) in England, Goodwin found that members were open to interviews, and more than willing to explain their views of society, reasons for joining, and life experiences (2007). In a study of women in extremist movements in the United States, Blee had a similar experience, and commented that the women in her study were accustomed to others not agreeing with their views and rarely tried to change the opinions of others to their viewpoints, but were interested in “someone outside the small racist groups to which they belong to hear and record their words,” lives, and thoughts (1998, p. 386).

In combination with a perceived unwillingness to participate, some researchers claim that being a member of an extremist group makes members too irrational, too ignorant, and too unstable to be interviewed for qualitative research (Goodwin, 2007).

Blee contends that many researchers are unwilling to research extremist groups because the ideology of the groups is too vastly different from their own, and that few researchers “want to invest the considerable time or to establish the rapport necessary for close-up studies of those they regard as inexplicable and repugnant” (2007, p. 121). However, when studying the BNP, Goodwin found this point to be false as well, and that members of the BNP were relatively normal members of the local community, and had a desire to uphold and improve the democratic institutions in which they lived (2007). In addition, Goodwin (2007) found that members joined the BNP because of concerns over how their more conservative way of life was being changed, a concern over the influx of minorities, and apprehensions that mainstream political parties neither shared nor voiced the concerns of BNP members. Goodwin (2007) argued, the views held by BNP members may run counter to the views held by more liberal academics and may make BNP members therefore appear irrational or ignorant to the researchers. Brown (2009) continues that many in the general public and in academia see white supremacists as fringe groups and therefore not worthy of study or attention. But, when researchers dismiss members of extremist groups as irrational and therefore impossible or unworthy to study, researchers devoid the motivations which led individuals to join these groups. Instead, Blee argues that membership in extremist social movements like the Klan, are the product of “rational social action rather than as outcomes of irrational behavior,” and researchers must understand that rational decisions as well as emotions play an important part in members making the decision to join these organizations (1998, p. 382).

Goodwin (2007) argues that although qualitative work on extremist groups is beginning to occur in Western Europe, it is still absent in much of the research on American extremist groups. Blee (2007) continues that while qualitative work examining extremist groups provides a better understanding of the ideologies of both the members and the groups, such studies are rare.

Goodwin (2007) concludes that despite the growing research interest in extremist group activity on the Internet, researchers continue to avoid engaging the creators of these sites personally, and instead attempt to study them through a computer screen. According to Brown, "The influence of White supremacy is understudied and often ignored in communication studies" (2009, p. 189). Bostdorff adds that "Despite the potential impact of such messages, communication scholars have largely overlooked them" (2004, p. 341). Therefore, qualitative analysis and in-depth study of these groups are necessary if researchers hope to have any true understanding of these organizations, or what motivates individuals to join. Glaser et al., argue that qualitative analysis of specific statements by extremist members reveal clear opinions and "offer a rich source for analysis of racists' attitudes toward minorities and committing violence against them" (2002, p. 184). But, Blee contends that "Few scholars study social movements as politically marginal and loathsome as organized racism" (1998, p. 395). Meanwhile, Gerstenfeld et al., maintain that few studies have been conducted that examine extremist web sites, and "precisely to what purposes the sites are being put" (2003, p. 30).

But, the lack of a desire on the part of researchers to study members of extremist groups is not the only reason why such analysis is missing. In addition, Blee argues that



“Researchers of social movements like organized racism rightfully are concerned” that their name and career may be tarnished or harmed “by the political stigma attached to those they study,” but such fears prevent a better understanding of the experiences and beliefs of these groups (1998, p. 388).

### **Behind the Message**

This study seeks to take the research recommendations by Goodwin (2007) and Blee (1998), and investigate domestic extremist groups in the United States on an interpersonal and qualitative level, and specifically the Ku Klux Klan. All web sites have a host or site creator, and, “Most Web masters provide an email contact for feedback purposes” (Zhou et al., 2005). Thus, it is possible to contact those behind the message. That it may be difficult to learn what motivates or inspires the creator of a Klan web site that should not prevent them from being studied, and in fact makes it all the more necessary (Bostdorff, 2004). Becker et al. (2005), argue that to understand groups like the Klan requires learning and critiquing the goals and beliefs they espouse while also understanding their actions, and not merely assessing these groups against how their beliefs do not fit within society. Researchers cannot investigate the motivations and messages of Klan web sites only while sitting at a computer screen processing images and rhetoric that appears on these sites. Researchers must understand those who create the rhetoric on these sites, intent on convincing individuals to join, as well as the messages aimed at retaining current members. It is impossible to understand the message without understanding the messenger behind it, and it is too important a topic to dismiss or avoid.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study is to better understand four important questions, “What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” “What does the Klan believe?” “Why does the Ku Klux Klan create and maintain web sites?” and “Who are members of the Klan?” To answer these four questions, an explanatory mixed methods research design will be used where qualitative data will be used to help build or explain initial quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The intent of this research is to investigate beyond what the messages on Klan web sites mean to outsiders, and instead what they mean to the actual Klan members who create them.

To understand what the modern Klan believes and how these beliefs may or may not differ from previous historical incarnations of the Klan, a content analysis will be conducted to examine the beliefs of the Klan, including whether Klan organizations consider themselves to be racist, pro-American, traditionally conservative, supportive of family values, Christian, and pro-white organizations. Repeated presentations of messages on Klan sites may cultivate site viewers toward a radically different perception of the Klan from previous research stating that the Klan is an objectively racist organization (Anti-Defamation League, 2007; Duffy 2003; Lewis & Serbu, 1999; & Moore, 1990). The content analysis will be collected from known Klan web sites from a list compiled by the Southern Poverty Law Center (2010). This examination will be done to better understand the ideology of the Klan, as well as the differences in ideologies between various and rival Klan organizations (Anti-Defamation League, 2007).

A subsequent, qualitative phase of this study will be conducted after the content analysis to better understand if the results from the first phase match the intentions and goals of those who create and maintain Klan web sites. In the follow-up, in-depth

interviews will be conducted by phone with web masters and site creators, contacted by email, and will ask a series of open and closed ended questions about their beliefs, the messages found on Klan sites, and the goals of creating and maintaining Ku Klux Klan web sites. Additional and follow-up questions will develop as responses are collected, as coding and analysis will be done simultaneously (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Responses from the web masters and site creators will build upon initial quantitative results in order to construct a grounded theory on the beliefs of the modern Klan and how the Internet is being used to portray these beliefs to a wider audience, as well as who are members of the Klan. Using a Grounded Theory approach, this study attempts to better understand the Klan and what motivates individuals to create Klan web sites and join the Klan. Too little attention has been paid to those who create Klan messages and those who are influenced by them (Goodwin, 2007). This study attempts to fill in that gap.

As this study uses both quantitative and qualitative results in an explanatory mixed methods design, it is not limited to the philosophical assumptions of quantitative or qualitative researchers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Instead, this study takes a pragmatic worldview that not only can quantitative and qualitative methods be mixed into the same research design, but that mixing the two methods provides better results and a more complete understanding than either method alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The quantitative data will play a secondary role to the qualitative data in this study as the content analysis data will be used to help guide the qualitative method of in-depth interviewing, while the participants' responses will help better understand the

quantitative results. In essence, the quantitative data will be used to help guide the qualitative method in the designing of questions and provide a greater understanding of what information Klan web sites include. Known Klan web sites will be examined first, and the data gained will aid in the process of in-depth interviewing of web masters and site creators after the quantitative data has been collected and analyzed. The goal of qualitative research, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967), is such that it can be used by both researchers and laymen, knowledgeable in the area, for both theory generating and practical application. It is in this hope that this research will be conducted so that both academics and the average person can better understand the nature and motivation behind the Ku Klux Klan.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Blee (2007), there has been a resurgence in right-wing extremism in the United States and around the world in recent years. The SPLC adds, “broad-based populist anger at political, demographic and economic changes in America ignited an explosion” of extremist activities, including that of the Klan (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010, p. 41). In light of the recent increase in extremist groups and activities, Blee argues, it is “imperative to understand how these movements develop ideologies, recruit participants, and craft strategies and tactics” (2007, p. 119). Previous research indicates, individuals become drawn to right-wing movements for a variety of reasons that often have little to do with political ideology, and instead they may be motivated to join for a sense of community, an affirmation of their masculinity or other personal motives and loyalties (Blee, 2007). Three motivational patterns have been found to explain the rationale for joining an organization, which include instrumental system rewards, internalization of organizational goals, and satisfaction from being involved in a group (Katz, 1964). Under these three motivations, individuals benefit by virtue of membership in the organization as the group provides incentives to members to remain active, individuals find being in the organization rewarding and take on the goals of the group as personal goals, and sharing experiences with other like-minded people provides social satisfaction (Katz, 1964). This may explain why members of an organization tend to be similar to one another as they recruit those searching for the same rewards and goals, and those who are looking for the satisfaction of being part of a larger group. As likeminded group members experience events together however, they also interpret those events in similar ways in a form of groupthink as they often

interact mainly with other group members and are unlikely to be exposed to different views (Bostdorff, 2004; Katz, 1964; Dickson et al., 2001; & Rajagopal & Bojin, 2002). This groupthink generates a shared identity which may explain the creation of “group consciousness through communication,” as groups create a common consciousness, and “shared understanding of the group and what it means to be a member” (Duffy, 2003, p. 293).

As an example, Glaser et al. (2002) argue some white racists are fearful of their own survival, and being in an extremist group provides them comfort and reassurance. But, being in a group with other like-minded individuals who are also fearful of their own survival, reinforces thoughts of a perceived extinction and intensifies the need for response. This may explain why extremist groups can be so dangerous, as likeminded whites fearful of their very survival join together. This fear becomes intensified and reinforced in these groups making them more likely to react violently to ensure their survival.

Brief, Umphress, Dietz, Burrows, Butz, and Scholten argue that according to realistic group conflict theory, “Competition between groups for valuable but limited material and/or symbolic resources breeds hostility” (2005, p. 830). Under this theory, one group’s gain is seen as another group’s loss, leading to resentment and prejudice as the perception of threat to one’s group is brought on by actual or perceived competition from the out-group (Brief et al., 2005). For individuals involved in white supremacist organizations, realistic group conflict theory hypothesizes that whites will emphasize “the tangible threats blacks pose to whites’ private lives” (Kinder & Sears, 1981, p. 414). The understanding of this theory is that direct competition between

blacks and whites for scarce resources “produces the perception of threat, which in turn leads to hostility directed at members of the threatening group” (Kinder & Sears, 1981, p. 415). Racism, therefore, is believed to occur at the same time of threats to private interests (Kinder & Sears, 1981). Brief et al. (2005), add that realistic group conflict theory may help to explain why interracial tensions occur in communities as racial diversity increases, and when majority group members become fearful that minorities will become competition to their economic security, power, prestige, and opportunities to obtain dignified work.

### **White Supremacy**

Brown argues that white supremacist discourse “espouses a racial hierarchy that places the White race above the Black race,” using “rhetorical strategies that reassert White racial dominance and call into question the humanity of Black people” (2009, p. 195). Brown adds that white supremacists will describe blacks with derogatory depictions based on physical appearance, language, character traits, and customs which “serves as an exoticizing (sic) quality that makes Blacks, as a group, appear strange, different from and as a threat to Whites” (2009, p. 196).

Duffy concludes that according to the psychology of racism, “Racial inferiority is planted in the mind” through repeated presentations of messages that become absorbed into the individual, and “interfere with the perception and interaction with members of the targeted group” (2003, p. 292-293). Bostdorff (2004) maintains that Klan rhetoric continually blames all minorities for a number of problems facing white America. According to Brown, white supremacist “ideology attempts to affirm that Black people exhibit unlawful behavior that threatens civilizations and White survival,” by depicting blacks “as inherently dangerous and prone to criminal behavior,” where white

women are especially in danger of black males (2009, p. 199). In addition, Bostdorff adds that many Klan groups emphasize the possibility of the extinction of the white race, and that such “threatening depictions might well resonate with white men who perceive themselves as increasingly under attack by a multicultural world” (2004, p. 351).

Blee finds that racism as a social movement, like the Klan, is based on a “premise of violence as a political and racial strategy, an organizing framework for collective action that is dramatic and distinctly out of bounds of normative politics” (1998, p. 389). Blee continues that many white extremist groups “insist that a cataclysmic ‘race war’ is imminent in which white Aryans will need to fight for their very survival against all other races,” and therefore “openly advocate violence and even terrorism” (1998, p. 389). With an ideology infused with beliefs where whites may become extinct and a racial war is all but certain, “Fear is highly salient in the lives of all members of the modern racist movement” (Blee, 1998, p. 393). At the same time, many extremist groups also have the overriding belief “of predestination and the inevitability that God’s chosen people will triumph” in the “restoration and establishment of a right and proper world,” with whites retaking their position as the rulers of the world (Duffy, 2003, p. 309). The extremist movement is thus based on a “division between the ‘we’ of the group and outsiders, who are portrayed as the ‘they,’ unsympathetic , or evil” (Duffy, 2003, p. 309). The idea behind restoring the country and civilization as a whole to a once great past has a long history in the United States. From the “Puritans settlements through U.S. history to Ronald Reagan’s 1980 inaugural address,” Americans have recited the historic drama that the country has “fallen on evil times” and there has come



a “need for restoration and a return to its foundation, and renewal of basic values and ideals” (Duffy, 2003, p. 308). Under the guise of restoration, society needs to be returned to its roots, with individuals willing to “overthrow practices causing it to stray from the right path and to establish a new, more perfect society” (Duffy, 2003, p. 308).

The “organized racist movement” in the United States is relatively small, particularly compared to the number of religious, racial, ethnic, sexual, and political groups perceived as enemies to the movement, and therefore “organized racists use physical intimidation and threat of violence to gain power over their opponents” (Blee, 1998, p. 393). The various types of intimidation can include “demonstrations, marches, violent propaganda, cross burnings,” and terrorism, all meant to demonstrate “the strength of the racial movement and to induce fear among its enemies” (Blee, 1998, p. 393-394).

Although there are many white extremist groups, the Klan remains the oldest and most enduring. Understanding an organization such as the Klan, which has been in existence in one form or another for over 145 years, requires an examination of the historical development of the organization as well as their beliefs (Becker et al., 2001). According to Vertigans, the Klan is a “blend of racism, patriotism, religion and ritualism in a populist combination that attracted extensive support during different periods” (2007, p. 642). Adams and Roscigno argue that Klan rhetoric “is a simplistic combination of nationalism and fundamentalist Christianity informed by racist ideology” (2005, p. 765). In fact, unlike many other white extremist groups suspicious of the government, “The Klan often advocates participation in and a restructuring of American democracy” (Adams & Roscigno, 2005, p. 767). Brown argues that traditionally, white

supremacist organizations like the Klan “positioned themselves as guardians of law and order in order to protect traditional values during a period of rapid social change” (2009, p. 191).

Lewis and Serbu argue that the Klan and the Klan’s founding was long celebrated in Pulaski, Tennessee, as part of “their own town’s history, remembering it as a noble and chivalrous group that saved the South from the ravages of Reconstruction” (1999, p. 140). However, Lewis and Serbu continue that even in Pulaski, beliefs about the Klan have changed over the years from “the Confederate ‘lost cause’ portrayal of the Klan as a ‘chivalrous savior’ to the image of ‘racist bigots’ found in discussions of current Klan groups” (1999, p. 141). Many Klan groups today, however, still trace their heritage to the original Klan of the 1860s and Pulaski, Tennessee.

### **The Original Klan**

From May 1, 1917 until 1989, rested a plaque in Pulaski, Tennessee donated by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which commemorated the founding of the Klan and read:

KU KLUX KLAN ORGANIZED IN THIS, THE LAW OFFICE OF JUDGE THOMAS M. JONES, DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>, 1865 NAMES OF ORIGINAL ORGANIZERS CALVIN E. JONES. JOHN B. KENNEDY. FRANK O. MCCORD. JOHN C. LESTER. RICHARD R. REED. JAMES R. CROWE.  
(Lewis & Serbu, 1999, p. 140).

The Klan was formed by these six former Confederate soldiers, and the first and only Grand Wizard was former Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, while former Confederate soldiers became the original rank-and-file members (Lewis & Serbu, 1999). Later, membership could include any white southern male, while the leadership of the local groups, called dens, came from the wealthy class (Becker et al., 2001). In the early years following the Civil War, the Klan was mostly a fraternal social club, and limited

their activities to harassing newly freed black slaves following the war (Becker et al., 2001), while keeping few official records of membership, rules, or purpose (Parsons, 2005). The Reconstruction Klan was regionally located in the South and was “organized for the sole purpose of restoring the racial order the region had lost during the Civil War” (Lewis & Serbu, 1999, p. 142).

Klan members during Reconstruction were Democrats, as was much of the white South prior to the Civil War (Rapoport, 2008). The white South had voted against Republican Abraham Lincoln prior to the war, and it was Lincoln’s election as President and the prospect that Lincoln would end slavery that led to the war. In addition, it was the Republican-led Congress during Reconstruction that passed the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments which ended slavery, granted citizenship to former slaves, and gave black men the right to vote. In addition, it was northern Republicans who came to the South after the Civil War, known as Carpetbaggers, who took advantage of the disenfranchised white Southern vote and the newly granted black vote, to take office across the South, which further led to Southern irritation. According to Rapoport, the Klan was the most active during Reconstruction in the “Piedmont and Appalachian highlands of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and western North and South Carolina,” where there were even numbers of whites and freed blacks, and where blacks would overwhelmingly vote Republican (Rapoport, 2008). However, the Klan was relatively inactive in Virginia where the Democrats were firmly in control of state politics (Parsons, 2005; & Rapoport, 2008).

According to Vertigans, the popularity of the Reconstruction Klan was based upon resentment following the South’s defeat in the Civil War, the freeing of the South’s

slaves, and “control of the South by a Northern-dominated federal government” (2007, p. 643). Vertigans continues that the Klan’s primary objective was “the ‘maintenance of the supremacy of the White Race in this Republic’ and used terror through arson, whippings, torture, mutilations and lynchings” (2007, p. 643). Between 1868, and the end of Reconstruction in 1871, the Klan is reported to have been responsible for lynching over 400 blacks in the South (Becker et al., 2001).

In light of acts of violence and lawlessness committed by the Klan, the federal government intervened in Klan activities and arrested and convicted more than 1,000 Klan members by 1871 (Richard, 2009), the same year the U.S. House of Representatives held a special *Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Affairs of the Late Insurrectionary States* (Parsons, 2005). The multivolume transcript of testimony was intended to investigate allegations of political violence in the South (Parsons, 2005). During the investigation, “Bipartisan teams of congressmen summoned witnesses to Washington and traveled to various southern states to hear testimony of alleged victims, perpetrators, and witnesses” (Parsons, 2005, p. 813). Although Klan activities led to congressional investigations and two acts passed by Congress aimed at stopping the Klan, many in the South still did not view the Reconstruction Klan negatively (Lewis and Serbu, 1999). In fact, Lewis and Serbu argue that “after Reconstruction, the original Klan’s legacy was rewritten as part of the southern mythology of the ‘lost cause’” (1999, p. 142). The “lost cause” myth was primarily orchestrated by ex-Confederate organizations like the United Confederate Veterans, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, to portray the Civil War and antebellum

South as “valiant and chivalrous and its soldiers as men who fought against enormous odds to defend and maintain their way of life” (Lewis & Serbu, 1999, p. 143).

The Klan used violence, intimidation, and mob power to pursue the political agenda of white male supremacy unrestricted by the rules of war (Rapoport, 2008). To reestablish the white male superiority of the Antebellum South, the Klan used terror, violence, and intimidation to influence southern elections (Parsons, 2005; & Rapoport, 2008). Specifically, the Klan prevented blacks from voting; intimidated scalawags, white Southern Republicans; and Carpetbaggers, white northern Republicans who came to the South for fortune and fame after the war; and attacked black militias that patrolled the South (Rapoport, 2008). The Klan also became an organization of terror toward whites who sided with newly freed blacks and blacks who were economically independent, politically active, or who attempted to speak to white males or pursue white women (Becker et al., 2001).

With Klan activity widespread in the South during Reconstruction, the federal government proved ineffective and powerless to stop the Klan. By 1869, the Klan had effectively restored white control over the South, and following a “soldier’s agreement’ between President Ulysses S. Grant and General Nathaniel Bedford Forrest (Klan Grand Wizard), Forrest ordered that the organization be disbanded” (Lewis & Serbu, 1999, p. 147). It has been argued that one of the reasons Forrest agreed to disband the Klan was because the Klan had been successful in the fight over Reconstruction because of two factors - one military and one political (Rapoport, 2008; & Vertigans, 2007). First, many Union Army soldiers did not want to occupy the post-war South, and, once Congress passed the Posse Comitatus Act, which prevented the military from

becoming involved in civil affairs, it effectively prevented the military and thus the federal government, from protecting blacks in the South (Rapoport, 2008). Second, the disputed 1876 Presidential election was only resolved after a political compromise made in the United States House of Representatives, where Southern Democrats agreed to support the Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes as President if he would remove federal troops from the South, effectively ending Reconstruction (Rapoport, 2008; & Vertigans, 2007).

Lewis and Serbu continue that after the end of the Reconstruction Klan in 1871, the “Klan did not exist for roughly half a century” (1999, p. 142). According to Blee, the “Klan lay dormant until the early twentieth century when it was reborn as a movement of white ‘100 percent American’ Protestants” (1991, p. 61). Blee continues that the movement was brought on by “a public explosion of anti-Black racism and white supremacist sentiments,” after a postwar migration of blacks from the South to the North, a “nationalistic hatred of immigrants and political ‘radicals’ fueled by World War I propaganda” and an increase in intolerance that accompanied the rise of political and religious fundamentalism across the country (1991, p. 62).

### **Post-Reconstruction Klan**

Prior to the Second Klan of the 1920s, membership had dwindled to only a few thousand (Rice, 2008). In 1915, however, D.W. Griffith released the film *The Birth of a Nation*, considered to be the first great cinematic masterpiece ever created, and it received a tremendous reception across the country (Becker et al., 2001; Lewis & Serbu, 1999; & Richard, 2009). The film was based on the 1905 novel by Thomas Dixon called “The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan,” which sympathetically portrayed the Klan as the savior of the South during Reconstruction

while also reinforcing racist stereotypes of blacks (Becker, et al., 2001; Levin, 2002; & Lewis & Serbu, 1999). One week before the film's Atlanta premiere, in October of 1915, a former Methodist-Episcopalian minister, "Colonel" William Joseph Simmons, along with 34 of his Atlanta friends, climbed Stone Mountain in Georgia "outside the city, burned a wooden cross at the top, practiced a weird ritual, and brought into existence the 'Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Incorporated'" (Alexander, 1965, p. 349). The new society was even given a preliminary charter from the state of Georgia on December 4, 1915 (Alexander, 1965). Among the 34 men Simmons brought to Stone Mountain, were veterans of the Reconstruction Era Klan (Bohn, 1925). According to Bohn, "A Georgian statute permits ex-members of any such disbanded organization to re-establish it and use its name," and argued that Simmons' Klan was "a direct reorganization and continuation of the Klan of the Reconstruction period" (1925, p. 394).

Simmons was known as "Colonel" because he had been a "private soldier in an Alabama infantry regiment during the Spanish-American War" (Bohn, 1925, p. 390). In his ethnographic study of the Klan and Simmons, Bohn compared Simmons to such great Protestant men as William Jennings Bryan, Brigham Young, John Brown, and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson and refers to him in the study as "our prophet" (1925, p. 394). According to Bohn, Simmons' rationale for reforming the Klan was due to "the gloomiest forebodings, not only for America, but for both Protestantism and the white man's civilization throughout the world" (1925, p. 395). In Bohn's study (1925), he agrees with Simmons and argues that the American people of the 1920s had "very considerable grounds for anxiety and fear for the future" (p. 405), and later continues that "The old American and the old America are passing into history" (p. 407).

It was Simmons who dubbed the Klan, “The Invisible Empire,” with the hopes of creating a fraternal organization, which was to be a “respectable and harmless group,” where “Klansmen were to refrain from coercive activity except perhaps to frighten an occasional ‘uppity’ Negro” (Alexander, 1965, p. 350). Simmons named himself the “Imperial Wizard” of the Klan, wrote the Klan’s ritual, which included other titles and passwords, and opened membership to all native-born white Protestant males over the age of 18 (Alexander, 1965).

After receiving the corporate charter from the state of Georgia, Simmons began advertising the group in Atlanta newspapers (Alexander, 1965). According to Alexander, at the same time Simmons began advertising the Klan in the Atlanta newspapers, the film *The Birth of a Nation* debuted in Atlanta, and the free publicity brought in new members. New members paid a \$10.00 initiation fee and an additional \$6.50 for the white robes that became the official uniform for the Klan (Alexander, 1965). In addition, at least 42 new members also signed up for Klan life insurance under Simmons’ reign (Alexander, 1965). By the time the United States entered World War I in 1917, the Klan had grown beyond Atlanta and new Klan dens had been formed in Alabama (Alexander, 1965). However, the Klan only reached a membership between 5,000 and 6,000 members by 1920 under the leadership and promotion of Simmons (Alexander, 1965).

In 1920, Simmons enlisted the help of an Atlanta advertising company run by Edward Young Clarke and Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler called the Southern Publicity Association, which would become the “Propagation Department” for the KKK into the 1920s (Alexander, 1965, p. 351). It was Clarke and Tyler who divided the United States into “‘Domains,’ or groups of states; ‘Realms,’ or states; and ‘Provinces,’ or subdivisions



of states,” and sent more than 1,100 Klan members to the southern and southwestern United States with “instructions to play upon whatever prejudices – anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, racism, or moral zealotry – were most acute in the areas” (Alexander, 1965, p. 351-352). According to Alexander:

The Klan assumed the posture of an aggressive protector of ‘100 per cent Americanism,’ a collection of white-robed crusaders determined to defend the nation from Catholics, Jews, Negroes, foreigners, radicals, bootleggers, moral offenders, corrupt politicians, and anyone else who did not live up to the ‘real American’s’ conception of right and wrong (1965, p. 352-353).

It was the publicity and recruiting of Clarke and Tyler, along with the ideas of Simmons, the patriotic zeal of post-war America, and a distrust of foreigners that led to the Klan’s rise in the 1920s (Alexander, 1965). The second Klan was born in 1915 and lasted until about 1929, although the Klan’s power was already dwindling by the mid-1920s (Lewis & Serbu, 1999).

### **Klan of the 1920s**

According to Rice, in the early 1920s, the United States was “struggling with the corrosive forces of modernity, and at a moment of heightened patriotic fervour (sic), the Klan exploited existing concerns around immigration, industrialisation (sic), bolshevism, and social-Darwinism” (2008, p. 367). Bohn argued, “Our American youth in general never had quite enough excitement out of the experience of the recent war,” and continued that “Over three millions of men had been armed, excellently drilled, keyed up to the fighting point by a very clever propaganda, and then sent home without having seen battle service” (1925, p. 398). Bohn opined that “this tremendous force was ‘spoiling for a fight,’” and looked at the Klan and the defense of white Protestantism as their best option (1925, p. 398). Bohn concluded that “impatience has grown into anger, anger into law-breaking” for the men who had been trained to be soldiers and had

returned to the rural farming life of their pre-war days (1925, p. 399). The Roaring Twenties of economic achievements for some, created feelings of anger and resentment among “small-town folk in the South, West, and lower Midwest” who had been “left behind” economically (Moore, 1990, p. 341). In fact, Moore (2009) argues the radicalism that was to become the 1920s Klan can be traced back to rural, small-town America.

Moore (1990) maintains that in the early 1920s, America’s right-wing responded to the changing social conditions of the time by attacking “un-American citizens”, i.e. immigrants, and un-American ideology, i.e. communism. Bohn referred to the Klan at this time as “the most important epoch of our militant nationalism” (1925, p. 385). Rice adds that the Klan began to align itself with local authorities, patriotic organizations like the American Legion, and began to “promote and define itself as a legitimate religious organisation (sic)” by aligning with Protestant reform groups (2008, p. 367). Alexander adds that the Klan was a vigilante body, employing both violent and nonviolent “techniques of coercion to foster white supremacy, Protestant hegemony, and orthodox standards of morality and propriety” (1965, p. 348-349). Lewis and Serbu (1999) agree, adding that the 1920s Klan supported Prohibition enforcement, immigration restrictions, and the promotion of white Protestant America. As an example, in Memphis, Tennessee, in the early 1920s, local members of fundamentalist Protestant denominations became “shocked by the lax moral codes of the city,” and “attributed the evils that they perceived to the sinister influences of Rome” (Wald, 1980, p. 221). Wald continues that the Klan’s “crusades for prohibition and against private schools were an outgrowth of this hostility to Roman Catholicism” (1980, p. 221). The Klan of the 1920s

“saw itself as the patriotic defender of its country and culture” against Catholic, Jewish, black, and foreign influences (Beirich & Potok, 2009, p. 256).

Lewis and Serbu (1999) argue that the Klan’s appeal was in their ability to enter a community and offer itself as a remedy for the people’s social problems and concerns, which allowed them to spread beyond the South into such places as Indiana, Colorado, and Oregon. According to Rice (2008), the Klan sought to position itself as a moral guardian of the American children, and took up populist causes of the time like Prohibition. Moore continues that the Klan “acted as a kind of interest group for the average white Protestant who believed that his values should be dominant in American society,” and that “Prohibition represented the great symbol of that desire” (1990, p. 353). At the KKK’s peak in the 1920s, roughly eight to 10% of the population of the United States was a member of the Klan (Lewis & Serbu, 1999).

But, it was not only men who joined the 1920s Klan in defense of white Protestantism. According to Blee, historians have generally ignored the role of women in the Klan, dismissing “women’s activities as incidental, auxiliary, or merely cultural screen behind which men carried out the real politics of the Klan” (1991, p. 60). Blee argues that “One of the largest and most influential right-wing women’s organizations of the immediate postsuffrage period was the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK)” (1991, p. 58). Blee continues that from 1923 to 1930, hundreds of thousands of women joined the WKKK “to oppose immigration, racial equality, Jewish-owned businesses, parochial schools, and ‘moral decay,’” in addition to fighting for the preservation of family life and women’s rights (1991, p. 58). The WKKK was particularly strong in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Arkansas, but the chapter in Indiana during the 1920s had an estimated

membership of 250,000; half of the total Klan membership at that time in the state and was the largest state WKKK organization (Blee, 1991).

Blee (1991) contends that during the 1920s, it was the female Klan members who legitimized the Klan, acted as covert manipulators of electoral plots, organized Klan cultural events, and were the force behind Protestantizing public schools. Blee continues that it was both the WKKK and the Klan that would issue “warnings to men who cheated on their wives, owed child support, or neglected their families” (1991, p. 68). Although the women of the WKKK were rarely involved in any direct violence or vigilantism, they worked to solidify the movement, led political assaults on non-Klan businesses, and organized members to strengthen the Klan’s political base, which Blee (1991) argues were all essential to increase the Klan’s political and social power.

But, just as it did during the Reconstruction Klan, Congress investigated the actions and workings of the 1920s Klan. In October of 1921, the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives held a series of hearings on the Klan which included testimony by Simmons, Clarke, and other Klan officials who all made “blanket denials of the charges made against the order” (Alexander, 1965, p. 353). After several days of testimony, Simmons expressed his sorrow over the presence of abuse and misunderstanding surrounding the Klan, denied the Klan had been founded with the intention of promoting violence or intimidation, and assured the committee that “if any lawless elements actually belonged to the order they would be banished for violating its peaceful tenets” (Alexander, 1965, p. 354). After only a few days of testimony, the committee abruptly ended its inquiry on October 17, 1921, without making any recommendations (Alexander, 1965). The lack of recommendations led Alexander to

comment, “The silence of the solons seemed to place their stamp of approval on the hooded fraternity” (1965, p. 354). Just prior to the congressional hearing, Klan membership was estimated at about 125,000 members, after the testimony and apparent rubber stamp by Congress, membership was estimated to increase by about 5,000 new members a day (Alexander, 1965).

According to Alexander, “For a time during the 1920s, the Klan... became one of the most thriving industries in America” (1965, p. 348). During the early 1920s, Klansmen were expected to subscribe to Klan publications including weekly and monthly magazines and newspapers, buy Klan life insurance, and donate money to Klan causes like Protestant churches and the needy in local communities (Blee, 1991; Bohn, 1925; & Alexander, 1965). In addition, by 1922, Simmons, Clarke and Tyler formed the Searchlight Publishing Company which printed Klan literature and the weekly Klan newspaper the *Searchlight* (Alexander, 1965). By 1923 there were 24 Klan newspapers being published in sixteen states including “*The Hawkeye Independent*, self-billed as ‘The Klansman’s Newspaper’ in Des Moines, Iowa” (Rice, 2008, p. 375). These papers contained both syndicated columns and reports of local news, allowing the Klan to “organise (sic) and unite local chapters within a shared national identity” (Rice, 2008, p. 368). Klan papers opposed perceived anti-Protestant films, stage plays, and radio productions including Charlie Chaplin’s *The Pilgrim* and D.W. Griffith’s 1923 film *The White Rose* (Rice, 2008). Ironically, it had been D.W. Griffith’s 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation* that had galvanized support and brought about the Second Klan (Becker et al., 2001; & Richard, 2009). The Klan papers would also include a weekly “section entitled ‘Go to Church Sunday,’ and provocative headlines like ‘Protestant

church in danger” (Rice, 2008, p. 368). Rice argues that the Klan of the early 1920s “presented itself as defenders of the Protestant faith,” and was an established part of local communities in Ohio and Indiana where it would visit local schools and make donations during Protestant church services (2008, p. 368). In 1923, the Klan also launched their own film companies, and two Klan-made films, *The Toll of Justice* and *The Traitor Within* were exhibited in schools in the United States in 1924 (Rice, 2008). The WKKK also worked to create the Cavalier Motion Picture Company to “establish a ‘clean’ motion picture company” (Blee, 1991, p. 70). In addition, before Clarke and Tyler left the Klan, they also opened the Clarke Realty Company, a real estate company for Klan property which included ten acres of the old Peachtree Creek Civil War battlefield, and a \$45,000 home for Simmons (Alexander, 1965).

According to Rice, “Reporters widely recognised (sic) the Klan’s successes in the 1924 elections and suggested that on a national level both Republican and Democratic parties had catered to the Klan vote” (2008, p. 377). Wald (1980) argues that throughout the United States in the 1920s, the Klan was active in the electoral process with candidates at the local, state, and national levels often seeking out the support of the formidable block of Klan voters. Blee (1991) argues that unlike the Reconstruction Klan, the Klan of the 1920s was in full view of the public even while individual identities were kept secret. By the mid-1920s, the Klan’s membership included local and national politicians and local law enforcement that stretched across the country, and began promoting anti-immigrant views along with white supremacist and anti-Semitic messages (Becker et al., 2001; Levin, 2002; Richard, 2009; Vertigans, 2007). According to Lewis and Serbu, by 1923, as many as 75 congressional representatives and

Senators from Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Texas “were said to owe their seats to the Klan,” and that United States Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black had been an active member of the Alabama KKK prior to his Supreme Court nomination in 1937 (1999, p. 145).

Klan leaders also prevented an anti-Klan plank in the party platform at the 1924 Democratic National Convention and stopped the nomination of the Catholic and anti-Klan Democratic presidential candidate Al Smith (Lewis & Serbu, 1999). In addition, Bohn (1925) argued it was the Klan that decided the 1924 presidential election in which Calvin Coolidge was elected. Four years later, according to Moore, anti-Catholicism was “the most important single factor in Herbert Hoover’s victory in the presidential election of 1928” (1990, p. 346), once fundamentalist Protestants and Klan members defected from the Democratic Party following the nomination of the Catholic candidate Alfred E. Smith for President (Wald, 1980). Bohn argued that in the mid-1920s, to some Protestants, “The pope was looked upon as anti-Christ” (1925, p. 392).

Moore argues that “the Klan was composed primarily of average citizens representing nearly all parts of America’s white Protestant society,” but did attract “its share of ‘low status’ individuals, men prone to violence” (1990, p. 353). However, Lay continues that most members “rarely engaged in violent vigilantism, and for the most part functioned in the manner of a typical civic action group” (1990, p. 668-669). The Klan became the means by which average Americans resisted political domination by urban elites and for a time made local and state governments more responsive to popular interests of white Protestant America (Moore, 1990), such as “improved law

enforcement, better public schools, municipal reform, and the preservation of traditional values” (Lay, 1994, p. 669).

Moore (1990) argues that while the Klan of the 1920s’ racist, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic message was offensive to many Americans of the time, these views did conform to the ideals of many in America as well as many members of Congress. Moore continues that “Blatantly discriminatory immigration restrictions were enacted during this time... by a bipartisan coalition in the United States Congress,” (1990, p. 346). The Johnson-Reed Act of May 1924, heavily reduced immigration, particularly from Catholic European countries, and “showed that the ideals of the Klan had now become mainstream political policy” (Rice, 2008, p 377).

Similar to after Reconstruction, the Klan had won, only this time, instead of against federal control of the South and blacks attempting to assert their equality in Southern society, the Klan fought back against Catholic immigration by advocating for decreased levels of immigration, and preventing the elections of Catholic candidates, while maintaining southern segregation (Alexander, 1965). By 1927, Klan membership was once again on the decline as scandal and the need for a group to advocate white Protestant supremacy waned (Alexander, 1965). With a peak of between three and five million members in 1925 (Lay, 1994; & Richard, 2009), Klan membership declined to as around 321,000 members by 1927, half that number by 1928, and as few as 37,000 by the end of the decade (Alexander, 1965).

### **Jim Crow Klan**

By the 1930s and ‘40s, the Klan lost most of their northern membership, but maintained their position in the South in opposition to communism (Richard, 2009). By 1930, the Klan was estimated to include only 35,000 members (Vertigans, 2007).



According to Alexander, by the 1930s, the Imperial Klan was a skeletal organization that “carried on through the depression-ridden 1930’s (sic); but the power, wealth, and prestige of the previous decade were lost forever” (1965, p. 365). Memberships declined as the Great Depression of the 1930s worsened, and after the Klan made overtures to the members of the American Nazi party before World War II (Larson, 1992). In addition, lynching which had been used by the Klan and “common in the 1930s, became a rarity after the Second World War” (Fairclough, 1990, p. 396). Alexander adds that the Klan’s secrecy, violence, and “penchant for prying into other people’s affairs –alienated many Americans who might have otherwise sympathized with the nativist, racist, and moralistic tenets of the order” (1965, p. 366). In addition, Fairclough (1990) argues that the anticommunist hysteria of the 1940s strengthened the forces of conservatism, and thus may have provided members with other avenues to demonstrate their anticommunist opposition. On “April 28, 1944, harassed by a federal suit for nearly \$700,000 in delinquent income taxes,” the remaining members of Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Incorporated, voted to disband (Alexander, 1965, p. 365).

By the 1950s, the Klan was weakened, and separate male and female Klan organizations all but disappeared, and for many years women remained background figures in the Klan; integrated, but no longer equal in numbers nor as active (Blee, 1991). The Klan groups of the Civil Rights Era that would come into being by the 1960s would continue to use the name “Ku Klux Klan” along with many of the rituals and symbols of Simmons’ Imperial Empire; however none achieved the success and membership of the 1920s Invisible Empire (Alexander, 1965).

## Civil Rights Era Klan

The reemergence of the Klan in the 1960s was in reaction to the Civil Rights Movement, challenges to segregation, and the “imposition of integrated education and opposition to egalitarian reforms” (Vertigans, 2007, p. 643). In the 1960s, the Klan used white working class man’s fear of competition from blacks for scarce resources to recruit new members (Cunningham, 2008). The Klan of the 1960s also gained strength from “the social and economic isolation and declining sense of opportunity” some whites felt in the South (Cunningham, 2008). But, according to Fairclough, by the 1960s, “many liberals and some Marxists contended that industrialization and urbanization were gradually undermining the economic basis of white supremacy” (1990, p. 395). This may explain then why the Klan of the 1960s was unable to achieve the mass movement status and support of the 1920s, as the United States became more modern and urban.

During the 1960s, the Klan was also seen by some as a social group to benefit the white poor, while also protecting white dominance over southern life. Cunningham argues that a lack of government attention to the plight of the rural white poor, and instead government attention directed toward the black ghettos of President Johnson’s Great Society initiatives, “fueled the feelings of anti-government alienation” (2008, p. 72). Cunningham (2008) goes on to point out that these feelings of alienation and discontent with the federal government, were also the basis for Alabama Governor George Wallace’s 1968 presidential campaign which espoused similar themes.

During the 1960s the Klan existed in numerous communities across the South and local chapters or “klaverns” would hold rallies attracting hundreds of people (Cunningham, 2008). At these events, attendees could listen to country music, buy food and Klan paraphernalia, join the Klan, and buy Klan robes (Cunningham, 2008). The

rallies would begin and end with a prayer, and would feature a number of speeches by local and national Klan members (Cunningham, 2008). The climax of the rallies occurred when Klan members would burn a wooden cross between thirty and seventy feet high covered in gasoline (Cunningham, 2008). In addition to rallies, the Klan acted as an alternative society for the white disenfranchised, and local klaverns would hold weekly meetings, sponsor raffles, have barbeques, and offer group life insurance to Klan members (Cunningham, 2008).

The Klan of the 1960s however did not have the same public support of the Klan of the 1920s, as negative comments from national leaders in the media and in speeches about the Klan's campaign against the Civil Rights Movement turned public opinion against the Klan (Lewis and Serbu, 1999). Just as it had done during Reconstruction and the 1920s, the United States Congress once again held hearings on the Klan. During the probe by the House Un-American Activities Committee, which ended in February of 1966, newspapers across the country reported on "eyewitness accounts of Klan beatings, bombings, and murders" (Lewis & Serbu, 1999, p. 147). The 35-day hearing led to a report that called out the Klan for being a violent organization that would attack individuals simply for the color of their skin (Lewis & Serbu, 1999). In 1968, President Johnson's National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, more widely known as the Eisenhower Commission, primarily targeted the Klan which was linked to "hundreds of acts of racial terror perpetrated by some of its approximately 17,000 dues-paying members" (Cunningham, 2008, p. 70). In 1964, the FBI identified 17 independent Klan organizations, of which according to Cunningham, the United Klans of America (UKA) was the largest (2008, p. 70). Cunningham (2008) continues

that approximately 90% of all official dues-paying members of the Klan belonged to the UKA. According to Cunningham, the UKA was a perfect example of “a reactionary social movement that won support by exploiting the decline of the political, economic, or social standing of particular groups” (2008, p. 74).

Vertigans attests that the “excessive use of violence and multitude of gruesome killings caused public revulsion” against the Klan in the 1960s (2007, p. 643). But, while the Klan of the 1960s is remembered for being a dangerous vigilante group, “the violence inflicted upon the civil rights movement, although shocking,” was in fact, “mild compared to the vicious repression of fifty or even twenty years earlier” (Fairclough, 1990, p. 396).

Lewis and Serbu argue it was the public’s negative view of the Klan during the 1960s which “projected back in time to include the original Klan as well,” and thus tarnished the name of the Klan and their connection to the “lost cause” (1999, p. 148). The tarnished image would for years lead to low Klan membership totals, and for a time, make the Klan a minor player in the white extremist movement.

### **Post-Civil Rights Klan**

Fairclough (1990) argues that the violence of the Civil Rights Movement, and the murder of civil rights workers in Mississippi and Alabama, prompted a crackdown on the Klan. After the Civil Rights Movement, and subsequent civil and criminal lawsuits by Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center, Klan membership once again declined and by 1974 membership was down to 1,500 members (Becker et al., 2001; & Lewis & Serbu, 1999).

Not that the Klan completely disappeared, or even disappeared from making headlines for being involved in violence. On November 3, 1979, in what is known as the

“Greensboro Massacre,” the Klan was involved in a violent altercation with a communist group in the North Carolina town (Cunningham, 2008). That morning, the Communist Workers Party (CWP) was planning to hold a “Death to the Klan” rally in the Greensboro, African-American neighborhood, of Morningside Homes (Callahan, 2008). The CWP had been organizing workers in a local textile mill while building “racial cooperation in their trade union efforts;” both communism and racial integration went against Klan ideology (Cunningham, 2008, p. 76). The Klan and CWP clashed a few months prior to the Greensboro Massacre, in the North Carolina town of China Grove, when the CWP burned a Confederate flag and traded insults with the Klan and members of the American Nazi Party (Cunningham, 2008). Before the CWP could hold their demonstration in Morningside, however, the Klan and members of the Nazi Party confronted the CWP, and tensions led to a gun battle (Cunningham, 2008). In the end, five CWP members were killed and eight others were wounded, while only one Klan member was wounded, along with a bystander who was a news photographer (Cunningham, 2008). Two criminal trials after the massacre led to acquittals by all-white juries, but in 1985, a civil trial found the Klan and Nazi Party members, along with the Greensboro police, liable for one of the killings, which resulted in a payment of more than \$350,000 by the city to settle the civil suit (Becker et al., 2001; & Cunningham, 2008).

Random Klan activity continued across the South during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Louis Beam, a former helicopter tail gunner during the Vietnam War, entered the KKK in 1968 and later became the Grand Dragon of David Duke’s faction of the Klan in the state of Texas (Levin, 2002). In Texas, Beam organized and trained a private Klan

army called the Texas Emergency Reserve (TER), whose “primary activity was terrorizing Vietnamese refugee fisherman” (Levin, 2002, p. 961). The TER conducted military training and conducted an “armed boat ride through a commercial waterway, conspicuously displaying their weapons,” in addition to hanging an effigy of a Vietnamese fisherman from a rear deck rigging (Becker et al., 2001). In 1982, the TER was forced to disband after lawsuits by the Texas attorney general and the Southern Poverty Law Center obtained a court decision that ruled the TER’s activities were outside the scope of its First and Second Amendment rights (Becker et al., 2001; & Levin, 2002). Such civil suits and monetary judgments have become a weapon of choice to combat the Klan (Vertigans, 2007). In fact, since the late 1970s, the Montgomery, Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center has used the strategy to sue hate groups civilly, leading to huge monetary settlements that exceed a group’s assets, effectively bankrupting them (Levin, 2002).

Since these and other lawsuits, a much smaller Klan has continued to exist, located mainly in the South, Midwest, and western parts of the United States targeting Asians, Mexicans, Jews, blacks and homosexuals (Richard, 2009). For example, in the 1980s, while Grand Dragon of the California Ku Klux Klan, a former colonel in the U.S. Army, Tom Metzger, operated a “border patrol” to harass illegal immigrants from Mexico and ran a “paramilitary-style ‘security force’ that was involved in violent confrontations” with immigrant groups in California (Levin, 2002, p. 963).

According to Lewis and Serbu, there was a brief but small revival of the Klan in the 1980s where membership may have reached as high as 5,000 Klan members, but the researchers concluded that this would have represented “far less than 1 percent of the

total native-born white male population,” compared to the nearly 10% of the white population the Klan achieved during the 1920s (1999, p. 148). But recently, the issue of immigration has become a powerful driving force in the United States, and the Klan has once again focused on the issue to reinvigorate their organization and movement. In fact, according to Beirich and Potok, from the Southern Poverty Law Center, “Non-white immigration has been successfully exploited by white supremacist groups in recent years” (2009, p. 255).

### **The Klan and Immigration**

In the United States, intense national debates occur with each new wave of mass immigration (Pantoja, 2006). In 1965, the United States government abolished racial immigration quotas that favored European immigration, and large numbers of Hispanic immigrants entered the United States, while at the same time birthrates for white Americans dropped precipitously (Beirich & Potok, 2009). In the 1990s, nearly 9.1 million new immigrants were admitted into the United States, surpassing the previous largest wave of immigrants between 1901 and 1910 of 8.8 million (Pantoja, 2006). It was this wave of Catholic immigrants in the early 1900s that led to the rise of the Klan in the 1920s.

During the 1990s, the number of illegal immigrants also increased to over eight-million (Pantoja, 2006). The increased immigration led to a public outcry including the 1994 “Save Our State” initiative in California, called Proposition 187 which would have denied public services to illegal immigrants and would have required public administrators, teachers, and medical personnel to report illegal immigrants to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (Pantoja, 2006). Although a District Court later ruled Proposition 187 was unconstitutional, the United States Congress reacted by

passing the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 which reduced the number of immigrants admitted into the country, nearly doubled the number of border patrol agents, and reversing previous policy, changing citizenship preferences from family reunification to preferences for skilled immigrants (Pantoja, 2006).

But, according to predictions by the U.S. Census Bureau, whites will become a minority in the United States by 2042, and California became the first minority-majority state in 2000 (Beirich & Potok, 2009). Although it is impossible to know exactly how many people are in the United States illegally, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) estimates there were 11.6 million illegal immigrants living in the United States as of January, 2008 (Hofer, Rytina, & Baker, 2009). This is essentially the same estimate provided by the Pew Hispanic Center, which indicated that the 11.9 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States as of March 2008, made up 4% of the U.S. population (Passel & Cohn, 2008). The DHS report added that between 2000 and 2008, the illegal immigrant population was estimated to have increased by 37%, with an average net increase each year of 390,000 (Hofer et al., 2009). According to the Pew Hispanic Center, illegal immigrant populations are only estimates, however, because the U.S. Census Bureau does not ask individuals to indicate immigration status, and instead “estimates are derived using a widely accepted methodology that essentially subtracts the estimated legal-immigrant population from the total foreign-born population” (Passel & Cohn, 2008).

In the DHS report, illegal immigrants were designated as part of the “unauthorized resident immigrant population,” defined by the DHS as “all foreign-born non-citizens



who are not legal residents,” that “entered the United States without inspection or were admitted temporarily and stayed past the date they were required to leave” (Hofer et al., 2009, p. 1). The report continues that of 11.6 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States, 7 million were from Mexico; 1.2 million from Asia; and 850,000 from South America (Hofer et al., 2009). Astoundingly, according to the Pew Research Center, one-in-ten people born in Mexico live in the United States (Passel & Cohn, 2009). California had the highest estimated total number of unauthorized immigrants at 2.9 million, Texas had 1.7 million, Florida had 840,000, and New York had 640,000 (Hofer et al., 2009). Meanwhile, Georgia had a 105% increase in the total estimated number of unauthorized immigrants between 2000 and 2008 (Hofer et al., 2009).

These figures and the increasing visibility of immigrant populations in areas that previously had been void of large immigrant populations has led to a new form of nativism not seen since the 1850s and 1920s. This new nativism by the Klan and other extremist groups has been a recruiting windfall. The current nativist and anti-immigrant movement have been fueled by whites who “fear, given current demographic realities, that they are somehow losing the country their forefathers built” (Beirich & Potok, 2009, p. 257). The Klan and other extremist groups are seen as a means to defend the “American way of life and the preservation of its heritage” (Vertigans, 2007, p. 648). These beliefs are based on the falling proportion of the white population in the United States and the growing population of Hispanics due to immigration (Beirich & Potok, 2009). Interestingly, the *Christian Science Monitor* argues the modern anti-immigrant Klan is actually a reversion to their nativist origins (Knickerbocker, 2007). In the same article by the *Christian Science Monitor*, Brian Levin, the director of the Center for the

Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino, is quoted as saying, "While we generally think of it as a white supremacist organization, the Klan at its peak was virulently anti-immigrant" (Knickerbocker, 2007, p. 2).

In 2007, *USA TODAY* ran an article with the headline, "Immigration becomes KKK rallying point" (Kim & Bazar, 2007, p. 3A). The article attests that the Klan was "stepping up its activities," through rallies and distributing fliers with anti-immigrant sentiments in "Bloomington, Ind.; Amarillo, Texas; Denison, Iowa; and elsewhere" (Kim & Bazar, 2007, p. 3A). The Klan fliers and rallies denounced illegal immigration and targeted communities across the country with growing immigrant populations (Kim & Bazar, 2007). The article quotes the national civil rights director of the Anti-Defamation League, Deborah Lauter, saying the Klan was using "this immigration issue to bring in others who feel like America is under siege," which Lauter believes explains a recent surge in both Klan activity and Klan membership (Kim & Bazar, 2007, p. 3A). In the article, Phil Lawson, the former "Imperial Wizard" of the United Northern and Southern Knights of the KKK, told the paper that in 2006 the Knights had distributed over 6,000 anti-immigrant newsletters and leaflets in Indiana calling on whites to join the Klan and blaming illegal immigrants for taking American jobs (Kim & Bazar, 2007). This is a significant and powerful argument because as Cunningham (2008) attests, research has found that racist movements emerge when race-based competition for jobs becomes widespread, and whites feel that their economic opportunities are being limited by non-whites. Wald adds that research has shown that extremist sentiments are often "concentrated among the marginal middle class and persons at the base of the

social order” (1980, p. 220), and thus those most affected by competition for low wage jobs from immigrants.

In 2007, Brad Knickerbocker wrote in the *Christian Science Monitor*, “The debate over what to do about the nation’s nearly 35 million immigrants, of whom about 11 million are in the US illegally... has become the Klan’s main recruiting tool” (p. 2). Don Black, a former Klan leader in Alabama and creator of the web site stormfront.org, was quoted in a *USA TODAY* article saying, “Many people in this country, even if they were upset with the country’s immigration policies, never felt threatened until now” (Bello, 2008). This fear has been a boon to Black’s site and to extremist movements, including the Klan.

But, while many Klans use immigration as a recruiting tool, not all Klan groups today have the same goals and/or beliefs, and there is intense conflict between different Klan groups (Blee, 1998), over who represents the true Klan and who best represents the original ideals of the Klan.

### **The Klan Today**

Today, “slavery has been abolished, civil rights have been expanded, minority groups have been enfranchised, and members of the majority no longer endorse beliefs in the genetic inferiority of disadvantaged groups” (Blatz, & Ross, 2009, p. 258). But, the Ku Klux Klan still remains. Some Klan groups cooperate with one another today, while others are bitter rivals (Billig, 2001). But, regardless of cooperation, some researchers argue that the modern Klan traces their heritage to the Reconstruction Era Ku Klux Klan (Blee, 1998). There are two significant reasons for the modern Klan to connect their organization to the original of the 1860s. First, many Klan groups today attempt to connect “the chaos of the period of Reconstruction in the South, and in present-day

America portrayed as destroyed by the federal government and self-serving individuals” (Duffy, 2003, p. 303). Second, many Klan groups attempt to connect their modern organization to the Klan’s original incarnation as a means of legitimizing the group. Thiesmeyer argues that extremist groups will often attempt to “define themselves by retroactively establishing a ‘tradition,’ even one that has no historical basis or is the opposite of documented historical fact” (1999, p. 121).

Lewis and Serbu argue that there is “abundant historical evidence describing the original Klan as a direct ancestor to today’s hooded order, a group whose purpose is to restore white supremacy throughout the South” (1999, p. 142). Today’s Klan, however, is not a regional organization and many of the issues previous Klan Eras combated have been settled. The original Klan viewed newly freed blacks as a threat to white supremacy. The Klan of the 1920s saw Catholic immigrants, Jews, and blacks as threats to white supremacy and jobs. The Klan of the 1960s saw the Civil Rights Movement and the end of segregation as threats to white supremacy and the southern way of life. The Klan today, however, is not based on perceived threats to white superiority, but on perceived threats to white survival. Douglas et al. (2005) find that white supremacists believe that whites’ position as the dominant group in American society is insecure, and a perceived threat to their dominant position as a high-status group leads extremists to adopt strategies like conflict and violence to maintain the status quo of white dominance. The current Klan is against “territorial incursion by Blacks into predominantly White communities,” and of the “perceived threat to the integrity, separateness, and hegemony” of the white race from interracial sex and marriage (Glaser et al., 2002, p. 180). In fact, Glaser et al., argue that for more than 60

years, scholars have suggested that “threats of miscegenation tend to evoke the strongest emotional reaction from avowed racists” (2002, p. 177).

Extremist groups like the Klan express their views under the pretense of fairness and justice for whites by arguing a “racist double-standard” exists where whites are “made to feel guilty and hateful’ for loving their own people and culture” (Duffy, 2003, p. 296). Brown agrees and adds that white supremacist discourse insinuates a “racist double standard” exists that “affords Blacks preferential treatment from social institutions” (2009, p. 200). Adams and Roscigno conclude that the end of white privilege and the belief of the end of equal protection of whites, has led to feelings of white victimization which is used as a “call to arms” for white supremacists and potential recruits to band together and protect their own race (2005, p. 762). Adams and Roscigno continue that the Klan worldview is of an American society comprised of “legal sanctions against whites, attacks on ‘white Christian’ values, loss of legislative power, and the possibility of becoming a numerical minority” (2005, p. 767). This victimization ideology is common among many white extremist groups which believe “whites have become disenfranchised as a result of current governmental policies,” and that “Subsequently, *legal reformation and political participation are seen as viable avenues for collective action*” (emphasis added by Adams & Roscigno, 2005, p. 768). Blee continues that members of extremist groups “learn conspiratorial explanations that help make sense of the injustices they perceive in the society and in their own situations” (1998, p. 394). These conspiracies generally revolve around the belief that a powerful and hidden Jewish conspiracy exists that includes government agents, blacks and other minorities, preventing whites from being in control, and that whites’ social, political and

economic world is being “manipulated from the outside by those seeking to harm” whites (Blee, 1998, p. 395).

These views resonate with pockets of conservative white America and lead some whites to conclude that diversity programs aimed to integrate and assimilate American society are unjust, and at the expense of white cultural identities (Schafer, 2002). Members of white extremist groups often distrust the government and popular culture, feeling alienated from a multicultural society and disenfranchised from the government (Schafer, 2002). Individuals join groups like the Klan therefore “as a source of social support” (Schafer, 2002, p. 72). Symbolic/modern racism theorists conclude that members of the white majority often reject policies intended to reduce racial inequality, such as affirmative action or reparations, based on the conservative ideological viewpoint that minorities no longer face prejudice or discrimination (Blatz & Ross, 2009). To explain, Kinder and Sears define symbolic racism as “a blend of antiblack (sic) affect and the kind of traditional American moral values embodied in the Protestant Ethic” (1981, p. 416). Kinder and Sears continue that “Symbolic racism represents a form of resistance to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline” (1981, p. 416). Kinder and Sears continue that “symbolic racism should find its most vociferous expression on political issues that involve ‘unfair’ government assistance to blacks,” welfare, “‘reverse discrimination’ and racial quotas,” forced school busing, and free abortions for the poor (1981, p. 416). Sniderman et al., add that the new racism in the United States is a “racism that has new strength precisely because it does not appear to be racism” (1991, p. 423). Sniderman et al.,

continue that this new racism is more disguised and indirect, as conservative whites will no longer say “they are opposed to blacks getting help from government because they are black; they will instead say they are opposed because blacks are not making a genuine effort to solve their own problems” (1991, p. 424). Some whites will also express views that these programs increase racial inequality but with whites on the losing end. Under this mentality a zero-sum game exists where for non-whites to achieve, whites must suffer (Brown, 2009). Sniderman et al., conclude that today’s new racism is an alliance with traditional values that gives legitimacy to “negative reactions to blacks” (1991, p. 424). Adams and Roscigno continue this point, by adding that “Religion provides an overarching cosmology that both explains and justifies racist ideology” (2005, p. 761).

### **The “Christian” Klan**

According to Bostdorff (2004), the Klan is and has always considered itself to be a Christian organization; although the definition of “Christian” varies by Klan group. According to Wald, there is considerable research that “reports a high correlation between religious fundamentalism and extremist political behavior” (1980, p. 221). Adams and Roscigno (2005) continue that the Klan uses religion, and specifically Christianity, as both an ideological foundation and a source of group identity, while arguing that Christian values, and more specifically white Christian values, are under attack in the United States, leading to persecution and the need to take action. This, of course, is reminiscent of the Klan’s argument that white Protestant values were under attack in the early 1920s.

What separates the Christian Klan of today from the Christian Klan of the 1920s, however, is the inclusion of Catholics by some groups, and an adherence to what is

known as Christian Identity by other Klan groups (Bostdorff, 2004). While not all Klan groups embrace the Christian Identity theology, those that do, embrace a religion with vastly different beliefs from traditional Catholic or Protestant theology. The Christian Identity movement is “heavily influenced by the Anglo-Israelism movement that emerged in Britain during the mid-nineteenth century and argued that the lost tribes of Israel were Anglo-Saxon” (Vertigans, 2007, p. 644). Christian Identity adherents believe that the original Israelites left the Middle East around 700 B.C. and traveled to the British Isles and Northern Europe (Becker et al., 2001). According to Bostdorff, those Klan groups which draw upon Christian Identity “argue that whites are God’s chosen people,” and that “a close reading of the Bible reveals that whites, not Jews, are the true Israelites” (2004, p. 348). Zhou et al., continue that Christian Identity theology “teaches that white people are the only true children of God” (2005, p. 45). Blee continues that in Christian Identity philosophy, not only are white Christians viewed as “the true lost tribe of Israel,” but that Jews and African Americans are “the offspring of Satan” (1998, p. 384). Specifically, Christian Identity theology teaches that “The first Jew was Cain, the son of the serpent, or Satan, and Eve” (Becker et al., 2001, p. 437). As God’s true Chosen People, Thiesmeyer maintains that some extremist groups that follow Christian Identity thought conceive of the white race as “biologically determined,” and as a “deity-given, gift that no other ethnic group can possess” (1999, p. 120). Explicitly, Christian Identity teaches that non-whites were among the beasts created by God, while only Adam and Eve, and thus only whites, were made in the image of God and thus human (Becker et al., 2001).



It was former Klan leader Tom Metzger, who encouraged the mixing of Klan and Christian Identity philosophies (Bostdorff, 2004). The philosophy behind Christian Identity is “shared by many other right-wing, radical organizations to present Jews as a formidable opponent worthy of unified white resistance,” and that it was the Jews who killed Jesus Christ (Bostdorff, 2004, p. 347). Under the Christian Identity philosophy, Jews are seen “as an evil but cunning enemy, an enemy worthy of strong, unified, white resistance” (Bostdorff, 2004, p. 348). By portraying Jewish people as a cunning and powerful enemy, Bostdorff argues it allows Christian Identity philosophy to “sidestep the questions of why Klan groups have been unable to defeat opponents like African Americans and gays, whom they depict as weak and stupid,” with the insinuation that “Jews are the real enemy behind all the ‘lesser’ foes” as they “control the economy,” as well as “the entertainment industry, the government, and even traditional Christian denominations” (2004, p. 348).

With an ideology based on Christian Identity and the belief that the media and government are controlled by interests opposed to the Klan and whites in general, the KKK finds alternative forms of media to deliver their message to followers and new recruits.

### **Contemporary Klan Activity**

According to Adams and Roscigno (2005), social movements, including extremist social movements, must use new technologies and diverse forms of media to spread their message and appear as viable entities and organizations. Vertigans argues the Klan seeks forms of independent media to spread their ideology under the belief that “the mainstream media is controlled by Jews... opposed to far-right ideologies and driven by pro-government and Zionist interests” (2007, p. 650).

While earlier versions of the Klan touted the mystery behind the group, the modern Klan is much more media-savvy. Today the Klan engages in numerous public speeches, rallies, and other public symbolic acts that attract media attention (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). Today's Klan is involved in such public events as attempts to erect crosses on public property, "Adopt a Highway" cleanup programs, small-circulation newsletters, attempts to establish White Student Unions on college campuses, and using public access television programs as a form of free publicity (Blazak, 2001; Harmon, 1991; Lamberg, 2001; & Nelson et al., 1997, p. 569). The Klan will also attempt to insert newsletters in grocery circulars and newspapers (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). As an example, in the summer of 2006, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in western North Carolina, inserted pro-Klan leaflets into the local newspaper, the *Rhinoceros Times*, and then placed the papers back on neighborhood lawns (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). In addition, the Klan and other extremist groups also use radio shows with prominent "so-called 'hate' jocks, as well as education seminars to spread their message" (Vertigans, 2007, p. 650).

But, spreading the Klan's message through public rallies or circulating Klan brochures and literature, requires a great deal of time and expense, and are often highly inefficient, as rallies draw opponents as well as supporters, while face-to-face communication and brochures only reach a limited audience" (Bostdorff, 2004). Lee and Leets continue that fliers, newsletters, rallies, mailings, and interpersonal contact are time consuming and often those who received these forms of literature or attended these rallies already "tended to subscribe to the beliefs of or were already involved in the organizations" (2002, p. 928). The Internet however allows the Klan to reach a

broader audience, free from the distraction of opponents to their views (Bostdorff, 2004). The Internet allows the Klan to spread their message by combining old and new technology to disseminate ideology. In addition to being able to print out fliers on Klan web sites, according to the Anti-Defamation League (2007), the Empire Knights have created KKK Radio, an Internet-based broadcast channel to air white power music and deliver Klan propaganda.

Adams and Roscigno (2005) continue that web sites can introduce new members to groups like the Klan as well as provide legitimacy and access to resources for current members. Levin contends that “American extremists have traditionally cultivated technology to enhance efficiency and promote goals” (2002, p. 958). In the past, extremist groups have had to find alternative means of communication because until fairly recently, marginal and extremist groups have had limited access to the means of presenting their ideologies unfiltered to a vast audience to create a collective identity (Eyerman, 2002). It is for this reason that Gerstenfeld et al., maintain, “Extremist groups were among the very early users of the electronic communication network that eventually evolved into the Internet” (2003, p. 29). As an example, in 1983, West Virginia neo-Nazi George Dietz established the first right-wing extremist bulletin board system (BBS), called “Liberty Bell Net or Info. International Network, to post racist, anti-Semitic, and Holocaust denial material” (Levin, 2002, p. 960). Schafer continues that extremist groups found bulletin board systems particularly “appealing because they were efficient, cost effective, and lacked any substantial police and/or government oversight” (2002, p. 70). Many of the same reasons are why the Internet has become an even more valuable tool. Perhaps the best example of extremists using the Internet is

the stormfront.org web site. Stormfront.org, started by former Klansman Don Black, was the first major hate site on the Internet in 1995 and now has over 144,000 registered members (Beirich & Potok, 2009; Bello, 2008; Levin, 2002; Schafer, 2002; & Zhou et al., 2005). Black had been the Grand Dragon of the Alabama Klan and “eventually its national leader” after David Duke left his leadership role in the organization in 1980 (Levin, 2002, p. 966). While in the Klan, Black was convicted in federal court, along with other white extremists, “for their role in a plot to overthrow the Caribbean nation of Dominica” (Levin, 2002, p. 966). Black now runs the White Nationalist web site stormfront.org from his home in south Florida (Levin, 2002).

The Internet and extremist web pages are the latest examples of extremists using technology to advance their ideals to a larger audience. The use of the Internet has become so widespread among groups like the Klan that Thiesmeyer (1999) argues it is doubtful extremist groups would be able to recruit new members as effectively as they have in recent years without the Internet. Douglas et al., continue that the Internet allows extremist groups to position themselves as “legitimate and effective exponents of their cause” (2005, p. 69). Bostdorff adds, “the Internet can empower a racist; rather than ‘feeling like an isolated retrograde,’ the person gains a sense of power” because the web makes it appear that many thousands of others feel the same (2004, p. 343).

### **Klan.net**

According to Zhou et al. (2005), extremist groups like the Klan use the Internet to recruit, link with other extremist groups, reach a global audience, spread hate material like flyers, encourage violence, and facilitate collective identity and solidarity. Duffy argues that “the Internet and the World Wide Web have been implicated as contributors to a culture of hate and violence” (2003, p. 291). Thiesmeyer (1999) adds that the

recent recruiting and marketing success for extremist groups like the Klan can be explained by their use of the web to reach across geographic and national boundaries. In fact, according to the SPLC, the Brotherhood of Klans of the Ku Klux Klan has expanded beyond its Marion, Ohio headquarters to become the largest Klan organization in the United States and has launched chapters in Canada (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2009).

Adams and Roscigno argue that “the Internet, has been cheaply and efficiently integrated into the white supremacist repertoire” (2005, p. 759). The Internet, because of its user-friendly and user-originated content, in effect, allows the Klan to present their beliefs and organization in credible and persuasive ways (Duffy, 2003). Bostdorff argues that the Internet, and particularly extremist web sites, place emphasis on the written word which “in turn, facilitates learning... racist messages,” adding that “hate web sites still employ written messages to a far greater degree than they do visual images,” as the “emphasis on the written word helps individuals ‘learn’ by focusing their attention on the content of hate rhetoric” (2004, p. 344).

Extremist groups like the Klan use the Internet to express their views, sell paraphernalia, organize, educate the general public, build a sense of community among members, convey a respectable image, bring together members from geographically distant areas, and recruit new members (Adams & Roscigno, 2005; Douglas et al., 2005; Duffy, 2003; Eyerman, 2002; Gerstenfeld et al., 2003; Glaser et al., 2002; Lee & Leets, 2002; Levin, 2002; Schafer, 2002; Xu, Chen, Zhou, & Qin, 2006; & Zhou et al., 2005). The Internet has also become such a valuable recruiting tool for the Klan and other extremist groups due to its anonymity and interactive capabilities to coordinate

meetings, members, and activities (Douglas et al., 2005; Eyerman, 2002; Gerstenfeld, et al., 2003; Williamson & Pierson, 2003). The Internet has become so popular with extremist groups, according to Gille and O Riain, because the virtual worlds offer a unique place where “participants can choose to log in our out freely and can adopt a wide variety of identities,” including extremist members without having to attend a rally or wear white robes (2002, p. 282).

In addition, the web allows site creators the ability to anonymously transfer potentially high-quality information, pictures, and video, in an interactive format inexpensively to a global audience to recruit and promote their beliefs (Abbasi & Chen, 2005; Becker et al., 2001; Levin, 2002; & Rajagopal & Bojin, 2002). Many groups like the Klan can now quickly and easily create sites and site content using HTML editors and web site software programs and cheaply purchase server space to host their sites (Rajagopal & Bojin, 2002). The sheer number of extremist and Klan sites is evidence of just how easy it is to create different sites to disseminate extremist views (Rajagopal & Bojin, 2002). The Southern Poverty Law Center found 630 U.S.-based hate sites active on the web in 2008, including 52 by the Ku Klux Klan (2009, p. 59). By 2009 there were 670 U.S.-based hate sites active on the web, however, the number of Klan sites had decreased to 44 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

### **Hate on the Net**

Abbasi and Chen argue that “The speed, ubiquity, and potential anonymity of Internet media... make them ideal communication channels for militant groups and terrorist organizations” (2005, p. 67). Using the Internet, the Klan spreads their message to a world-wide audience of injustice directed toward whites as well as the fear that whites must join together for their very survival (Glaser et al., 2002). Bostdorff adds that

the web allows the Klan to exploit the fears of members and potential members of their survival by emphasizing a shared identity of “white masculinity that is under attack by various groups who are to blame for white men’s problems” (2004, p. 351).

Through the Internet, the Klan is able to create a community for their members that is unified in opposition to the Klan’s enemies, which Bostdorff argues are “minority groups,” and “particularly Jews” (2004, p. 340). Bostdorff argues that Klan web sites encourage “odious political activity, including acts of violence,” while at the same time disavowing “responsibility for the consequences of their messages” (2004, p. 340). Bostdorff goes so far as to say that Klan web sites encourage whites to mobilize politically and “create a context in which real-life violence is justified and encouraged” (2004, p. 340).

Stopping extremist groups from using the Internet however is difficult as groups argue for their right to spread their message under the guise of freedom of speech. Extremist and hate web sites use the First Amendment and legal precedent to spread their message. Part of the precedent is based on the 1989 Supreme Court case, *Texas v. Johnson* (Levin, 2002). While protesting at the 1984 Republican National Convention in Dallas, Texas, Gregory Johnson set fire to an American flag outside city hall (Levin, 2002). Johnson was charged with the “desecration of ‘venerated objects’” and was found guilty and sentenced to one year in prison and a \$2,000 fine after numerous people spoke at his trial that they had been offended by his actions (Levin, 2002, p. 975). In what has now become a landmark case, the Supreme Court ruled the law used to sentence Johnson was unconstitutional because his action was protected speech (Levin, 2002). For extremists who use the Internet to spread this message, the ruling

meant, according to Levin, that “governmental laws cannot single out the nonviolent expression of even the most offensive and disquieting ideas” (2002, p. 977).

Overt hostility and advocacy of violence, however, is not acceptable and considered dangerous by the courts, and legal action can be taken against web administrators that allow it to occur on their site (Douglas et al., 2005). In essence, free speech on Klan and extremist web sites is constitutionally protected in the United States as long as the sites do not contain expressions aimed to cause or create violence, or incite crime or other illegal activities (Rajagopal & Bojin, 2002; & Levin, 2002). However, if the web site distributes information that targets specific individuals or “is designed to facilitate or assist a terrorist act or crime, the sender can face criminal and civil liability” (Levin, 2002, p. 983). Web masters and site creators therefore must walk a fine line between expressing hate, while not inciting hate and violence. The study by Douglas et al. (2005) in fact found that few extremist sites overtly advocate violence in absolute terms, and instead include disclaimers that the organization was neither a hate group nor did it promote violence.

Many hate sites include disclaimers “based loosely on the prevailing legal proscriptions (established by *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 1969), that they are not attempting to engender violence,” and, instead, are “merely providing people a forum to access the information that they ‘want and need’” (Williamson & Pierson, 2003, p. 254). According to Levin, the 1969 Supreme Court case of *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, “articulated what is now the current test to determine the contours between lawful, protected advocacy and unprotected, illegal incitement to criminality” (2002, p. 978). The case stemmed from an event in the early 1960s when Klansman Clarence Brandenburg invited a television



news crew to a KKK rally on a private farm in Hamilton County, Ohio (Levin, 2002). Brandenburg was prosecuted based on news footage from the event where only Klansmen and the television crew were present (Levin, 2002). The footage showed around a dozen Klansmen, some armed, light a wooden cross on fire on private land (Levin, 2002). During the event, Brandenburg, dressed in Klan robes, spoke to the members in attendance, and made vague references to revenge being taken out on the President, Congress, and Supreme Court for attempting to suppress whites in the United States (Levin, 2002). At the event Brandenburg also made a comment that blacks should be returned to Africa and Jews to Israel (Levin, 2002). Brandenburg was sentenced to 10 years in state prison and fined \$1,000 dollars for his comments at the rally under Ohio's Criminal Syndicalism Act which punished individuals for advocating the need for political violence (Levin, 2002). The Supreme Court in a unanimous decision, however, overturned the Ohio law (Levin, 2002). The decision has led to the understanding that for "dangerous advocacy to be classified as illegal incitement," that "the speech must be directed toward inciting or producing imminent lawless action," and "the speech must be likely to incite or produce such action" (Levin, 2002, p. 978). For Klan and extremist web sites, Levin argues the decision "provides significant protection to online extremists as long as their violent advocacy is abstract in nature" (2002, p. 979).

Courts in the United States, however, have convicted individuals using the Internet to directly advocate violence or communicate threats, and these sites can also be shut down by service providers (Douglas et al., 2005). According to Levin, "Under the Communications Decency Act (1996), those who seek to threaten, annoy, or harass

others through the use of a telecommunications device by making lewd, indecent, or anonymous contact face up to 2 years in prison” (2002, p. 982). In October of 1998, a neo-Nazi web site called Alpha HQ became the first extremist web site removed from the Internet by court order, after the Pennsylvania deputy attorney general obtained a civil injunction against the Philadelphia based racist who ran the site (Levin, 2002). The Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office determined the site was in “violation of state laws that generally prohibit harassment, terrorist threats, and ethnic intimidation” (Levin, 2002, p. 982).

In addition, extremist sites that use Internet Service Providers (ISPs) must agree to a “terms of service” agreement with the ISPs, an agreement to which “customers consent as a condition of access to providers’ systems” (Levin, 2002, p. 977). But, ISPs can include provisions in their “terms of service” that can “restrict content for a variety of reasons, including” material that is “bigoted, offends sensibilities, or is fraudulent” (Levin, 2002, p. 977). If “someone improperly uses the service or posts objectionable content,” then “ISPs are free to delete content or cancel service,” if a site violates the “terms of service” (Levin, 2002, p. 977). In essence, if an extremist web site uses a service provider to carry its site and post material that violates the terms of service or that the provider finds objectionable, according to the terms of service, the ISP can shut down the site.

But, with the anonymity afforded to Internet users both as site visitors and site creators, it is difficult to determine culpability of a message posted on these sites and how that message might influence others to act (Williamson & Pierson, 2003). In reality, the anonymity of the web can make it difficult for the courts or the FBI to find those

responsible for web content and prosecute them (Douglas et al., 2005). At the same time, complete censorship is almost impossible as Klan site creators or web masters can still switch to different servers.

To protect themselves from legal action, or to prevent violating the terms of service, Thiesmeyer argues that on the web, extremist groups describe themselves and their beliefs with “reasonable, unimpassioned, and cheerful descriptions” (1999, p. 119). Klan sites often equate white pride with American patriotism while emphasizing the potential for white men and women to become part of something bigger than themselves by joining the Klan and protecting the white race (Bostdorff, 2004). Blee adds that while extremist groups generate and reinforce feelings of fear, hostility, persecution, and anger into members, they also instill feelings of “pride, amusement, and sensuality” (2007, p. 123).

### **Kinder and Gentler Klan on the Net**

The modern Klan continues to advocate segregation, but instead of supporting segregation under the pretext of white superiority, segregation is advocated through Biblical and individual freedom justifications, as well as the “supposed incompatibility between groups” that prevents whites and minorities from coexisting (Douglas et al., 2005, p. 74). Some Klan groups also argue that segregation “is essential to ensure the purity of the white race” (Vertigans, 2007, p. 645). Douglas et al., continue that many extremist sites present whites as victims of organized Jewish conspiracies using blacks, and advocate policies of segregation “justified in terms of Biblical injunctions, individual freedom, and even purported benefits to other races” (2005, p. 74). This new stance on segregation insinuates that whites and minorities are too different to coexist peacefully and that segregation would benefit all races. While the goal of segregation remains, the

marketing of the idea using the Internet is an attempt to soften the Klan's message and thus appeal to a broader audience.

According to Vertigans (2007), prejudice has become more subtle from extremist groups and the focus on "biological differences has shifted to government programmes (sic) that are seen to favour (sic) minority groups and enforce integration" (p. 645), including laws that grant citizenship to everyone born or naturalized in the country. In a *USA TODAY* article, Northeastern University criminologist Jack Levin was quoted saying, "Many white supremacist groups are going more mainstream... The groups realize if they want to be attractive to middle-class types, they need to look middle-class" (Bello, 2008, 3A). As an example, in 2008, *USA TODAY* reported that the Keystone State Skinheads had changed its name "to Keystone United to attract members," and reported that one member of the organization told the paper that the group sponsors family-friendly activities, rejected violence, and plans gatherings in public libraries (Bello, 2008, p. 3A).

By using the Internet, right-wing and extremist groups now have the ability to present their views, unfiltered, to attract more mainstream recruits by portraying the organization in a less radical image. According to Rajagopal and Bojin (2002), extremist sites often do not appear overtly racist, and seldom contain direct hate speech or attacks against other groups, so as to entice viewers to join the group or site and thus pave the way for new members to become more involved. Billig argues that extremist groups like the Klan "take a high road in public, claiming to be respectably democratic," concealing their more extremist beliefs privately to their members (2001, p. 271). In fact, according to Billig, many Klan web sites officially disclaim extreme racism, publicly deny

they hate blacks, and rarely use the word “Nigger,” as it would “undermine the protestations of non-hatred” because “‘nigger’ is never a fellow human being” (2001, p. 279). Bostdorff continues that the Internet also provides the Klan with a “useful tool for targeting middle and upper middle-class individuals, especially teenagers” (2004, p. 342). Bostdorff continues that visiting a Klan web site for the middle class individual is “akin to how individuals who would never go to an adult bookstore feel comfortable accessing pornography on the Web” (2004, p. 342). In essence, individuals, who would never associate with the Klan in public, can do so in private on the web.

Unlike in the past, some modern extremist groups attempt to balance their racist agenda and rhetoric to retain hardcore members, while also softening their public image to appeal to a wider base of supporters including women (Blee, 2007). In fact, women now comprise nearly one-fourth of all Klan membership and are essential to the growth of the Klan (Bostdorff, 2004). It was David Duke, the former Grand Wizard of the Knights of the KKK from 1975-1980, who made the decision to allow women full participation into the Klan rather than relegating them to the women’s auxiliaries they had been a part of in the past (Bostdorff, 2004). In fact, it was Duke’s recruitment of women in the Klan that led other Klan groups to also pursue female members and thus broaden the appeal of the group (Bostdorff, 2004). Schafer (2002) continues that in recent decades women have taken on a more prominent role in extremist groups including as leaders of some extremist organizations. Blee (1998) argues that since the 1980s, women have become a growing component of extremist movements and comprise 25-50% of membership in some groups (1998, p. 384). Blee continues that women are often recruited to these groups with the assumption they will in turn

convince their boyfriends or husbands to join, are less likely to attract the attention of law enforcement, and will increase the overall membership of these groups. Schafer contends that, "While male activists reflect the belief that society is degenerating at a rapid rate, females often focus on protecting their children" (2002, p. 77). Along a similar ideal, the Klan has also made efforts to appeal more to young people and college students (Bostdorff, 2004). Appealing to younger members has long been a goal of both the Klan and all extremist movements. In the 1920s, the Klan had a "children's auxiliary designed to instill the group's values in youth during their formative years" (Schafer, 2002, p. 78). Lee and Leets add that many extremist web sites will have specialized children's pages to "focus on and recruit school-aged youth" (2002, p. 928).

Bostdorff argues the current Klan has a "tendency to target a much broader range of social issues than it once did" (2004, p. 342). Duffy argues that the Klan advocates many issues appealing to right-wing ideology including being isolationist, a policy of "America first" over foreign nations and immigrants, against foreign ownership of American industries or property, against outsourcing of jobs, closing the southern border with Mexico including using military troops to prevent illegal aliens from entering, eliminating affirmative action programs, and by taking strong stances against homosexuality and welfare (2003, p. 302). These beliefs are based on perceived "principles of fairness and justice" with the "legitimizing authority in the form of a greater force – God," and Jesus Christ (Duffy, 2003, p. 310).

But, while extremists have become more politically right-wing, the political right-wing has become more extremist. Becker et al., contend that, "Ideas that originated within the white racist movement have been incorporated into the mainstream of

American political discourse” (2001, p. 451). Vertigans continues that by the 1980s, “racist politicians and the adaptation of patriot and far-right rhetoric” had become more widespread and acceptable within the Republican Party (2007, p. 643).

### **Mainstreaming of the Klan**

Adams and Roscigno (2005) argue that while the Klan has kept pace with current technology, and uses the Internet to spread their message, the overall image of the Klan has changed little over the years. Among white extremists, the Klan is still viewed as “the ‘good ol’ boy’ club that other hate organizations have attempted to move beyond” (Adams and Roscigno, 2005, p. 765). The Klan is aware of their negative image, however, and some groups have made a number of moves to appear more mainstream including one Klan organization changing its name and referring to “itself simply as the ‘Knights’ party” (Williamson & Pierson, 2003, p. 258).

Most people today, however, see extremist views as unacceptable with their own and are therefore reluctant to embrace the beliefs of groups like the Klan (Schafer, 2002). To combat this perception, Fletcher (2008) argues that while in the past extremist groups attempted to blend political rhetoric with racial undertones, more recently extremist groups like the Klan have attempted to broaden their appeal by eliminating racial language and violence from their discourse. Becker et al., argue that this change was brought about after seeing the success of some extremists into mainstream politics and on the Internet (2001). Two of the most significant examples in the political area occurred in 1980, when former Klansmen Tom Metzger and Gerald Carlson won their party’s nominations for U.S. Congressional seats, although both lost in the general elections (Becker et al., 2001). Metzger, a former California Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon and founder of WAR, the White Aryan Resistance (Becker et al., 2001; &

Levin, 2002), also developed his own Bulletin Board System (BBS) in the 1980s, and through WAR produced a “monthly WAR newspaper, videos, books, pamphlets, jewelry, audiotapes, a nationwide network of telephone message banks, rallies, and cable-access television shows distributed to providers throughout the United States” (Levin, 2002, p. 963).

But more than running for political office, as part of an effort to increase membership and appear more mainstream, groups like the Klan are using the Internet to rebrand their image on the Internet. On the web, the Klan projects their core values and ideology to align with more traditional, conservative, Christian beliefs, which taken as a whole, positions the Klan not as a racist group, but instead as a pro-white organization (Becker, Jipson, & Katz, 2001). This more open and less violent version of the Klan allows a more palatable role in the mainstream political landscape, making it easier to recruit more members, generate attention for the group, and/or gain more influence in American society. The result of these efforts is a blurring of the lines between extremist groups and right-wing politics. In order to do this, however, the Klan attempts to maintain many of their traditional pro-white beliefs while incorporating politically conservative and socially traditional right-wing and mainstream ideologies.

According to Sniderman et al., traditional values include:

The importance of preserving traditional ideas of right and wrong, individual achievement, competition, strengthening law and order, respect for authority, opposition to welfare, opposition to spending on the problems of big cities, and even the importance of maintaining respect for U.S. power in the world (1991, p. 439).

The modern Klan advocates patriotism, is concerned with government corruption and a lack of protection for individual rights and restraints on individualism, and opposes threats to basic freedoms by the government and the role of the United States in



international organizations like the United Nations (Vertigans, 2007). The Klan also recruits new members angered over “taxation, interest rates, regulation of individual rights, immigration, international affairs, affirmative action, rising crime and drug use” (Vertigans, 2007, p. 645). It has been argued that questioning the United States’ involvement in international affairs has roots in the Vietnam Era, and led some extremists to “question the validity of wars that were not directly in defense of US interests” along with the nature of American international politics (Vertigans, 2007, p. 648).

But, as individuals become more hooked to groups like the Klan because of the Klan’s outward mainstream appearance on the Internet, “they slowly come to embrace other dimensions of the group’s ideology” and often more extreme beliefs on controversial issues (Schafer, 2002, p. 72). Blee (1998) continues that modern-day racists participate in a marginal movement within the American political landscape. But, by using the Internet to present their beliefs in a more socially and politically mainstream manner, groups like the Klan create a bridging mechanism where those reluctant to join or follow such orthodoxy, may become hooked through the Klan’s more mainstream appearance (Schafer, 2002). In doing so, extremist groups attempt to convince members that the group’s ideology is feasible and that it is possible to build a movement around such beliefs (Blee, 2007). But, to do so requires the groups to instill in members “a sense of commitment that will help them withstand the stigma, marginalization, legal consequences, and even physical assault they may face in such a movement” (Blee, 2007, p. 124). While some Klan organizations are attempting to rebrand their image as more mainstream and less violent, not all Klan groups are as committed to this ideal.

While Klan violence is nowhere near as prominent today as it was during the 1970s, the Civil Rights Era, during the 1920s, or during Reconstruction, some Klan organizations continue to make headlines for violence.

### **Still Violent After All These Years**

For many years, the Ku Klux Klan was associated with its violence history. According to the Anti-Defamation League (2007), the Klan originated as a terrorist group and has had a close association with criminal activity since it began. The Klan has been accused of such violent acts as hate crimes and acts of domestic terrorism, yet it is unclear how much of this violence was conducted by the Klan.

Becker et al., claim that between 1868 and 1871 the Klan lynched over 400 blacks in the South, often sexually mutilating the bodies as a means of “emasculating black men and claiming white and black women as all belonging to white men” (2001, p. 437). In addition, Becker et al. (2001), claim that during the 1880s as many as 106 black males were lynched in the South often including mutilation, but it is unclear how many of these lynchings were caused by the Klan as it was not officially in existence at the time. Between 1882 and 1946, over 5,000 people were lynched in the South, many of whom were black males as the “myth of the black male rapist was promoted at this time to justify these lynchings (Becker et al., 2001, p. 437), but not all violence was committed by the Klan during this period either. During the Civil Rights Era a number of notable instances of violence were committed by those both in the Klan, and those who purported to be Klan. Violence covered in newspapers, magazines, and on television garnered national media attention, and exposed the Klan and Klan violence to the entire country. As examples, in 1963, civil rights leader and NAACP field secretary, Medgar Evers, was killed in front of his home in Mississippi, and on September 15, 1963, the

16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, burned after a bomb was detonated in the church killing four young girls and injuring 16 others (Becker et al., 2001). But, while many instances of violence occurred during the Civil Rights Era, after the passage of a number of Federal Acts and Executive Orders, Southern segregation ended and with it much of the Klan's power (Becker et al., 2001). According to Becker et al., the Voting Rights Act in 1963:

Suspended the use of literacy or other voter qualification tests for voting, authorized federal voting appointees to register African Americans in areas not meeting certain voter participation levels," and "provided for federal initiation of court suits to hear discriminatory poll taxes charged some blacks before voting (2001, p. 441).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 "expanded voting rights for racial minorities and outlawed discrimination against minorities in employment and the use of public facilities and accommodations" (Becker et al., 2001, p. 441). The Immigration and Naturalization Act Amendments of 1965 "aimed to eliminate racism in immigration policies," and repealed the national origins quotas (Becker et al., 2001, p. 441). In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson's Executive Order 11246 "directed all federal contractors to have affirmative action programs" (Becker et al., 2001, p. 441). The Civil Disobedience Act of 1968 was passed to prevent groups "perceived as threatening to the existing order," from suppressing the civil rights of others (Becker et al., 2001, p. 441). In 1972, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act "prohibited employment discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion or sex in state or local governments" (Becker et al., 2001, p. 442). The result of the culmination of Civil Rights legislation of the 1960s and 1970s led to a near total disappearance of the Klan in the United States (Becker et al., 2001). While various groups claiming to be acting in the name of the Klan made headlines after

the Civil Rights Era, the violence committed by those claiming to be the Klan curtailed sharply by the 1970s and 1980s.

The “Greensboro Massacre” in 1979 (Cunningham, 2008) and the Texas Emergency Reserve in 1982 (Levin, 2002) are two examples of violence committed by individuals under the name of the Ku Klux Klan, and while they made national headlines, other acts of violence committed by those claiming to be Klansmen have also occurred since. On March 21, 1981, members of the United Klans of America lynched a black man named Michael Donald (Becker et al., 2001). Six years after Donald’s lynching, on February 13, 1987, Morris Dees won a \$7 million dollar civil settlement against the United Klans, effectively bankrupting the organization (Becker et al., 2001). On October 25, 1988, Dees won a “\$950,400 settlement for 53 plaintiffs, against the Southern White Knights of the KKK, for violence the group started during a civil rights march in Georgia in 1987” (Becker et al., 2001, p. 445). In April of 2003, five members of the American Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan were convicted in federal court in Louisiana on conspiracy and intimidation charges after lighting a cross at the residence of three black men in Longville, Louisiana (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). In 2003, Pennsylvania Klan leader David Hull was convicted of illegal weapons charges in connection to an alleged plot to use hand grenades to attack abortion clinics (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). In March 2006, six members of the Nation’s Knights of the Ku Klux Klan pleaded guilty to weapons and conspiracy charges in connection with an illegal gun trading scheme to finance a plan to blow up the Johnston County, North Carolina, courthouse (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). In August of 2005, North Georgia White Knights member Daniel James Schertz pleaded guilty to building pipe bombs to

blow up buses carrying Mexican and Haitian migrant workers from Tennessee to Florida, and received a 170-month federal prison sentence in November of 2005 (Anti-Defamation League, 2001). In 2008, a Tulsa, Oklahoma, woman was killed by Raymond “Chuck” Foster, the Imperial Wizard of the Dixie Rangers Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana (Mitchell & Garland, 2008). Foster was accused of shooting the woman with a .40-caliber handgun after she tried to back out of a weekend Ku Klux Klan initiation (Garland & Mitchell, 2008). Seven other white men and women were also charged with obstruction charges stemming from the murder (Mitchell & Garland, 2008). The woman had been recruited over the Internet and was to return to Oklahoma after being initiated to recruit new members (Garland & Mitchell, 2008).

While much of this violence occurred in the name of the Ku Klux Klan, by the Civil Rights Era, the idea of a “true Klan” was all but gone. In fact, more than 40 different Klan groups exist in the United States with many having multiple chapters or klaverns (Anti-Defamation League, 2007).

In addition, according to the Anti-Defamation League (2007), while many Klan groups remain Christian, some Klan groups are eschewing their traditional Christian only membership, and allowing neo-Nazi and skinhead members who are more likely to be pagan, atheist, or Christian Identity followers. In 2006, the Kentucky-based Imperial Klans of America (IKA) announced on its web site, in an effort to recruit more members, it would begin to accept non-Christian members (Anti-Defamation league, 2007). While this change in membership requirements did not open the door for Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, or Hindus, it does allow for Odinists, National Socialists, Nazis, skinheads, and pagans (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). According to the ADL, since the 1970s,

the Klan has been forced to compete with other white extremist groups for membership as many younger people were not attracted to the old-fashioned Klan (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). In order to reach and recruit younger people, some Klan groups began to adopt the symbols, regalia, tattoos, slogans and even music of skinhead and neo-Nazi groups (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). Some Klan groups even began to abandon wearing the traditional hoods and robes of the Klan for military fatigues, or only using them for cross lighting ceremonies (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). Discarding the traditions of the Klan to appeal to skinhead and neo-Nazi members has created tension among the different Klan groups as some are now Klan in name only.

In response, some traditional Klan groups are attempting to retake the name Ku Klux Klan and unify what has become a fragmented movement (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). In June of 2006, the North Georgia White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan held a “Klan Jam” in Fort Payne, Alabama, to attempt to bring together competing Klan groups (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). The result of the gathering was the creation of the “Konfederation of Klans” a loose umbrella group of more than 10 different Klan groups mostly located in the South (Anti-Defamation League, 2007).

In essence though, today the Klan is no longer a single entity, if it ever truly was, as many groups and individuals over the years have claimed the name of the Ku Klux Klan. The fact that so many different Klan organizations exist today is evidence of the fact that no “true” Klan exists, making it more difficult to understand what the Klan believes. Therefore, it becomes all the more important to understand the messages behind Klan web sites, as the Internet has become the means through which individuals interested in becoming a Klansmen learn of the various Klan organizations.

The Anti-Defamation League (2007) maintains that lower and working class whites have traditionally formed the core constituency of the Klan in most of their incarnations. However, as some Klans move toward becoming more mainstream and rebranding their image as a pro-white and traditional organization, some are also looking to expand membership beyond the traditional lower class and less educated membership. To rebrand their image, some Klan groups have even begun to claim the Klan is nothing more than a NAACP for white people. In fact, a NAAWP (National Association for the Advancement of White People) exists, and was once led by former Klan leader and Louisiana state representative, David Duke.

### **Studying the Klan**

With the recent growth in extremist groups across the country and in cyberspace, it is important to understand what factors lead an individual to become interested in groups like the Klan in terms of what recruited them, and what first led them to have a desire to learn more about an organization that is well known as an extremist organization with a past dating back to the 1860s. Next, it is important to understand what factors cause individuals to remain in a group with such a negative stigma attached to it. But, before researchers can understand what motivates individuals to join the Klan, researchers must first understand what the Klan is.

It is important, therefore, to understand what factors lead an individual to want to recruit more people into Klan ideology as well as to create, design, and maintain Klan web sites, where members and potential recruits can learn more, and become indoctrinated into the Klan and Klan ideology.

To understand which factors create an environment where this occurs means to understand that environment without preconceived notions of those factors. To examine

this topic therefore requires attempting to understand it, and not merely to verify the work or theories of others. Glaser and Strauss contend that a researcher should study an area with a particular perspective, focus, general question, or problem in mind, but that the researcher can and should “study an area without any preconceived theory that dictates, prior to the research, ‘relevancies’ in concepts and hypotheses” (1967, p. 33). A researcher, however, can begin with their own experiences, knowledge, or reading of the work of others, to begin to obtain data on groups to be used for comparison and to formulate theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In fact, Glaser and Strauss argue a researcher often begins with a “loose conceptual framework of formal ideas, hunches, notions, concepts, and hypotheses about the substantive area under consideration” (1967, p. 95). Some theoretical sampling therefore occurs prior to conducting research, often involving reading past studies, documents, and observing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend a researcher use general literature on the area as additional reference points and even as secondary data when writing up the finished research. Glaser and Strauss continue that the general literature and preexisting theories on the topic will most likely be introduced in an opening chapter as a prelude to the research and “may be necessary for putting the research in context” (1967, p. 162). But, Glaser and Strauss add the warning that “researchers often stifle potential insights by virtue of too strict adherence to existing theory” (1967, p. 253).

### **Understanding Before Predicting**

According to Emerson, reality is complex, allowing for multiple interpretations that shift in meaning “depending upon the individual researcher’s theoretical concerns and orientating questions” (2001, p. 20). This matches the naturalistic/constructivist worldview that more than one reality exists and that individuals have their own unique



perspectives of the social world (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Therefore, for a researcher, social reality is “in part a product of an investigator’s efforts to apprehend and describe it” (Emerson, 2001, p. 20). Emerson believes that the researcher actively interprets social life and transforms experiences and interpretations, whether personal or from observation and study, “into texts that could be made available to others as versions or representations of ‘what’s there’” (2001, p. 23). This is what Jones means when he argues that “knowledge on the whole can gradually be built up from a detailed understanding of the relationships between the parts” (1987, p. 236). Reality, therefore, cannot be predicted, as it is subject to multiple interpretations. Instead, reality becomes what the researcher constructs out of it through purposeful examination.

This is the essence of the constructivist approach to research where the goal is, not to “predict and control the ‘real’ world” but to “*reconstruct* the ‘world’ at the only point at which it exists: in the minds of constructors” (emphasis added by author, Guba, 1990, p. 27). As Glaser and Strauss argue, the “aim is to explore... not test” (1967, p. 135). The researchers continue that, “To preconceive relevance is to force data, not to discover from data what really works as a relevant explanation” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 142-143). The goal of this study is not prediction, but a greater understanding of what the Klan is, and what motivates individuals to create Ku Klux Klan web sites.

A greater knowledge and understanding is necessary as Goodwin (2007) argues because the literature is lacking in empirical data on extremist groups. Goodwin (2007) believes that such empirical data can help understand what attracts individuals to extremist groups and may help to further understand activism generally as well as specific movements. Blee agrees, adding that “our knowledge of modern right-wing

extremism is limited” (2007, p. 119). Goodwin concludes that researchers’ emphasis on quantitative analysis of extremist group literature alone ignores the local dimension and individual reality of members, and has created a “significant gap in the existing literature” on how these groups form and their “calculations and actions in response to a variety of factors” (2007, p. 3). Goodwin sums up his beliefs with the statement, “It is difficult to understand how we might possibly gain a rich understanding of what attracts individuals to extremist movements by reducing interviewees to units of analysis and summary scores, reducing their motives to a selection of pre-determined choices” (2007, p. 5). Instead, qualitative inquiry and interviews are needed to understand the social worlds of extremists rather than relying solely on quantitative measures. For this reason, while this study uses an explanatory mixed method design, the quantitative results garnered from the first phase of this study will act in a supporting role to the qualitative phase of the second half of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

There are a number of approaches researchers can use to understand the reality of those being studied by using their own thoughts and words. One approach is symbolic interactionism where the researcher explains social actions based on the meanings people assign to the objects in their world (Emerson, 2001, p. 16). Yet, this approach often involves the researcher using predetermined categories and themes into which the responses fit. Instead of predetermined observation and coding, according to Glaser and Strauss there is instead a “tradition... especially in field work... to initiate the research using only a very general framework with no intention of using a given theory,” with the assumption that “one’s data will be sufficiently rich to stimulate the generation of good theory” (1967, p. 152). The researchers continue that “this rather free style of

research lends itself to generation of theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 152). Glaser and Strauss conclude that “The rule for generation of theory is *not* to have pre-set or valued hypotheses, but to maintain a sensitivity to all possible theoretical relevances” (1967, p. 194).

### **Grounded Theory**

According to Bowen, all qualitative research, including grounded theory research, begins with the researcher’s “attempts to discover, understand, and interpret what is happening in the research context” rather than starting with preconceived notions or hypotheses (2006, p. 3). This idea of needing to understand and explain rather than attempting to predict is the starting point of qualitative research. Grounded theory becomes the most appropriate approach to use when attempting to better understand an understudied population. In a grounded theory approach, the researcher devises themes and codes after they have achieved a greater understanding of those being researched, and envisions how these themes come to rationalize the actions of others. In the words of the originators of the concept, grounded theory is “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1). In fact, Thomas and James insist that grounded theory “has been a major – perhaps *the* major – contributor to the acceptance of the legitimacy of qualitative methods in applied social research” (2006, p. 767). Grounded theory is a research approach or method involving the continual interplay between data collection and analysis to produce theory, “derived inductively through the systematic collection and analysis of data pertaining to a phenomenon” (Bowen, 2006, p. 2). Glaser and Strauss continue that, “Joint collection, coding, and analysis of data is the underlying operation” required to generate theory, “coupled with the notion of theory as process,” which

“requires that all three operations be done together as much as possible” (1967, p. 43). It is for this reason that “further collection cannot be planned in advance of the emerging theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 47). Instead, the emerging theory points to the researcher’s next steps which are not known until data is analyzed during the research process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

According to Mills, Bonner, and Francis, grounded theory “is a methodology that seeks to construct theory about issues of importance in peoples’ lives” through data collection “often described as inductive in nature” where “the researcher has no preconceived ideas to prove or disprove” (2006, p. 2-3). Glaser and Strauss argue that if the researcher starts with raw data, they “will end up initially with a substantive theory: a theory for the substantive area on which he has done research” (1967, p. 114). But, they continue that if the researcher “starts with the findings drawn from many studies pertaining to an abstract sociological category, he will end up with a formal theory pertaining to a conceptual area” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 115).

Using grounded theory, the researcher examines issues important to the participants that emerge from the stories they tell and responses they provide (Mills et al., 2006). This can also come from detailed observation and analysis of texts, including web sites (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). From these stories and responses, the “researcher analyzes by constant comparison, initially of data with data, progressing to comparisons between their interpretations translated into codes and categories and more data” (Mills et al., 2006, p. 3). Glaser and Strauss continue the point, arguing, “Both implicitly and explicitly, the analyst continually checks out his theory as the data pour in” (1967, p. 26). They later continue that the researcher is “constantly redesigning

and reintegrating his theoretical notions as he reviews his material” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 101).

Mills et al., (2006) argue coding from the data is the fundamental analytic tool used to uncover an emergent grounded theory. The researchers continue that three forms of coding are used: open, theoretical, and constant comparative (Mills et al., 2006, p. 5). Open coding is the first step in analysis where the researcher develops codes to analyze the data collected until a core category is located (Mills et al., 2006). The core category is the central point of a grounded theory integrating all the data together and identifies the researcher “as the author of a theoretical reconstruction” (Mills et al., 2006, p. 6). Theoretical codes “are ‘conceptual connectors’ that develop relationships between categories and their properties” (Mills et al., 2006, p. 5). Glaser and Strauss argue it is the job of the researcher “to transform insights into relevant categories, properties, and hypotheses” (1967, p. 254). Through induction and empirical data, the researcher builds an explanation connecting all the interviews and data conceptually together. Constant comparative coding is “the method of constant comparison that imbues both open and theoretical coding” (Mills et al., 2006, p. 5). One form of theoretical coding is the conditional/consequential matrix when the researcher locates an “interaction that appears repeatedly in the data and then traces the linkages from this through micro and macro conditions that might influence it” (Mills et al., 2006, p. 5).

Bowen uses a similar description of grounded theory, arguing, “the essence of meaning or experiences drawn from varied situations and contexts,” comes about in grounded theory through themes or sensitizing concepts as the starting point for inquiry

(2006, p. 2). Glaser and Strauss argue to discover theory, “One generates conceptual categories or their properties from evidence; then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept” (1967, p. 23). Glaser and Strauss contend, “The researcher chooses any groups that will help generate, to the fullest extent, as many properties of the categories as possible, and that they will help relate categories to each other and to their properties” (1967, p. 49). The researchers continue, “The evidence may not necessarily be accurate beyond a doubt... but the concept is undoubtedly a relevant theoretical abstraction about what is going on in the area studied” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 23). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), while lower level categories emerge quickly during the beginning phases of research, higher level categories that are overriding and integrating, tend to come later during the joint coding and analysis. In essence, “As the theory grows, becomes reduced, and increasingly works better for ordering a mass of qualitative data, the analyst becomes committed to it,” and this commitment “allows him to cut the original list of categories for collecting and coding data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 111).

Bowen refers to conceptual connectors as the conceptual framework that “links various concepts and serves as an impetus for the formulation of theory” (2006, p. 3). In Bowen’s study (2006), sensitizing concepts were those codes that formed the conceptual framework. These concepts, derived after a thorough review of the literature, became the variables which formed an analytic frame, and served as “a guide in the analysis of data with theory-producing potential” (Bowen, 2006, p. 4). Glaser and Strauss add that, “What are relevant for theory are the general categories and properties and the general relations between them that emerge from the data” (1967, p.

189). These general relationships “become the basis for suggesting hypotheses for the emerging theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 190). The most frequent of theoretical statements therefore are “the varying conditions under which a phenomena exists” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 217).

Glaser and Strauss continue that a researcher’s work with grounded theory can quickly lead to the generation of a hypothesis, and when this is accomplished, the researcher is “no longer a passive receiver of impressions but is drawn naturally into actively generating and verifying his hypotheses through comparison” (1967, p. 39). This is possible according to the researchers because generating a hypothesis only requires enough evidence to “establish a suggestion – not an excessive piling up of evidence to establish a proof, and the consequent hindering of the generation of new hypotheses” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 40). The grounded theory remains inductive and does not attempt to predict human behavior, but simply to better understand the phenomenon from the perspective of those being studied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

A researcher decides when to stop sampling in order to develop a hypothesis, when a category has reached theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Glaser and Strauss, saturation occurs when “no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category,” and instead “sees similar instances over and over again” (1967, p. 61). Frey, Botan, and Kreps (2000), define saturation as the point when new data adds little to the development of new categories or themes. Glaser and Strauss continue that, “When saturation occurs, the analyst will usually find that some gap in his theory, especially his major categories, is

almost, if not completely filled” (1967, p. 61). Glaser and Strauss (1967), however, also conclude that saturation can occur sooner based on availability of research subjects. Glaser and Strauss contend that the researcher “will be constrained by such structural conditions as who is available to be observed, talked with, overheard, interviewed, or surveyed, and at what times” (1967, p. 66-67). Therefore, the researcher cannot be sure prior to beginning the study who will be interviewed, the sample size that will be studied, or how much time the study will take to complete, but can specify the types of groups to be studied and therefore “indicate the range of types necessary to achieve the desired scope and conceptual generality” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 74). Therefore, it is understood that when the researcher begins the process to suggest a theory, “they can relax many rules for obtaining evidence and verification that would otherwise limit, stultify or squelch the generation of theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 186). The researcher instead must be flexible in terms of sampling, saturation, and integration, otherwise the researcher “will not be able to generate theory that is adequate” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 186). But, the researcher should still “be clear about the rules he is relaxing... and he should explain his position to readers” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 186). Glaser and Strauss surmise that the researcher realizes the formulation of theory is complete:

When the researcher is convinced that his conceptual framework forms a systematic theory, that it is a reasonably accurate statement of matter studied, that it is couched in a form possible for others to use in studying a similar area, and that he can publish his results with confidence (1967, p. 224)

Glaser and Strauss conclude that the theory that emerges comes from the “researcher’s collection and analysis of qualitative data” and “is in one sense equivalent to what he *knows systematically* about his own data” (emphasis added by authors, 1967, p. 225).



Grounded theory and qualitative research in general, do not attempt to achieve overarching generalizations about a population, but instead, a greater understanding of those studied. Grounded theory accepts the critiques of qualitative research and acknowledges that the goal for researchers is to examine the interplay between the groups studied to their own worlds with the researcher as author (Mills et al., 2006). As Glaser and Strauss argue, “Merely being statistically significant does not mean that a relationship is or should be of theoretical relevance” (1967, p. 201).

Bowen (2006) argues that the principal technique used in grounded theory is inductive analysis, which is necessitated on the idea of a subjective researcher. The idea of the researcher as author clearly situates the researcher’s importance to the study and signifies that the “results of an inquiry are always shaped by the *interaction* of inquirer and inquired into” (emphasis added by author, Guba, 1990, p. 26). To further emphasize this point, Mills et al., add that, “Constructivism emphasizes the subjective interrelationship between the researcher and participant,” denying the existence of an objective reality and repositions the “researcher as the author of a reconstruction of experience and meaning” (2006, p. 2). Constructivist grounded theory thus can be seen as the approach by which the researcher attempts to understand the reality of those being studied while acknowledging their own interpretation of the world. According to Glaser and Strauss, “The root of all significant theorizing is the sensitive insights of the observer himself” (1967, p. 251). Glaser and Strauss continue that in the presentation of data, the researcher “can quote directly from interviews or conversations,” summarize events or persons, describe events and acts, provide background descriptions, and even “offer accounts of personal experience to show how events impinged upon

himself” (1967, p. 229). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) agree, adding that in qualitative research, evidence comes in the form of direct quotes from participants. The goal therefore is to understand a phenomenon, as well as to understand that it is the researcher who develops grounded theory through their own interpretations and experiences to shed light on that phenomenon. When the “reader becomes sufficiently caught up in the description so that he feels vicariously that he was also in the field, then he is more likely to be kindly disposed toward the researcher’s theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 230). In essence, “The reader’s judgment of credibility will also rest upon his assessments of how the researcher came to his conclusions” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 230).

A grounded theory therefore has been formed when it closely fits the substantive area in which it will be used, is “readily *understandable* by laymen concerned with this area,” when it is “sufficiently *general* to be applicable to a multitude of diverse daily situations within the substantive area, not just a specific type of situation,” and when it allows “the user partial *control* over the structure and process of daily situations as they change through time” (emphasis added by authors, Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 237).

### **Research Questions**

In order to gain a better understanding of the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the modern Klan’s use of the Internet, a research design and research questions evolved after a thorough review of the literature to guide this study. The overarching research questions this study seeks to answer are, “What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” “Why does the Ku Klux Klan create and maintain web sites?” and “Who are members of the Klan?”

Using an exploratory mixed-method design, content analysis will be conducted to gain a better understanding of, “What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” as well as, “What does the Klan believe?” A subsequent qualitative analysis using in-depth interviews with Klan site web masters and site creators will be conducted to expand upon the responses from the quantitative inquiry as well as to gain a better understanding of the grand tour question, “Why does the Ku Klux Klan create and maintain web sites?” In order to ask this question in the broadest way and to greater ensure the question does not put the respondent on the defensive, this question will be worded as, “Talk to me about the reasons and goals for creating and maintaining Ku Klux Klan web sites.” In addition, as it is presumed many of the web masters and site creators will have contact with members of different Klans, the in-depth interviews will also seek to better understand a mini-tour question which will be posed to participants of “Who are members of the Klan?” The significance of this last question is to determine who current Klan members are, and if this depiction matches the stereotypical view that the Klan is made up of “good ol’ boys” and uneducated rednecks (Adams & Roscigno, 2005; & Fletcher, 2008), or if the Klan is abandoning this group and attempting to appeal to a wider, more educated and wealthier white membership.

## CHAPTER 3 METHOD

This study uses an Explanatory sequential design - participant selection model; a two-phase mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The design begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, which for this study is a content analysis of known Ku Klux Klan sites operating in the United States in 2009 according to the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The second, qualitative phase of the study is designed to follow and connect the results of the first quantitative phase with in-depth interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Mixed methods research “focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing quantitative and qualitative data in a single study” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 5). Mixing for the purpose of this design is “the explicit relating of the two data sets” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 83). The premise of this design is that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a better understanding of a phenomenon than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Although the Explanatory design begins with quantitative results, and these results are typically given greater emphasis in this method, because the goal of this study is greater understanding rather than prediction, the qualitative results will be given greater emphasis in order to understand what is the Klan, why the Klan creates web sites, what the Klan believes, and who are members of the Klan? This is the essence of a pragmatic worldview where placing greater emphasis on either a post-positivistic or constructivist approach is acceptable as the pragmatic worldview accepts the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has the potential to lead to greater understanding and results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Content analysis will be used to help explain the differences among Klan groups, while the in-depth interviews will be used to understand any unexpected results discovered from the content analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Web masters and site creators for Klan web sites interviewed in this study will be individuals who create and maintain the sites examined through content analysis and will therefore be able to provide more detailed information about the sites, the information contained on these sites, and the motivations for creating sites to best address the qualitative research questions as well as provide further support for the quantitative research questions.

The data collection for this study uses sequential collection of data which better allows a single researcher to conduct a study as opposed to other mixed method designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). At the same time, because the researcher will be continually collecting and analyzing data during the in-depth interviews, based on results from the content analysis, the continuous creation of codes, categories, and themes lends itself to using a grounded theory approach toward greater understanding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In addition, “The final report can be written in two phases, making it straightforward to write and providing a clear delineation for readers” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 74). Therefore, results will be presented in two parts, with the analysis of web sites first, followed by the responses to the in-depth interviews.

This study uses a method of collecting for data analysis to data connection, where the “analysis of one type of data leads to (and thereby connects to) the need for the other type of data” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 84). In this study, quantitative results will lead to the “subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 84).

Under a pragmatic worldview, using a mixed methods design, research questions can be asked at a more general level related to the type of design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). With this in mind, the content analysis will be used to examine “What is the Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” and “What does the Klan believe?” while the in-depth interviews will be used to examine “Why does the Ku Klux Klan create and maintain web sites?” The combination of these results will be used to answer, “Who are members of the Klan?”

### **Content Analysis**

Content analysis is used to identify “occurrences of specific message characteristics embedded in texts” (Frey et al., 2000, p. 236). In this study, those texts will include Ku Klux Klan web sites known to be active in 2009 according to the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). According to Frey et al., “Content analysis is one of the dominant, if not the dominant, methodologies employed in mass communication research” (2000, p. 237). While most content analysis is quantitative in nature, through counting the number of instances certain types of messages appear in texts, some content analysis “blends both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data by combining traditional objective analysis of messages with data interpretation made on the basis” of observation (Frey et al., 2000, p. 237).

The primary goal of content analysis is “to describe and count the characteristics of messages embedded” in texts (Frey et al., 2000, p. 238). Content analysis has a number of advantages over other forms of methodologies as it is a relatively unobtrusive method of data collection as researchers study existing texts rather than asking participants to produce material to examine (Frey et al., 2000, p. 238). Content analysis also allows the researcher to observe unstructured material and form

predetermined categories in which to place the data examined, allowing researchers the opportunity to not only examine the content of texts, but also “infer such things as the underlying motivation of the producers of texts and the effects of texts on” individuals (Frey et al., 2000, p. 238). Finally, content analysis can also handle massive amounts of data to examine (Frey et al., 2000). This last advantage is particularly important in this study with as many as 44 different web sites potentially being examined.

### **Analyzing Klan Web Sites**

Content analysis is a systematic, step-by-step procedure used to answer research questions through selecting texts, determining units to be coded, developing content categories and analyzing data (Frey et al., 2000). Content analysis starts by choosing appropriate texts (Frey et al., 2000). In this study, the 44 known Ku Klux Klan sites operating in the United States in 2009, according to the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), will be selected as a population sample from which to conduct the content analysis. Unlike other quantitative studies, a population is available for analysis, and rather than investigating these sites as a sample to generalize back to the population, the full population of sites will be examined. Those sites no longer on the Internet will be omitted, while additional sites discovered through examining the original population will also be omitted as the sites were not part of the SPLC’s list, and may therefore not meet the requirements used by the SPLC to be included in its list of active Klan sites.

The next step in content analysis “involves coding messages embedded in the selected texts into descriptive categories. To accomplish this, researchers first identify the appropriate message units to code” (Frey et al., 2000, p. 240). There are five types of units a content analyst may study: physical, syntactical, referential, propositional, and thematic (Frey et al., 2000). This study will focus on physical and thematic units.

Physical units are “the time and space devoted to content, such as the number of particular items or amount of space devoted to them in the texts” using standardized measurement units (Frey et al., 2000, p. 240). Thematic units “are topics contained within messages,” and involve symbolic meaning and are therefore less standardized (Frey et al., 2000, p. 241). Observational data will be collected in predetermined response categories of physical and thematic units in a closed-ended fashion (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). A coding sheet (Appendix A) was developed by the researcher to conduct the content analysis of the Klan web sites intended to summarize the information observed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Physical units will include whether the site provides a contact email, emails for additional members of the Klan organization, a chat room, a page to sell paraphernalia and merchandise, the inclusion of promotional material, a link for viewers to join the Klan, internal links, external links to other Klan sites as well as non-Klan sites, a site counter, information about upcoming events, information about past events, a logo or emblem for the group, multimedia including videos, photos and music, a religious orientation, a statement of whether the Klan group associates with radical extremist groups like skinheads and Nazis, a disclaimer that the site does not encourage violence, and a disclaimer that the Klan group viewed is not a racist organization.

Thematic units would include the use of derogatory language or slurs against religious, racial or ethnic minorities, specific statements that the organization is pro-American, supports traditional or family values, is a pro-white organization, admonitions the organization represents the “true Klan,” issues the Klan supports or is against which



contain a racial overtone, and traditional or conservative mainstream issues the Klan site states the organization supports, or is against.

According to Frey et al., the identification of appropriate units of analysis using nominal measurement procedures to develop categories is a very creative process with which “to develop categories into which units can be classified” (2000, p. 241). The value of a content analysis study “rests on developing valid categories into which units can be classified” (Frey et al., 2000, p. 241). These thematic categories were developed from a thorough review of the literature on the Ku Klux Klan. The thematic categories are racist language, religious ideology, the “true Klan,” racist beliefs, and traditional or conservative mainstream beliefs.

Units will be placed into the racist language category if they involve the use of racial slurs or racist stereotypical depictions of religious, racial or ethnic minorities. This category will be open to the least interpretation, although the severity of the rhetoric may be open for interpretation. As an example, while the word “nigger” would be the most obvious example of racist language, the use of “colored” or “negro,” while still racist, do not contain the same vitriol and will therefore not be counted. Religious ideology is perhaps the most obvious category as Klan groups will either espouse a Christian including Catholic ideology, Protestant only ideology, a Christian Identity ideology, or make allowances for atheists and pagans. Units coded into the “true Klan” category will be found in rhetoric identifying the organization’s linkage to previous Klans and specifically the Reconstruction Klan and/or the Klan of the 1920s; these groups will often identify themselves as “traditional.” However, simply indicating a stance as “traditional” will not ensure that the Klan will claim to be a “true” Klan, only that it follows

the traditions and prescripts of previous incarnations of the Klan. In addition, while both the Reconstruction Klan and Klan of the 1920s were Christian, and specifically Protestant organizations, Klan groups that accept Catholics or atheists may still insist on their lineage to the original Klans.

Racist beliefs will be more difficult to code. Racist beliefs may be easier to code if statements are made specifically relating issues such as immigration or welfare by including racist language concerning minorities. But, if these statements are made without the inclusion of racist language or racial overtones, they may instead be coded as traditional and mainstream beliefs. The mainstream beliefs category is perhaps the most interesting area to code, because its prevalence on Klan web sites would support the argument made by some researchers the Klan is attempting to appear more mainstream.

According to Gerbner, "The 'mainstream' can be thought of as a relative commonality of outlooks" (1980, p. 15). In any diverse society exists a dominant set of attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices (Gerbner, 1998). These aspects of a society, however, are not the sum total of all attitudes, beliefs, values and practices of the members of that society, but "the most general, functional, and stable mainstream, representing the broadest dimensions of shared meanings and assumptions" (Gerbner, 1998, p. 183). In essence, the mainstream "can be thought of as a relative commonality of outlooks and values" which "absorb or override differences in perspectives and behavior which ordinarily stem from other factors and influences" (Gerbner, 1998, p. 183). Mainstreaming therefore can occur either when the dominant culture imposes its attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices on the rest of society, or when a subculture

attempts to match its own attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices to the dominant culture, where the sub-cultural norms compete with the traditional norms of the dominant culture (Walby, 2005). For these subcultures, mainstreaming often requires reinvention, restructuring, and rebranding of their culture to match the dominant group (Walby, 2005). Mainstreaming can then occur through the “homogenization of initially different perspectives” as the subgroup more closely aligns its culture to the dominant group (Gerbner, 1980, p. 25). While neither political and social conservatism nor liberalism reflects the dominant position of all Americans, they do reflect the two main, although opposing, driving forces in American society.

According to researchers, mainstream beliefs should place emphasis less on racist rhetoric and instead on a society based on right and wrong, law and order, respect for authority; opposing welfare programs, high taxes, limits on individual freedoms, affirmative action programs, legal and illegal immigration, crime and drug use, and homosexuality; supporting an increase and continuation of the United States’ military strength and spending, a decreased presence in international affairs; and support of religiously conservative Christian values (Duffy, 2003; Sniderman et al., 1991; Vertigans, 2007; & Wald, 1980). Therefore, the traditional or conservative mainstream beliefs category will be filled with units mentioning a desire for law and order and respect for authority; opposition to welfare programs, high taxes, affirmative action, legal and illegal immigration, and limits on individual freedoms including gun rights; supporting American military strength and spending while opposing participation in international organizations; support for Christianity, capitalism, and American

democracy; and opposition to socialism and communism (Cunningham, 2008; Sniderman et al., 1991; Vertigans, 2007; Wald, 1980).

After identifying the individual units of analysis, each is placed into one of the exclusive categories mentioned (Frey et al., 2000). While coding some of the categories into nominal units will yield qualitative data, counting the number of units in each category will yield quantitative data (Frey et al., 2000). According to Frey et al., “Knowing the types of categories informs researchers about what is being communicated; knowing the number of units in each category informs them about how often these types of messages are being communicated” (Frey et al., 2000, p. 243). In either case, both types of data are “useful for describing, understanding, and critiquing the content of the communication being studied” (Frey et al., 2000, p. 243).

The frequency of these messages appearing on Klan sites is particularly vital to understand as there are only 44 Klan web sites for between 5,000 and 8,000 Klan members (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010; & Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.). Individuals who are members of a Klan organization presumably will use their organization’s web site for information, and the repeated exposure to messages found on these web sites can influence their worldviews. According to Klein and Shiffman, cultivation theory “states that media viewers’ perceptions of social reality will be shaped by extensive and cumulative exposure to media-provided messages” (2006, p. 166). Klein and Shiffman (2006) conclude people’s perceptions of the real world will be partially based on what they see and hear in the media, and that these perceptions will influence decisions on how they behave in real-world situations. Crouteau and Hoynes (2003) agree, adding that individuals develop at least some sense of the social world

through their exposure to the media. Grabe and Drew contend, "People who are avid media consumers tend to adopt worldviews similar to those presented in mass media content" (2007, p. 147). For Klan members, this would be the exposure to the information found on their Klan group's web site. This is significant if the messages found on Klan web sites contain racist themes which may indoctrinate web viewers with the messages found on these sites. As an example, Dixon and Linz contend if blacks are frequently depicted as perpetrators of crime this may lead to the belief "that the social world is populated by African Americans who are dangerous and prone to crime" (2000, p. 134). Therefore a content analysis of known Klan web sites should not only reveal a greater understanding of "What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21st Century?" but also, "What does the Klan believe?"

### **Klan Web Site Content Analysis**

According to Schafer, "The greatest challenge to successful internet-based research is determining an appropriate population from which to draw a representative sample," as it is difficult "to determine the true size of any population of web sites" (2002, p. 72). Schafer continues, "Research using web sites as the unit of analysis must often rely on less accurate purposive sampling techniques" (2002, p. 72). Schafer argues using a purposive sample developed by a "watchdog" group like SPLC "does raise certain methodological concerns" as these groups have "an established agenda and vested interests which they seek to protect" (2002, p. 73).

The Southern Poverty Law Center builds its list of active hate groups and their web sites "based on information gathered by the Intelligence Project from hate group publications, citizen reports, law enforcement agencies, field sources and news reports" (2008, p. 52). The SPLC however does not include every Klan organization on its list or

all Klan web sites on the Internet in 2009, and instead, “Only organizations known to be active in 2009, whether that activity included marches, rallies, speeches, meetings leafleting, publishing literature or criminal acts were counted” (2010, p. 44). The SPLC justifies these exclusions, stating in the 2010 Intelligence Report on “The Year in Hate and Extremism,” that, “Entities that appear to exist only in cyberspace are not included because they are likely to be individual web publishers who like to falsely portray themselves as powerful, organized groups” (2010, p. 44). Therefore, as the SPLC does have “clear and explicit guidelines for defining which types of web sites will be included in its catalogue,” any “methodological issues that attend the use of watchdog groups for sampling purposes are not points of concern” (Schafer, 2002, p. 73).

In the first phase of this explanatory mixed method study, all 44 known Ku Klux Klan web sites (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010) will be examined using a coding sheet with predetermined questions (Appendix A). On the coding sheet, the researcher will indicate the name of the Klan organization site examined along with its URL. In addition, the researcher will indicate if an email address is provided for the web master of the site. The email addresses will be used to contact individual web masters and site creators for the second phase of this study: the in-depth interviews. In addition, other email addresses, if provided, along with the titles of those associated with the emails will also be collected. While these emails will potentially be for others associated with the individual Klan organization and not the web master or site creator, they will be recorded should the web master or site creator’s email address have changed, and will act as an additional means of contact for the in-depth interviews.

Of the physical units examined on the web sites, the researcher will note if the site contains a chat room and if the chat rooms are for members only. Many extremist sites include chat rooms and discussion forums where members can discuss topics of interest to them; the site Stormfront.org has over 144,000 registered members who use the chat rooms and forums on the site (Beirich & Potok, 2009; Bello, 2008; Bostdorff, 2004; Duffy, 2003; Levin, 2002; & Zhou, et al., 2005). Some researchers have argued Klan sites give an outward appearance of being mainstream (Duffy, 2003; & Gerstenfeld et al., 2003), however, in closed chat rooms, Klan members espouse more radical and racist views, hidden from non-members or at least those who do not sign-up on the site to view the chat room discussions (Rajagopal & Bojin 2002). Therefore, closed chat rooms may provide a venue for members of Klan organizations to discuss beliefs that otherwise may not be espoused on the site in general.

The researcher will also indicate if the site contains a link where site viewers can purchase paraphernalia or merchandise. This may be an external site that the Klan group affiliates with, or the Klan site may offer merchandise for purchase. According to Schafer (2002), many extremist web sites have products for sale which may connect to the group's mission or ideology. Schafer concludes "there is a clear information-sharing function linked with selling booklets, books, video tapes, and audio cassettes designed to educate the user," and adds even products like t-shirts, hats, and belt buckles have the "potential to inform the public by advertising the existence of the group" (2002, p. 79).

The researcher will also note if the site includes promotional material such as leaflets viewers can distribute, and the number of brochures and leaflets included on the

site. Previous research has shown Klan members have distributed leaflets in neighborhoods blaming immigrants for taking jobs (Kim & Bazar, 2007), and to spread Klan ideology (Anti-Defamation League, 2007). The researcher will also note if the site contains a link where site viewers can either join the Klan, or where viewers can get more information about joining the Klan. Previous research has indicated the Internet has become a vital recruiting tool for the Klan (Douglas et al., 2005; Eyerman, 2002; Gerstenfeld et al., 2003; Thiesmeyer, 1999; & Williamson & Pierson, 2003), and the presence of an option on these sites for individuals to have the opportunity to join without meeting a member of the Klan would lend credence to the idea that the Klan is using the Internet to recruit new members.

The researcher will note how many internal links the site has as well as external links to other Klan sites, or to other non-Klan sites. A web site with many internal links would indicate a sophisticated site with a great deal of content for site visitors to view. Many extremist and Klan sites link to other sites (Bostdorff, 2004), including other Klan sites and other extremist groups. According to Schafer, links allow a web master to “direct users to other sources of information, e-commerce establishments, and the web sites of groups with similar ideologies” (2002, p. 75). Links to other Klan sites would indicate rival Klan groups have an organizational relationship and may be working together toward a common goal (Billig, 2001), whereas links to non-Klan sites such as skinhead or neo-Nazi sites, would indicate the Klan group being viewed has discarded the traditions of the Klan to appeal to skinhead and neo-Nazi members, which according to the Anti-Defamation League (2007) has created tension among the different Klan



groups. Other links will also be noted as they may provide further insight into the beliefs and ideology of the Klan and specific Klan groups.

If the site has a counter, the number of hits the counter has recorded will also be noted. As there are as many as 8,000 active Klan members and only 44 Klan sites, according to SPLC estimates, it is important to know which sites are more popular with active Klan members and site visitors (Southern Poverty Law Center 2009; & Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.). While there is no way to check on the accuracy of the site counters, the information will still be recorded.

The researcher will note if the site includes information about upcoming events or past events. This information will show the extent to which the Klan organization being viewed is more of a web presence or an active Klan, and if the site is used as an informational portal for members to learn of events where they can meet and interact in an interpersonal setting, attract new recruits, or gain publicity reflecting more traditional Klan activities (Anti-Defamation League, 2007; Blazak, 2001; Douglas et al., 2005; Harmon, 1991; Lamberg, 2001; & Nelson et al., 1997). The existence of material on past events also will indicate the extent to which the sites are updated; if events presented on the site are over a year old, this may indicate the Klan organization being viewed is inactive or at the very least does not advertise its events to a general public to gain attention or new recruits. At the same time, Schafer contends while many extremist sites often include “news” or “current events” on their sites, “It was common for items found in these sections to be outdated by several months” (2002, p. 76).

The researcher will note if the site has a logo to represent the Klan organization and what the logo is, including any specific graphics. According to Rajagopal and Bojin

(2002), images and graphics can subtly, effectively, and persuasively illustrate a message. Adams and Roscigno (2005) add traditional Klan symbols like the flaming cross and hooded Klansman are common images on Klan sites.

Sites will also be examined for multimedia such as videos, photos, or music, and if this multimedia is only located on the site's homepage. According to previous studies, many extremist and Klan sites include multimedia (Abbasi & Chen, 2005; Anti-Defamation League, 2007; Becker et al., 2001; Levin, 2002; & Rajagopal & Bojin, 2002). This multimedia will be examined as physical units quantitatively as well as qualitatively for its overall message and intention. Specifically, videos will be examined to determine if they relate to recent news stories, which would provide additional information about the frequency with which the sites are updated, if they are of recent rallies indicating the promotion of group activities, or if they are of Klan leaders which would indicate the group does have a hierarchical structure instead of promoting a leaderless resistance articulated in "the endorsement of 'lone-wolf' actions" particularly involving violent or illegal actions by individuals (Adams & Roscigno, 2005, p. 774). The researcher will also view the videos to determine if the purpose is to provide additional information about the Klan, and educate or indoctrinate visitors with information about issues the Klan either supports or is against. Photos will be examined to determine if they depict a violent Klan with images of weapons, or of rallies which would demonstrate public Klan activities. If the sites contain music, the songs will be examined for lyrics and messages contained in the songs. Songs may represent a connection to previous Klan movements, i.e. if the song played is "Dixie" this would indicate the group is attempting to establish a connection to the Reconstruction Klan, while if the song discusses issues from the Civil

Rights Era, this may indicate a connection to the Civil Rights Era Klan and thus a break from the traditional Klans of the Reconstruction Era or of the 1920s (Blee, 1998; & Duffy, 2003). Finally, if the music is more in-line with Nazi propaganda music or White Power music, this would indicate a more purposeful and even greater delineation from the traditional Klans (Anti-Defamation League, 2007).

Sites will be examined for the existence of disclaimers that the Klan organization does not encourage violence. This disclaimer may only act as a legal defense to the Klan organization or the web master to protect themselves from individuals who commit violent acts after viewing a Klan web site (Douglas et al., 2005; Levin, 2002; & Williamson & Pierson, 2003). The absence of such a disclaimer would indicate either the site hopes to encourage violence, or the group's leadership is not concerned that members will commit violence toward others in the name of the Klan. At the same time, the possibility does exist that sites may not contain specific disclaimers that the group does not encourage violence, if the site contains little information other than promotional material about the Klan. The researcher will also note if the site specifically states the Klan organization observed is not a racist organization. Becker et al. (2001) argue that many Klan and extremist group members do not see themselves as racist and instead see themselves as being pro-white. Regardless of the actual views of the members of the organization, a statement refuting the Klan to be a racist organization runs counter to previous research indicating the Klan remains a racist organization (Billig, 2001; Fletcher, 2008; & Rajagopal & Bojin, 2002). In addition, the researcher will note what, if any, racist or inflammatory language is included on these sites.

Thematic coding will include noting if the site states that the Klan is “pro-American” or any of its derivatives, and the number of times this occurs. According to Bostdorff (2004) and Vertigans (2007), the Klan considers itself to be a patriotic organization. Of all the previous versions of the Klan, the Klan of the 1920s most frequently referred to itself as a pro-American organization, and the inclusion of this message on a site would infer a desired connection to the Klan of the 1920s (Alexander, 1965; Moore, 1990; Rice, 2008; & Vertigans, 2007). Thematic coding will also include noting if the site claims the Klan supports traditional and family values. Inclusions of politically conservative buzz words such as traditional values and family values may be a means to make the Klan appear more mainstream and to rebrand the image of the Klan (Blee, 2007; & Thiesmeyer, 1999), in order to attract more middle class members (Anti-Defamation League, 2007; & Bostdorff, 2004). The researcher will also investigate whether the site claims the Klan organization represents the “true Klan.” But, while a Klan’s web site may state it does represent the “true Klan,” in light of the fact rival and opposing Klan organizations exist, no organization owns the rituals, robes or name of the Ku Klux Klan, as the original Klan was disbanded by Nathan Bedford Forrest in 1869 (Lewis & Serbu, 1999), while the 1920s Klan formed by “Colonel” William J. Simmons disbanded in the mid-1940s (Alexander, 1965), claiming to be the “true Klan” is more an indication of an attempt to create a false history for the organization rather than a factual account in order to legitimize the group by providing it with a historical tradition. Finally, the sites will be examined for statements claiming the Klan is a pro-white organization.

While this analysis should provide greater insight into “What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” and assist in the second phase of the study using in-depth interviews

of web masters and site creators of Klan web sites, additional content analysis will be used to better understand, "What does the Klan believe?"

Klan sites will be examined to determine if they claim the Klan is a Protestant organization, Christian including Catholics, a Christian Identity organization, or any combination thereof. According to Bostdorff (2004), the Klan has always considered itself a Christian organization. However, Bostdorff (2004) also concludes as opposed to the anti-Catholic stance of the 1920s Klan, the current Klan also allows for Catholic members. Adams and Roscigno (2005) however claim that the Klan remains a Protestant organization. Meanwhile, other researchers contend that the Klan is now infused with Christian Identity theology which is vastly different from the teachings of traditional Christian theology (Becker et al., 2001; & Blee, 1998). At the same time, the Anti-Defamation League (2007) finds that some Klan organizations no longer hold membership strictly to Christians, but also include pagans and atheists in order to attract new members. Disagreement on whether Klan membership is limited to only Christians, or Protestants, and which religions individual organizations allow its members to be a part of, or not be a part of, may provide deeper insight into what the Klan believes and what is the Klan. This insight will be further supported by examining if the site specifically dissociates the Klan organization with skinheads and Nazis. Such an indication is important as skinhead and Nazi ideology is often infused with pagan and atheist beliefs. At the same time, groups that accept Nazi members should conceivably also profess less pro-American ideology.

Sites will be examined for statements depicting issues the Klan claims it stands for or against with a racial overtone. Conservative issues including racist or bigoted

language will be included in this category as well as issues specifically race related. Previous research has shown the Klan is against a number of issues with a clear racial component, such as stances against race mixing and assimilation (Glaser et al., 2002); multiculturalism and diversity programs (Schafer, 2002); affirmative action (Blatz & Ross, 2009; Duffy, 2003; & Vertigans, 2007); school busing and school integration (Kinder & Sears, 1981); liberal popular culture promoting race mixing, multiculturalism and homosexuality (Schafer, 2002); a societal double standard oppressing whites (Blee, 1998; Brown, 2009; & Duffy, 2003); the erosion of white people's position as the dominant group in the United States (Douglas et al., 2005); preservation of aspects of Southern society like maintaining the Confederate flag on or around government buildings or in prominent display (Blazak, 2001); and the need for whites to protect themselves from minority violence (Adams & Roscigno, 2005; & Bostdorff, 2004). A high number of instances of these issues mentioned would indicate the Klan remains a racist and anti-minority organization, rather than a pro-White and more mainstream organization.

Klan sites will, however, also be examined for statements depicting the Klan as a more mainstream organization with politically conservative and traditional values. Statements supporting mainstream beliefs or statements against mainstream beliefs will therefore be indicated, as they would depict the Klan as a conservative organization with more in common with more mainstream right-wing political organizations. Previous research has shown that the Klan is against high taxes (Vertigans, 2007); foreign ownership of American industries and properties (Duffy, 2003); outsourcing of jobs (Duffy, 2003); the welfare system (Duffy, 2003; Kinder & Sears, 1981; & Sniderman et

al., 1991); homosexuality (Duffy, 2003; & Schafer, 2002); abortion (Kinder & Sears, 1981); the United States' involvement in international organizations such as the United Nations (Vertigans, 2007); drugs and crime (Vertigans, 2007); globalization (Vertigans, 2007); a general distrust of the federal government and disapproval of government corruption (Schafer, 2002; & Vertigans, 2007); birth-right citizenship (Vertigans, 2007); and illegal immigration (Beirich & Potok, 2009; Kim & Bazar, 2007; Knickerbocker, 2007; Levin, 2002; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2008, 2009, & 2010; & Vertigans, 2007). The illegal immigration issue may be especially prominent on Klan sites as it has been used as a particularly effective recruiting tool. In fact, in a 2007 USA TODAY article, Phil Lawson, the former Imperial Wizard of the United Northern and Southern Knights of the KKK, told the paper in an email: "Everyday (sic) that our government allows this Illegal Mexican Invasion to continue, our membership numbers continue to grow in the KKK" (Kim & Bazar, 2007, p. 3A).

At the same time, previous research has shown the Klan supports a number of conservative issues including individualism and self-reliance (Kinder & Sears, 1981); law and order (Sniderman et al., 1991); participation in the political system (Bostdorff, 2004); support for the Second Amendment (Becker et al. 2001); the concepts of right and wrong (Sniderman et al., 1991); free speech (Levin, 2002); support for the United States military (Sniderman et al., 1991); and the importance of the United States remaining a world power (Sniderman et al., 1991).

While the results from the content analysis may not provide a complete answer to the question "What does the Klan believe?" as there is no one true Klan, nor will it potentially fully answer the question "What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?," the

analysis should differentiate the more socially and politically mainstream Klans from more extremist Klans. This distinction alone should fill a gap in the literature about an organization which has been around for nearly 150 years and showing signs of a surge in membership (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The content analysis may provide insight as to why, while the second phase of this study will hopefully explain how.

### **In-depth Interviews**

The majority of previous research on Klan web sites has been quantitative in nature (Goodwin, 2007). This study however uses an explanatory mixed method design beginning with a quantitative examination of Klan web sites, but this quantitative examination is merely the first phase of this study. The second, qualitative phase of this study, will build upon the results from the content analysis of Klan web sites in order to conduct in-depth interviews with individuals who create and design Klan web sites. The second phase of this study is to move beyond what the Klan is, and what the Klan believes, to understanding why the Klan creates web sites, and who are members of the Klan. By using in-depth interviewing, the researcher will be able to gain a greater insight into the motivation of those who create and maintain the sites examined and who are members of the Klan, as qualitative analysis is the most appropriate approach when examining an understudied population. Specifically, grounded theory will be used as it is the most appropriate method for exploring a complex phenomenon where little if any previous understanding currently exists.

In-depth interviews were selected for this study because they encourage the respondents to share their impressions, beliefs, and feelings in their own words (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The responses from the participants using open-ended questions will allow a greater understanding of the phenomenon beyond what could be



achieved using quantitative methods alone, where responses and questions are predetermined and require participants responses to fit within the given answers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Klan web sites were examined first by the researcher to better understand what the Klan is and believes, while the in-depth interviews will build upon this knowledge to better understand web masters and site creators' motivation to create and maintain these sites in terms of recruitment and spreading ideology.

The in-depth interviews will use a form of purposeful sampling as only those individuals with experience and/or knowledge of the phenomenon will be asked to participate; this falls in line with the participant selection model of an explanatory mixed method design using a homogeneous sampling. In this study, those individuals asked to participate will be web masters and site creators of Ku Klux Klan sites examined in the content analysis phase of this study. In qualitative research, only a small number of individuals are asked to participate in in-depth interviews; typically between four and ten (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Lindlof & Taylor continue, "Projects that study hard-to-find participants are more justified in having smaller samples" (2002, p. 129). For this study, a much larger number of participants will be invited to participate than is typical in such a study as many individuals may potentially be unwilling to participate. While it is unclear how many web masters and site creators will be willing to participate in this examination due to the secrecy of the organization (Becker et al., 2001; Goodwin, 2007, & Parsons, 2005), or what will be learned from interviewing them, research must still begin with some understanding of the phenomenon.

As this study uses a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, the sequential qualitative data collection is tentative, based on the observations achieved during the

quantitative phase and what results need to be explained in more detail (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In essence, the qualitative data (in-depth interviews) will build on the quantitative results from the content analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Both the qualitative results and a review of the relevant literature of the Klan will be used to conduct the in-depth interviews. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue a general understanding of the phenomenon, which can be both inductive and deductive, allows the researcher to develop an interview guide. Glaser and Strauss conclude the researcher should be “concerned with *basic phenomena*” as well as being “concerned with the *various explanations* of these phenomena” as these “dual concerns are directly linked with his interest in *tested explanations* (verification)” (emphasis added by authors, 1967, p. 119).

In the in-depth interviews, participants will be asked a series of open-ended and closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions provide participants with preselected answers from which to choose, and can be used to ascertain specific information relevant to the study, as well as allow the researcher to collect quantitative data (Frey et al., 2000). Closed-ended responses are therefore easier to compile, code, and compare (Frey et al., 2000). Open-ended questions ask participants to “use their own words in answering questions” (Frey et al., 2000, p. 100). The responses to open-ended questions are more time consuming, and provide data more difficult to categorize and analyze than closed-ended questions, because the participant’s response can widely vary (Frey et al., 2000). Open-ended questions, however, provide a greater depth of information about the perspectives of individual participants as they “allow people to respond with what is on *their* mind” (emphasis added by authors, Frey et al., 2000, p.

100). Open ended questions are preferred in in-depth interviews, but because responses can vary greatly as participants are able to provide answers in their own words, researchers typically use a small number of participants (Frey et al., 2000). Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend using open-ended questions at the beginning of research where respondents can provide as much information as they desire. As the research and theory building continues, and analysis is directed by the emerging theory, more direct questions will be asked to fill in gaps in the analysis and reach saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In addition, in-depth interviews and open ended questions are particularly valuable for studying secretive and understudied groups, as Frey et al., argue because “open questions are more useful when researchers are exploring a little-understood issue, want unanticipated answers, and are studying respondents who may resent preselected answers” (2000, p. 100).

The format for the interviews will be directive as participants will be presented with a predetermined sequence of questions (Frey et al., 2000). However, the interviews will be semi-structured and therefore allow the researcher to ask follow-up and probing questions to gather more specific information (Frey et al., 2000). The interviews will follow an inverted funnel format where more specific questions will be used at the beginning of the interview and as the interview develops, more broad questions will be asked as rapport develops (Frey et al., 2000). The researcher will also take notes during the interview as a means of recording observational data, including reflective notes, as well as emerging codes and themes that develop (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Data analysis of the results of the in-depth interviews will be a continual process as responses from the interviews may require additional questions to be added or for

questions to be discarded during subsequent interviews (Frey et al., 2000). The process of constant collection and analysis of data is a vital component in building grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Frey et al., explain this process stating constructivist researchers “make sense of data as they are acquired, and acquire more data after making sense of earlier data” (2000, p. 280).

### **Participants**

Web masters and site creators of the 44 known active Klan web sites in the quantitative phase of this study will be contacted by email and asked to participate in a phone interview asking a series of questions about their sites, beliefs and the messages found on Klan sites. The actual total number of web masters and site creators emailed will be based on contact information ascertained during the content analysis phase of this study. All interviews will be conducted by the researcher, as well as all transcription of the interviews. All participants will be provided a consent form prior to the interviews and asked to verbally provide consent to be interviewed (Appendix B). The informed consent agreement was approved by the University of Florida’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). No compensation will be provided for participating in the study, although participants will be told they will be able to see the finished study upon request.

Questions for web masters and site creators will relate to specific questions about the sites including the use of graphics, site ownership, frequency with which the sites are updated, the purpose of the sites, the perceived effectiveness of the sites, and a general understanding of the Klan and their members. Questions for web masters and site creators are intended to be more general, both allowing for a wider area of response and to not put the participant on the defensive creating an environment where they will want to withdraw from the study prior to completion.

In her study on extremist group members, Blee comments participants were conscious they had possible reason to be fearful of participating in a research study because of the possibility of “disclosure to the police, enemies, or family members who are not aware of their racist activities” (1998, p. 391). Glaser and Strauss maintain, “Certain groups are unwilling to expose themselves to the sociologist’s gaze, or require him to make a considerable effort to ‘get inside’” (1967, p. 177). To protect the respondents, pseudonyms for both participants’ names and participants’ organizations, will be used to ensure greater anonymity, and identifying details will be changed to protect respondents (Blee, 1998). Participants will be allowed to provide their own pseudonym or one will be provided for them by the researcher. In addition, following the study by Blee (1998) no questions will be asked about illegal activities. But, should participants divulge or admit to committing illegal activities during the course of the interview, these incidents will be stricken from the transcripts as there will be no way to prove an illegal activity took place or if the respondent is instead boasting or bragging about an incident in order to make an impression upon the researcher; a similar method used by Blee (1998) in her study of skinheads.

In addition to concern for the safety and anonymity of the research participants, there is also reason to pause concerning the safety of the researcher when dealing with extremist groups. According to Blee, extremist groups tend to “regard academics as untrustworthy or hostile,” and adds “it is not uncommon for extreme rightist groups to actively intimidate potential researchers with explicit or implicit threats of violence for gathering data or publishing analyses of them” (2007, p. 121). Duffy continues, members of extremist groups often see universities in general as “promoting the racial

'double standard'" by supporting multiculturalism, historically Black Universities, and student unions for minorities but not whites (2003, p. 296). Blee contended that while researching women in extremist movements that her "white skin color provided little protection," and adds, "Many of those in the racist movement who have faced criminal charges have been betrayed by other whites" (1998, p. 388). In addition, former members of extremist groups have also suffered violence from former group members for betraying their former members (Blee, 1998). Therefore simply being a white Christian does not afford the researcher any additional sense of security or ability to develop a sense of rapport with the respondents. In fact, Blee contends some members of white extremist groups claim race is based more on actions than genetics, and "'true whites' are revealed only by their commitment to white power politics, or at least by their failure to betray the 'white cause'" (1998, p. 389). Therefore, being white does not protect the researcher nor make the researcher more likely to be trusted by the participants. However, the hope is as there are as many as 44 active Klan sites in the United States, according to the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), enough web masters and site creators will participate in order to better understand the nature of the sites.

While concern may still exist for the safety of the researcher in conducting a study on individuals involved in extremist groups, the researcher will not provide the participants a home phone number or home address. In addition, while the researcher will conduct interviews with extremist group members for the purpose of this research, the interviews will be conducted over the phone at the University of Florida, or using Skype which does not provide a callback number, to allow for both greater quality

interview recordings and greater ensure the safety of the researcher. In addition, this study does not involve participant-observation, and therefore the researcher will not meet face-to-face with the participants, and all contact will be at a distance.

### **Studying Web Masters**

The intent of interviewing web masters and site creators of Klan web sites is to investigate beyond what the messages on sites mean to outsiders, but instead what they mean to the actual Klan members who create them. Structured interviews which use “a formal set of questions... in an open-ended way” (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, p. 122) will be conducted over the phone, and all interviews will be recorded and transcribed in full (Blee, 1998). The method to interview web masters and site creators is similar to studies by White (1989) and Blee (1998). In her study, Blee (1998) used structured questionnaires to interview women involved in extremist groups during face-to-face interviews. In White’s (1989) study, he interviewed members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Derry, Northern Ireland. White’s study had personal resonance with the researcher, and will be used in part as a guide for this study, as the researcher has family members who live in Derry, Northern Ireland. The personal relevance of the study added to the overall understanding of the lives and beliefs of members determined to be in an extremist organization. In his study, White argued in-depth interviewing allowed the respondent “to describe in his own words the changing environment, his reaction to these changes, and the process by which he became ready to join the IRA” (1989, p. 1289). White compared the stories by the individual IRA members with other former or current members, to show the process of deciding to become involved in political violence was not specific to one individual, and instead specific themes became apparent in their responses (1989). According to White (1989),

the consistencies in the accounts by the individual respondents' tendencies to focus on some issues rather than others, can be used as support for the questions examined and a validation of the method itself. DeWalt and DeWalt agree, adding that "while individuals may interpret and respond to" questions differently, "the likelihood that the responses of different individuals can be considered comparable" is high (2002, p. 123). Using the studies by White (1989) and Blee (1998), as a guide, web masters and site creators will be interviewed to better understand their motivation for creating Klan web sites as well as to gain a greater understanding of the Klan.

Specifically, a grand tour and mini-tour question will be asked of web masters and site creators to better understand "Why does the Ku Klux Klan create and maintain web sites?" and, "Who are members of the Klan?" In addition, a short question guide of more semi-structured open-ended and closed-ended questions (Appendix C) will also be administered to participants in order to collect demographic data as well as specific information about the Klan and Klan web sites. The short survey guide will be used to elicit more specific responses and build on data gathered from the content analysis, as well as to gain greater knowledge on areas not discussed or not provided within the responses to the grand tour and mini-tour questions.

### **Interviewing Web Masters**

There are three types of people who visit Klan sites: active members, new recruits, and those who come across a Klan site for the first time and may be susceptible to the Klan's rhetoric. Thiesmeyer argues that the target audience for extremist web sites include "those willing to be recruited, those who desire teaching and persuasion for themselves or to be used in turn on others," and "those who are already followers and are seen to need constant reminders from an authoritative voice" (1999, p. 120-121).



Brown continues that hate groups like the Klan therefore have to post messages on the Internet “for web surfers to find by choice or accident” (2009, p. 190). Some individuals may stumble upon Klan web sites unknowingly, and sites must provide messages to draw visitors in to make them learn more. Klan web sites often attempt to provide messages to site visitors linking current events to those of the past by “providing ideological reinterpretations of contemporary issues in an effort to promote unity among adherents, while simultaneously appealing to potential recruits” (Adams & Roscigno, 2005, p. 763). For groups like the Klan to recruit new members, they must “present an ideological appeal that is congruent with potential members while offering a supportive and inclusive network working toward attainable political ends” (Adams & Roscigno, 2005, p. 761). For example, when the United White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (UWK) web site discusses Christianity, unsuspecting web users who do a search for this topic may stumble upon the UWK’s views of Christianity rather than the opinions of a Christian church:

IN THE BEGINING (sic) GOD; ETERNAL INFINITE CREATOR AND HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, OUR CRITERION OF CHARACTER, OUR SAVIOR IN THIS WE PLACE ALL OUR FAITH.

Other viewers of Klan sites may be actively searching for more information about the Klan. For these visitors, rather than providing introductory messages, sites need to reinforce the visitors’ beliefs on what the Klan is and is not, so they become motivated to learn more and perhaps join. Schafer contends that to do so, many extremist web sites include “some form of text library,” which can include short essays, articles, and on-line books to indoctrinate and inform visitors of extremist beliefs and ideology (2002, p. 75). It is presumed these messages will be more mainstream and lead the visitors to find the Klan as an acceptable and viable organization to join, as those reluctant to join

may become active after being influenced by the Klan's mainstream appearance (Schafer, 2002). For example, on the UWK's web site, visitors are greeted with the

Disclaimer:

WE DO NOT SPREAD HATE TOWARDS ANY RACE. IT IS NOT HATE FOR US TO LOVE OUR WHITE RACE. HERITAGE IS NOT HATE.

However, Klan sites are also intended as gathering and informational pages for current Klan members. These members are open to more radical messages than new recruits or those who are visiting a Klan web site for the first time. For these visitors, sites need to be more open and expressive of what the Klan is and does and what the Klan believes. For example, once again from the UWK's web site:

Race mixing is a very effective way to destroy the culture, heritage, historical roots and identity of any people. The United States today is a prime example of what happens when White people turn away from God and his laws.

Klan web sites need to be developed for three different audiences, and therefore the question that will be asked of all web masters and site creators that agree to participate will be, "Talk to me about the reasons and goals for creating and maintaining Ku Klux Klan web sites." This is intended to understand the grand tour question of the qualitative research which is, "Why does the Ku Klux Klan create and maintain web sites?" This question was designed to elicit responses of depth and personal context from participants. As motive can be a sensitive subject, particularly when dealing with extremist ideologies and professing these ideologies, it is imperative for the researcher to ask the grand tour question in a way that does not imply blame or second guessing (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), and was therefore left purposefully vague. The grand tour question is designed to provide a starting point for the discussion with participants. In

addition, participants will also be asked how, and if, they tailor their message to members and non-members, and how these messages differentiate.

An additional mini-tour question was also included of “Who are members of the Klan?” It was presumed that since web masters and site creators would be in contact with members of the Klan, either in a leadership role or from developing and maintaining the Klan web site, they would be able to offer some general knowledge of members of the Klan. While this question is specifically asked of web masters and site creators, overall responses from both the quantitative and qualitative analysis of this study will be combined with this response to create an overall view of who are members of the Klan.

In addition, as part of the follow-up of semi-structured open-ended and closed-ended questions, web masters and site creators will be asked if they are the creators of the site or if they only maintain the current site. Participants will also be asked if they maintain their own ISP, and if they have changed the URL of their site in the past. If participants respond that they have changed their URL previously, a follow-up question will also be asked of what the previous URL was before it was changed. Research has shown that many extremist sites emerge and disappear regularly as these sites are frequently hacked, or host providers shut down the sites or refuse to continue to let the sites use their space (Gerstenfeld et al., 2003; Schafer, 2002; Xu et al., 2006; & Zhou et al., 2005). In addition, according to Adams and Roscigno, “Possession of a personal, privately owned domain name is indicative of organizational resources,” while “smaller organizations, often with defunct links, use free or public access servers made available by Internet providers and web hosting services” (2005, p. 764).

Web masters and site creators will also be asked if they are actual members of the Klan or simply create and maintain sites for the group. This is a significant question because individuals who are not members of the Klan but maintain a Klan web site would possess less in-depth knowledge of the Klan overall, and would be less able to provide insight into who are members of the Klan. At the same time, contracting out web site maintenance would signify a Klan group possesses a significant amount of organizational resources to pay for these services (Adams & Roscigno, 2005).

Web masters and site creators will also be asked if they get ideas for their site from other Klan web sites and which sites. While the quantitative analysis will examine if Klan sites provide external links to other Klan sites, thus demonstrating a collaborative relationship with other Klans, a web master or site creator admitting to using designs of other Klan organizations may also indicate a willingness to turn other Klan organizations from rivals to partners.

Web masters and site creators will also be asked how they decide which pictures, graphics, videos or music to put on the site. Bostdorff argues that while extremist group sites “vary in their level of visual sophistication,” they are however “wise enough to incorporate at least some visual images to augment their persuasive efforts” (2004, p. 344). Responses to this question will build on the content analysis of Klan sites to determine if the purpose is to provide additional information about the Klan, and educate or indoctrinate visitors with information about issues the Klan either supports or is against, or if the multimedia included is intended to represent a connection to previous Klan movements. Web masters and site creators will also be asked how often they change the graphics and photos on the site and how often they update the site in

general. Bostdorff argues that “The angry style of most Klan messages serves to inflame potential supporters... but the Internet also allows that anger to be expressed in a timely manner about particular public issues” (2004, p. 347). Therefore, “Responsiveness to current events can make Klan groups appear knowledgeable” (Bostdorff, 2004, p. 347).

Other questions will ask if the group has a particular logo or emblem and if they created it for the site, or if it was created by someone else, and what that logo is and represents. It is presumed that all Klan sites will not be text alone and will include graphics, logos, and pictures. The impetus for placing images on sites may reveal specific beliefs and understandings of what the group is attempting to accomplish in having a site, be it to recruit, indoctrinate, or instill pride in their members. Abbasi and Chen (2005) argue that font sizes and colors as well as the embedded images and links require a conscientious effort on the part of the web master or site creator and provide important insight into a writer’s online style.

Web masters and site creators will be asked how effective they believe their sites are to spread the Klan’s message and recruit new members. Some researchers have argued it would have been impossible for extremist groups like the Klan to have recruited so many new members without the Internet, and it is essential to understand how effective web masters and site creators believe they actually are in recruiting new members to the Klan (Thiesmeyer, 1999). These responses may lend credence to the argument the Internet has been a recruiting boom for extremist groups (Douglas et al., 2005; Gerstenfeld, Grant, & Chiang, 2003; & Williamson & Pierson, 2003), or it may show the Internet has had a negligible effect in recruiting more members to the Klan

who would have otherwise not joined. Vertigans (2007) argues that despite the popular use of the Internet for extremist groups like the Klan to spread its message and attract new supporters, it is interpersonal contacts, and friends recruiting friends, which have the greatest success in extremist groups recruiting new members. Vertigans continues that new members are mobilized by “socialising (sic) agents like family, friends, religious organisation (sic) and work relationships” that have the greatest impact in recruiting new members to these groups (2007, p. 652).

Additionally, Klan members will be asked to estimate the current membership of active Klan members across the country. This estimation will be compared to the SPLC’s estimate of 5,000 to 8,000 active Klan members (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.). Klan members will also be asked what they believe Americans think of the current Klan. Richard (2009) argues that the Klan of the 1920s was one of the largest social movements in the history of the United States, and attracted members across the country. This question is intended to learn if current Klan members believe Americans see the Klan as a viable social movement related to mainstream values, or if even current Klan members believe Americans see the Klan as out of touch.

The only demographic questions included asked web masters and site creators to provide their age and highest level of education. In the 1960s, the Klan was estimated to have had 55,000 members (Becker et al., 2001; & Vertigans, 2007), but membership has shrunk to 8,000 by 2009 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2009). It would be interesting to see if any of the web masters or site creators were old enough to have been members during the Civil Rights Movement or if they were younger and part of a new digital Klan. Web masters and site creators will be asked about the education

because previous research has indicated a connection between low levels of education and racism. According to Sniderman et al., “there is a link between racism and traditional values because simplistic values appeal most to the least educated, and it is the least educated who are the most prone to racism” (1991, p. 441).

Web masters and site creators will also be asked if they believe the Klan is a racist organization and why or why not. Previous research has shown the Klan is attempting to rebrand their image on the Internet as a non-racist organization (Duffy, 2003). Responses to this question would indicate whether this attempt to rebrand the Klan’s image is genuine or simply a ploy to attract a more mainstream audience. Finally, participants will be asked if they have anything else they would like to share at the conclusion of the interview. The purpose of this question is to allow the participants the opportunity to add any additional thoughts or ideas not covered in the interview, which may provide additional and valuable insight not originally included in the in-depth interview, and create new themes and categories. Lindlof & Taylor refer to this as a loose-end question, which is a “chance for the interviewee to fill in or clarify, suggest a new area of discussion, or ‘set the record straight’ before the interviewer leaves” (2002, p. 204)

### **Analyzing In-Depth Interviews**

According to Goodwin (2007), there has been a lack of qualitative research about the individuals in extremist groups and those who create web sites for these groups, and instead research has focused primarily on quantitative analysis of the sites. The significance of this study is to fill in that gap.

All interviews will be conducted and transcribed by the researcher. Transcriptions will be done concurrently with the research and interviewing so as to look for emerging

themes in the chance additional questions will need to be added to the interview guide for further information. The thoughts and views of the researcher during the analysis and data collection will also be used to not only guide follow-up or additional questions, but will also be used to better understand the nature of the Klan. The purpose of including the researcher's attitudes during the study are a part of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and as Blee argues, fieldworkers can do an injustice to their work when "only a narrow range of emotional experiences involving the researcher" is included in the fieldwork, analysis, and understanding (1998, p. 383).

Blee argues there is a "lack of methodological guidelines for scholars who study... 'unloved groups'" (1998, p. 387). Instead, a grounded theory approach will be used to understand and interpret responses to arrive at a greater knowledge of the Klan (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Following a study by Bowen, an inductive approach will be used to "identify patterns and interrelationships in the data by means of thematic codes" (2006, p. 3). The Klan sites, and responses to interviews, will be reviewed to determine "what codes fit the concepts suggested by the data" (Bowen, 2006, p. 5). The themes which emerge will be the result of reviewing all the data collected, making logical associations with the interview responses, and "considering what was learned during the initial review of the literature" (Bowen, 2006, p. 5). The key to this research will be to move beyond a descriptive analysis to an interpretive analysis so concepts create themes and these themes provide an explanatory theory of what the Klan is and why individuals create Klan sites.

In analyzing the data, the researcher must move through a process to make sense of what was collected. First, the data is reviewed to gain a general understanding



of the participant's responses and beliefs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Next, the researcher develops units in which to place the data to form broader categories in which to reduce the data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The data must be reduced into a manageable amount for examination (Frey et al., 2000). Data is reduced through physical reduction where material is selected that is the most useful to include in the analysis, and conceptual reduction where a conceptual scheme is used to sort and categorize the data (Frey et al., 2000). The next step is to code the data by dividing the texts into units of phrases, sentences, and paragraphs by assigning labels to each unit (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Units are placed into categories and categories into themes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). As data is analyzed and categorized, it should begin to reflect these broader themes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

While predetermined themes will not be created prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher will look for responses related to the literature on the reason the Klan creates web sites, such as allowing direct contact with members (Bostdorff, 2004; Gerstenfeld et al., 2003; Lee & Leets, 2002; & Levin, 2002); introducing individuals to a "new" Klan and provide site visitors with information (Adams & Roscigno, 2005; Bostdorff, 2004; Duffy, 2003; & Glaser et al., 2002); recruiting new members (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2009; & Thiesmeyer, 1999); empowering whites who feel oppressed (Bostdorff, 2004); and linking likeminded groups and individuals (Zhou et al., 2005).

In presenting the data, the researcher will discuss the evidence for categories and themes and build a discussion to convince the reader the themes and categories emerge from the data by providing evidence in specific quotes (Creswell & Plano Clark,

2007). Data will be analyzed deductively for the purpose of grounded theory development (Frey et al., 2000). The researcher will use analytic induction to analyze the data, and “infer meanings from the data collected, rather than imposing such meanings on the data from another source (such as a theory)” (Frey et al., 2000, p. 281). Analytic induction is the most common form of data analysis used by constructivist researchers (Frey et al., 2000). Using this technique, the researcher will look for emerging patterns in the data, and revise tentative formulations of categories and themes as more data is collected and analyzed (Frey et al., 2000). This process is both inductive and deductive in forming grounded theory as the researcher will form themes and hypotheses inductively and then deductively attempt to verify and confirm the findings, which can often lead to a new inductive cycle (Frey et al., 2000).

Developing a grounded theory will require the use of the constant comparative method to “create and compare exhaustive categories that explain the data” (Frey et al., 2000, p. 281). To use this method, all interview responses are recorded and analyzed by searching for commonalities among the responses (Frey et al., 2000). When a significant amount of content fits under a particular commonality, responses are presumed to constitute a category (Frey et al., 2000). Categories are often given a one-word or short phrase title to describe the data in the category. As more participants are interviewed, new categories may form, or the data may confirm the categories created. Eventually, all the data is placed into categories and from there, larger themes to represent the phenomenon being studied (Frey et al., 2000).

The collection of data and formation of categories and themes is concluded when the researcher achieves saturation, and more abstract themes have been formed

including the various categories at a hierarchical level as the categories serve as properties of the theme (Frey et al., 2000). According to Frey et al., the “resulting grounded theory is a description of this hierarchical category structure, including relationships among the categories and between categories and the data” (2000, p. 282). Frey et al., conclude research to develop grounded theory should meet four criteria where the results should be “*believable*, in that they should seem plausible to the reader; *comprehensive* in accounting for all (or most) of the data; *grounded* or tied to the data; and *applicable*, leading to testable propositions and additional investigation (2000, p. 282).

### **Mixed Method Analysis**

This study uses an Explanatory sequential design - participant selection model to better understand the Klan is, what the Klan believes, why the Klan creates web sites, and who are members of the Klan. The first content analysis phase of this study will provide generalization about the Klan and its beliefs, while the in-depth interviews will supplement the data from the content analysis from responses and perspectives of those who create and maintain Ku Klux Klan web sites. The in-depth interviews will, in effect, enhance the quantitative data, which is the purpose behind the Explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Some responses will relate back to questions from the content analysis to aid in better understanding what the Klan is and what the Klan believes.

In this sequential mixed method analysis, the researcher uses the information from the analysis of the first database to inform the second database (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The researcher will analyze the data from the content analysis, and from the data determine what additional information is needed from the in-depth interviews,

as outlier and extreme cases will be examined in the qualitative analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Validity will be achieved through the ability of the researcher to draw meaningful and accurate conclusions from all the data based on the overall mixed method design of this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The results to this study, as discussed in the next chapter will be based on the researcher's understanding of the Klan, and Klan web sites, using an explanatory mixed method design which includes content analysis of Klan web sites, and in-depth interviews with web masters and site creators of Klan web sites, while adding personal insights the researcher achieves while interacting with the data and those who create and maintain Ku Klux Klan web sites.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

### **Results of Content Analysis**

According to the SPLC, there were 44 active Klan web sites in 2009 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). But, as of the Spring of 2011, only 29 of the 44 web sites from the SPLC's list were still active, and among these sites, four were blogs by individual Klan members, and three of the four were from members of one Klan group. The four blogs were not included in this examination as they represented the beliefs of individual members of Klan organizations, and not the ideology of the organization. Also, additional Klan sites were found that were not included on the SPLC's list, but were not included as there was no evidence the sites fit within the guidelines provided by the SPLC to determine an actual Klan site. Therefore, it was determined only 29 total Klan web sites were in existence by the Spring of 2011, for what the SPLC determined were 187 Klan groups around the country (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), and only 25 of these web sites were actual organizational sites for Klan groups when the four blogs were eliminated (Appendix D for more information on the sites and individual Klan organizations). Although it is unclear why 19 Klan sites were no longer in existence by the time this study was conducted, but with nearly half missing, it does support research indicating Klan and extremist sites appear and disappear frequently.

As of the Spring of 2011, 25 active Klan sites remained from the SPLC's 2010 list of active Ku Klux Klan web sites. These sites included the Association of Georgia Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (AGKK), the Brotherhood of Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (BOK), the Church of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CNKKKK), the Confederate White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CWK), the Dixie Rangers Knights of the

Ku Klux Klan (DRK), the Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the Fraternal White Knights (FWK), the Imperial Klans of America (IKA), the International Keystone Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (IKKKKK), the Knight Riders of the Ku Klux Klan, The Knights Party of the Ku Klux Klan with sites as [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com), [kkk.com](http://kkk.com), [newporttennessee.net](http://newporttennessee.net), and [kkk.bz](http://kkk.bz), The Knights Party Veterans League (KPVL), the Ku Klux Klan, LLC., the Mississippi White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (MWK), The Indiana Historical Research Foundation (TIHRF), the Southern Alliance of Klans (SAK), the True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (TAK), the United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (UNSK), the Church of the United Realms of American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CURA), the United White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (UWK), and the White Camelia Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (WCK). However, while 25 web sites existed and were analyzed, some were merely shells or feeder sites and offered little content but were still included in this examination. These sites were: [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com), [newporttennessee.net](http://newporttennessee.net), and [kkk.com](http://kkk.com).

### **Shell, Feeder sites and Mistakes by the SPLC**

The Knights Party of the Ku Klux Klan had three feeder and shell sites which appeared to have no purpose other than to provide additional URLs to link to the Knights' main site. The Knights Party feeder site at [newporttennessee.net](http://newporttennessee.net), did provide two external links, an email address to contact the Knights Party Realm, a logo, and two external links to the Knights Party's main site. The Knights Party had two additional feeder sites that contained more information and links than the [newporttennessee.net](http://newporttennessee.net) site, but, [kkk.com](http://kkk.com) and [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) were essentially feeder sites to the main Knights Party site. Additionally, the Knights Party Veterans League (KPVL) site was also a feeder site to the main Knights Party site, but advertised the group as "The only

Veterans Organization specifically addressing the concerns of White Military Veterans, Active Duty Service Members, Reservists, and their families.”

The Confederate White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan’s web site was a shell site with no internal links, multimedia, or contact information. However, the homepage did have information on it about the Confederate White Knights.

In addition, mistakes were found on the SPLC’s list. Only 43 web sites, and not 44, were actually listed in the SPLC’s 2010 *Intelligence Report* (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The SPLC list did not include the main site for the Imperial Klans of America, but did list the IKA’s two Realm sites. But, by the Spring of 2011, both Realm sites were no longer active. In addition, the SPLC provided the wrong suffix to the CNKKKK site listing it as a .com when it had been changed to.net. Also, the SPLC listed kkkklan.com as the Order of the Ku Klux Klan. However, the site is run by Richard Bondira and the phrase “Order of the Ku Klux Klan” was never used on the site. Instead, the site used the name “The Indiana Historical Research Foundation” (TIHRF), and provided historical information and photos of Klan events, members, and memorabilia. There was no Klan affiliated with the site, and instead the site provided what it called “An Educational, Historical Study of the Ku Klux Klan.”

### **Klan Site Content**

All 25 sites were examined to determine if they provided a contact email address, a chat room, sold merchandise, provided an online option to join the organization, discussed future and/or past events, included promotional material to be printed and distributed such as leaflets, total number of internal links, number of links to other Klan groups, a counter to show number of site hits, number of photos, number of videos,

number of songs, and if the site included a logo. A summary of these results is found in

Tables 4-1 and 4-2:

Table 4-1. Summary of Ku Klux Klan web site content (Mechanics)

Klan	Contact email	Chat room	Sell Merchandise	Online option to join	Upcoming events	Previous Events
AGKK	yes*	no	no	no	no	yes
BOK	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
CNKKKK	yes **	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
CWK	no	no	no	no	no	no
DRK	yes **	no	no *****	yes	yes	yes
Empire Knights	no***	yes	no	yes	no	yes
FWK	yes **	no****	no	no	no	no
IKA	yes **	no	no	yes	yes	yes
IKKKKK	yes **	no****	no	no	no	no
Knight Riders	yes	no	no	no	yes	no
Knights Party arkpower-light.com	yes	no	no*****	yes	no	no
Knights Party kkk.com	no	no	no*****	yes	no	no
Knights Party newporttennessee.net	yes	no	no	no	no	no
Knights Party main site kkk.bz	yes***	no	no*****	yes	yes	yes
Knights Party Veterans League	no***	no	no	yes	yes	no
Ku Klux Klan, LLC.	yes	no	yes	no	no	no
MWK	yes**	yes****	yes*****	yes	yes	yes
THIRF	yes	no	no*****	no	no	no
SAK	yes	yes	no*****	no	yes	yes
TRK	yes	no****	no	no	no	no
TAK	yes**	yes	yes	yes	no	no
UNSK	yes**	yes	no*****	yes	no	no
CURA	yes **	yes *****	no *****	yes	no	yes
UWK	yes**	yes****	no***** & *****	no	yes	yes
WCK	yes**	no	no	yes	no	yes

\* The AGKK site did provide a contact email address, but it did not work

\*\* Included additional contact email addresses

\*\*\* Included an online form for site users to contact Klan

\*\*\*\* Included a guestbook

\*\*\*\*\* Also included a forum, chat room, guestbook, Yahoo group, and forum under construction

\*\*\*\*\* Included a link to Reb Ware Products

\*\*\*\*\* Included a link to Christian Books and Things and/or Ozark Crafts

\*\*\*\*\* Included a link to M.A.C.S., Confederate and Southern Merchandise

\*\*\*\*\* Included a link to Empire Enterprises



Table 4-2. Summary of Ku Klux Klan web site content (Content)

Klan	# of Leaflets	# of Internal links	# of links to Klans	Counter and # of hits	# of Photos	# of Videos	# of songs	Logo
AGKK	0	7	1	no	30	0	0	no
BOK	1	34	1	no	71	18	6	yes
CNKKKK	3	63	5*	no	81	11	0	yes
CWK	0	0	0	no	0	0	0	no
DRK	0	6	0	no	3	0	1	yes
Empire Knights	0	31	1	no	2	0	0	no
FWK	0	3	2	no	7	0	0	no
IKA	3	53	0	13,775	31	4	1	yes
IKKKKK	0	1	0	no	1	0	0	yes
Knight Riders	0	4	1	no	14	0	0	no
Knights Party arkpower-light.com	0	10	4*	7,180	30	0	4	no
Knights Party kkk.com	0	0	1*	no	2	0	0	no
Knights Party newporttennessee.net	0	0	2*	no	0	0	0	yes
Knights Party main site kkk.bz	46	172	1*	no	36	0	0	yes
Knights Party Veterans League	0	5	0	no	1	0	1	yes
Ku Klux Klan, LLC.	0	58	0	no	10	0	0	yes
MWK	0	6	6	25,524	70	18	1	yes
THIRF	0	25	0	no	355	0	0	no
SAK	0	5	6	25,179	110	1	0	yes
TRK	0	9	0	no	38	0	0	no
TAK	13	15	4	no	11	2	0	yes
UNSK	15	44	1	338,578	136	1	0	yes
CURA	0	37	0	24,860	38	0	0	yes
UWK	0	26	6	42,045	463	0	0	no
WCK	0	12	0	no	113	0	0	no

\* Included links to other Realm or Klan sites for the same Klan

All of the above listed sites were examined between January and March of 2011, and some sites may have been updated since being examined or removed. As an example, the SPLC included on its 2010 list of active Klan sites a UWK Realm site at oklahomakkk.com, which consisted of a logo with no internal or external links, or contact information (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The Oklahoma Realm site was active in January of 2011 but dead by March of 2011.

### **Site Contact Information**

Each site was examined for an email address. Among the 25 sites, one did not have any contact information, one provided a single email address that did not work, two solely provided forms for site users to fill out, one provided a link to the group's main site where a contact email address and form were available to fill out, eight sites provided one contact email address, one site provided a single contact email address and a form to fill out (the Knights Party), 10 groups provided multiples email addresses to contact the group, and one site provided multiple email addresses as well as a contact form for users (UNSK). In addition, the CNK KKK and the Knights Party both had Twitter feeds, and the Knights Party also let individuals connect with the group through Facebook and Myspace.

### **Chat Rooms & Guestbooks**

Open chat rooms and discussion forums allow members to discuss topics of interest to them while also allowing non-members the ability to discuss topics with members of the Klan organization. Each site was examined to determine if it contained a forum and if the forum was for members only. The physical units of chat rooms, as well as guestbooks, were examined for each of the 25 sites. Guestbooks were counted as additional physical units, with the understanding that they served as a less sophisticated forum where any site user, regardless of membership or ideology, could post material. The material and discussion in open chat rooms and guestbooks were not examined in this study, and the individual discussions were not counted as internal links, because there was no way to determine if those posting in the forums and chat rooms, or on any of the open guestbooks, were members of the Klan organization, members of other Klan groups, or non-members.

Researchers have suggested groups like the Klan attempt to portray a more mainstream appearance to the public on web sites, but in closed chat rooms, members espouse more extremist and racist views. But, only seven of the 25 sites had a forum, while three additional sites had a guestbook only, for a total of 10 sites. In addition, three of the sites that had forums also had guestbooks.

The Fraternal White Knights, the International Keystone Knights, and Texas Rebel Knights sites did not have a forum or chat room for site users, but the sites did have a guestbook where any site users could leave a message. The UNSK site had an open chat room for both members and non-members, but only members could make posts. The Southern Alliance of Klans (SAK) which the site called “an alliance of pure and traditional Klan groups,” did have a forum but was for members only.

The Mississippi White Knights (MWK) had guestbook as well as a forum for members and non-members, but only members could post to the forum. The United White Knights (UWK) main site had both a guestbook and a member’s only section on its site. Unlike the other sites, the Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan site was almost exclusively a forum site. The discussions were both for members and non-members, but only members could post to the forum. However, there was also a section titled “Private Messages” where only members could post.

The Church of the United Realms of American Knights (CURA) site provided the most forum and guestbook options of all the Klan sites. The site offered a link for site viewers to view the CURA guestbook, a link to sign the CURA guestbook, a members only Yahoo group that no longer worked, a second members only Yahoo group that required individuals to become members and according to Yahoo had 22 members as

of the Spring of 2011. The CURA site also had a members-only section that was under construction.

In total, only four of the 25 sites provided forums or chat rooms that were inaccessible to the general public and two of the sites provided a guestbook for non-members to make posts, and a third provided a forum for members and non-members. Therefore, while previous research may be correct and closed forums do allow members to hold discussions which include more extremist rhetoric, but with only 16% of Klan sites including closed forums of any kind, it would appear the Klan does not use closed chat rooms to hide their message from the general public.

### **Merchandise Sales**

Previous research suggests groups like the Klan use merchandise sales as a means to spread group ideology and that merchandise sales provide groups like the Klan a revenue stream to pursue more traditional activities. But, only four of the total 25 sites sold merchandise directly to Klan members and the general public. Instead, 10 sites included links to other sites where Klan or Confederate merchandise could be purchased, including one site that sold merchandise and included a link to another merchandise site. In addition, some Klan web sites included links to online stores where religious material could be purchased as well as Klan and White Power merchandise.

One of the most popular online stores to link to was Reb Ware, located at rebware.com, which is listed by the SPLC as a General Hate site (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The main page to the Reb Ware site showed two cartoon images of a Confederate soldiers, as well as a color photo of a cross lighting, and an animation of three black letter Ks on fire. The store sold Klan robes, patches, Klan dolls, pamphlets,

flags, Klan banners and bumper stickers. Sites with links to Reb Ware included CURA, the Dixie Rangers Knights, the UNSK, and the UWK.

Another online merchandise site three Klan groups provided external links to was M.A.C.S. Confederate and Southern Merchandise at macsconfederate.com, which is also listed by the SPLC as a General Hate site (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

The site included a disclaimer that read:

This store is designed for Klansmen and LOTIE's. It is not intended to harm any individual or group of individuals or to initiate violence or hate. There are products that some may find offensive. We realize that any product sold by any vendor may in some way offend somebody. If this website offends you, please leave.

In addition, the M.A.C.S store also sold books but only to UWK and SAK members, adding, "Nobody can purchase these with out (sic) their credentials verified." The books included copies of the 1922 Klan Constitution, 1924 Klansman manual, and other books about Klan rituals and ceremonies, including one called the "Kludd Manual with wedding ceremonies, funeral services and prayers." Otherwise the site sold the same t-shirts, water bottles, mouse pads, mugs, and various merchandise but with different Klan symbols. The three sites with links to M.A.C.S. included the MWK, the Southern Alliance of Klans (SAK), and the UWK.

The Indiana Historical Research Foundation linked to the online store Empire Enterprises which specializes in "KKK Novelties, Collectibles, and Memorabilia." The top of the site included the disclaimer:

The Indiana Historical Research Foundation is only providing this link because of worldwide popular demand. This link is provided as a free public service. People using this link will deal directly with the company contacted through this link. Do not e-mail the I.H.R.F.

The disclaimer continued, "It is not against the law to have and own KKK items. It is, however, against the law to use anything for the purpose of intimidation or depriving anyone of any of their Civil Rights." However, the link to the site was [kkkklan.com/empire.htm](http://kkkklan.com/empire.htm) and while it included a different contact email, the entire design of the site was the same as TIHRF. The site sold Realm patches; KKK patches; KKK belt buckles; Klan knives, hat pins, spinners, rings, lapel pins, earrings, flags and medallions; KKK stickers and pin on buttons; original KKK memorabilia from the 1920s – '40s; original KKK coins and tokens; modern KKK memorabilia 1950s – 1990s; reprints of KKK booklets, leaflets, etc.; and KKK robes. With the exception of the original KKK memorabilia from the 1920s – '40s, all of the items included color photos, prices, and descriptions.

The Knights Party's national headquarters is located in Harrison, Arkansas, and the Knights party's main site and feeder sites at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) and [kkk.com](http://kkk.com), included links to the online store Christian Books and Things, which is also located in Harrison, Arkansas. All three sites link to the Christian Books and Things site at [christianbooksandthings.net/index1.htm](http://christianbooksandthings.net/index1.htm). The store sold t-shirts, hats, flags, pins, patches, books, and an assortment of Klan and Confederate merchandise. Deceptively, the sites link to the [christianbooksandthings.net /index1.htm](http://christianbooksandthings.net/index1.htm) site, which included a USA flag and two Confederate flags, and sold various Klan and Confederacy merchandise. However, the main site [christianbooksandthings.net](http://christianbooksandthings.net), which is not the link from the Knights Party sites, did not have any Confederate flags on it, and while there were a handful of Confederate t-shirts that could be purchased on the main site, there were no Klan items. However, the [christianbooksandthings.net](http://christianbooksandthings.net) site looked different and only sold

religious items. The Christian Books and Things main site was also listed by the SPLC as a General Hate site (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

In addition, the Knights Party's feeder site at kkk.com and the Knights Party's main site had links to another online store at ozarkscraft.net, which was also located in Harrison, Arkansas. The Ozark Craft site was also listed by the SPLC as a General Hate site (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). Ozark Crafts sold ceramic Klan dolls, Confederate jewelry and merchandise, crosses, Confederate and biker t-shirts, and White Pride Music from the group Heritage Connection. It is worth noting the two lead female singers in Heritage Connection are the granddaughters of Knights Party National Director Thomas Robb and the daughters of Knights Party National Organizer Rachel Pendergraft, and the group is listed as a Racist Music organization by the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

Overall, only four of the 25 sites directly sold merchandise to site visitors. In addition, three of the five sites from the Knights Party had links to online stores with possible connections to the Knights Party but under different URLs.

### **Leaflets**

While the Internet makes traditional means of spreading group ideology and advertising the Klan with leaflets or flyers appear outdated, some Klans continue to use this traditional form of information dissemination. The leaflets and flyers on the Internet were provided to members, rather than being promotional material for non-members, as more of a means of getting individual members to participate in the organization rather than an attempt to spread the message to non-members. As an example, on the IKA web site, members were given directions on how to distribute leaflets indicating that the

leaflets found on Klan sites are not intended for non-members, but provided so current members could print and distribute them:

WARNING: All IKA members know they cannot place flyers in mailboxes, but doorsteps are fine. Only distribute flyers if you will do the entire street and not target one home. Stay away from mailboxes, that's federal property and you yourself could get in trouble. The IKA allows no illegal actions and should you commit any you do so on your own.

Only six of the 25 sites provided leaflets or flyers for site users to print out and distribute. The BOK site provided one flyer in .jpg format encouraging people to join the Klan and included the mailing address and web site of the Brotherhood of Klans. The CNKKKK site provided three flyers, but one captioned "Blast from the past!" was a .gif image of a flyers from the Second Era Klan to purchase a pamphlet called "The Ku Klux Klan or The Knights of Columbus Klan" by Arthur H. Bell. The other two flyers on the CNKKKK site were web pages could be copied and made into flyers but were not in a printable format. The IKA site provided three flyers that could be downloaded in PDF format or in Microsoft® Word. One of the flyers was against illegal immigration and another against President Obama. The third, titled, "The White Light," stated, "What is wrong with this country? First we have a nigger for a leader," and later added, "Keep the spics in Mexico, we don't need anymore (sic) grass cutters." The flyer later added, "They say we came from monkeys, the niggers did. God created man in his own image. He made Adam who was white and Eve who was white. We where (sic) created. We did not come from Apes." The flyer stated, "Lets (sic) not forget Japan. They bombed Pearl Harbor. We should have turned them into fried rice." The flyer went on to read:

Now lets (sic) talk about letting your daughter date a nigger, or your son date a black woman. Race mixing is an abomination! You hear people say what a cute baby you have and it's black. Well it's a tree swinging banana eating monkey.



The last paragraph of the flyer stated:

There's still a law on the books where if you can get 5,000 niggers that want to go back to Africa, we can send them back to their country courtesy of the U.S.A. and white American (sic). And maybe you can send some of the "want-to-be" niggers along with them!

The flyer ironically ended with the statement, "Judge not lest ye be judged yourself."

The True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights site provided 12 flyers in .jpg format, and one PDF which was business cards for the TAK, and included the TAK's contact information, including mailing address, email, and web site. The UNSK site provided 15 flyers in PDF format to view and print, or site users could download a .zip file of all 15.

The Knights Party's main site provided the most flyers at 30, as well as 16 press releases which could be used as flyers. All of the flyers were in PDF format. The site included a link to download Adobe Reader to view the flyers as well as a link to Foxit, another PDF software program. The site informed users that the PDFs could be printed from a home computer or a local copy shop, or ordered from the Knights Party in larger quantities. The site also provided a link to a PDF titled "How-to: Literature Distribution," written by the Knights Party's National Director Thomas Robb. The Knights' main site explained the importance of distributing flyers:

The distribution of literature is an activity that keeps many Klan associates busy throughout the year. Many people have misconceptions about the Klan. They have been told Klan members are stupid, ignorant, backward and hicks. They probably can't read or write and would not even want to learn how if given the opportunity. To dispel these misconceptions is one reason it is so important to get literature into the hands of everyone in your community.

In total, there were 65 flyers and 16 press releases provided on six sites for all 187 Klan groups (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). Interestingly, while the Confederate

White Knights did not provide any leaflets on its site, the site did state the group has “helped to distribute pro-White literature all over the state of Virginia.” In addition, the Church of the United Realms of American Knights (CURA) site did not provide flyers or leaflets on its site, but under the heading, “What can you do to make a difference?” the site did list “Flier Distribution.” According to the CURA site:

Flier distribution is a method for mass publicity of a message, which has proven to be successful many times. You can either find fliers on the internet or you can make your own fliers that best suits your needs and the message you wish to get across.

The site encouraged individuals to use flyers that relate to the audience and added, “The object behind flier distribution is to impact, and awaken the public with your message, and provoke them to want to stand up and do something themselves.” In essence, while only 24% of Klan sites included leaflets or flyers on their page, this traditional method of spreading Klan ideology is still used by many Klan organizations, even if the leaflets are not available on the site to distribute.

### **Option to Join**

Sites that offer the option for individuals to join the Klan suggest that previous research is correct, and the Klan is using the Internet to recruit new members. There is, however, a difference between providing individuals an online application to join and their actual acceptance into the Klan, but the fact individuals can express interest in the Klan without having first been approached by a Klansman is significant. But, not all the Klans provided online application, and sometimes for this very reason. For example, the FWK did not provide a link to join, instead stating on its web site, “Being a true Traditional Klan, we must meet you face to face for consideration of membership in the Fraternal White Knights.” In all, 14 of the 25 Klan sites, or slightly over half at 56%,

provided online applications or online membership forms that could either be filled out online or printed and mailed.

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. did not provide a link or form for individuals to join, but did provide information for site users to request an “Info-Pak” to learn more about the organization. The UWK site also did not provide a link to join, but provided contact email addresses for its national recruiter, Texas recruiter, and Oklahoma recruiter, as well as 24-hour hotline numbers for site users to call.

The Knights Party was the most aggressive Klan group to recruit individuals to its organization. The Knights Party Veterans League (KPVL) site included a link to an external web site at [christianconcepts.net/informat.htm](http://christianconcepts.net/informat.htm), for site users to print out a form to mail to join the KPVL, and provided a link to the site [christianconcepts.net/joinwithcard.htm](http://christianconcepts.net/joinwithcard.htm), where individuals could join by credit card. The Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) also included a link to [christianconcepts.net/joinwithcard.htm](http://christianconcepts.net/joinwithcard.htm), and another link where individuals who only wanted to give money to the Knights Party but did not want to join could become supporters at [christianconcepts.net/ofcredit.htm](http://christianconcepts.net/ofcredit.htm). The Knights Party site at [kkk.com](http://kkk.com), provided a link to the main Knights Party site for users to join. The Knights Party’s main site provided a PDF that could be printed and mailed in to join, an online form for users to fill out to join which also provided a blank space for users to donate more money in addition to joining, an online form for individuals to become official supporters for \$35 and an additional option to pledge even more money per month, and a form for individuals to contribute money to the Knights Party either in one donation or a monthly pledge. The application fee for individuals seeking membership was \$40, \$50 for

married couples, or \$25 for a “student, full time homemaker, person on reduced fixed income.” The site also provided the wording to leave the Knights Party money in a will or trust:

I give to Thomas A. Robb as trustee for the The Knights Party, inc. (sic), the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ and / or other specifically described property, free of all death taxes, creditors’ claims and expenses of administration of my estate, for discretionary use in carrying out its aims and purposes.

The site informed users, “If you intend on naming The Knights Party as a beneficiary in your will or trust, our attorney will prepare the legal documents free of charge.” Although it is not specified who the Knights Party’s lawyer is, one of the Knights Party’s three blogs is run by Attorney Jason Robb, the son of Thomas Robb.

In total, 11 of the 25 sites did not provide online links for members to join. However, if the five Knights Party sites are removed, only 10 of the 20 remaining sites provided an option for individuals to join the Klan. In essence, while previous research has shown the Internet is being used by the Klan to recruit new members, only half provided users with the ability to begin the membership process without first meeting a Klan member.

### **Internal Links and Counters**

The physical units of internal links and counters were also examined in this study. While a high number of internal links does demonstrate a level of sophistication and resources, the internal link count does not accurately portray the amount of information provided on these sites. A number of sites contained vast amounts of information and media with long pages that viewers would have to scroll through, while other more professional sites used numerous internal links for site viewers to jump back and forth between for specific information.

As discussed, some of the 25 sites examined were little more than shells or feeder sites into a Klan's main page, or were stand-alone homepages with no internal or external links. For example, the Confederate White Knights' web site had no internal links and was a stand-alone homepage. Some sites had relatively few internal links while others were large sites with many internal links to information, photos, events, and contact information. The number of internal links on Klan sites varied from zero links on three sites to 173 internal links on the Knights Party's main site. The average Klan site had slightly more than 25 internal links per site.

Web site counters were also noted including the number of hits a site had received. This information may not be particularly useful as the numbers provided may be incorrect as a web site may have been in existence longer than others and therefore had a longer time to receive visitors, and because there was no way to track if the counter marked unique visitors, or simply every time the main page was refreshed. But, counters would indicate how many times a site had been viewed and the number of times accessed, possibly indicating more popular Klan groups or groups with the most members.

Only seven sites had counters. The ones that did included the Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) which showed 7,180 page visits when the site was examined, the IKA site at 13,775, the CURA site read 24,860, the Southern Alliance of Klans site at 25,179, the MWK site counter read 25,524, the UWK site counter read 42,045, and the UNSK's counter read 338,578. Obvious from these numbers is that among the Klan sites that did have counters, the UNSK site received slightly more than 200,000 visitors than the other sites with counters – combined.

## Events

The SPLC's list of active hate groups and their web sites only included those groups that were known to be active in 2009 "whether that activity included marches, rallies, speeches, meetings, leafleting, publishing literature or criminal acts," while those groups that "appear to exist only in cyberspace" were not included in the SPLC list because they were "likely to be individual Web publishers who like to falsely portray themselves as powerful, organized groups" (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010, p. 44). While it would be difficult to determine if a group was engaged in publishing literature, and doubtful that a group would advertise if it had committed any criminal acts, all the web sites should include information about previous or future events such as rallies, marches, or speeches, to have been included in the SPLC list, or a group should indicate it is planning a leafleting campaign. Simply providing leaflets and flyers on a web site would not indicate that a Klan group is participating in a Klan activity.

An examination of the 25 web sites still in existence as of the Spring of 2011 indicated few had any previous events, and even fewer mentioned any future events. In total, four sites provided information about past events, but not future events, such as the AGKK which had a Ku Klux Klan Anniversary Celebration on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010, and included a march to the Rockdale County courthouse in Georgia where "illegal immigration and Job loss" were on the agenda, followed by a BBQ, and ended with a cross lighting ceremony. Under "Upcoming Events," the CURA site mentioned the Ku Klux Klan Winter fest from the previous year which was "canceled due to unforeseen circumstances and reasons of security." The Empire Knights site mentioned previous events, but the most recent was in August of 2006, when "members of the Empire Knights of Texas, based in San Angelo, held a heavily publicized anti-immigration rally

in the northwest Texas city of Amarillo.” The Empire Knights also held an event in July 2006 in Leesville, South Carolina.” The White Camelia Knights had a page on its site for “Upcoming Events,” but the page read, “There are no events scheduled at this time.” However, the site did include 95 pictures from a memorabilia sale and rally in Tomball, Texas on June 11, 2005.

In addition, two sites provided information about events occurring in the future from when the sites were examined, but not past events, including the Knights Party Veterans League which included a calendar of upcoming events, but no events were found on it. However, the KPVL site had a blog where press releases about future events were posted. The BOK site did not mention any past events, and on the site link to “Upcoming Events,” it stated, “Stay tuned for more event information.” The Knight Riders site did not mention past events, but included a future event along with the MWK for a rally at the Alcorn County Courthouse in Corinth, Mississippi, on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The Knight Riders site added that all SAK members would be invited to attend, which would include the TRK and IKKKKK. The Texas Rebel Knights (TRK) site did not list upcoming TRK events but included a calendar of American holidays with the caption, “This is a reminder that white Anglo Saxon European descendants have holidays also!” In essence, only one of these four sites listed any actual future events.

Only seven sites included information about past and future events. The MWK site provided information about the rally to be held in Corinth, Mississippi, also stating that it is a Southern Alliance sanctioned event, and will include a cross lighting. The MWK will also hold its eleventh annual July Crosslighting on July 17, 2011 in Lee County, Mississippi, and welcomed all traditional Klans. The site also stated that the

MWK held a Unity Crawfish Boil and Cross Lighting Ceremony on July 7, 2007; a protest and rally in Tupelo on October 20, 2007; a rally in Fort Payne, Alabama, in 2006 which was also attended by the North Georgia White Knights, the BOK, the Georgia Knight Riders, the Confederate Knights of Tennessee, and the Knights of Yahweh; a Veteran's Day rally in 2006, including cross lighting; a rally in November, 2005 that included a cross lighting; a cross lighting for the Great South Ku Klux Klan Conference in 2009; and a rally at Ole Miss in 2009. The SAK site also included the March 26, 2011 rally at the Alcorn County Courthouse in Corinth, Mississippi, inviting all traditional Klans. The SAK site also mentioned a previous rally on September 11, 2010 in Ellijay, Georgia which included the International Keystone Knights and the MWK.

The CNKKKK site mentioned the Ku Klux Kristmas with Ku Klux Klaus on December 11, 2010 which was canceled, and a "50-years of service to the Klan anniversary party" for International Imperial Wizard Ray Larsen on September 18, 2010 in Red Bay, Alabama. The CNKKK site also called on "all the Aryan Race" to take five minutes on September 11, 2011 for a candle light event nationally and internationally "at 530pm (sic) in your own state, your own country." The site called on whites to "light a candle in remembrance of all those that have fallen in the fight against Islamic Terrorism." The site added, "5 minutes in an act of unity to show we as the Aryan people can forge together as one, against Islam," adding, "Islam continues to attack the very base of the western world." The site even asked whites to take pictures so the photos could be posted on the CNKKKK web site.

The Dixie Rangers Knights were involved in a rally with the Dixie Knights on November 20, 2010, in Farmersville, LA, and stated it would be part of an event along



with the True Invisible Empire on April 30, 2011 at Fort Davidson Park in Pilot Knob, Missouri. The UWK listed a future event on March 19, 2011 as “Oklahoma Rally,” but also included photos of previous rallies and cross lightings from 2008 to 2010.

The Knights Party main site included the most past and future events. These events included the annual Faith and Freedom Conference, the annual Knights Party National Congress, the annual White Christian Heritage Festival, and the annual Christmas Conference and Banquet. The Faith and Freedom Conference takes place in Harrison, AR; costs \$55 per adult; includes the White Christian Youth Conference; features Thomas Robb, Rachel Pendergraft, Jason Robb listed as “Constitutional attorney and Knights Party advisor” and entertainment by Thomas Robb’s granddaughters from the Heritage Connection. The National Klan Conference takes place in Harrison, AR, costs \$55 per adult, features Thomas Robb and Rachel Pendergraft, and includes fireworks, an awards banquet, a naturalization ceremony, and a cross lighting. The White Christian Festival takes place in Pulaski, TN, and is partially sponsored by the Knights Party, and other organizations including stormfront.org and the Heritage Connection, and includes a car show and parade. The Christmas Conference takes place in Harrison, AR, “to celebrate and Honor our racial Kinsmen Redeemer, Jesus Christ.” The link to the event included an essay by Jason Robb titled “The Anglo-Saxon Jesus,” which explained that despite attempts by the media, Judeo-Christian preachers and “their anti-Christ rabbi counterparts,” to depict Jesus as Middle Eastern, that Jesus was in fact white, with blonde hair and blue eyes.

The IKA included links on its site to Nordic Fests from 2005 to 2008, which the IKA called “an annual White Power rally and music festival” held at the IKA Headquarters in

Dawson Springs, KY and included a cross lighting and swastika lighting. The event was held for four years along with the organization Blood and Honour, which the SPLC listed as a skinhead group (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The IKA site also had a link to pictures of its first public rally on September 27, 2003. In 2011, the IKA will hold a Spring Fest from March 25-27 which will include a cross lighting. Memorial Day Weekend of 2011, the IKA will also take part again in Nordic Fest again, for the first time since 2008.

In total, only 11 of the 25 sites included information about planned future Klan rallies or marches. Interestingly, only three events included a cross lighting and one included a cross lighting and a swastika lighting. Even more interesting is that although The Indiana Historical Research Foundation is not a Klan and does not affiliate with any Klan group, the site stated:

It has also been declared that the true Klan will no longer have public rallies or events until further notice. It has been decided that because of the negative image given the KKK by the illegal Klans and the negative media attention they have attracted, the authentic KKK will only meet in private.

The Indiana Historical Research Foundation added, "Cross lighting ceremonies and open public activities are now a thing of the Klan's past." The site did not provide any information on how this decision was made or by whom, but this may explain why so few Klans had planned future events. In addition, 12 of the 25 sites did not include information about past or future events, and could be perceived as merely a web presence. In essence, few Klans were engaged or planned on being engaged in future public events, which according to researchers, is when the Klan has an opportunity to gain publicity and attract new members.

## **Links to other Klans**

Klan web sites providing external links to other Klan sites may indicate the Klan groups have an organizational or working relationship with one another. Previous research suggests that external links to other Klan sites may indicate an ideological similarity between Klans. While it may be assumed that an ideological similarity exists, and that the groups are on friendly terms with another Klan, differences between the groups must exist preventing them from joining together. These differences may be ideological or distance based. Slight ideological differences may prevent Klan groups from working with one another, but more importantly, regional Klans may find commonalities with other Klans, but are separated by distance, and therefore decide not to unite under one banner. An example of this is the Fraternal White Knights (FWK) which has its National Headquarters in Iowa, but from its site links to the Original Knight Riders Knights of the Ku Klux Klan web site at [originalknightriders.com](http://originalknightriders.com). The Original Knight Riders has its headquarters in West Virginia. The geographical distance between the two Klans, i.e. Iowa to West Virginia, may be one reason the two Klans are not under one banner, along with any ideological differences that may exist between the two groups. In addition, the FWK site included a link to the Knights of the Southern Cross Confederate Soldiers of the Ku Klux Klan at [knightsouthcrosssoldiersofthekukluxklan.com](http://knightsouthcrosssoldiersofthekukluxklan.com), but neither this site nor the Original Knight Riders Knights of the Ku Klux Klan's web site was included in this examination because neither was included in 2010 list from the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

Also, some Klan sites linked to their main site, individual chapter sites, or blogs by individual members or parts of the Klan organization. For example, the CNKKKK's

web site linked to the Women of the KKK blog, it also linked to the Church of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Inc. Realm of Australia and New Zealand's site, the CNKKKK's Realm of Arizona web site, the CNKKKK's Realm of Indiana web site, the CNKKKK's Realm of Tennessee web site, and the CNKKKK's Realm of Germany web site. All of these sites, although external links, were part of the CNKKKK but none were included in the SPLC's 2010 list (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). In addition, the Knight Riders site was actually the Knight Riders of the Ku Klux Klan's Georgia Realm site, and not the main Georgia Knight Riders site. The Realm site did provide a link to the main Knight Riders site at [knightriders.org](http://knightriders.org), but the main site was not listed in the SPLC sample (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). Finally, the UNSK included a link to a blog for the European Division of the UNSK, but was not included in this examination because it was not an American group and because the site was not included in the SPLC sample (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

Some of the Knights Party feeder sites provided external links to itself. The Knights Party's web site at [newporttennessee.net](http://newporttennessee.net), linked to the Knights Party's homepage and to the Knights Party's main site's media policy page at [kkk.bz/media\\_policy.htm](http://kkk.bz/media_policy.htm). The Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) linked to the main Knights Party site as well as the Knights Party site at [kkk.com](http://kkk.com), the Knights Party Mobilize America Campaign against illegal immigration site, and the Knights Party Klan Kid Korp and Youth Corp site. The Knights Party site at [kkk.com](http://kkk.com) linked to the Knights Party main site. The Knights Party main site, however, only provided a link to the Knights Party Veterans League site.

In total, 10 of the 25 sites did not contain external links to other Klan sites or to other Realms of the same Klan. In addition, three sites linked to The Indiana Historical Research Foundation (TIHRF). While sites may link to TIHRF, The Indiana Historical Research Foundation site did not have any external links to other Klan groups. Linking to the TIHRF, however, may act as a legitimizing agent for a Klan as the site provided a tremendous amount of information about the Klan since the organization's founding during Reconstruction. While TIHRF site did not claim to represent the "true Klan," the site did point out that many groups calling themselves the Klan are far from it, referring to them as "bogus 'Klan' groups," and "con artist illegal Klan groups who are running money scams." Klan groups with external links to the TIHRF site included the AGKK, the Fraternal White Knights, and the TAK site.

Some Klan sites did include external links to other Klan sites, but the other Klan sites were often dead. The TAK site linked to the Dixie Rangers site, to the Canadian Realm of the True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights site, and a link to the Mountain State Knights of the Ku Klux Klan which was a dead site. The Empire Knights site did include a link to the Supreme White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan site, a group that was listed in the SPLC sample (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), but the site provided by the SPLC was different from the site linked to from the Empire Knights site, and both sites were dead.

The only Klan group, or groups, that had any connection to one another from the sample were connected to the SAK. The SAK site which called itself "an alliance of pure and traditional Klan groups," but is not a "Klan" and only an umbrella organization, provided links to the main Knight Riders site, and not simply the Georgia Realm of the

Knight Riders, the MWK, the International Keystone Knights (IKKKKK) which has its Imperial Office in Arkansas, the UWK which has its National Office in Texas, and the Texas Rebel Knights. The SAK site also provided a link to the Traditional Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan site at tckkkk.com, a site and group that was included in the SPLC sample (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), but was dead at the time of this investigation. The UWK site included similar links to the SAK sites including a link to the SAK site, as well as links to the main Knight Riders site, the MWK, the IKKKKK, and the dead tckkkk.org site. The UWK site also included a link to the Great Knights of the Ku Klux Klan at gkkkk.com, a group and site listed in the SPLC sample (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), but which was also dead at the time of this examination.

The Mississippi White Knights site included similar links to the SAK sites, including to the IKKKKK, the UWK, the main Knight Riders site, the dead tckkkk.com site, and a site for the Knight Riders Georgia Realm at georgiaknightriderskkkk.com that did not work. The MWK site also included a link to the BOK site, although the BOK was not part of the Southern Alliance of Klans, and has its headquarters in Ohio. The Brotherhood of Knights (BOK) site only had a link to the MWK.

According to the SPLC, in 2009, 30 different Klan groups had web sites, when blogs were removed and groups that had multiple sites were collapsed (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). By the time of this examination, only 20 of the 30 groups still had web sites. What was interesting was how few Klan sites linked to one another, with the exception of those calling themselves “traditional Klans.” The “traditional Klans,” were the few Klan groups that appeared to have any desire to work together and were often affiliated with the SAK.

## **Links to non-Klans**

Links to non-Klan sites were also examined as the links potentially indicate a particular ideology of the Klan group being examined. According to previous research, links to non-Klan sites such as skinhead, neo-Nazi, or White Nationalist sites would indicate an organizational relationship working toward a common goal. In addition, external links may also provide insight into the beliefs of the Klan group examined. As an example, the Texas Rebel Knight's (TRK) web site linked to the Houston Community News web site at hconline.com. The TRK web site provided the link to the main site of the Houston Community News for users to search for a story posted on the TRK web site that was captioned "Another hate crime committed by blacks on whites," which was a news story about the New Black Panther Party's member Quannell X's appearance and press conference at a courthouse in Coldspring, Texas, in support of a man accused of raping a 14-year-old girl. The link highlighted the TRK's belief that whites should fear black-on-white crime, and the TRK's animosity toward the New Black Panthers.

In total, nine sites had no external links to other non-Klan web sites, including the AGKK, the Confederate White Knights, the FWK, the IKKKKK, the Knight Riders, the Knights Party at newporttennessee.net, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC., TIHRF, and the SAK site. But, 13 sites did provide external links to sites the SPLC listed as General Hate, White Nationalist, Christian Identity, or neo-Nazi (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

The True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights site was the only one that provided external links offering no insight into its ideology. The site linked to freeamericancommunity.com, which was a social media site for whites, the site

phplist.com which was an open source email campaign manager, and tincan.co.uk which was a British web design company.

The MWK site included an array of external links that situated the group as attempting to work within the system, but also maintaining ties to the Civil Rights Era Klan. The MWK provided links to the National Rifle Association, the United States Senate where users could look up the contact information for their Senator, and the United States House of Representatives site for users to find their Congressman. The MWK also provided a link to familywatchdog.us, a sex offender registry page, and another link to the Mississippi sex offender registry page. Connecting the MWK to the Civil Rights Era, the site included a link to the University of Missouri at Kansas City Law School for site users to learn more about the Mississippi Burning Trial of U.S. v. Price et al., written by Douglas Linder. The trial gained notoriety from the movie of the same name. The MWK site also included a link to Wikipedia for James Ford Seale, which stated “James Ford Seale (born 1936) is a former Ku Klux Klan member charged by the U.S. Justice Department on January 24, 2007, and subsequently convicted on June 14, 2007, with the kidnapping of two African-American teenagers in Meadville, Mississippi, in 1964.” The MWK also provided a link to the Federal Bureau of Prisons where users could send money to prisoners such a James Seale, or Edgar Ray Killen who was charged in 2005 with manslaughter in the case of three murdered Civil Rights workers in 1964. In addition, the MWK included a now defunct link to the F.B.I web site of James Ingram who investigated cold cases for the F.B.I, including those of Seale and Killen. The MWK also provided a defunct link to a site with the caption, “Link to image of race



traitor Jerry Mitchell: Mitchell was a reporter in Jackson, Miss who looked into cold cases from the Civil Rights Era.”

The Knights Party Veterans League included a link to the site for the Council of Conservative Citizens, and an anti-illegal immigration site at [puttroopsontheborder.com](http://puttroopsontheborder.com), both of which were listed as White Nationalist sites by the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The KPVL also provided a link to the White Power Media Network which appeared to be run by the Knights Party. The Knights Party web site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) also included a link to the Put Troops on the Border site, as well as links to the White Nationalist site [stormfront.org](http://stormfront.org), and what the SPLC listed as a White Nationalist site about Martin Luther King, Jr., at [martinlutherking.org](http://martinlutherking.org) which presented itself as a site about the “truth” concerning King (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

The [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) site also had more banal sites it linked to including one for the local Concord District Schools, the local paper the *Batesville Daily Guard*, a link to the Herber Springs, AR local paper, an Arkansas government web site about Arkansas voting and election results, and a link to local weather conditions in Arkansas. The site also included a link to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement web site to report illegal aliens, and to the Numbers USA web site for users to find their congressional district and write their Congressman about the dangers of illegal immigration.

The Knights Party’s main site also included links to “Put Troops on the Border,” the White Pride Media Network, and [stormfront.org](http://stormfront.org), as well as links to blogs by Thomas Robb, Jason Robb, and Rachel Pendergraft, and to the Heritage Connection Band. In addition, the main site included links to the site [christianconcepts.net](http://christianconcepts.net) where users could make additional contributions to the Knights Party, a link to the European American

Heritage Festival, and a web site about exposing myths about inventions made by blacks. The site also provided a link to Soldiers of the Cross TV which was run by Thomas Robb Ministries, and the Abundant Life Fellowship site which is a Christian Identity group out of Harrison, Arkansas, where the Knights' headquarters is located. The Knights' main site also linked to White Pride TV and White Pride Home Schooling, both of which were listed by the SPLC as General Hate sites, while additional links were provided to the Political Cesspool radio program, as well as the Voice of Reason Radio Network were listed by the SPLC as White Nationalist sites (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), and to the official web site of Tomislav Sunic, a White Nationalist. The Knights Party feeder site at kkk.com, also provided a link to White Pride TV which is located at thomasrobb.com.

The main Knights Party site also provided links to various organizations that the Knights Party has a working relationship with, including the Canadian Association for Free Expression, WPBR 1340 AM in Palm Beach County which is the same area where stormfront.org is located, Livin the Legacy customs gifts and collectibles, and a crisis pregnancy support web site at standupgirl.com. The main site also included links to the White House for users to write to the President, and links to two United States government web sites where users could look up their Congressman or Senator. What makes the external links from the Knights Party so striking were that they included no links to other Klan sites, and instead only provided links to White Nationalist and Christian Identity sites. Interestingly, the SPLC also listed a site at christianidentitychurch.net as the Church of Jesus Christ/Thomas Robb Ministries, but no link to the site was found on any of the Knights Party web sites.

More than any other Klan, the Knights Party's external links revealed its deeper ideology, as the Knights Party is essentially a White Nationalist group. The Knights Party appeared to be using the Klan name, without actually being a Klan, and stated on its site, "We have prepared this site in order to give an accurate portrayal of the Nationalist Movement." In fact, throughout the site, the Knights Party rarely referred to itself as the Ku Klux Klan, and instead called itself "the leader of the White racialist movement," a "white rights movement," supporters of "White separatist views," a "white rights movement," "Christian racialists," part of the "White resistance movement," as "white separatists," as a "white separatist organization," part of the "separatist movement," a member of the "white cause," part of the "white Christian right," as "White Racial Loyalists," involved in "White Christian Revival," and the site stated the organization was "building The Knights into a true political party."

The Knights Party was not the only "Klan" group with more ties to other extremist movements outside of the Klan. The IKA site provided links to the White Nationalist web site White Pride World Wide, as well as links to two other sites listed by the SPLC as White Nationalist sites: American Third Position, and Jew Watch which labeled themselves as: "The scholarly library of facts about domestic & worldwide Zionist criminality." Unlike the Knights Party, the IKA did not have ties to Christian Identity groups, and specifically stated on its site, "The original Klan, under Imperial Wizard Nathaniel (sic) Forrest did not form to be a Christian Church; just as the IKA does not exist to be a Christian Identity Church." Interestingly, the statement was not only the repudiation of Christian Identity but also that the site would get wrong the name of the first leader of the Klan and refer to him as Nathaniel instead of Nathan. While the IKA

did not have ties to Christian Identity, the site did have ties to White Nationalists, provided no links to other Klan groups, and stated on its site, “The IKA welcomes Christians, Odinists, National Socialists, Skinheads, Defenders, Confederates, and all other White Racialists.”

The Dixie Rangers Knights site provided links to three articles on the site Jew Watch. One link went to an article about “Jewish Hate Groups” and listed the Jewish Defense League, the Anti-Defamation League, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the ACLU, and the Jewish World Foundation. A second link went to an article on Jew Watch about the Jewish ancestry of the owner of Fox News, Rupert Murdoch. The third link on Jew Watch went to an article about the Jewish ancestry of Samuel Irving Newhouse, one of the richest men in the history of the United States who owned a number of newspaper and magazines, and whose sons now control his media empire. The Dixie Rangers site also linked to an article on stormfront.org with a link that read, “The Zionist Jews control approximately 96% of the media in this country.” The site also linked to three additional stories, two from the Real Zionist News and one from Wake Up American; both sites are listed as General Hate sites by the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). One of the links to the Real Zionist News was a story titled, “Jew ‘Sumner Redstone’ Runs Homosexual TV,” while the other linked to a story titled “Federal Reserve Jews Control America.” The article from Wake Up America listed the Jewish Senators and Congressman in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress, with the title: “With 2% of the American population Jews constituted 11%” of the U.S. Senate. The Dixie Rangers site included an additional link to Wikipedia titled “List of Jewish American politicians.” While the Dixie Rangers linked to White Nationalist and General Hate sites, the commonality

among the sites was resentment toward Jewish people. In fact, the DRK site stated, “Zionist Jews have a stranglehold on the United States and they are leading us down the primrose path to hell. It is time to stand up to the foreign invaders. The Zionists call it ‘anti-Semitism,’ we call it’s (sic) SELF-DEFENSE.”

The White Camelia Knights site included a link to a Christian Identity site located at biblestudy.wckkkk.org, which was called the “White Camelia Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Christian Identity Outreach Ministry.” As an explanation of what Christian Identity theology preaches, the White Camelia Knights site stated, “We do not follow the ‘jewish’ (sic) version of Christianity.” The CURA site also linked to sites identified by the SPLC as Christian Identity (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), including the Covent People’s Ministry, and the Church of the Sacred Race located at aryannationalrevival.org. The CURA site also linked to Numbers USA, and the whites’ only social media site Free American Community.

The UWK site included links to White Nationalist sites at New Nation News and American Free Press (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), in addition to the White Nationalist site Altermedia News. Where these external links were different from the Knights Party’s connection to the White Nationalist movement however, was that the UWK site also provided links to three other “media” sites including Chuck Baldwin Live – Fighting for Constitutional Government in America, Conspiracy Pen Pal, and the Unjust Media News and Perspectives. These sites combined demonstrated the UWK’s attempt to link to media sites providing news and opinions by white and for whites, not simply White Nationalist news. The UWK site also provided a link to a site for users to be able to look up and contact their U.S. Senator at badteddy.com/government/senators.htm, a

site to help prevent Internet spam, and a link to the Cornell University Law School on Fair Use on the Internet.

The UNSK provided three external links on its site. One link was to a site that helped users create HTML forms and surveys, another was to the black invention myths page the Knights Party also linked too, and the last link was to a site the SPLC listed as White Nationalist site for a book called *The March of Titans: A history of the White Race* which was a an explanation of the changing demographics of “white” countries in Europe, North America, and Australia, and the “dangers” these countries face from non-white immigration and interracial relationships. Although the UNSK linked to a White Nationalist site, it was an informational site, and otherwise there was no connection between the UNSK and White Nationalists.

The CNKKK site included two links to articles on the site American Resistance which the SPLC labeled a White Nationalist site (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). One of the American Resistance articles was about rap lyrics encouraging violence against white people, the second article was titled “Hispanics: A statistical portrait,” that provided statistics on Hispanic crime, education, and income from a study by the New Century Foundation in September, 2006. The CNKKK site also provided a link to the site The Color of Crime which the SPLC listed as a White Nationalist site (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The Color of Crime site was also a study from the New Century Foundation from 2005 that provided statistics about African-American crime, interracial crime, and gangs. The CNKKK site also provided a link to a women’s magazine in Australia, a link to an article in the *Weekly Standard* from 2005 about Muslim rap in France, and an article on the topix.com web site about a Klan group trying

to form a Hispanic Klan. The CNK KKK also provided three links to E-Book sites where users could read Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman*, *The Leopard's Spots: A romance of the white man's burden – 1865-1900*, and *The One Woman*. In addition, the site provided links to three Facebook pages of a woman the site said was the "Ex Web Master" of the CNK KKK site who was banished from the CNK KKK for "printing something that could have serious complications for one of our Australian members," and added that the woman was a "drunk," and "dangerous." Although not links, the site provided two of the ex-web master's email addresses as well. Interestingly, while the CNK KKK is a Christian Identity church, it did not provide any links to Christian Identity web sites.

The Brotherhood of Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (BOK) site provided 23 external links providing insight into the ideology of the group. In addition to a link to dreamhost.com, a web hosting service site, the BOK also linked to a CBS News story about a white college student in Mobile, Alabama, killed by four black men, and a WKRG News Channel 5, Mobile, Alabama, story also about the same crime. The BOK site also provided a link to the Stop Sex Offenders site, and a Yahoo News link about a new book that "sheds light on Lincoln's racial views," including Lincoln's belief that whites and blacks could not live together and that he wanted freed blacks to leave the United States and settle in Central America. The BOK site also included a link to the *Mansfield New Journal*, an Ohio newspaper, that ran an article on March 17, 2011 about a cross burning on a black family's yard, which was committed by two young people, who the local Sheriff's Department stated had no connection to the Klan. The cross burning took place in Marion, Ohio, where the Brotherhood of Knights have its

main headquarters, and in the article, an attorney for the local chapter of the NAACP was quoted saying that while the whites involved were not Klan members, the NAACP was not “100 percent satisfied that this wasn’t an inspired or influenced act.” The caption for the article on the BOK site was, “Brotherhood of Klans KKK NOT responsible for a local Cross Burn on lawn of mud family.” In response to the article, the IW of the BOK sent an email to the ACLU asking for its help in being “slandered” by the NAACP and the local paper, and included the email on the site sent to the ACLU. The BOK site also included a link to a March 10, 2011 article from *The Hill* saying that Congressman Peter King was a “bigot” and “racist” for holding hearings on Muslim extremists, and said instead white domestic terrorists posed a more dangerous threat. The BOK was specifically mentioned in the article which said the BOK was “one of the fastest growing” Klans in the United States.

The BOK site also linked to a number of sites listed by the SPLC as Christian Identity (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), including the Kingdom Identity Ministries, the “Jesus was not a Jew” site, the Covenant People’s Ministry, Scripture for America, a link to the archive of Scriptures for America, the Virginia Publishing Company at richardhoskins.com, and Christogena. The BOK sites also linked to a number of sites the SPLC listed as White Nationalist sites including stormfront.org, the Voice of Reason Radio Network, New Nation News, the Council of Conservative Citizens, the colorofcrime.com sites, and the American Resistance web site with the article “Hispanics: A statistical Portrait” (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The site also linked to WPBR 1340 A.M. in Palm Beach County where stormfront.org is headquartered. In addition, the BOK linked to what the SPLC labeled as a General Hate



site at American Third Position (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). Finally the BOK linked to [ae911truth.org](http://ae911truth.org) which is the Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth about how the September, 11<sup>th</sup> Attack was a conspiracy. In total, the BOK site linked to a variety of Christian Identity, White Nationalist, and general hate sites, and links to news stories about black-on-white crime, which combined, demonstrated more of a connection to White Nationalist groups than the Klan.

The Empire Knights site provided a link to [aryan-nations.org](http://aryan-nations.org), which the SPLC listed as a Neo-Nazi site, and Kingdom Identity Ministries listed as a Christian Identity site by the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). In addition, the Empire Knights linked to the site [allfatherwotan.org](http://allfatherwotan.org), a site about the religion of Wotanism and promoted “David Lane’s Gnostic, heathen beliefs;” the site was listed by the SPLC as a White Nationalists site (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The Empire Knights also linked to [wotanreich.webs.com](http://wotanreich.webs.com), and [wotansvolk.com](http://wotansvolk.com), which were about Wotanism, and although not listed in SPLC’s 2010 “The Year in Hate,” the sites were most likely White Nationalist sites as well. The Empire Knights also linked to [whitespeech.blogspot.com](http://whitespeech.blogspot.com), which also appeared to be a White Nationalist site.

Although the Empire Knights included a link to a Christian Identity site, it was not a Christian Identity group, and attacked Christian Identity essentially saying it was a “made-up” religion. On the Empire Knights site was an article by the now deceased David Lane, where he stated, “History shows that a religion must have a founder, often called a ‘prophet,’” and continued that “Since no one else assumed that role, I have done so.” In the article, Lane explained the origins of both Christian Identity and Wotanism:

Giving credit where it is due, the proponents of a religion called Identity Christianity realized the power of a religion when they formulated its theology as a tool to resist the Judeo-American/Judeo-Christian murder of the White race. However, for reasons detailed here, the strategy has been a complete and utter failure. It has not stopped forced bussing, open borders, Anti-White propaganda, miscegenation or the ever-accelerating plunge to extinction. Why? First, it clings to the absurd idea that America is "God's chosen land," for the preservation of the White race.

Later in the article, Lane explained that Wotanism was a racial religion that followed Natural Law, with its "major deity" as "Wotan, or Odin or Woden," and is a form of Odinism, where "the Gods, Goddesses and myths of Wotanism represent the forces of nature." Lane continued that "The Old Testament is about the reality of this life on this earth," adding that "The philosophy of the Old Testament helped Jews conquer the world and get the power to sentence the White race to death." Lane concluded that the Old Testament provided a philosophy that could "benefit any race or people," whereas whites who followed the New Testament "may soon be an extinct specie (sic)." In the article Lane compared himself to Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, which Lane stated was a "religion for the preservation of the White race," and restricted its membership to whites while condoning polygamy. Lane wrote, "Joseph Smith was slandered, called crazy, and thrown in prison, where he died," and continued, "Now at age 63, with a life sentence in prison, I expect the same fate." Lane concluded that the "first and highest Law of Nature is the preservation of one's own kind," which was represented in the 14 Words: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White Children." The Empire Knights was the only site that provided a link to a Neo-Nazi site or to any sites about Wotanism, which clearly distinguished them from other Klans.

## Logos and Klan Symbolism

Sites were also examined for logos for the Klan organizations. Determining if a graphic, photo or illustration was in fact a logo and not simply an image on a site was often based on the interpretation of the researcher. Images deemed as logos were often Klan symbols that also incorporated the name of the Klan being examined.

There are only a few true symbols of the Klan (Appendix E for examples). The MIOAK is Klan symbol which according to The Indiana Historical Research Foundation stands for “Mystic Insignia Of A Klansman,” or the “Material Identification Of A Klansman.” The MIOAK exists in two forms. According to TIHRF, the original MIOAK first appeared in the 1920s and was “to be at an angle that makes them look like an ‘X,’” and was part of the “Imperial Seal of the KKK as instituted by Col. Simmons.” The original MIOAK had a yin and yang symbol in the middle with the white part having the year 1915 in it when the Klan was revived, and the black part had the year 1866 in it which TIHRF site stated was “the date the revival Klan recognized as the first official year of the original Klan.” Surrounding the yin and yang symbol, according to TIHRF, were “four ‘K’s’ symbolically facing the four points of the compass. The four ‘K’s’ stand for: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.” The center of the Imperial Seal with the yin and yang and four Ks became a patch on Klan robes for the Second Era Klan in red, white and black. The white of the yin and yang, however, could not be seen on white robes, and the once black of the yin and yang was replaced with red. The new patch showed up as four K’s with a red drop in the middle.

TIHRF site contended that during the 1960s, “The Ku Klux Klan groups were pulverized by the federal and state prosecutions of the illegal and renegade Klans for their criminal activities during the Civil Rights movement.” The site said that even

“legitimate Klans suffered,” and the respectable “ministers and clergymen from legitimate established churches who had been members quit the Klan.” The site added:

After the Klans dwindled down to an all time (sic) low of about eight thousand members nationwide, someone, somewhere, got the idea to make a public relations pitch to try to regain the Klan's lost clergymen and improve it's (sic) symbolism in the eyes of the public by taking on all the Christian overtones it could.

The MIOAK then changed from being in the shape of an X to a cross, and the red from the yin and yang was depicted as the blood of Christ, and the MIOAK became the “Blood Drop Cross.” The site added, “The modern day Klans' switch from the MIOAK to the Blood Drop Cross was not an act of religious zeal. It was a propaganda move.” In essence, whereas the MIOAK is a 1920s Era Klan symbol, the Blood Drop Cross would be a more modern symbol of the Klan.

This discussion is significant in relation to a symbol on some of the sites called the crosswheel. According to the BOK site, a crosswheel “is simply a cross in a circle.” The BOK site added that the crosswheel “is directly derived from the Klan name and from White history as the crosswheel is found in every white civilization.” The BOK site described the crosswheel as “the Christian cross, the wheel of creativity, the circle of unity, motion, and also the ancient Aryan symbol for the sun or light.” The BOK site concluded that “No symbol has come to represent the totality of the White race better than the crosswheel.” The crosswheel is an interesting symbol because the BOK site concluded, “The traditional Klan red, white and black patch called the blood-drop is a form of the crosswheel.” In essence, the BOK stated that the crosswheel came before the MIOAK, which it may have, but the crosswheel was never a Klan symbol, but a symbol of Aryan and White Nationalist groups. This was either another example of disagreements between Klans or of a downright fabrication.

In addition, The Indiana Historical Research Foundation added, “The Confederate flag never had anything to do with the Klan,” arguing that the Klan was founded after the Civil War ended in April of 1865. Instead, the original Klan of the Reconstruction Era had a flag called the Grand Ensign. According to TIHRF:

In the Klan's original Prescripts of 1867 the official banner of the KKK was described in detail. It was to be three feet by five feet and triangular in shape. It was to be yellow material with a red scalloped border about three inches in width. Hand painted on it in black was to be a European flying dragon (dracovolans) and the Latin motto: Quod Semper, Quod Ubique, Quod Ab Omnibus. (What always, what everywhere, what by all is held to be true.)

The modern Klan also has a flag according to TIHRF, originally designed in the 1960s. The modern Klan flag is red-white-and-red vertically striped with the Blood Drop Cross in the middle. In essence, the original Klan and the Civil Rights Era Klans both had their own flags. As for the Klan of the 1920s, TIHRF site stated, “Imperial Wizard Simmons made it plain. He openly declared that there was but one official flag of the Ku Klux Klan and that was the Stars and Stripes.” The site added, “He made it Klan law that NO flag at any Klan function was to fly above it and NO flag was to fly equal to it. All flags would fly beneath the flag of the United States!” The Indiana Historical Research Foundation site stated that the Confederate flag became mixed up with the KKK during the Civil Rights Movement, “as an act of defiance to the federal violations of State's Rights.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site, to an extent, added to this point stating, “The Confederate Battle Flag is NOT a Klan symbol, but rather a rich historic American symbol,” which the site stated it displays “in honor, and reverence, NEVER as a symbol of hatred, or slavery.” The FWK site added, that although some Klans use the Confederate Battle Flag, that “it is not a Klan flag.” In effect, the type of flag a Klan uses provides insight into that Klan and to the era the Klan attempts to emulate where the

Grand Ensign represents the Reconstruction Klan, the American flag represents the 1920s Klan, the Blood Drop Cross represents the modern Klan, and the Confederate flag represents opposition to federal authority and to an extent support for Southern and white heritage.

Another often mistaken aspect of Klan symbolism is the Klan salute. According to TIHRF, the “Klan salute is given with the left hand NOT the right hand.” The site stated:

The Klan salute is not the nazi (sic) salute! To begin with, the Klan salute pre-dates the nazi (sic) salute. The Klan salute dates back to 1915 and possibly back to the original Klan. The Klan copied it from the ancient Roman salute.

In addition to distinguishing the Klan salute from the Nazi salute, TIHRF site added, “Illegal ‘klans’ deliberately give the nazi (sic) salute to make the KKK look like a nazi (sic) oriented organization.” The site said, “The greatest damage done to the KKK since the 1970's (sic) has been the perverting influence of rabid neo-nazi (sic) infiltrators and their convoluted logic.”

The final and perhaps most infamous of Klan symbols is a cross on fire. The Indiana Historical Research Foundation argued that a fiery cross did not originate as a Klan symbol, but was a Christian religious symbol, stating that according to the Catholic Church:

The first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine, beheld a vision of a fiery cross in the sky on the eve of a battle. With the fiery cross vision in the sky were the words: "With this sign ye shall conquer." Constantine adopted the fiery cross as his symbol on his shield and won the battle. That's how it all got started and since then the fiery cross has been a religious symbol not only for the Catholic Church, but numerous Protestant churches as well.

Cross lightings, however, were never performed by the Reconstruction Klan. The Indiana Historical Research Foundation instead stated, “The Klan - fiery cross ‘link’ is the work of fiction writer, Thomas Dixon, in his novel, ‘The Clansman’.” The site added:

When questioned years later as to why he did that, Dixon said that he put the fiery cross into his Klan novel because his Uncle had told him that on one occasion the Klan used a small fiery cross as a signal light. This one use of a small fiery cross by a local Klan unit may not have even happened!

Therefore, while a fiery cross was never part of the original Klan and only mentioned in the Dixon novel, TIHRF claimed, “When D.W. Griffith made the Dixon novel in to the epic motion picture, ‘The Birth of a Nation’, Griffith embellished the fictitious usage of a fiery cross by the Klan,” adding, “He knew a good movie prop when he saw one.” The site added that when the former Methodist minister, Col. Simmons, revived the Klan in 1915, “He incorporated the fiery cross as a major ceremonial prop in his revised Klan,” as the fiery cross is a symbol of the Methodist Church. In essence, the fiery cross was originally intended by Col. Simmons as a ceremonial symbol used by the Klan to represent its connection to Christianity. The IHRF site added that it was not until the 1960s when “renegade Klans and rabid rednecks truly abused the fiery cross and did use it as an act of intimidation, terror, and lit it in some cases as to make it a part of arson.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site added that burning crosses have been used by organizations, including some Klans, for intimidation or vendettas, but that the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. only uses a lit cross for the purpose of a religious ceremony and “NEVER done with intent to scare or intimidate but, to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Used for its original religious purpose, TIHRF site concluded, the fiery cross is an “established religious symbol and thus protected under the First Amendment.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated when the Klan lights a cross, the intention is never to burn the cross, adding, “Everything possible is done to prevent the cross itself from being burned, it is usually put out the moment it is practicable.”

The UWK site provided the best explanation for lighting a cross. The UWK site maintained, "Historically there have been two completely separate and distinct types of cross burning," the "disciplinary cross" and the "ritualistic cross lighting." According to the UWK site:

The "disciplinary cross" was used by the Klan in past times as a warning. Today, such an act commands stiff penalties under man's law and is viewed as a "hate crime". We understand such an act produces no positive results in today's society and our associates are banned from participating in cross burning of this type.

The UWK site added the Klan only participates in the "ritualistic cross lighting," adding, "We refer to it as lighting rather than burning to separate it from the act of intimidation," adding that "The cross lighting is a religious ceremony." The Dixie Rangers site maintained, "Contrary to popular belief, it is a sacrilege to light the cross for use other than in our ceremonies, but it is never used for hateful purposes."

While cross lightings are common among many Klans, some Klans also light swastikas. TIHRF site referred to those Klans who include swastika lightings along with cross lightings as "idiots," calling the swastika "A pagan symbol," adding, "We don't call them illegal Klans for nothing." TIHRF site concluded about swastika Klans that "I've seen their web pages and literature where they all claim to be a strictly legal, law abiding, moral, Christian fraternal order," but added:

They break the law like crazy. They are always losing major lawsuits or going to jail. They live drunken, drug abusing immoral lives, and the last thing they ever do is anything fraternal or Christian. They lie, they steal, they slander and stab everyone in the back including themselves.

The problem, according to TIHRF, was that during the 1990s, "Large numbers of neo nazis (sic) and skinheads began to join the various Klan groups en masse. They even formed their own 'nazi' Klans." The site added that "The violent actions of these people



led to the arrests of many 'Klan' leaders and the collapse of many Klan groups across Canada, the USA, and beyond.”

An explanation of symbols was included in the discussion of Klan imagery, because it is important to know what is and is not part of Klan symbolism. This distinction is essential when viewing images and videos on Klan sites to determine which Klans are real, and which are Klan in name only.

In total, 14 of the 25 Klan sites had what were determined to be logos (Appendix F). The Brotherhood of Klans site had a logo which acted as a banner at the top of every page, and included a crosswheel along with a photo of a cross lighting with hooded Klan members standing around the cross.

The CURA logo was an illustration of the top left of the American flag and the bottom right of the Confederate flag. The CNKKKK logo appeared to incorporate an illustration of the CNKKKK's Imperial Wizard Ray Larsen. The Dixie Rangers logo was a circle with a Confederate battle flag and smiling skull and crossbones over it. The IKA logo was a gray shield with a Blood Drop Cross and two axes crisscrossed behind it. The IKKKKK logo was a white banner with three Ks facing outward with a red cross in the middle. The Knights Party at newporttennessee.net logo was a graphic of the Earth in red. The Knights Party main site's logo was “an official banner simply called *The Knights Banner*. It was designed in 1983 by National Director Thomas Robb for exclusive use by The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.” The banner included an American flag and a white family of a man and woman and two young female children. The KPVL logo was a flag with a black crosswheel and a white sword.

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. had two logos. One was The Triple Tau symbol which the site stated “has been used to represent deity, life and death, its use as symbol of Christianity dates back to Christ,” with the symbol H, “bisected by a T, the H representing God the T the cross or Christ.” The second Ku Klux Klan, LLC. logo included a Klansman on a horse with an American flag.

The MWK logo was a circular seal with a Blood Drop Cross, feather, and a sword. The MWK logo could also be purchased as a patch for six-dollars through the MWK’s online store. The SAK logo was a graphic of a CSA flag with a Blood Drop Cross in the middle, and around the cross in the four corners were the letters “A K I A,” which stands for “A Klansman I am.” The TAK logo was an illustration found on other sites, with Klansman holding a copy of the Bible. Behind him was a Blood Drop Cross over a flaming cross. The logo was used as the background on the homepage in multiple images down the screen. The UNSK logo was a Confederate flag superimposed over a United States flag, and in the middle was the Blood Drop Cross.

### **Klan Multimedia - Videos**

Each site was examined for multimedia, including images, videos and music. Videos were viewed and examined as both physical and thematic units to determine if they presented informational messages about the Klan as recruitment videos, showed Klan group activity such as rallies and marches, were news stories used to reinforce the Klan group’s beliefs, or general videos to supplement the Klan group’s beliefs. Only seven of the 25 Klan sites contained videos, for a total of 55 videos. One of the seven sites with a video was the UNSK site. The video was entitled “We the People,” and was a message to President Obama from the Tea Party. The video included a voiceover and accused Obama of subverting cultural, legal and economic institutions while showing

images of Tea party rallies, national monuments, American flags, United States soldiers, bald eagles, the Martin Luther King March, and stock photos of people who looked upset. The background music to the video was “Glory, Glory, Hallelujah.” The video had both a pro-American message and suggested the UNSK’s connection to conservative political ideology.

The SAK site included a video of a nighttime cross lighting, with Klansmen circling a cross and marching around it before lighting it. During the lighting, members chanted, “For God, for country, for the Ku Klux Klan, for the United States of America,” and bagpipe music of “Amazing Grace” played from a recording. Included with the video was the caption: Crosslighting For Imperial Knighthawk Tony Todd Mississippi White Knights. Thematically, the video portrayed the SAK as a traditional and active Klan with a connection to the Klan of the 1920s.

The MWK site had 18 videos. The first video was a cross lighting ceremony and appeared to be the same video found on the SAK site; the MWK is a member of the Southern Alliance of Klans. The second video began with words on screen reading, “Join us the Mississippi White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Sat May 23<sup>rd</sup> in New Albany Mississippi at the Union County Courthouse at 1 O’clock (sic).” In the background was the song “Crazy Train” by Ozzy Osbourne. After the opening sequence, a blue robed and hooded Klansman appeared with a Confederate flag behind him, and explained that the MWK wanted people to join them at the birthplace of William Faulkner for the rally, in protest of sex offenders, not allowing prayer in schools, illegal immigration, and black-on-white crime. The third video was the opening 10 minutes of the movie *The Robe* with Richard Burton including the opening credits. The fourth video was a news story from

the Mississippi FOX 13 television station about the MWK distributing flyers in the town of Olive Branch, Mississippi, warning residents about a sex offender. The news story also included Mark Potok of the SPLC. Videos five through 18 were all different Disney cartoons from 1937 to 1945; there appeared to be no significance to these videos. The first two videos as well as video four, thematically, indicated that the MWK is a Southern Klan and active in public events, but there was no significance to the movie *The Robe*.

The TAK site had two videos. The first was a recruitment video, and provided contact information for the True Invisible Empire Traditionalist Knights. The first video showed handouts and images set to a country music song about a Civil War battle in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The handouts were scanned images of the TAK info pack. The video also included images of the Confederate flag as well as the Baptist flag. The second video was of a night lighting of three crosses with full ceremony, and began with the computer generated words, "On December 4, 2010, The Traditionalist American Knights merged with the True Invisible Empire. This is a historical event and we hope all true Klansmen will follow the example we have set." The video explained the beliefs of the group including that it is a traditional Klan. In the video, the background music was "If you're going through hell" by Rodney Atkins. The videos indicated connections to traditional Klans as well as the desire to recruit new members into the TAK.

The CNKKKK site contained 11 videos. The first was the music video to Toby Keith's "American Soldier." The second was a pro-military music video to a country music song called "If I die before you wake" by Dustin Evans. The third was a music video for Charlie Daniels' song "Simple Man," that showed different shots of Confederate flags. The fourth was the music video to Tim McGraw's song "If you're

reading this,” which was a song about a fallen soldier. The fifth video was a news story about a homeless white man who saw an American flag on the ground, and folded it properly and left it on a truck for someone to find. The sixth video was an anti-illegal drugs video, with a voice over with an Australian accent. The video showed a white hand holding the hand of a small white baby and included info for the CNKKKK and informed viewers that members who use drugs would be banned from the CNKKKK. The seventh video was titled “Thoughts of a Klanswoman in Australia,” and was a voice-over of Klan symbols and the American contact information for the CNKKKK. The video spoke out against white guilt, Jewish people and Muslims, and referred to them as “non-white viruses.” The eighth video was a membership recruitment video with country music in the background, primarily for the Australian and New Zealand Realms of the CNKKKK. The ninth video was of a black man talking to the camera and was upset a 16-year-old black male was killed by a group of black people, and told those watching not all black people are thugs, and told black viewers to stop acting like thugs. The tenth video included a blurry background of trees with a black man talking off camera about black-on-black crime, and that if black people commit crimes against blacks, they will against whites too. The man in the video continued that whites should fear crime from black people because blacks target whites for crimes. The caption to the video was:

Even the Black Community tells Whites to wake up they are targeted by Blacks. They openly tell multiculturalists you are WRONG, Blacks will commit crimes against you. Its (sic) their culture and traditions. The Black Community tells you defend yourself against Blacks. They openly admit they will choose White people to attack because they are easy targets.

The final video was a sermon from a black preacher identified in the video as the Honorable James David Manning, standing in front of an all-black congregation. In the sermon, Manning explained, “I’m not an African-American,” and no longer wanted to be

called a black man, saying black men leave their children and do drugs, as he once did. He also spoke out against the leaders of the black community who do not tell black men to take care of their children and give themselves to the Lord. The thematic messages in the CNK KKK videos were pro-American military, recruitment videos, anti-black-on-white crime, and anti-non-Christian.

The BOK site had 18 videos, and provided the most non-photographic multimedia of any of the sites examined. The first video was a news story of the father of a white teen in Seattle, beaten, whipped with belts, burned with cigarettes and had a gun pointed to his head by a group of blacks. The reporter in the story said the crime “may have been” committed because the victim was white. The second video came with the caption, “Young white man and his elderly mother jumped by savage Negro Beasts in Dover, Delaware.” But, when the video was clicked it read, “This video has been removed as a violation of YouTube’s policy prohibiting hate speech.” The third video was footage from FOX 6 News of a young black male punching an older white male. The first caption read, “Negro viciously attacks elderly bus driver in Milwaukee.” The second caption read, “This is far more than just some isolated (sic) black on White hate crimes. This proves the thugs want war. And they will get just that! Are you prepared to Stand Up and Fight?” The fourth video was from RT News in Moscow, about Israel’s covert lobbying of the United States government, and attempts to manipulate American media coverage of Israeli foreign policy. An “expert” in the news story claimed the evidence came from a United States Senate and Department of Justice investigation of a massive Israeli manipulation of the American media, but that the evidence from the investigation had been sealed and censored by the United States

Senate. The fifth BOK video was from a WXYZ Channel 7, ABC news story about a white police officer shot and killed by a black man breaking into a home in Michigan. In the news story the black man's girlfriend was interviewed and said her boyfriend was a peaceful man, but the story also reported the man had been in jail for more than ten years on other crimes including attempted murder. The video came with two captions on the BOK site, the first read, "White Police Officer shot and killed by Black Thug." The second caption read, "No outcry from the White community? No cries of racist hate on the part of the black killing the White Officer?"

The sixth video was about whether President Obama was born in the United States, and was a combination of interviews and news clips. The video included interviews with J.D Hayworth, Allen Keyes, Tom Delay, and a sermon from a black preacher, all asking to see Obama's birth certificate. The seventh BOK video was a compilation of different videos about the Black panthers. Part of the video was a home video of white guy at a building on Election Day in November, 2008, talking to the New Black Panther's Philadelphia leader Kin Samir Shabazz who was holding a stick. Another part of the video was a Fox News story about how the Department of Justice convicted Shabazz of voter intimidation, but that Eric Holder and the Obama Administration dropped the charges. The video showed an interview with Shabazz where he said he hates white people. The video ended with footage of Shabazz standing on a street yelling at people, saying, "You want freedom you going to have to kill some crackers," and "You going to have to kill some of their babies." The eighth video was also a FOX News Channel story about the Black Panthers. The news story showed the November 2008 Election Day video of Shabazz threatening white voters,

and was about the Justice Department's decision to drop the case against Shabazz. Included in the story was testimony from a former Justice Department lawyer who testified that he was told the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice would not bring up cases of white victims. Also in the news story, Bartle Bull was interviewed and said the Black Panthers were intimidating poll watchers to let illegal ACORN voters vote. Bull was at the polling station.

The ninth video on the BOK site came from the Patriot Network which the SPLC listed as a Patriot movement group, described as a group "which generally defines itself as opposed to the 'New World Order,' engages in groundless conspiracy theorizing, or advocates or adheres to extreme antigovernment doctrines" (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010, p. 61). In the video a white man sat at a desk and asked Congress to investigate the Black Panthers Election Day intimidation case as a form of black racism. The man continued that it was the Obama Administration's decision to drop the case and alleged Obama and Eric Holder believe in black intimidation and a racial double-standard.

The tenth BOK video was an ABC Nightline News story about Fort Hancock, Texas, on violence along the Mexican border. In the news story, the Sheriff of Fort Hancock admitted he asked citizens to arms themselves, and said the town was under siege in a low intensity war. The news story also showed the Fort Hancock Sheriff's Department in a gun fight with a Mexican drug cartel using Mexican Military Humvees. In addition, the story showed part of the border fence end abruptly. The eleventh video contained the caption: "Racially Motivated Attack - Cleveland, Ohio. A group of teenage black thugs brutally attacked two men aged 51 and 73. The only motivation appears to



be race.” But when the video was clicked, it read, “This video has been removed by the user.” The twelfth video was part of a documentary from the History Channel. Among the scenes shown were a montage of footage with the song “Stand Up and Be Counted” in the background, and footage of cross lightings, a large Klan gathering in Washington D.C., rallies, marches, gun battles, a black doll being hung from a rope, and David Duke. Most of the footage was from the 1920s, but also included more modern footage as well.

The thirteenth video was a BOK recruitment video with the song “Branded Man” by Merle Haggard in the background. The video was a montage of images of Klan rallies in color and black and white, Klan symbols, cross lightings, and a scene with individuals in Nazi clothes and a SS flag in the background. Video fourteen was the same as video thirteen but on a different page on the site. Video fifteen was a 48-minute video from the Voice of Citizens Together and came with the BOK caption, “Mexican invasion.” The video included News stories and interviews about illegal immigration, and about Mexican attempts to reclaim land in the US through immigration. Other footage showed Hispanics arguing for reclaiming land from the United States and demanding rights in the United States, as well as whites speaking against illegal immigration. The video also denounced the SPLC for saying that any anti-illegal immigration groups are hate groups. Video sixteen was also the same as video thirteen but on another page on the site. Video seventeen on the BOK site included the caption, “Negro’s Gone Wild – shocking video of Negro’s at their best.” But, when the video was clicked it did not work. Video eighteen included the caption, “Koran Burning,” but like other videos on the site, when clicked, it too did not work. The BOK videos included a number of attempts to

recruit individuals to the group by having the same recruitment video on three different pages. There were also videos against illegal immigration, the Black Panthers, black-on-white crime, an anti-Jewish video, anti-Obama videos, a History Channel video trying to connect the BOK to the Klan's past, and a video from a Patriot Group. From the videos and external links, the BOK site provided links/connections to the Patriot Movement, White Nationalist groups, Christian Identity, and General Hate groups. The site also stated on its main page, the BOK would no longer, "restrict membership to Christians only, but open our doors to all Proud White Folk," but added, "We will still operate under the foundation of Christian principles however." In essence, the videos painted the BOK as a White Nationalist group that incorporated some Klan symbolism into its organization.

The IKA site had four videos. The first video was from the National Prayer Network at [truthteller.org](http://truthteller.org), which was listed as a General Hate site by the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The video was titled, "How to Kill the Hate Bills." The intent of the video was to explain the National Prayer Network's stance against a federal hate crime bill that would protect gays, Muslims, and Jews. The video also was a repudiation against a federal police force, the Anti-Defamation League, and "brainwashing" of students to accept homosexuality. The second video was an IKA vs. SPLC video and depicted a lit cross and burning swastika, along with the song, "If this is the way my race ends." The video was about IKA Imperial Wizard Ron Edwards being sued civilly for criminal acts committed by IKA members, and ended with a call for whites to unite against non-whites. The third video was a voice-over of IKA IW Ron Edwards talking about the lawsuit from the SPLC against him. Edwards called the IKA a law abiding

organization, and accused Morris Dees of the SPLC of witness tampering, and a number of other criminal acts. The fourth video was from the SPLC and was labeled on the IKA site as “Propaganda video by Morris Dees.” The video was a voice-over of Dees talking about the case against the IKA and Ron Edwards in both a criminal and civil trial. The video also showed scenes from Nordic Fest, the White Power music concert the IKA helps host every year. The videos clearly situated the IKA as an organization with connections to skinhead groups, depicted swastikas, and showed the IKA has a history of its members being involved in violent crimes.

Among the 55 total videos examined, only five were recruitment videos, and three were the same video from the BOK site. In addition, only five videos portrayed the Klan as active with four showing cross lightings while one showed the MWK involved in a flyering campaign. Oddly, 15 of the videos were scenes from movies or cartoons and appeared to have no purpose. The remaining 30 videos showed the Klan was pro-military, pro-South, and pro-American, and that the Klan was against drugs, sex offenders, black-on-white violence, Jewish people, white guilt, Barak Obama, illegal immigration, the Black Panthers, Muslims, the SPLC, and homosexuality.

### **Klan Multimedia – Music**

Music was counted as physical and thematic units. Songs were examined for lyrics and any messages relayed through the lyrics as determined by the researcher. Lyrics referencing a particular time period were seen as an attempt to connect a Klan to a different Era Klan. Songs with no lyrics were also analyzed, and it was determined by the researcher if the song related to a particular Klan Era. In addition, sites providing audio files without accompanying video were also included in this portion of the examination.

Only six of the 25 Klan sites contained any music or audio files, either that played when the site was visited or could be clicked to play. The MWK site included an audio file from the Imperial Wizard of the MWK, where he spoke against the DREAM ACT, illegal immigration, and the issue of a double standard where Hispanics have groups looking out for them, while no such groups exist for whites. The last message of the audio file, thematically, fit into Klan ideology that there is no group looking out for the interests of whites, with the exception of the Klan. When site users visited the Dixie Rangers site, the song "Dixieland," without lyrics, immediately played in the background. Thematically, the song did not connect the Dixie Rangers to any Klan Era as the Confederacy was gone by the time the Klan was founded, but the music situated the organization as a Southern group.

The Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) had four audio files. Three of the audio files were .midi sound files of instrumental music of a piano and electric organ of the songs, "Faith of Our Fathers," "Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!" and "At the Cross." The fourth audio file was a .mp3 marching song of the Civil Rights Era Klan titled "Stand up and be counted," by Johnny Rebel with the lyrics, "Stand up and be counted, show the world that you're a man. Stand up and be counted, and go with the Ku Klux Klan." The song included references to Klan symbols such as white robes, the Bible, the sword, and the hood, and also included the call to defeat communism. Thematically, the audio files attempted to portray the Knights Party as a religious organization with a connection to the Civil Rights Era Klan.

The Knights Party Veterans League site provided an audio file which was a message from Christian Identity Pastor Mark Downey. In the audio message, Downey

made a number of claims including that America's enemy was the United States government which he claimed was against white Christians, communism was sponsored by Jewish people and an attempt to create a New World Order, American soldiers in Vietnam were controlled by communists in the United Nation, Israel and Mossad caused September 11<sup>th</sup>, Al Qaeda was created by the CIA to keep up military spending, it was the Jews who wanted the United States to go to war with Iraq and Afghanistan, the neoconservative movement was founded by Zionists, the United States government is involved in a conspiracy to commit genocide on white Christians, and Israel purposely blew up a United States Naval Vessel in 1967, the *USS Liberty*. In his speech, Downey also spoke against God being removed from schools and the courts, the Patriot Act, and a multicultural society. The messages in the speech provided a deeper understanding into Christian Identity theology which was strongly anti-Jewish, and created a connection between the Knights Party and the Patriot Movement with its beliefs in government conspiracies, and thus further differentiated the Knights Party from traditional Klan groups.

When site users visited the IKA site homepage, a warning was on the first page providing a long disclaimer about the contents of the site, while a sound file played in the background of what thematically would be described as Nazi marching music. The music continually repeated until the site visitor agreed to the terms and conditions of the site, and then entered the main page. While there is no proof that the audio was Nazi marching music, the IKA stated on its site, "We are a paramilitary organization with ties to Skinheads and National Socialist groups," i.e. Nazis, and therefore the connection of

the music to Nazi marching music was justified, and further removed the IKA from being seen as a Klan organization.

The BOK site included six audio files. The first audio file was a speech entitled “The Jewish Question,” and argued that Christian churches were wrong and lying about Jesus and the Jews, stating that Jesus was not a Jew, that Jews were not God’s Chosen People, and while Israel is a landmass, whites are the true Israelites. The audio files clearly differentiated Christian Identity beliefs from Christian beliefs. The site also included four .mp3 files of country music from Johnny Rebel from the Civil Rights Era. The songs included, “Stand up and join the Ku Klux Klan,” “Cajun KKK,” “Dixie Land,” and “Living next to niggers.” The site also included an .mp3 file from the band Racist Redneck Rebels called “Droppin the kids off in Harlem.” The first audio file linked the BOK to Christian Identity theology, while the songs from Johnny Rebel were Civil Rights Era songs that supported the Klan, fighting against black integration, fighting for the Confederacy, and using violence against blacks who attempted to integrate. The songs were against the NAACP, integrated neighborhoods, Martin Luther King, Black Power, and Civil Rights demonstrations. All of these issues appeared later in beliefs the BOK stood for and against that had a racial overtone. The last song was a more modern country song about white kids acting black until they realized blacks do not like white people. The last song matched a belief of some Klans that blacks commit crimes against whites, and thematically, fit the messages presented in BOK videos of a prevalence of black-on-white crime.

### **Klan Multimedia - Images**

Images were also counted as physical units, and viewed thematically to determine if they depicted a violent Klan, rallies indicating Klan activity, Klan symbols, or older

images of the Klan to establish a relationship between the Klan organization and previous Eras of the Klan. In essence, the images presented the ideology of the Klan based on the symbols used in the photos and graphics. As an example, sites with MIOAKs would be more traditional 1920s Klans, sites with Blood Drop Crosses would be more modern Klans, and sites with crosswheels would be groups with ties to White Nationalist organizations.

The Confederate White Knights' web site was one of only two sites among the 25 examined that did not contain any images. It is not surprising that the CWK did not include any images on its site as the sites stated the "CWKKKK is a unique Klan whereas there are no membership lists or dues. There are also no meetings or crosslightings, although CWKKKK has attended these and many other activities put on by other Klans and pro-White groups." Essentially, the Confederate White Knights did not host any events or rallies, and therefore no possibility existed for photos of its members engaged in Klan activity. The Knights Party site at newporttennessee.net also did not have any images. Among the remaining sites, the number of photos ranged from one to 463 with an average of 66 images.

The KPVL site had one image which was a banner on the top of every page. The banner was the center of the American flag, and on the left was a photo of the top half of the statue of Liberty including torch facing to the right. On the right was a bald eagle facing to the left. In the middle was the Knights Veterans League logo, which included a crosswheel. The images depicted the KPVL as a pro-American White Nationalist organization.

The IKKKKK site had one image of three lit crosses with 11 Klansmen with outstretched arms around the cross. While not offering a tremendous amount of insight, the photo signified that the IKKKKK was involved in traditional Klan events such as a cross lighting.

The Empire Knights site had two images. The first image was a banner ad for David Lane and Wotanism. The second image was from a news story and showed a young black man and an older white man. The caption to the story was, "UPDATE: Missing Delanco man's body found in Mount Laurel; granddaughter's boyfriend charged with murder." Thematically, the photo depicted the Empire Knights as a non-Christian organization.

The Knights Party site at kkk.com also had two images. The first was a banner at the top of the homepage which showed the middle third of the American flag across the entire page. On the far right was a white family of a husband and wife and two small female children, all looking to the left. Above the family in blue it read, "Loving our family!" Over the blue field of the American flag, in white, it read, "Welcome to the Ku Klux Klan" In the first white stripe under the blue field, in blue, it read, "The Knights Party, USA." The second image was on both sides of a link to the main Knights site and were graphics of the United States in red, with a white patch over the middle and a crosswheel over the white patch. The images perpetuated the overall understanding of the Knights Party as an American White Nationalist organization.

The Dixie Rangers site had three images in addition to a logo. One image was a graphic of the United States with a Confederate flag superimposed over it, another was an animation of three fiery crosses with unanimated Klansmen behind it, and the third



was a graphic of a MIOAK. The inclusion of a MIOAK rather than a Blood Drop Cross and the Confederate flag, portrayed the DRK as a traditional, Southern Klan.

The Fraternal White Knights site had seven images, which included images of Klan symbols as well as photos of a FWK rally and cross lighting, where Klansmen wore Blood Drop Crosses and displayed banners with Blood Drop crosses. The images portrayed the FWK as an active Christian Klan.

The SAK site also had seven images, as well as a collection of 103 photos from other Klan sites. The SAK displayed 103 images of rallies and cross lightings from member Klans, including 22 from the UWK, nine from the MWK, and 72 from the Georgia Knightriders. The images on the SAK page included the Blood Drop Cross, the Grand Ensign, a photo of a deceased Imperial Knighthawk of the MWK at a rally, and an image of a WKKK patch. The images portrayed the SAK as an active and traditional, Christian Klan.

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site had 10 images. The images included photos of cross lightings and one of an unlit cross. The site also included an illustration of Klansmen holding American flags. In addition, the merchandise sold on the site had MIOAKs, and there was a MIOAK at the bottom of every page. The images portrayed a Second Era traditional Klan.

The TAK site included 11 images. The images were an animation of a MIOAK, a graphic of a Grand Ensign, photos of Klansmen, photos of a cross lighting, and a large catalogue filled with Klan merchandise. Thematically, the images portrayed an active traditional Klan.

The Knight Riders site had 14 images, and showed images of a KnightRider, as well as photos of members involved in cross lighting ceremonies wearing robes with Blood Drop Crosses. The images depicted an active, Christian Klan.

The Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) included 30 images. The images included a graphic of the Blood Drop Cross, a street sign with a family running across it that read, "Illegal Alien Round-up Sponsor," a KnightRider wearing a Blood Drop Cross, a flag with a crosswheel in the middle as well as graphics and animations of the Christian, American, and Confederate flags. The site also included images of young white children at Confederate monuments, including one to Nathan Bedford Forrest, images of the White Heritage Festival, and a scanned image from an anti-Semitic book. There was also an image of a cross lighting where Thomas Robb and Rachel Pendergraft could be seen standing in front of the cross. The images depicted the Knights Party as a very active, Southern-American White Nationalist organization.

The AGKK site had 30 images, and almost all were black and white photos and images of the 1920s Klan or members of the Second Era Klan, wearing robes with MIOAKs on them. The images depicted the AGKK as a traditional Klan.

The IKA site included 31 images. The images were an animation including the Blood Drop Cross, a graphic of a Klansman wearing a Blood Drop Cross, and a different IKA logo which used a MIOAK but also read, "White Power," and "White Pride." The IKA site also included black-and-white photos of the original founders of the Klan and the leaders of different Eras of the Klan, as well as photos of a cross lighting with two Klansmen giving a left-handed salute. There were also photos of various IKA rallies including rallies with IKA members in camouflage fatigues, and another with members in

riot gear holding plastic riot shields with Klan symbols on them. In addition, there was a photo shopped image of Morris Dees of the SPLC and IKA IW Ron Edwards staring at one another, an image of Dees talking, and an image of the SPLC offices. An interesting photo on the site was of a man with a shaved head and sun glasses wearing jeans and an IKA, shirt in front of a white building, the caption to the photo read, "Tom Grant FBI Rat Bastard/Klan infiltrator," the caption continued, "FBI witness protection program," and "Banished for Treason against IKA 2010." There were also three cartoons on the site. The first was a black-and-white illustration of a fan with black blood around it and the caption, "How many times do I have to tell ya Bubba, not to throw niggers into the fan?" The second was a black-and-white illustration of two white robed Klansmen talking with one sitting on a rock and the other speaking. In the background were three black men hanging from a tree. The caption of the cartoon read, "Like my new windchimes (sic)?" The third was a black-and-white illustration of a crudely drawn fence with barbed-wire at the top. Two crudely drawn signs were below the fence. Above one sign was the word "English" and the sign and read, "High Voltage 220v Stay Away," the other sign had the word "Spanish" above it and read, "El volto 200v El Crispo." The caption below the image read "Mexican Border." The images depicted the IKA as active and clearly a target of the SPLC, as well as a racist organization that found humor in violence.

The Knights Party's main site had 36 images. The images included an illustration of the Blood Drop Cross, photos of Thomas Robb and Rachel Pendergraft, stock photos of young white people, Christian symbols, and mug shots of non-white criminals. The site included one photo of a cross lighting with Thomas Robb in the picture, and one of

a rally where four white males with shaved heads and black bomber jackets are seen upfront. The Knight Party's main site depicted itself as a Christian organization, but also solidified the singularity of the leadership of the Robb family within the organization.

The Texas Rebel Knights (TRK) site has 38 images depicting Confederate soldiers or flags, as well as gravestones of Confederate soldiers. The site also showed images of modern cross lightings as well as Klan ceremonies and cross lightings from the 1920s Era Klan, and old Klan member gravestones. When Klansmen were shown, they were often wearing Blood Drop Crosses on their chests, but held up MIOAK shields. The TRK's site images alluded to connections to the Confederacy, as well as a traditional Klan with ties to previous Klan Eras.

The CURA site had 38 images. The images were of Klan symbols such as the Blood Drop Cross, and illustrations of Klansmen and religious illustrations. The CURA site also showed photos of Klansmen and photos of a cross lighting where Klansmen were seen giving left-handed salutes, and wearing robes with Blood Drop Crosses, as well as an illustration of a Klansman in front of a crosswheel. The images depicted a religious organization with ties to more modern Klan ideology as well as White Nationalism.

The MWK site included 70 images. The images were graphics of Blood Drop Crosses and the MWK logo, and photos of cross lightings and MWK rallies. At the rallies, MWK members wore Blood Drop Crosses on their chests, saluted with their left hand, and were surrounded by Confederate and Blood Drop Cross flags. There were also a number of photo shopped images of MWK members in a group with MWK logos photo shopped on the image, or of different backgrounds photo shopped behind the

members. The images depicted an active Klan with connections to the Civil Rights Era Klan.

The BOK site included 71 photos. The images included photos of the leaders of the Klan in the different Eras, and repeated photos of a cross lighting. The BOK site also had numerous graphics of Confederate flags, although the BOK's Headquarters is in Ohio. The site also included graphics of the Blood Drop Cross, and graphics and animations of the crosswheel. In addition, some graphics of the crosswheel also included the words, "White Pride World Wide" around the four corners. The BOK images portrayed an active organization with ties to the White Nationalist movement as well as to a more modern Klan.

The CNKKKK site had 81 images. Some of the images were quasi-religious illustrations of God or Jesus meeting a Klansman, which were often "gifts" for the International Imperial Wizard of the CNKKKK Ray Larsen. Most of the photos were of Klan events with sometimes upwards of more than 20 people in a photo, including photos of cross lightings, as well as a party to celebrate Ray Larsen's 72nd-birthday, and another to honor his 50 years in the Klan. Larsen was the most frequently portrayed individual in the images, including new and older photos. In the newer photos, Larsen was often seen wearing black military fatigues with Klan symbols, but not Klan robes, although he was giving a left-handed salute in many of his photos. Other photos included images of merchandise and of CNKKKK members surrounded by Klan flags and symbols, and wearing the Blood Drop Cross. Interestingly, one of the images on the site is a painting of a skeleton wrapped in a Confederate flag holding a scythe, as well as two flesh covered skeletons in the bottom corners and Klan symbols in the top

corners. On the painting were the words, "Railton DeVoine Loy National Knights, Grand Wizard, Indiana." Larsen's real name is Loy, but this was one of the few references to his real name on the site. The other occurrence on the site was in a message from Larsen himself where he stated he changed his "hillbilly given name Railton DeVoine Loy" to "Ray Larsen after I saw Don Larsen pitch a no hitter for the NY Yankees." The images depicted an active religious organization and a modern Klan with connections to the past based on Larsen's long membership.

The White Camelia Knights site had 113 images. The images included a Blood Drop Cross, a Confederate flag, and a Christian flag. The site also included a graphic of three flags. The first flag was the USA flag pointed down and partly burnt, followed by the Israeli flag one-third burnt, and a red flag with a white hammer and sickle two-thirds burnt. Above the Israeli and Communist flag the banner read, "It is the duty of every Christian soldier to make the tyrant's life miserable!" Under the phrase was a white hand with a snake wrapped around it. The site also included an illustration of Jesus crucified on the cross. In white above the cross it read, "Believe Jesus and you are a Christian." Below the cross to the left in white it read, "Do Not believe Jesus and you are Not a Christian," then "IF you are a Christian, then HOW CAN YOU NOT BELIEVE what Jesus taught about the Jews?" Below in red it read, "Matt: 15:3-9 Matt: 23:1-33 John: 8:44." To the bottom right in red it read, "Jesus Told the Truth about the Jews" The remaining images on the site were from a rally in Tomball, Texas on June 11, 2005. No photos were of members of the White Camelia Knights, with the possible exception of photos that showed white people entering a building, but none showed members in Klan robes or specifically showed Klansmen. The rally drew numerous protestors, and was

barricaded by police. Among the protestors were individuals waving the red and black Anarchist flag, the Black Panthers, S.H.A.R.P.S. known as Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice, members of the Nation of Islam, and whites with premade signs with such slogans as: "Ban the Klan!" "Tomball is not a place for hate!" "There's no racism in Heaven." In one of the photos, stacks of the premade signs can be seen leaning against a building. The photos were all taken by an individual that blended in with the protestors, and showed some of the protestors being arrested. There were also 23 photos of Klan memorabilia. Although not clear from the photos, the building that some whites were shown entering, may have housed the display of memorabilia. Some of the memorabilia on display were Klan robes, most of which had the Blood Drop Cross on them. The majority of the memorabilia was from the 1920s and Civil Rights Era Klans. The images portrayed a religious, anti-Jewish organization.

The UNSK site included 136 images. The site included color photos of members of the UNSK posing with Blood Drop Crosses on their chests, an animation of a spinning Blood Drop Cross, Confederate flags, and graphics of American state flags and foreign flags where the UNSK has Realms. The remaining images were illustrations of Klansmen on each of the Realm pages, and include various recruiting messages and Klan symbols, and "Vintage Photos" of the Klan from the 1920s through the 1960s involved in various Klan activities including cross lightings, rallies, various events, and initiations. In the vintage images, Klansmen were seen giving the left-handed salute and wearing both MIOAKs and Blood Drop Crosses. The UNSK photos depicted an active and large Klan with connections to previous Eras.

The Indiana Historical Research Foundation site included 355 images. Most of the images came from what the site called the "Museum of Americanism." The photos were of items from the 1920s through 1950s, as well as replicas, of Klan statues, dolls, robes, banners, plates, bowls, cups, spinners, seals, rings, medals, tokens, pamphlets, cartoons, swords, knives, record albums and song books. The site also included photos of gravestones including those of Nathan Bedford Forrest and Col. Simmons, as well as photos of the founders of the Klan and leaders of the different Eras of the Klan from different modern Klans. In addition, the site included illustrations from the Reconstruction and 1920s Eras of the Klan, photos and illustrations of Klan symbols, and black-and-white photos of the 1920s Klan initiating members, performing charities, and involved in various events. There were also photos from the 1960s to today of Klan members interacting with black people. The Indiana Historical Research Foundation also included images of magazine and newspaper articles about black slave-owners, an article about black Confederate soldiers, an article about American Indians that fought for the Confederacy, an article about white slavery, and an article about Thomas Jefferson's views on blacks and slavery. Also, the site included an image of an article about whites being beaten and attacked by the Klan for various offenses such as bootlegging, wife beating, and child neglect. The images depicted the site as an informational portal about previous Eras of the Klan.

The UWK site included 463 images. The images included animations of the Stars and Stripes, Confederate and Christian flags, and animations and graphics of the MIOAK. The photos were all of various cross lighting events which often included lighting three crosses and three letter Ks. In the images, Klansmen and Klanswomen



were seen giving left-handed salutes and frequently wearing MIOAKs on their chests. There were also numerous photos of a Klan wedding with everyone in attendance in Klan robes including the preacher and groom, with the exception of the bride. In the room where the wedding was being held were various Klan flags, including the Grand Ensign. The images depicted the UWK as an active and traditional Klan that was involved in much of the ritual and ceremony of the 1920s Klan.

Thematically, many Klans included black-and-white photos of the 1920s Klan, potentially in an attempt to create a connection between their Klan group and the Klan of the 1920s. In none of the photos were weapons seen, with the exception of ceremonial swords or knives. In addition, none of the sites showed images of blacks being lynched, with the exception of the IKA cartoon, although TIHRF site did include photos of Klan violence against whites. The differentiation between those sites that included the MIOAK and Blood Drop Cross compared to those sites that included the crosswheel, however, is significant. The IKA, Knights Party sites and the BOK site all used the crosswheel. The BOK and IKA sites also included the most racist multimedia of any of the Klan sites, while the Knights party had the most connections to White Nationalist groups.

### **Portraying a Different Image**

Regardless of whether the Klan was located in the South, many of the Klan sites showed Confederate flags. The inclusion of Confederate flags on Klan sites did not dispel the belief the Klan remains a Southern organization, although some sites attempted to dispel the idea that the Klan was only made up of lower-class Southerners by highlighting previous “members” of the Klan that held important positions in American society. For example, TIHRF site stated, “Contrary to modern myth the KKK was never

a bunch of ignorant racists.” Not surprisingly, TIHRF and the AGKK sites included images of famous, reputed Klansmen, photos of their gravestones, or photos of famous people with Klansmen. These “famous” individuals included President Harry Truman, President Calvin Coolidge, President Warren G. Harding; Supreme Court Justice Edward White, Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, Gutzon Borglum whom the AGKK site stated “carved Mt. Rushmore, Stone Mountain, and did work on the base of the Statue of Liberty,” and United States Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia. According to TIHRF, Robert E. Lee was offered the position of Grand Wizard that Forrest was later to accept but declined due to age and health reasons. TIHRF also stated President William McKinley was a member, President Warren G. Harding “was sworn into the Ku Klux Klan in the Green Room of the White House by Imperial Wizard Simmons,” and President Coolidge “allowed cross lightings on the Capitol steps and reviewed the giant Klan parades of 1925 & 26.” TIHRF site also reported President Truman “was a minor ordinary Klansman from 1920-22,” but “had a major falling out with the KKK over his desire to appoint Catholics to key political positions,” and later “severed all ties with the KKK and openly repudiated them.” The BOK site stated that “It’s believed that five US Presidents were Klansmen.” However, the BOK stated the five Presidents who were Klansmen were “Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.” The IKA site also claimed the same five Presidents were members. But, regardless of which Presidents were in the Klan, what was significant was that any of the Presidents who were involved were in a Christian, and specifically Protestant Klan of the 1920s.

## **The Religion of the Klan**

Religion played an important factor in the ideology and beliefs of the Klan. More so than region of the country, or longevity of the group, a Klan's religious ideology was the most important factor in how that group viewed the world and the ideology it held. Interestingly, according to TIHRF, the original Klan made no distinctions over religion and stated there is "documentation that ex-Confederate Jews, as well as many Catholics also joined the Klan." The site added, "Some Jews rose as high as the rank of Grand Cyclops in the original KKK." Interestingly, however, while some Klan groups today do accept Catholic members, none accepted Jewish members and, in fact, most included anti-Semitic comments on their sites.

The religions of the Klan were separated into four groups: Christian including Catholic, Protestant only, Christian Identity, and non-Christian. The category of non-Christian encompassed accepting members of different Christian religions as well as allowing members who were atheists or pagans. Not surprisingly, although the non-Christian Klans would accept pagans and atheists, they would not accept Jews, Muslims, or Hindus. All but one site clearly indicated the Klan group's religious ideology, or included links to other sites that indicated a particular religious conviction.

In total, 10 Klan groups proclaimed to be Christian, and made no distinction between Catholic and Protestant. The UWK site stated in particular, "We do not restrict members to any one Christian denomination nor do we allow any ideals to be put above any Christian denomination more so than another," adding, "We are open to all true Christian believers regardless of the particular denomination a member decides to follow." The site added, "The United White Knights do not attempt to force any particular doctrine upon its members," adding, "We have good Catholic members as well as

Protestant members.” Unless a Klan specifically stated it was Protestant, it was considered Christian and accepted Catholics as members.

The only Protestant Klans were the Ku Klux Klan, LLC., and the True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights. The TAK site stated its organization was a Protestant organization, and membership was “restricted to those who accept the tenets of true Christianity, which is essentially Protestant.” The TAK site maintained, “It is the inalienable right of Protestants to have their own distinctive organization,” adding, “We can say to the world without apology, and say truly, that our forefathers founded this as a Protestant country and that it is our purpose to re-establish and maintain it as such.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC., instead, equated its organization to the Knights of Columbus, stating, “Our organization includes nearly all Protestant denominations that accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,” adding, “We do not have Catholic associates because, you must be a Catholic to be a Knight of Columbus and you must be protestant to be a Klansman.”

In total, six Klans were adherents to Christian Identity, when the Knights Party’s feeder sites were collapsed. Christian Identity theology dramatically impacted a Klan’s beliefs as the teachings of Christian Identity are anti-Semitic and often include a racist interpretation of the Bible where non-whites are seen as “beasts” or the offspring of Satan, while all Jewish people were seen as the offspring between Cain and Satan. According to the White Camelia site, “Christian Identity simply implies that we identify our race as being the true descendants of the Israelite people,” and that teaching otherwise was a mistranslation or misunderstanding of the Bible. The BOK site contended, “God gave His Laws ONLY to HIS people Israel, who are the White peoples

of the earth.” The BOK site said that the descendants of Adam and Eve were from the Garden of Eden which the BOK stated is the Plateau of Pamir in central Asia, adding, “The cradle of the Adamic (sic) or Aryan race is located in these mysterious mountains of central Asia.” However, the BOK site also stated it would not limit membership to Christians or Christian Identity believers. While the BOK was coded as a Christian Identity Klan, it straddled the line between Christian Identity and non-Christian. The only site where no religious ideology could be determined by indication on the site or through links was the Confederate White Knights. However, because of the amount of anti-Jewish messages on the site compared to the little information provided, it was presumed that the CWK had a connection to Christian Identity.

Only two Klan groups did not require Christian faith or belief in Jesus as a condition of membership, if not shunning Christianity all together. The Empire Knights site supported Wotanism, and the IKA site referred to its members as “Pan-Millennialists, in other words, with God it will all pan out by itself.” The BOK site also referred to its members with the same words found on the IKA site but was still listed as a Christian Identity Klan. Although the IKA and Empire Knights did not require members to be Christian, Christians were allowed to join either group.

### **Descriptive Content**

In the remaining discussion concerning the content of Klan sites, each section will be broken down into four categories: Christian Klans, Protestant Klans, Christian Identity Klans, and non-Christian Klans. This delineation was used as religion was determined to be the most significant factors to separate more mainstream Klans from more extremist Klans and to better answer the questions: What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and What does the Klan Believe?

In total, 23 Klan of the 25 Klan sites were examined for statements suggesting an organization was a true and traditional Klan, if the site included racist language, and if the site denounced racism, violence, skinheads and Nazis, as well as whether the site indicated a race war in the United States was inevitable. All of these items were examined by site and each was categorized by religion (A summary is provided in Table 4-3).

In addition, the 23 Ku Klux Klan sites were also examined for statements suggesting an organization was patriotic or pro-American, acted in the interests of white people as a white rights organization, supported traditional and family values, and indicated support for politically conservative ideology and beliefs. These themes were examined based on previous research suggesting the Ku Klux Klan uses the Internet not only to recruit new members, but also to rebrand the image of their organizations from being seen as a racist extremist organization, to a more mainstream organization, supporting conservative and Christian values in order to attract more middle-class members. All of these items were examined by site and each was categorized by religion (A summary is provided in Table 4-4).

As The Indiana Historical Research Foundation is not a “Klan,” and did not claim to be the Klan, ideologies and beliefs on issues from TIHRF were not included in the remaining examination, except when such information shed light on one of the categories. As an example, TIHRF site mentioned there exists a number of “bogus ‘Klan’ groups,” led by “everything from con artists out to shake down suckers for dues and donations, to psychos and criminals, to ego maniacs out to build their own personal power structures.” Such information is helpful to better understand the overall ideology

and beliefs of the Klan, but otherwise information from the site was not examined and included in the remaining discussion. In addition, the Knights Party site at newporttennessee.net was also not included as it was a feeder site and contained no information either about the Klan or the Knights Party.

Table 4-3. Summary of Ku Klux Klan web site content (Descriptive)

Klan	Traditional Klan	Denounce Violence	Race War*	Denounce Racism	Racist Language	Denounce Skinheads & Nazis
non-Christian:						
Empire Knights	no	no	no	no	yes	no
IKA	no	yes	no	no	yes	no
Christian Identity:						
BOK	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
CNKKKK	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
CWK	no	no	yes	no	yes	no
Knights Party	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no
arkpower-light.com						
Knights Party kkk.com	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no
Knights Party main site kkk.bz	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
Knights Party Veterans League	no	no		no	no	no
CURA	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
WCK	no	no	yes	no	yes	no
Christian:						
AGKK	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
DRK	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
FWK	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
IKKKKK	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes
Knight Riders	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes
MWK	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes
SAK	yes	no	no	no	no	yes
TRK	no	no	no	no	yes	yes
UNSK	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
UWK	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Protestant:						
Ku Klux Klan, LLC.	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
TAK	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes

\* Denotes belief of a current or future race war

Table 4-4. Summary of Ku Klux Klan web site content (Marketing)

Klan	Pro-American	White Organization	Family Values	Conservative Mainstream Beliefs
non-Christian:				
Empire Knights	no	yes	no	no
IKA	yes	yes	yes	yes
Christian Identity:				
BOK	yes	yes	yes	yes
CNKKKK	yes	yes	yes	yes
CWK	no	yes	no	no
Knights Party	yes	yes	yes	yes
arkpower-light.com				
Knights Party	yes	yes	no	yes
kkk.com				
Knights Party main site kkk.bz	yes	yes	yes	yes
Knights Party	yes	yes	yes	yes
Veterans League				
CURA	yes	yes	no	yes
WCK	no	yes	no	yes
Christian:				
AGKK	yes	yes	yes	yes
DRK	yes	yes	no	yes
FWK	yes	yes	yes	yes
IKKKKK	yes	yes	yes	yes
Knight Riders	yes	yes	no	yes
MWK	yes	yes	no	yes
SAK	no	no	no	no
TRK	yes	yes	yes	yes
UNSK	yes	yes	yes	yes
UWK	yes	yes	yes	yes
Protestant:				
Ku Klux Klan, LLC.	yes	yes	yes	yes
TAK	yes	yes	no	yes

### The “True” Klan

Individual sites were examined for statements that professed the Klan group represented the “true Klan.” Obvious prior to examining the web sites, in the original sample of 44 sites from the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), none of the groups called themselves the Ku Klux Klan. While almost all of the groups included Ku



Klux Klan in their titles, none attempted to distinguish themselves though name alone as the “Ku Klux Klan.” One of the reasons for this according to TIHRF web site was that after the 1920s Klan of Col. Simmons disbanded, under the command of Imperial Wizard (IW) James A. Colescott, who served as IW from 1939 to 1944, “There was no longer any legal protection on the name of the Ku Klux Klan, its emblems, or regalia. Everything had gone into public domain and anyone could now use whatever they chose.” Therefore, there is no legally recognized entity called the Ku Klux Klan.

While research showed that the Klan disbanded in 1944, the research did not provide a clear explanation about why this occurred. TIHRF site stated Colescott was unable to pay back taxes the Klan owed, and was forced to order the Klan’s disbandment. After the Klan lost its legal protection as a copyrighted organization, anyone was able to use the name. But, more significantly the fall of the Klan in the 1940s was caused by one man.

The UWK site listed him as Imperial Wizard Robert E. Stevenson, the BOK site referred to him as “Grand Dragon D.C. Stevenson,” and TIHRF listed him as D.C. Stephenson, but showed an image of his gravestone where his correct name was given of Stephenson. Stephenson had been a Grand Dragon in Indiana. According to TIHRF site, Stephenson was no longer a member of the Klan and “had already started his own organization after he had a falling out with Imperial Wizard Evans,” when “he was tried for the death of Madge Oberholtzer;” the BOK site stated he was “tried and convicted for rape and murder.” According to the BOK site, after Stephenson was convicted he “provided the government with two black boxes full of Klan membership information,” which helped the “government discover the identity of many Klansmen, as well as,

many members being high ranking individuals within society.” The UWK site concluded, between Stephenson’s revealing the secret identities of members and “the start of WWII, where every able bodied Klansman was drafted, the Ku Klux Klan suffered severely,” and according to the BOK site, “disbanded again during WW II.”

Today there is no legal entity called the Ku Klux Klan, but this has not stopped groups from using the name and claiming legitimacy. Groups sometimes do not refer to themselves as the “true Klan,” and instead claim legitimacy by referring to the group as a “traditional Klan.” While this distinction is not the same as a “true Klan,” the moniker “traditional Klan” does signify a relationship to the ideals, rituals, symbolism, and prescripts of the 1920s Klan. But, just as calling the group the “true Klan” does not make it so, simply referring to the groups as a “traditional Klan,” also does not ensure a connection or resemblance to the Klan of Reconstruction or the 1920s. In addition, some groups do not claim to be the “true Klan,” nor do they portray themselves as “traditional Klans.”

### **Non-Christian**

The IKA site did not claim to be a “true Klan,” but instead stated, “The Imperial Klans of American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, led by Imperial Wizard Ron Edwards, has formed a ‘New Klan’.” The site added, “Ron Edwards has decided that today’s ‘New Klan’, is in reality none other than the resurrection of the Original Ku Klux Klan... emboldened with the spirit of all White Warriors that have went before it!” The Empire Knights site did not make any statement claiming to be the “true Klan,” or a “traditional Klan.”

Significantly, the two Klans not rooted in Christian ideology, made no claim to being true Klans. The IKA claimed to be a new Klan, while the Empire Knights did not

include a single image on its site of members in Klan regalia. Both Klans will continue to be discussed as both are labeled by the SPLC as Klans, and both identified themselves as Klan, but the inclusion will be based more on distinguishing these two groups from other Klan organizations.

### **Christian Identity**

While the Knights Party's feeder sites did not claim to represent the "true" or "traditional" Klan, or even a part of the Ku Klux Klan, the Knights Party's main site, stated, "The Knights Party is the legitimate Klan association in the United States," adding, "We are not some fringe fly by night group of disgruntled losers who decided to start a 'Klan' group." The Knights Party's main site also stated, "The Knights Party was founded in Louisiana in 1956 and boasts David Duke as it's (sic) first national director," although Duke was born in 1950 and would have been six-years-old. However, the site also stated it was part of the "white separatist movement," and as previously noted, the Knights Party continually referred to itself as a white racist movement.

The Knights Party Veterans League (KPVV) referred to the Knights Party as a "grass-roots movement to take back America." The arkpower-light.com site stated, "The Knights' Party is not a secret society but rather a political movement," adding "We are a political party building a strong foundation nation wide (sic)." Oddly, however, the site also stated, "We do not run candidates at this time... therefore we do not fall under the federal political party guidelines." In essence, the Knights Party is neither a Klan organization nor a political party.

According to TIHRF, the "White Camelia" was a group separate from the Klan that arose during Reconstruction and "Grand Wizard Forrest had no authority over" such groups. The White Camelia Knights site stated similarly, "The original White Camelia

was organized in 1867, two years after the original Ku Klux Klan was formed,” and referred to itself as “a White Power Christian Identity organization.” Similar to the Knights Party, the WCK appeared to be less of a Ku Klux Klan group, and more of a White Nationalist group incorporating some Klan symbolism into its organization.

The Church of the United Realms of American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CURA), site did not state it was a “true” Klan, but did state, “Although we are a newly formed Klan group, we cherish the tradition and values of the old Klan.” The CURA site added, “We are made up of a council of Grand Dragons from various united Klan realms, all working together in one organized ‘Konfederation’, standing up for white rights and promoting the ideas of Western Christian Civilization.” However, the CURA site also referred to itself as a “Racial Resistance,” and admitted it would not “allow our own people among the cause who may have trouble excepting us as a respect worthy organization, weaken the strength of our resolve!” In essence, CURA was claiming to be a real Klan, but admitted it was not accepted by other Klans.

The CNKKKK site did not claim to be the “true” Klan, but did include an oath that “The National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is dedicated to the same principles of the original Ku Klux Klan.” The CNKKKK is also led by Imperial Wizard Ray Larsen who has more than 50-years of experience in the Klan, but the CNKKKK’s decision to become a church rather than a fraternal organization was a clear break from traditional Klans.

The Confederate White Knights made no mention of being either a “true” or “traditional” Klan. In addition, while the SPLC listed the site on its 2010 list of Klan web sites, the SPLC did show the CWK had any Realms or chapters anywhere in the country, and the site contained no contact information. It was therefore unclear who if

anyone was a member or why it was included in the SPLC sample, as the site only appeared to be a web presence (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

The BOK was a difficult site to code as a “true” or a “traditional” Klan. The BOK site stated that it was “the largest and fastest growing Traditional KKK organization in America and Canada today.” The site also linked to the MWK, and the BOK site stated, “We will not tolerate no drama or bullshit from anyone or any other organization. We do strongly promote working in unity with multiple other pro white organizations that are also actively involved in the pro white movement.” But, this provided the BOK with more of a connection to White Nationalist groups than the Klan. In addition, the BOK also stated it was a “modern Klan,” and its members would “not wear our robes in public, BDU and protective gear will be utilized publicly.” BDU stands for “Battle Dress Uniform,” and is more closely associated with Nazi groups than the Klan. It would be difficult to conclude the BOK is a true or traditional Klan with its connection to non-Klan groups and insistence that members would not wear Klan robes in public. In effect, none of the Christian Identity Klans could be considered traditional Klans.

### **Christian**

The SAK site included the statement “The Southern Alliance of Klans is an alliance of pure and traditional Klans.” As a member of the SAK, the International Keystone Knights (IKKKKK) also stated on its site it was a “traditional Klan.” The Knight Riders, also a member of the SAK, stated it was a “traditional” Klan and so were all organizations in the SAK, adding, “If you are interested in becoming a member of a traditional Ku Klux Klan group, contact the Georgia Knight Riders or any of the Klan groups listed under ‘Southern Alliance of Klans.’” The Mississippi White Knights referred

to the SAK as “the largest Alliance of Klans ever assembled,” adding that SAK events welcomed “All traditional Klans,” and called the SAK a “rebirth” of the Klan.

The Fraternal White Knights (FWK) was one of the few sites that specifically referred to its organization as “a true Klan.” The site added, “The Fraternal White Knights go back to the 1st era and makes us a rare Klan in the fact that the majority are made up out of the blue from some other defunct organization.” The Dixie Rangers site stated the purpose of its organization was “to bring back the traditional beliefs of the original Klan establishment on Christmas Eve in 1865.” The site added, “Our beliefs should not be confused with other ‘Klan groups’ which have inadvertently labeled every organization like ours with a tainted reputation.”

The FWK and Dixie Rangers connected their organizations to the Reconstruction Klan. The FWK site stated:

We, unlike most other Klans out there today do not get our knowledge of Klankraft from a book we were able to buy online or from an antique store. Ours was passed on from generation to generation on up to those that lead today!

Significantly, the Reconstruction Klan wrote little down, and rituals were instead passed from member-to-member by word of mouth, which does add credence to the FWK’s statement. In addition, sites like TIHRF sell books and pamphlets about the Klan, which any individual can buy, and also lends support to the FWK on how other Klans can claim to be true or traditional Klans simply from purchasing books or materials. But, the UWK countered, “There is not a Klan today that can trace its roots directly to the Ku Klux Klan of the Reconstruction Era.” The UWK added, “The United White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan may come closer than other Klan (sic) because we are striving to mirror the spirit and intent of the Reconstruction Klan.” The UWK added it was a

“Traditional Ku Klux Klan,” and “a law-abiding, fraternal organization and just like the Original Ku Klux Klan we are opposed to any sort of violence unless it is in self-defense.”

The AGKK also did not state its organization was a traditional or true Klan, but did state, “Our primary purpose is to unite white citizens of our country together to fight for our rights, christianity (sic), our women, our children as did the original Ku Klux Klan.” The site added, “The life of a TRUE Klansman is noble, unselfish, loving, and pleasing before the eyes of Almighty GOD.” In essence, the AGKK did not state it was the true Klan, but that its members and organization attempted to act as true Klansmen.

According to the UNSK site, “Yes, there have been crimes committed by some Klan organizations,” but added that the UNSK has “no say in what some Klan groups do or what they engage in,” adding, “All legitimate Klans that we are associated with follow the same guidelines as us and live by obeying the law.” In essence, the UNSK maintained Klans engaging in violence were not true Klans. The UNSK asserted, “Naturally there are groups out there who do not subscribe to the same principals as us. We do not associate with them, and we shun them in all areas,” adding, “We have no control over these kinds and we do not nor will not support their actions.” This is significant, as the UNSK is not only one of the largest Klans in the United States in terms of the number of states it is located in (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), but also because it made more statements than any other Klan of being a “true” and “traditional” Klan. The site stated, “The U.N.S.K. is a traditional Klan, and our values, ideology, philosophies, and practices have been handed down from the original Klan founders.” The UNSK site added its organization was doing its best to “have this order

follow what the original founders had planned for the Klan, mainly helping whites who can't or don't know how to help themselves." The UNSK added, "We are a traditional Klan that not only calls itself traditional but lives the traditional Klan life and ways." According to the UNSK site, "We teach original Klankraft to our members." In essence, according to the UNSK, being a true Klan meant following the traditions and rituals of the First and Second Era Klan, a criteria which any group that was not Christian or a fraternal order did not meet.

The Texas Rebel Knights site did not claim to be the "true" Klan, and instead stated:

The name Texas Rebel Knights of the Ku Klux Klan came from the people in Texas that rebelled against the Union on the side of the Confederacy during the onset of the Civil War. Thus we created the name of this organization.

Basically, the TRK did not claim to be the "true" Klan and instead referenced the Civil War prior to the founding of the Klan. This was significant, because although the TRK was a member of the SAK, it had more in common with Christian Identity Klans in terms of beliefs and ideology.

### **Protestant**

The TAK site maintained a connection to the fraternal nature of the 1920s Klan, stating its organization was "a very traditional 2nd Era like Klan." The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. in a question and answer section on its site, included the question, "Are we the REAL Klan?" with a response of, "We believe we embody the best and most positive of the values endeared to our founders ideals for the organization. We are willing to let our record speak for itself." In essence, the site stated it was as close to a true Klan as possible, later adding it was a "legally recognized fraternity. As were all major Klan



organizations since reconstruction, those not legally chartered are clandestine and spurious.” According to the site, “The Ku Klux Klan LLC. is a legal, tax paying business in the State of Arkansas. We are recognized as ‘The Ku Klux Klan’ by the State.” Ultimately, the Ku Klux Klan LLC. wanted to be more than a fraternity stating, “No fraternal club, or violent gang has any real chance to make a positive change.” It should be noted however, that the 1920s Klan was chartered by the state of Georgia and was forced to disband because it could not pay its taxes, in essence providing the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. with a close connection to the 1920s Klan as both were legally recognized businesses. In addition, the 1920s Klan was Protestant and anti-Catholic, but so was much of the United States during that time. But, it was only the 1920s Klan that held anti-Catholic beliefs which faded over time.

### **Denounce Violence**

Sites were examined to determine if the Klan group denounced violence and illegal activities, or encouraged violence. In addition, sites could contain the physical units of clear denouncements of violence and illegal activities, but also contain statements or beliefs that counteracted these messages in statements that insinuated the Klan or whites in general were at war or made overtly threatening comments. These counter statements were examined thematically.

In addition, not making a denouncement of violence did not signify the group encouraged violence, only that the site made no mention of it. The reasons for not including a statement denouncing violence are multiple and beyond the scope of this study. But, the absence of a disclaimer runs counter to the Klan’s projected image as non-violence and law-abiding.

In addition, some sites while not denouncing violence did make statements which could be considered violent calls to action. As an example, the Confederate White Knights' stated, "The battle to get to the top may be a long, costly and bloody one, but in the end, the White race will prevail." It should be noted that being a member of the Klan is not illegal, neither is wearing Klan robes, or even lighting a cross on private land.

### **Non-Christian**

The Empire Knights site did not make any statements denouncing violence or encouraging violence. On at least nine different occasions, however, the IKA site did provide a disclaimer or repudiation of violence by the organization or its members, with such statements as "We are against all forms of illegal activity." Other statements by the IKA site denouncing violence and illegal activity included, "We are against terrorists, the immoral, and oppose all criminal behavior and activity," and "The Klan promotes, upholds and protects all the laws in whatever state, country, or city you live in." Interestingly, the IKA was the only site that discussed criminal and civil prosecution against its organization because of the actions of its members. Concerning members, the IKA site stated:

The Klan has always supported our governments, our Presidents, and laws and does not, and has never advocated anything illegal. All of our actions are within the law and promoting the enforcement of the law. The IKA 6th era of the KKK strictly manages their policy to suspend or banish any member immediately if they speak of or promote illegal actions. If anyone is found to be committing crimes they are immediately put up for suspension or banishment.

The IKA site, in addition, said the material on its web site were not intended to encourage violence, stating, "Not only is all of our material for our own people, it is never intended to threaten others in any way, shape or form." The site added the IKA was involved in a "propaganda war rather than a war of violence and bloodshed," and

therefore placed an “emphasis on communication.” In an attempt to further protect the organization from lawsuits committed by members, or individuals reading the material on the IKA site, the site stated, “If you take it upon yourself to violate the law, you do so on your own.” The IKA site added, “We cannot and will not be responsible for any member committing any illegal acts,” and that if members overhear other members “speaking of illegal acts to you, tell them to STOP, walk away and report it to the International Office ASAP.”

That the Empire Knights site did not contain any statements denouncing violence was not surprising, as the site contained little information overall. At the same time, it also was not surprising that the IKA would have so many statements denouncing violence particularly by its members, since the IKA has been involved in a criminal and civil trial against the SPLC due to violence committed by its members.

### **Christian Identity**

The Knights Party site at kkk.com provided a confusing message of being a pacifist participant in a race war, stating, “There is a race war against whites. But our people – my white brothers and sisters – will stay committed to a non-violent resolution.” The site added that the resolution “is the Christian way – law and order – love of family – love of nation.” The Knights’ site at arkpower-light.com stated, “We are nonviolent,” but added, “We are not opposed, however to self-defense only aggressive behavior.” The site also stated the Knights Party was “a legal, law abiding political organization.”

The Knights Party’s main site stated, “As Christians we know that Jesus has promised us peace on earth one day,” but added, “Until that time comes we believe that God wants us to teach the Bible and to have a land where Christians aren’t persecuted.” The Knights Party site also stated, “We do not offer gun training. We do not promote

violence – EVER!” The site added, “We believe in the 10 Commandments and do not believe in murder,” adding, “We are not asking you to commit an illegal act. We are not asking you to hurt anyone.” Intriguingly, the site stated, “We must use all legal means necessary in order to bring about a return of lawful government in this nation.”

According to the Knights Party’ site, “God has seldom used military might to win.” But, the site later added, “This is a race war - a culture war – being waged against white people. As more and more non-whites come into this country the hatred for the founding people will grow.”

While Christian Identity Klans sometimes included statements that the organization was not violent, the sites also often said whites and the Klan were at war with non-whites. These double messages were thematically interpreted that Christian Identity Klans differentiated between random criminal acts and violence in the name of self-defense. However, self-defense could mean anything from protecting one’s home and family from an intruder to protecting whites from non-whites by any means necessary. In essence, encouragements of self-defense were encouragements of violence. The Confederate White Knights and the Knights Party Veterans League were the only Christian Identity sites with no denouncements of violence.

While the CURA site included four separate statements denouncing violence and criminal activity, such as, “We are NOT advocating violence or illegal actions,” these statements at times concurred with a caveat, such as “We are a non-violent, law abiding organization, however, we realize that certain occasions arise when self defense, (sic) and justified violence, is necessary for the safety of our members, and the well-fare of our racial kindred.” The site also included a number of calls to violence, such as, “Either

March and FIGHT! Or stand back and parish!!” In fact, the CURA site contained more calls to violence than denouncements of violence. These calls included, “It’s time for every white Christian American to stand up and fight back! THIS IS OUR LAND!! Either we DEFEND it or perish!” The site even referred to the Klan as a covert army, stating:

Understand that we are in enemy occupied territory. No guerrilla force wears parade uniforms in battle. No special forces units wear medals into combat. No covert army ever succeeded where it let the foe chose the time of battle, the territory on which to fight, nor the manner in which to fight. We are the fog, the First of God! Let us again begin to plan, to train and to act as such in deadly seriousness. For, if we do not, we shall be quite dead, seriously!

In addition, while the CURA site claimed it was speaking in hypotheticals, the site also condemned those organizations not willing to commit violence to protect other whites, stating:

When the time comes for “Bombs, Bricks and Bullets”, will they be willing to stand and fight? Would somebody who has followed a pansy ass, goody goody, sugar-coated form of racialism, be willing to put a bullet in the head of an invading Negro? Or execute a Jew who has been brainwashing our Children with their twisted multicultural propaganda? This is, however, just a hypothetical scenario, and is not intended to be taken literal. I surely am not condoning unnecessary violence, but the time will come when our situation will have escalated, and we will truly be on the defensive end of an all-out massacre, and do you really have faith that those “softer” racialists will be able to adapt, or will they try and find a “diplomatic” resolution by trying to appease those enemies who are attempting to destroy them?

The White Camelia Knights (WCK) did not denounce violence, and instead included statements that violence between whites and non-whites, and a full-scale racial war was coming. The WCK site stated, “Soon there will be no place for us to run to, we will be forced to strike back against the system that works to destroy us and the pawns they use.” The WCK site added not only will there “be a race war in America’s future,” but, “There are racial battles breaking out all across America right now. These racial battles are going to lead us into an all out (sic) race war. As the non-white race

population is growing the White population is decreasing.” The WCK site maintained, “The Federal Government has become an enemy to White America and seems to be helping to bring about a race conflict.” In the coming, and current, race war between whites and non-whites, the WCK site stated:

The uniform that will make up the different players in the coming war will be the color of ones (sic) skin. The White Camelia Knights of the Ku Klux Klan believes it is time for Whites' to prepare for what will be a harsh and bloody struggle, not just between the races, but a battle between the forces of good and evil.

In essence, while the WCK site did not encourage violence, per se, it did acknowledge a race war was eminent, and encouraged whites to prepare for war against non-whites.

The CNK KKK site included the statement that the organization was “100% law abiding and have zero tolerance on violence, drugs and abuse of elders, women, children, and animals.” The CNK KKK also required members to agree to the statement, “I will conduct myself in an acceptable manner and WILL NOT commit criminal acts while a member.” The site also made the statement members were to obey the law, unless in self-defense, stating:

A Klansman cannot separate his personal life from his Klan life, therefore it is his duty to always obey the law, and do no violence to any man or property, either personal or as a Klansman, unless under extreme conditions exist, where self defense (sic) is clearly called for. There are no exceptions to this rule.

But, in a mixed response to this message, the CNK KKK site also included the statement, “Brothers and sisters, we are at war!!”

The BOK site included seven different statements denouncing violence, including that it was “against all forms of illegal activity,” and that the BOK “is a Legal, law abiding organization that does not tolerate or condone illegal acts of any kind.” The BOK site also stated, “There is nothing illegal about becoming a member of the KKK,”

and the material on the BOK site “is never intended to threaten others in any way, shape or form.” However, the BOK site also included calls to war. These statements included, “We are clearly in the wake of a major race war and it’s clearly just not here in the United States but around the World,” and “The racial war is among us, will you fight with us for the future of our race and for our children?” The BOK site was also the only site that included the skinhead call to violence of “RaHoWa,” which stands for “Racial Holy War” (Arena & Arrigo, 2005). In total, five of the nine Christian Identity Klan sites made statements about a coming or ongoing race war, while three of the remaining four included calls to violence or justified violence.

### **Christian**

According to TIHRF site, “The KKK was not founded to be, nor intended to be lawless or violent,” but also said the Klan has always “had a problem controlling renegade members; a problem that exists to this day for many Klans.” The UNSK added to this argument, stating there are some “rogue Klans ruled by rogue leaders.” In general, the Christian Klans made few calls for violence with the exception of the MWK.

The AGKK site not only stated it did not encourage violence, but also attempted to distinguish the Klan from stereotypes, stating it was not a form of “prison gang,” but a “legal law abiding organization.” The AGKK site stated, “We do not advocate violence as a means to get our message heard. But we believe in self defence (sic).” The AGKK added that the material on its site was not meant to incite violence, stating, “It is not now nor will it ever be the intention of this material to threaten others in any way, shape or form.” The AGK site however did say that the group was part of a “noble fight for survival of the White race.”

The FWK did not encourage violence, and instead stated on its site that the organization had an obligation “to defend our country and enforce its laws, through duly constituted authorities and justifiable means.” The DRK site stated, “We do not participate in any illegal activity of any kind whatsoever, or condone the same.” The DRK site added that it was “peaceful,” and a “law abiding White Christian Organization,” adding, “While there may be some organizations out there claiming to be the ‘Klan,’ that engage in violence and extreme behavior, we neither engage in violence/extremism nor do we condone it.” The DRK site also stated, “The Dixie Rangers of the Ku Klux Klan of Louisiana are a peaceful, law-abiding, White Christian organization dedicated to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our White Race, our Children and Families, and our Country.”

The SAK site made no denouncement of violence. However, as it is only an umbrella organization, it would be up to the individual member Klans to make that distinction. The IKKKKK, a SAK member site, however stated, “We are a law abiding, non-profit Organization with no criminal accusations against us.” The Knight Riders, also a SAK member, stated, “We do not promote or incite violence, but we will protect ourselves.” The Knight Riders site added, “We are a Non-Violent Christian Fraternal Order, All Members of the KnightRiders Are law Abiding Citizens and Are Free of Drugs,” adding, “WE, OBEY THE LAW.” The TRK, a member of the SAK, however, in another example of where it was different from other SAK groups, made no statement denouncing violence or illegal activities. The MWK, also a member of the SAK, with a long history in the state of Mississippi including connections to individuals involved in the violence of the Civil Rights Era, asked on its site, “The racial war is among us, will



you fight with us for the future of our race and for our children?” The MWK site later added, “It is time to declare war on these illegal mexican’s (sic).”

The UWK site was one of the most adamant Klans in stating it did not support violence, illegal acts, or intimidation. As an example, the UWK site included the statement, “We promise that we do not, have not or will not intimidate or threaten anyone regardless of their race, religions, sexual preference or any other personal beliefs,” and interestingly added, “This includes sending intimidating letters to Media outlets.” The UWK site added it was a “law abiding White organization,” did “not promote illegal activities,” and opposed “criminal activities being committed period.”

The UWK also stated that the material on its site did not encourage violence and, “It is now – nor never will be the intention of this material to threaten others in any way, shape or form.” The UWK site also emphasized, as did other Klans that being a member of the Klan was not illegal, stating, “Because it is a legal organization and no one can be prosecuted for being a member.” In addition, the UWK site made statements pronouncing its willingness to work with law enforcement to bring to justice those who commit crimes particularly under the guise of being a Klansman, stating:

We pledge to help law enforcement in their investigation of anyone that uses our name or the name of the Ku Klux Klan to do these things, and regardless if they are a rogue member of our, or any other group or an outsider, we will work together with those law enforcement officers to see that those guilty of such actions are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The site added, “We as an organization, are solidly behind every enforcement officer in the land to help, aid and assist in the PROPER PERFORMANCE of their LEGAL duties.”

The UNSK made numerous references to being monitored by law enforcement, and argued its organization could not be violent, otherwise with all the surveillance on them, its members would be convicted of crimes. For example, the site stated, "We all know that local and federal authorities monitor our every move," and added, "We obey the laws not only because we believe in them and value them, but also because we do know how closely we are watched." According to the UNSK site, "We are under CONSTANT scrutiny from agencies such as the F.B.I., the Department of Homeland Security, the local police and sheriff's departments and who knows what other sources." The UNSK insisted, "Since its inception, not one active members of this order has been charged with or linked to ANY criminal activity," adding, "We do not have one member who was ever convicted OR accused of any domestic terror acts or any acts of violence." The UNSK maintained, "There is no place in our constitution, practices, or rituals that calls for ANY type of terrorist act."

The UNSK maintained it has "non-violent waivers that must be signed by an applicant before they can join," and that new members are informed that "NO ONE in this Klan may give them an order to violate the law, and that IF they WERE given such an order that they are to report it at once to the Imperial Wizard." Instead, the UNSK site stated it educated members "on how and when to take action (in a non violent (sic) way)."

The UNSK did continue, "We, as Klansmen, are sworn to uphold the constitution of the United States, and to abide by the law, yet the Federal Government spends untold man hours investigating us over and over again." The UNSK site added, "Our rights are trampled regularly and all the while Americans are screaming about

mistreatment of war criminals and rights of illegal invaders.” The UNSK also stated that although it did not support or condone violence, the organization does understand why it may be called for by some, stating, “As we watch what is happening to America today sometimes it is hard NOT to call for violence,” adding, “Whites are raped, robbed, tortured, beaten and killed and in many cases have racial epithets screamed at them while it is being done and the perpetrators are not charged with a hate crime!” The UNSK site added, “The only acts of violence we do condone are acts of self defense (sic) or of protecting someone being a victim of a violent act such as rape, robbery, assault, etc.,” and said that protecting others is “allowable by the law.”

Among the 10 Christian Klans, only the AGKK and MWK mentioned a race war, and only the TRK did not denounce violence. In addition, while three Christian Klans condoned violence in self-defense, four denounced all violence.

### **Protestant**

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC., along with TIHRF and the UWK, also stated being a Klansman was not illegal, and “There is no law in any state against possessing Klan literature, Robes or uniforms.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site also made at least 11 separate statements that its organization did not encourage violence and did not engage in illegal activities. The site made such statements as, “We denounce violence as an acceptable means of accomplishing our agenda in every instance.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. added, it was a “legal law abiding entity,” and required members to swear they would not “conspire to commit any crime while a member,” and would “NEVER be asked to do anything illegal,” and did not want new members who were “involved in criminal enterprise.” With many Klan groups bitter rivals, due to ideology or territory, the

Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site was also one of the few sites that did not encourage violence toward other Klans, stating, “We are not fighting other groups for territory or members.”

The TAK site made numerous statements that it neither encouraged violence nor accepted criminal behavior on the part of its members, including, “We are a non-violent organization,” and “a law abiding group.” The site added that it would “not take the law into its own hands and will not tolerate acts of lawlessness on the part of its members,” and instead “demands the enforcement of laws by those who have been duly elected to office.” The TAK site also stated it required that members “must believe in non-violence, except in self-defence (sic).” Neither Protestant site mentioned a race war and only the TAK condoned violence in self-defense.

### **Denouncing Racism**

Sites were examined for statements that the Klan group examined was not racist or a hate group. Some sites did not specifically state they were not a racist organization or hate group. Often these were sites with little overall information, such as the Confederate White Knights. However, while sites were examined for statements that the group was not racist or a hate group, these statements have little value if the sites contained racist language within them. Therefore, while sites may have presented a message or statement that the group was not racist or not a hate group, what was more significant was whether the site contained racist language or derogatory racial or ethnic slurs. As expected, the non-Christian Klans were the least likely to denounce racism, while the Christian Klans most frequently denounced their organization as racist.

### **Non-Christian**

The Empire Knights site made statements the group was not racist, although its connection to a neo-Nazi site provided insight that the group may have racist ideologies.

The IKA site not only did not state the IKA was not racist, but before users could view the IKA site, they had to agree to a disclaimer which stated in part, "You acknowledge that the Site may offer content that could be deemed 'politically incorrect' in nature or may have racial themes," and "KKKK.NET and partner IKA WEBSITES are websites containing news and articles about Nationalism, politics, current events and musical entertainment that may appear to have a racist overtone and is protected by the 1st Amendment of the United States." In essence, the IKA admitted to being a racist organization.

### **Christian Identity**

Christian Identity sites often included statements their organization was not racist, but support for these statements was often not found when examining the site for racist language. The CNKKKK site stated, "We are not about hate, we are about being civilised (sic). Its (sic) about time the rest of America follows our example, it doesn't matter if your Black, White, Purple or Green, senseless killing is against Gods Law, America's Law, and civilisation (sic)."

The Knights Party's main site provided numerous denouncements of being a racist organization, such as "We are not a hate group!" and "We don't endorse hatred," as well as, "We don't go around terrorizing people who aren't white." The Knights' main site also included the statement, "The Knights is a love group not a hate group," adding, "The Knight's (sic) are not racists or out to get anyone (Regardless of what people may say) nor do we claim superiority to anyone." In a different declaration, the Knights main site added, "We are not Klansmen and Klanswomen because we hate anyone." The Knights Party site at kkk.com, stated its organization provided "A Message of Love NOT Hate!"

The Knights Party's main site also included denouncements that it was a hate group, and directed these statements at the SPLC and younger people. To the SPLC, the site stated, "We aren't a fringe hate organization as groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center like to imply." The site added, "We represent a core group of honest, sincere, and dedicated men and women working for a return of Law and Order in America." In a message directed toward younger people, the site stated, "Just because a person is in the KKK doesn't mean they don't like any black people," and added, "Yes, there are black people and other races of people who are very nice people." But, the site also added, "Just because there are nice black people don't mean whites and blacks should mix together," adding, "Most people like hanging out with people who are the same race. But it doesn't mean they hate other people." Meanwhile, the Knights Party at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com), did not denounce racism, but did imply the Knights would simply rather not be around non-white people, stating, "We don't care who is superior and who isn't. White people are just better suited to White culture and Blacks are better suited to their culture and so on with other racial groups."

According to the CURA site, the objective of the Church of the United Realms of America "is not to spread 'hatred' for blacks, Mexicans, and other non-whites, but to preach love for our own race, and to ensure the preservation and well-being of our heritage." The CURA site added it did not "support, or condone racial hatred or any kind," adding that "We believe that people of all races have the right to be proud of their heritage." But, the CURA site also admitted whites could not be blamed if they were racist or hated non-whites. The CURA site added:

Although our organization is NOT based on hatred, we do believe that hatred is a natural human emotion, and given the current situation that

white people are in we can not (sic) blame those who do hold deep feelings of hatred, as it is only natural when they witness something that they truly love and hold pride in, being destroyed.

The CURA site maintained, "This hatred can often prove to be counterproductive if not properly directed, and it is one of our goals to help provide this direction, so that we may utilize these negative emotions in such a way to where they become productive, and beneficial to our race." In essence, hatred used for a good cause was supported.

The BOK site included some clear statements it was not a racist organization, while at the same time justifying any racist beliefs. The site stated, "We don't spread hate towards any other race," adding, "It is not hate to love your white race!" But, the site also stated, "The Ku Klux Klan hates no one with the exception of God's enemies or those who wish to frustrate his cause," adding, "The Bible never teaches us to love God's enemies, such a notion is completely blasphemous and absurd." The BOK site added, "God Almighty has decreed the destruction of those who hate Jesus Christ and His true Israel People. In a last battle they shall be defeated." Concerning Jesus, the BOK site concluded:

The Prince of Peace is a man of war, and His Peace is a victory over the evil of this world. There is no Peace for the wicked. There is no Peace for Lucifer and His Angles, or any of the forces of darkness. There is no Peace for world Jewry.

In essence, the BOK only hated those who were enemies to God, and based on Christian Identity theology, this would include those who Christian Identity teaches are from the lineage of the devil, meaning Jewish people, and, as such, violence against Jewish people would be Divinely encouraged.

The CWK, Knights Party Veterans League and White Camelia Knights sites made no denouncements of racism. In total, four of the nine Christian Identity Klans did not

denounce racism, while the CURA site justified racial hatred even while saying it was not a racist organization. The BOK, however, alluded to the idea that violence toward Jewish people was justified by God.

### **Christian**

The SAK site made no denouncement of racism, but, as an umbrella organization, it would be up to the individual member Klans to denounce racism. Some of the members of the Southern Alliance also did not include statements renouncing racism, such as the IKKKKK, the Knight Riders, the MWK, and the TRK.

The remaining five of the 10 Christian Klans however did denounce being racist organizations. The denouncement of racism by Klans claiming to be traditional is significant as The Indiana Historical Research Foundation stated the Klan was never intended to be a racist organization and had performed charitable works for “Catholics, Negroes, and Japanese.” The UNSK supported this point, adding, “Many Klansmen over the years have helped blacks and that is historical fact which can easily be proven.”

The AGKK site explained, “We are not a hate group!” adding the exclamation point for emphasis. The FWK site stated, “We don’t hate people just because of the color of their skin.” The Dixie Rangers twice site stated, “We are not a hate group,” and the second time declaring, “We are NOT a hate group, and will not tolerate public display of racism within our organization,” adding, “Our problems are within our own race.”

The UWK site included an interesting assertion, as an attempt to demonstrate it was not a racist organization, stating, “Today the Ku Klux Klan’s philosophy concerning Negroes is honest and simple. We realize there are many hard working Negroes who are productive.” In addition, the UWK site stated on two occasions “We are not a hate



group,” and included the statement, “We promise that we do not, have not or will not intimidate or threaten anyone regardless of their race, religions, sexual preference or any other personal beliefs.”

The UNSK site stated not only was it non-violent, but it was also not made up of racists, stating, “We have non violent (sic) Christian members who have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution of these United States, not a bunch of blood thirsty race hating rogues.” The UNSK site added, “The rope and gun are not the tools of todays (sic) Klan any more than they were those of the original Klan.” According to the UNSK site, “Talk of assassinations, killings, bombings and the like are strictly forbidden. No one will be allowed to attack any person simply because they are a different color or race than us.” The UNSK site maintained, “They say we hate because of the color of a person's skin. This is stated clearly in our own constitution that we do NOT discriminate because of a person's color.” In total, half of the 10 Christian Klans did not denounce racism, and all were members of the SAK. The UWK was the only SAK member that did denounce racism.

### **Protestant**

The TAK site stated, “We will absolutely NOT use our good name as an intimidation tool towards anyone, no matter what race, color, or creed. We are not a hate group.” In addition, while many Klans, specifically Christian Identity, stated they were not hate groups but included anti-Semitic statements on their sites, the TAK site stated:

We sing no hymns of hate against the Jew. He is interested in his own things and we are exercising the same privilege of banding our own kind together in order that we may realize the highest and best possible for ourselves.

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. made statements it was not a racist organization, arguing being racist goes against the Bible and teachings of God. The site included statement such as, “No where (sic) in the Bible are we called to hate anyone. We work against the agenda of anti-American organizations, without hate, but with a firm resolve.” The site added, “We hate no one,” adding, “Hate is for those who deny God, not for those who cry for justice. No one is justified by hatred.” In statements refuting the organization was a racist or violent group, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site also stated it worked “without hate or violence.” The site also spoke generally about the Klan adding, “It is a common misconception that we are a so called ‘hate’ group, no member of the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. mindlessly hates other races.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site added its organization had “non-white supporters,” who agree with the organization and “the need for the restoration of our representative Republic,” and “financially support our efforts with a regular monthly pledge of \$50.00 - \$100.00.” While only two groups, both Protestant Klans denounced racism.

### **Racist Language**

All sites were examined for the use of racist language or racial and ethnic slurs. This distinction was both thematic and highly interpretational. While the use of the word “nigger” was considered racist language, the use of the words “negro” or “colored” were not, particularly if the words were found as part of an explanation of a historical document or photograph. As an example, TIHRF web site contained a black-and-white illustration with the caption, “Negro poll watcher oversees election in which only Blacks, scalawags, and carpetbaggers could vote.” In addition, referring to illegal aliens crossing the United States and Mexican border as “Mexicans” was also not considered

a racial or ethnic slur. But, the IKA's reference of Hispanics as "spics" was considered racist language.

No references to homosexuality were considered racist language, unless the individual was also called out for their race. This decision was based solely on the nature of the question itself about racist language. Had the question been "hateful language," some of the references to homosexuality would have been included in this. The exception to this was if a site used the word "faggot" instead of homosexual such as when the IKA denounced "'special privileges' for niggers, gooks, muds and faggots;" this exact statement also appeared on the BOK site.

Statements about Jewish people were sometimes coded as racist language. The decision was based on the vitriol of the statement. As examples, the statement on the White Camelia Knights' web site of, "Satan's children, 'jews' (sic) have worked long and hard to destroy white America and the followers of Christ," was considered a racist statement, however the statement on the CURA site that it was against "the Jews and the Liberals," did not contain the same vitriol and therefore was not coded as racist language but instead as an issue, idea, or group the Klan was against which contained a racial overtone. Another example from the AGKK site stated, "Racially we are distinct and apart from the Jew, and ideally there is very little in common." While the statement appears racist, as it claimed Jewish people are of a different race, but because Jews and Gentiles are considered separate peoples in the Bible, this was coded as an issue the Klan supported with a racial overtone.

In addition, although not minorities, but because of the scorn shown to them on some of the Klan sites, statements against whites that did not support other whites or

who were seen to be working with minorities and against the Klan were coded into the category of racist language. These individuals were often referred to as traitors, a particularly scornful term. An example of white traitors being mentioned came from the Confederate White Knights site, and included racist language:

CWKKKK acknowledges that there are many enemies of White people, including negroes, mestizos and asians (sic). Jews are one of our most dangerous enemies, more so than the other nonwhites. However, we reserve a special wrath for White race-traitors that collaborate with jews (sic) and the mud races to oppose racially aware White people.

### **Non-Christian**

The Empire Knights site included language considered racist, with statements such as, “The philosophy of the Old Testament helped Jews conquer the world and get the power to sentence the White race to death,” and that the goal of Judeo-American and Judeo-Christian beliefs was the “murder of the White race.” The Empire Knights also compared miscegenation to the genocide of whites. The IKA contained the most racist language of any of the sites, and upfront stated:

The IKA hates: Muds, spics, kikes and niggers. This is our God given right! In no way do we advocate violence. We believe in educating our people to the monopolistic Jewish control of the world's banks, governments, and media. White education is what ZOG hates and why it tries to imprison White Racialists.

The IKA site also contained a downloadable Microsoft WORD document file titled “nigger jokes,” which contained 57 “jokes.” As an example, the first “joke” was, “Why do niggers carry shit in their wallet?” and the response was, “Identification.” While many of the Klans supported racial segregation or separation, the IKA defined segregation as “racial separation between Whites and niggers;” this exact wording also appeared on the Christian Identity BOK site. The IKA site also provided a “history lesson,” on the

desegregation of the United States military, which also appeared word-for-word on the Christian Identity BOK site:

After WWII, President Harry S. Truman issued an Executive Order "integrating" the US Armed Forces. Before this, Whites and niggers were "segregated" in US Armed Forces. The 1950's (sic) and 1960's (sic) were referred to as the years of the "Civil Rights Movement for niggers in the Old South". The Z.O.G. (Zionist Occupation Government) in Washington, DC. passed laws which were upheld by the "jew (sic) infested" US Supreme Court against Southern Whites, in favor of niggers.

The IKA made a number of racist statements about Jewish people, including referring to them as "Alien Jew Owners from the international jewish (sic) banking cartel who run satan's (sic) world and system." In addition, the IKA site called the Anti-Defamation League a "criminal and terrorist organization aligned with the JDL who historically has bombed more places in the United States than any other known group." The JDL is the Jewish Defense League, which is listed by the SPLC as a hate group (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The IKA also charged the Anti-Defamation League with committing "crimes against Americans."

Surprisingly, while the IKA is a non-Christian Klan, it used Biblical passages to attack Jews, a tactic found on other Klan sites, and particularly Christian Identity sites. This was particularly interesting because it showed the IKA would use anything to argue its points even if it went against the beliefs of its own membership which could be made up of pagans and atheists. In the IKA interpretation of the Bible, the Jews were the:

Children of Satan (John 8:44-47; Matt. 13:38; John 8:23) though Cain (1 John 2:22, 4:3) who have throughout history always been a curse to the true Israel, the Children of God, because of a natural enmity between the two races (Gen. 3:15), because they do the works of their father the Devil (John 8:38-44).

According to the IKA site, in Matthew 21:43, Jesus told the "antichrist Jews that the kingdom was being taken away from them and given to a 'Nation' bearing the fruit

thereof.” This passage signified that Jesus told the Jews that Christians were the Chosen People. According to the IKA, in Matthew 3:7 and 23:33, “Christ and John the Baptist both told representatives of the Jew nation that they were a generation of vipers.” The IKA stated in First John 3:12, Jesus told the Jews, “They are the children and descendants of Cain, whose father was the Devil.” The IKA site also stated in Genesis 3:15 and Romans 16:20, Jews were called “the Serpent Race, those whom God has ordained to be His enemies till the Day of Judgment.”

The IKA site added that Jewish people were an “antirace” of people who “practice usury, paganism (Kabbalah), foment wars and revolutions and lead the media battle against the White Race which they see as the cancer of mankind.” The IKA site also asked of whites viewing the site whose side they were on, either “The White Christian people or the Satanic Jews Conspiracy against all peoples and races of the earth?” While not stating specifically, the IKA site also equated the death of all Jews as the will of God:

The ultimate end of this evil race whose hands bear the blood of our Savior (Matt. 27:25) and all the righteous slain upon the earth (Matt. 23:35), is Divine judgment (Matt. 13:38-42, 15:13; Zech. 14:21).

With connections to skinhead and neo-Nazi groups, the Empire Knights and particularly the IKA included the most overtly racist language of all the Klan sites.

### **Christian Identity**

Most Christian Identity sites contained racist language directed toward minorities, and particularly toward Jewish people. As an example, The Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com), stated, “Jews reject Jesus Christ, Jews are destroying our nation, and continue to destroy efforts which can restore White, Christian America.”

Christian Identity theology is considered by Christian Identity Klans as a Christian denomination with a particular interpretation of the Bible where Jews are believed to be the Children of Satan. Therefore, while members do not have to belong to a traditional Protestant denomination or be Catholic, they must be Christian. As an example, while the Knights Party claimed that its members had “to profess a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,” the Knights did not “require that a person belong to any particular denomination.” This is significant as it demonstrated that not all members of Christian Identity Klans had to believe in Christian Identity, but those who did could join a Christian Identity Klan.

In addition to racist language directed toward Jewish people, three of the Christian Identity Klans also selected passages from the Jewish Talmud to explain Jewish beliefs about non-Jews, and then used these beliefs for their own comments about Judaism as a whole. The Knights Party’s main site stated, “The Talmud says that Jesus was a witch and is burning upside down in human waste,” that “his mother Mary was a prostitute,” and “men can sleep with other men and can even sleep with children. Child molestation is Okay with the Talmud.” The BOK site stated, “The Babylonian Talmud says Jesus Christ was a mamzer (a bastard) and born of a whore. It says that an evil spirit conceived him (though one of the books says a drunken Roman soldier) during Mary’s menstruation.” To further explain the BOK’s understanding of the Talmud, the site added that Deuteronomy 23:2 stated, “A bastard (taken from the Hebrew word ‘mamzer’ which means mongrel of a half-breed) shall not enter into the congregation of YHVH; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter in to the congregation of YHVH.” In this statement, YHVH stands for Yahweh or God.

The Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) included 16 passages from the Talmud. Examples included, “The Jews are called human beings, but the non-Jews are not humans. They are beasts.’ Talmud: Baba mezia, 114b,” and “‘Sexual intercourse between Gentiles is like intercourse between animals,’ Talmud Sanhedrin 74b,” and “‘Every Jew, who spills the blood of the godless (goi), is doing the same as making a sacrifice to God,’ Talmud: Bammidber raba c 21 & Jalkut 772.” While not providing the entire passage, the Knights site also stated the Talmud read, “Jesus Christ is in hell where His punishment is ‘boiling in hot semen.’ Talmud: Gittin 57a.” After providing these passages, the Knights site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com), asked users:

Does your preacher or spiritual advisor tell you that you are to support Jews and the works they do? Does your preacher or spiritual advisor tell you that the Jews are “holy people”, or that Jews are “Israel”? Do you listen to them and offer your sacrifice (tithe) to the god that the preacher mentioned above serves? The god that preacher serves ain’t Jesus Christ! That preacher serves “another Jesus”! (II Corinthians 11:4)

The [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) site added, “The Ashkenazi Jews, like the Pharisaic Jews of Christ’s time, have always been against Christianity, and are diligent workers for its destruction.” According to the [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) site, “Christianity and Judaism are in sharp conflict with each other and will remain in locked combat until one of them is destroyed. There can be no Jewish-Christian civilization.” The BOK site also differentiated between the two “basic types of Jews: Sephardic the original Jew of ancient times, Ashkennazi (sic) group descending from the Khazars which merely chose Judaism as a religion, and are not, but are of the Synagogue of Satan.”

While the Knights’ main site did not have as vitriolic statements against Jewish people as the Knights’ feeder sites, the main site did contain statements written in very simplistic messages for younger site users which were anti-Semitic. As an example, the



site stated, "If your mom and dad is a Christian then they probably have gone to church or have listened to a preacher who believe Jewish lies and teach Jewish lies." The site added:

There are hundreds of preacher schools and the Jews have worked to change the books the preacher students learn from. The materials the Jews want to take out of the books are the parts that warn about Jewish lies and about the Jews that killed Jesus.

The Knights' main site added, "The churches today are pastored by sheep not shepherds. 99.9% of all preachers in any country on any continent have no business speaking or teaching in the church." It should be noted the Knights' National Director, Thomas Robb, is a pastor for a Christian Identity Church.

The Knights' main site also stated, "Be careful not to listen to Jewish lies," and added Jews "cause trouble and try to deceive the people," adding, "They work to destroy entire families and nations to gain wealth. They must be stopped." The belief from the Knights' main site that Jewish people were liars carried over to its beliefs about the Anti-Defamation League:

The ADL is a huge organization with Jewish members all over the country – they tell many lies about the Ku Klux Klan and other groups that love white people – but they don't tell lies about groups that work for black people or Mexican people. Why? It is because white people have always been the ones who work for the Bible more than any other people and the ADL hates the Bible and Jesus but they pretend they are good and nice – they are telling Jewish lies like the Bible warns about

The Knights Party's main site also stated "cross burnings," and "other types of threatening actions including graffiti are often the acts of disturbed blacks, Asians, non-white Hispanics, homosexuals, or Jews who use the publicity for fund raising, to bolster sought after legislation, or even insurance scams!"

The Knights Party's main site also denounced Jewish people as liars. The site blamed Jewish people for all the ills of America, concluding in a message to younger people that Jewish people "hate YOUR white Christian heritage!" and added, "The Jews want all the races to mix up so there is only one race. The Jews think they will be able to control the world when the white defenders of Jesus are gone!" The Knights Party's main site also detailed in statements directed toward younger whites how Jewish people are able to garner so much power in the United States, and make frequent accusations that Jewish people control the government and media. The site included such statements as, "They have a lot of power and the politicians are scared to say anything that will make the Jews mad!" The site added that "the very very rich people who own the TV shows and newspapers and movies don't like white Christians. They are so rich they can tell the politicians what to do. Some of them own most of the banks too."

The WCK site also contained racist language directed towards Jewish people, stating, "The jew (sic) plotted and planned the death of Jesus Christ," and referred to Jewish people as "Satan's children." The CURA site stated, "Jewish bankers and shylocks control the American economy with an iron fist," and CURA wanted to "remove these users from power," and "punish the Jew tycoons who have brought America to the brink of financial disaster."

In addition to anti-Semitic rhetoric, the CURA site also mentioned Adolph Hitler, and stated, "The contributions of Adolf Hitler can be respected and admired but not worshipped." The CURA site added that Hitler "was a visionary. He knew who the real enemy was and wished to rid his people of them. He had good ideas." The site added, "He was a good man with good qualities." In a comparison between Hitler and God, the

CURA site stated, “Adolf Hitler was a great man...he did so much for Germany...he hated the jews (sic)! Yahweh is a great God...He created our race...He hates jews (sic)!”

The BOK site contained the most racist language of the Christian Identity Klan sites, which was significant as it was the only Klan site with ties to Patriot organizations, used the skinhead phrase “RaHoWa” on its main page, and appeared to have taken word-for-word sections of the IKA site for its own web site. The BOK site stated the “Jews are hated by Yahweh!” and were the “people who slew Christ two thousand years ago.” The BOK site also stated, “Jesus is NOT a Jew! He called them (the Jews) the children of Satan.” The BOK site also maintained the Christian Identity theology belief that “Cain was the son of Eve’s seduction by Satan, Cain was the progeny of ‘the wicked one.’ (See 1st John 3:12) This makes Cain a son of Satan. It is from the Cain line that we have the so-called Jew.” In explaining how Satan could have a child with Eve, the BOK site concluded, “Fallen angels can bear children by mortal women, would not their leader, Satan be able to do the same?” The BOK site then stated stereotypical descriptions of Jewish people:

The seed of the serpent shall be fugitives and vagabonds who wander the earth without a home, they shall complain about any punishment levied against them, even when found guilty by YHVH himself, and will constantly complain of their plight.

The BOK site added, “like Cain, they will have a unique and distinguishing mark on their faces, so that other will be able to identify them,” and “Cain built the first city, so you can say that they will probably be partial to living in cities, because their lack of agricultural skill will make it difficult to grow crops in the wilderness.”

Christian Identity sites however did not only have racist language directed toward Jewish people. On the CURA site, when Internet users clicked on “Page Source” to

read the HTML coding, the coding included the phrase, “Quit being a nigger and trying to take what dont (sic) belong to you!” The WCK site stated, “Our prison systems are overflowing with non-whites that hate our people.”

The CNK K K K K provided more insight into Christian Identity theology, especially as the site did not include external links to any Christian Identity sites, and instead labeled the CNK K K K K as a Church. The CNK K K K K site stated it believed “in the Bible before liberals translated it,” adding, “We of the White race came from Adam and Eve, not monkeys.” The site added that the Bible “makes references to Beasts who walked on two legs,” and maintained, “So we believe that blacks are not our Brothers and Sisters, but are beasts of burden,” adding, “To accept evolution fully, is to say that we are equal with these animals, which history shows that we are not equal to, and in fact are superior to.” According to the CNK K K K K site, “After Eve sinned and had relations with the beast in the garden” which produced Cain, she mated with Adam and “had a son Abel.” The CNK K K K K site added that after Cain killed Abel, he then “left to goto (sic) the land of Nod and take unto himself a mate from the created races living there. You call them Cro Magnon (sic) or Neanderthals but I will call them muds or soulless creatures.” The CNK K K K K site concluded God had a purpose for the soulless creatures of the Earth “for them to be our slaves.” The CNK K K K K site stated that whites were being punished for falling from the path of God, “by having a soulless creature rule us as a President,” which was a reference to Obama being black, and therefore, a “beast of burden.”

The BOK site went even further than the CNK K K K K site, explaining through Christian Identity theology that whites did not evolve from monkeys. According to the BOK site, “The greater majority of Biblical scholars agree that” Adam was created

“somewhere between 5500 and 6000 years ago,” while the “Negroid race is at least 40,000 years old, and the nation of China is 8,000 years old.” Using the Book of Genesis, the BOK contended that blacks are “nothing but a 6th day creation... a beast of the field.” The BOK site added, “There is no record of the White race prior to 5,500 B.C.,” while “the earth was inhabited by Asiatics (sic) and Negroes long BEFORE the advent of Adam and Eve.” The BOK site asserted, “Satan had previously mixed his seed with the pre-Adamic (sic) races, thus producing Asiatic Jews and black-Jews.” The BOK site concluded that “The Bible is not the history of ALL races, it is the history and guidebook to the WHITE RACE and begins with Adam,” adding, “Yahweh had a divine purpose in mind when He created the black beast and the yellow beast.”

The BOK site also referenced different minority groups specifically. The BOK site stated most Native Americans “were of Mongoloid decent,” except for those Native Americans among “The ‘C’ tribe (Cherokee, Choctaw, etc) were originally Celtic and Scandinavian explorers who sailed over to this continent a couple hundred years before Christ, but only a remnant of them had kept their lineage pure by the time the English colonists arrived.” For proof that Europeans arrived in the New World prior to Jesus, the BOK site stated, “You should be able to find thousands of pages on this subject in your local library or a Mormon Church.” As to why European colonists were able to kill off so many Native Americans, the BOK site remarked, “Why did Yahweh allow His Christian Israel people to destroy them? Simply because we are His Children and they were inconvenient beasts.” The BOK site added, “America is the Promised Land of Israel (the Caucasian peoples of the Earth).”

Compared to Native Americans, the BOK site maintained that “The other branch of the Mongoloid races has faired (sic) much better in Asia,” than in North and America, and because of this Asians “claim that they are superior to us.” The BOK site, however, explained that the “Satan worshipping Buddhist” and Asians have become so powerful “because our schools have been mongrelized and our once-Christian society has been mixed with false religions and anti-Christ Jewish teachings.” The BOK site also claimed that China’s advancements were only possible because of Russian aid, while Japan acquired “her talent and technology... from the White man.” The BOK site concluded, “The blessings that Yahweh has bestowed upon the Caucasian race have allowed us to create the technology that the world uses,” and the “pure descendants of Adam are thousands of years ahead of the beasts technologically, culturally, and spiritually.”

The BOK site also included racist statements about “blacks in modern day America,” arguing that “Our ancestors bred an elite race of Negroids (sic),” through slavery. But, the BOK site added, “Blacks, being only thirteen percent of the population, commit roughly sixty percent of the violent crimes.” The BOK site also stated, “We have given these blacks beasts everything! Yet they curse us, rape us, rob us and kill us, then demand more. The Negro blames us because they cannot achieve what we have done.” The BOK site maintained, “No amount of affirmative action will ever make us equal, because it is Yahweh who created the inherent differences between man and beast.”

The BOK site included what it titled as “An Apology to the Black Race,” which began, “To the entire Black race living in America, we, the Aryan, pink complexion race (better known to you as the White race) that came to these shores from Europe,

England, Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, Germany and the like, do hereby apologize.” The “Apology” included 37 different items that the BOK site stated whites were sorry for doing, or giving to black people. One of the 37 “Apologies” included:

We apologize for trying to come up with an AIDS vaccine to stop the epidemic spread of AIDS in Africa, AIDS being a disease that you created and passed on to us after having sexual intercourse with monkeys and then with one of our idiotic race-mixers who then passed it on to the rest of the world.

The apology concluded:

For all these wrongs we’ve carried out against you, we apologize deeply and unreservedly, and if you will please accept our apology, we shall happily and immediately take back all of the above mentioned evils we have cast upon you and return you to your home continent.

Included in the “Apology,” the BOK stated blacks could also take “your race-traitor wives, husbands, and Mulatto children with you.” The BOK site stated that it advocated “race traitors” go with black people back to Africa because “after a few generations of mixing with your race they would disappear into the dark tar-mix which your dominant design-genes make up.”

The WCK site stated, “White’s (sic) are being robbed, raped and murdered at an ever-increasing rate by non-whites.” The WCK believed whites were in danger from blacks and the Nation of Islam, stating:

Organized Black groups such as the Nation of Islam are working for the day when White's will be enslaved and all White American history will be destroyed. Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader, has worked diligently to build an army of Black men and women to wage a war against White America.

Although the Knights Party’s main site included numerous statements that it was not a racist organization, the site also included numerous statements containing racist language against minorities. For example, the site stated, “The average white person

respects and obeys the law as opposed to the average black person.” The site later added, “The majority of the black community won’t consider reason however. They are out for blood.” According to the Knights’ main site, blacks “as a people (though there are always exceptions to the rule) are incapable of maintaining or even comprehending the rule of law and order, actions and consequences.” The site added, “The black male is the greatest perpetrator of both petty crimes,” and is “on an ever long search for many sexual partners and quick bucks for little work.”

The Knights Party’s main site said in a message directed toward younger people that “there are lots of blacks who hate white people.” The site added:

When there are only a few blacks in a town they act nicer to the white people. But when there begins to be more black people, they start complaining about how there were slaves hundreds of years ago and think it is there (sic) right to hurt white people.

The site also stated, “White people are hurt and killed by blacks all the time,” adding, “Young girls should be extra careful. Many black boys feel extra cool if they hurt a white girl.” The site added, “Many minorities feel justified in their violence against whites and going to prison just makes them heroes to their friends and neighbors,” but added, “The black leaders get mad if the TV news or newspapers say anything about it.” The site maintained, “It is evident that Negro agitators are attempting to stir the local natives up and encouraging them to riot.” As for the leaders of the black community, the Knights Party’s main site also stated Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks “were both communists and trained at Communist schools,” adding, “Communist and the Jewish groups who started the Communist Party are still around today.” The Knights Party’s main site was also against the government’s “changing of the names of schools, streets, avenues, stadiums, libraries, etc. to Martin Luther King.” The site later added, “Our ancestors



would be shocked to know America's government officials passed into law a holiday demanding that all of America celebrate a race-mixing Communists' birth!" In total, while the BOK, CNKKKK, Knights Party main site, and CURA site all denounced being racist organization, all of the sites contained racist statements.

## **Christian**

Overall, the Christian Klan sites contained the least amount of racist rhetoric, although Christian Klan sites were also often the smallest sites based on number of internal links. But, the AGKK, DRK, FWK, IKKKKK, Knight Riders, MWK, SAK, and UNSK sites contained no racist language.

The Texas Rebel Knights are a member of the Southern Alliance of Klan, and included a link on its site titled "Christian Beliefs." These two factors combined placed the TRK into the Christian Category. However, on the its "Christian Beliefs" page the site included a quote from "R.G. Butler," which was potentially Richard Girnt Butler the now deceased former leader of the Aryan Nations, a neo-Nazi group (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), and a believer in Christian Identity theology. Thus, while the TRK site included no reference to "Christian Identity," the site did include an interpretation of the Bible and Biblical passages which bared a greater resemblance to Christian Identity thought than Judeo-Christian theology, and not surprisingly, the TRK site contained more racist language than any other Christian Klan web site. For example, in a section on the TRK site titled "Where to look in the Bible on Negroes," the site stated the following:

It is interesting to note that in all of these scriptures we find reference to a BEAST that is apparently biped (two-legged) and who can talk, riot, commit adultery, co-habit with man, work in vineyards, use his hands, wear clothing, cry unto his creator and sow his seed with other races. Those who have clearly traced this Hebrew word CHAYAH through the scriptures

under the English word beast, know it is speaking of the NEGRO! If this truth were known and taught from the pulpits of our American churches, it would stop the mad race toward racial suicide and mongrelization (sic) of the races dead in its tracks.

In addition, the TRK site also included numerous statements about Jewish people, which often resembled anti-Semitic Christian Identity rhetoric that was racist. As an example, the TRK site stated the Biblical passage John 7:1 said that Jesus “would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.” The site also stated, “In the 8th chapter of John. Jesus tells the Jews that they are neither the children of Abraham nor the children of God, but of their father the Devil,” adding “In this 48th verse Jesus tells them that they will be like their father the Devil who was a liar and a murderer.”

The TRK site also contended it was the Jews who killed Jesus and not the Romans, stating, “These Jews had the power to put a man to death but not by crucifixion,” adding, “The Jews were very clever in plotting the assassination of Christ, because the whole world knew that only Rome had the power to crucify.” The site maintained, “Therefore if Jesus was crucified, then automatically every one would think that the Romans had killed Him and all suspicions would be averted from the Jews and the blame would be placed upon the Romans. Yes, they are crafty.” The TRK site added, “In order for the Jews to shift the blame of the crucifixion of Jesus to someone else, it was necessary for them to send Jesus to Pilate for trial,” adding, “Even though Pilate found nothing wrong with Jesus, he too eventually gave into the mob pressure of these Satanic inspired evil Jews.” The TRK site further stated, “The Jew soldiers crucified Christ, while the Roman soldiers were crucifying the two thieves as is recorded in Matthew 27:38.” The TRK site added to the more commonly known story of the crucifixion of Jesus:

It should also be noted that it was these same Jewish soldiers which witnessed the resurrection of Christ as recorded in Matthew 28:11-15. Now, Roman soldiers would never report first to (sic) Jew priest, seeing that the Romans and the Jews did not get along with each other. No, these were Jew soldiers which reported back to their Jew bosses. Therefore, the assassination plot, crucifixion, and the guarding of the dead body of Jesus Christ was conducted entirely but he (sic) Jews and their own soldiers. Only the Jews are guilty of KILLING Christ. Truly His blood is on them.

In support of the TRK's accusation, the site added, "In 1 Thessalonian 2:14-15 Paul speaks 'of Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men.'"

The TRK site also concluded that notable Americans throughout history have been anti-Jewish, including Benjamin Franklin, Charles Lindberg, and Henry Ford, Sr. The TRK site concluded that the Jews killed Jesus, and yet "we have the highest politicians in our government traveling to Israel to embrace those filthy Jews." The TRK site also included passages from the White Nationalist site [colorofcrime.com](http://colorofcrime.com) (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), detailing the number of violent crimes committed by black and Hispanics as compared to whites.

The UWK site included what it titled "An Open Apology to the Black Race," which was a condensed version of the one found on the Christian Identity BOK site, but whereas the BOK site included 37 different apologies, the one on the UWK site only included seven. An example from the UWK site, also found on the BOK site, was the statement:

We want to apologize to the generations of afro-Americans (sic) in America that without White culture would still be living in Africa with bones in their noses and living in grass huts as their race is to this day because they are a lazy, unintelligent, backwards race unable to make it on their own without the generosity shown to them by the Aryan race.

The apologies also ended much the same on both the BOK and UWK sites with the offer for blacks to be repatriated back to Africa. On the UWK site, the apology ended:

Maybe if they are so unhappy with the way they are treated in the United States by the White majority they should consider moving back to their native lands where they can live in squalor and hunt with spears as their people do. It never ceases to amaze us when we see a person of color complaining of their plight when truth is told they are given every opportunity to better themselves and yet always resort back to their ghetto mentalities...

In total, only two of the 10 Christian Klan sites included racist language. But, as seen from the wording on the TRK, site and the possible inclusion of a quote from a leader of a neo-Nazi group, the ideology of the TRK more closely matched that of Christian Identity Klans.

### **Protestant**

The TAK site did not include racist language. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site while not including racist language toward minorities or Jewish people, did include passages from the Babylonian Talmud, the Jewish Press, and the "1907 Jewish Encyclopedia, published by Funk and Wagnalls and compiled by Isidore Singer," that were coded into this category. The passages were used to illustrate not that the Klan hates Jewish people, but Jewish people hate Christians, which was significantly different from Christian Identity Klans which referred to Jewish people as the seed of Satan. In a question and answer section on the site, to the question, "Does the Klan Hate Jews?" the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site responded, "This is a fallacy long propagated by our detractors (sic), the fact is, the Jew HATES all non Jews!" The site maintained, "Shabat 116a," stated "Jews must destroy the books of the Christians, i.e. The New Testament: 'the books of the minim (Christian) may not be saved from the fire, but they must be burnt.'" The site added:

The book Zohar, III, (282), tells us that Jesus the Christ died like a beast and was buried in that 'dirt heap...where they throw the dead bodies of dogs and asses, and where the sons of Esau [the Christians] and of Ismael [the Turks], also Jesus and Mahommed (sic), uncircumcized (sic) and unclean like dead dogs, are buried.'

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site included eight different passages from the Talmud and Jewish Encyclopedia, and concluded:

Remember these are translated quotes from THIER literature NOT ours! Remember this has been taught for more than 2000 years and is STILL taught today. The reality is Talmudic Jews hate all races and people who are not Jews, we are called anti-Semitic because we know these facts.

### **The Skinhead and Klan Connection**

Sites were also examined to determine if they contained statements disassociating with skinheads, Nazism, and National Socialism. Beyond the incompatibility between being a pro-American organization, and supporting a movement which once fought a World War against America, definitive tensions and splits in ideology have occurred between Klans that associate with skinheads and neo-Nazis, and those Klans that do not. In addition, an association with skinhead and Nazi groups leads to abandonment of traditional Klan rituals and symbols. Traditional Klans, modeled after the 1920s Klan, have a strong focus on Christianity and Americanism, both of which would be at odds with skinhead and neo-Nazi ideology, which would include swastikas and Nazi flags, as well as a Nazi, right-handed salute.

Although a number of sites did dissociate with skinheads and neo-Nazis, and few Klans specifically indicated they would accept such individuals as members, many sites made no indication either way. It should be noted that similar to other aspects examined, because a site does not disassociate with skinheads and neo-Nazis, does not suggest tacit approval. In determining which groups would be willing, or do

associate with skinhead and neo-Nazi groups, when specific statements were not provided indicating either way, additional inferences were necessary to make a determination.

### **Non-Christian**

The Empire Knights web site stated, “We are not part of the ‘White Power’ movement nor do we want to be,” adding, “The ‘White Power’ movement is now just a corpse and most of these so-called ‘leaders’ and ‘activists’ are comparable to maggots and other parasites feeding off of a decaying body.” However, the Empire Knights site did contain external links to the Aryan Nations web site, and the White Speech blog which included pictures of Adolph Hitler and swastikas. The site also stated the Empire Knights had made the decision “to accept all white nationalists regardless of religious persuasion,” and like the IKA, would accept “skinheads, Odinists, and Christians alike.”

More than any other Klan, the IKA associated its organization with skinheads and Nazis, and accepted them into its membership. On April 11, 2006, the IKA announced on its site a new membership policy from “The Imperial Minister of Propaganda for the IKA” which stated, “Christian, Odninists, National Socialists, Skinheads, Nazi’s, Defender, Confederates, other White Racialists now welcome into FULL IKA membership!”

The Empire Knights' and the IKA's disassociation with Christianity and implicit connection to skinhead and neo-Nazi groups were the clearest separation from traditional Klan ideology.

### **Christian Identity**

Christian Identity sites generally made no statement associating or disassociating with skinhead and Nazi groups, although the anti-Jewish rhetoric often found in

Christian Identity made groups potentially more susceptible to skinhead and Nazi association. But, Christian Identity association with skinheads and Nazis appeared to be more a product of the leadership of the organization than ideology. For example, the International Imperial Wizard of the CNKKKK, Ray Larsen, has been a Klansman for more than 50-years, thus giving him a connection to members of previous Era Klans. This connection assuredly influenced his leadership of the CNKKKK and the groups' disassociation with skinheads and neo-Nazis. The CNKKKK site was one of the few Christian Identity sites to dissociate with Nazis, stating, the organization "will not be apart (sic) of Nazi or neo con communities."

The BOK, Confederate White Knights, the KPVL, the Knights Party at kkk.com, the Knights Party at arpower-light.com, and WCK made no statement that dissociated or associated the group with skinheads or Nazis. However, in a question and answer section on the Knights Party's main site, when asked, "Are you all Nazis or something?" the response provided was, "No. The Nazi regime ended in Germany over 50 years ago. We live in a different century in the United States." It should be noted then, that this was not a denouncement of skinheads or Nazis, just a pronouncement Nazi Germany no longer existed.

Looking at the CURA site for a skinhead or neo-Nazi connection required a level of inference based on information provided. The CURA site stated, "Our organization DOES NOT and WILL NOT teach anything about Hitler. We are not pushing National Socialism as a form of government as we do not adhere to NS politics." The CURA also added, "We do not have links to Mein Kampf. We do not deck our web-pages out in Nazi regalia nor do we slap Swastikas on every newsletter we print." The site also

added it was “not about National Socialism or Adolph Hitler,” however, as previously mentioned, the CURA site included a page questioning whether the “movement” should follow God or Hitler, with God barely winning. Among the Christian Identity Klans, only the CNK KKK disassociated with skinhead or Nazi groups.

### **Christian**

Although they have distinctions in membership, Christian and Protestant Klans frequently denounced and disassociated with skinheads and Nazis. As an example, the SAK site stated traditional Klan groups were “strongly opposed to Nazis, and Skinhead movements.” The SAK site also stated it did not allow “Neo Nazi groups to attend our public demonstrations or rallies,” adding, “We disagree that they stand with us and our cause.” The SAK site maintained that skinheads and Nazis are “unworthy of standing with us at any time,” are “a detriment to the Ku Klux Klan,” and “only support the media in publishing negativity about us.” In its clearest denouncement, the SAK site stated, “Southern Alliance groups will not communicate, associate or affiliate themselves with Skinheads, neo Nazis or White Socialist groups.” The Association of Georgia Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan site stated, “We are not nazi’s (sic) or skinheads.”

Some Christian sites, however, made no dissociation with skinheads or Nazis, such as the IKKKKK, MWK, and TRK, but their dissociation would have been congruent with the beliefs of the Southern Alliance of Klans as all three are SAK members, and would adhere to the SAK’s membership requirements. This argument is made clear on the Knight Riders site, which stated, “In recent months, myself and other Klan leaders within the ‘Southern Alliance of Klans’ have been criticized as to our strict criterion of acceptance.” The Knight Riders site added, “Our staunch stand against Neo Nazi’s, Skinheads and White Nationalists from participating at our rallies or public events has



caused a whirlwind of comments on various web sites.” The Knight Riders site stated, “Our Constitution forbids us to be a member of, or align with other organizations” such as skinheads and Nazi organizations.

Although not stating it did associate with skinheads or Nazis, the FWK site also did not deny it, but it was one of the five smallest Klan sites based on internal links, and may have explain why this was omitted. However, the remaining Christian Klans all disassociated with skinheads and neo-Nazis. The Dixie Rangers Knights’ site stated, “We are not a neo-Nazi group nor are we affiliated with the Fascists, Skinheads, or Aryan Brotherhood.” The UNSK site stated, “We also are not affiliated with any militias, Nazi groups, or Skinhead organizations.” The UWK site stated, “We are not seeking to further the 3rd Reich or fascism.” In all, six of the 10 Christian Klans disassociated with skinhead and Nazi groups. However, three of the four Christian Klan that did not include statements disassociating with skinheads and Nazis were members of the SAK, and would have to disassociate with such groups as per the rules of the SAK.

### **Protestant**

The TAK disassociated with neo-Nazis, stating, “Be warned: We do not believe in Nazism or any form of Socialism,” and added, “We do not believe in socialism, nazism (sic), paganism, or any other Non-American beliefs.” According to the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site, “Many Klan styled organizations allow, and some even encourage the display of the Nazi flag. We of The Ku Klux Klan LLC. do not. Nazism has no common thread with Americanism, a cardinal principal of Klankraft.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site added, “We have Fathers, Uncles, and Grand Fathers who fought the Nazi regime, we will not dishonor their sacrifice.”

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site was the most adamant of all the Klans that it would not associate with Nazism, seeing Nazism as a failure, stating that “The fact is the swastika represents failure, failure of the national socialist government of Adolph Hitler. It represents a type of thinking never endeared to Americans, or the Ku Klux Klan.” The site added that the Klan and Americans “both have been and remain in direct opposition to socialism, communism, and dictatorship.” The site was even against a comparison between Nazism and the Klan, stating:

Nazism lasted approximatley (sic) 12 years, 1933-1945. The Ku Klux Klan had been around some 68 years before Hitlers (sic) thousand year Reich was created, and has been around 65 years after it's (sic) defeat. There is no comparison between the two, and none should ever be made.

With the exception of the CNKKKK, only Christian and Protestant Klans disassociated with skinheads and Nazis.

### **Supporting Issues with a Racial Overtone**

Sites were examined for admonitions of issues the Klan supported that were infused with racial overtones. This coding differed from racist language in that, while Klans support issues involving race, these issues were not considered racist beliefs, based on the idea that a certain level of vitriol was deemed necessary for an idea or statement to be considered racist. The most common issues were a desire to protect and defend whites and white rights, the desire for equal protection with no special privileges given to any group, and racial separation. Often, these statements were conservative issues that included a racial moniker and frequently a call to action. An example from the AGKK site was, “Our primary purpose is to unite white citizens of our country together to fight for our rights, chritianity (sic), our women, our children as did the original Ku Klux Klan.” Another issue the Klan supported which contained a racial

overtone was the survival of the white race or white people. Common on Klan sites were statements that while the Klan was not racist, the Klan did believe in separation or segregation of the races, often using Biblical arguments to support their belief in racial segregation. Another statement seen on Klan sites was that the Klan was a white Christian organization. As this statement included a racial qualifier and a conservative position, of being Christian as opposed to atheist, admonitions the Klan was a white Christian organization were considered issues the Klan supports with a racial overtone. Not all Klan sites however claimed to support issues with a racial overtone.

### **Non-Christian**

The IKA took a number of stances with a racial overtone, related to racial separation, and the idea whites were God's chosen people. Interestingly, while not a Christian organization, the IKA used passages from the Bible to support its stances. The IKA supported racial separatism, arguing, "Each RACE has a RIGHT to live. Each RACE has a right to be with it's (sic) own kind! Each Race has the tight to love it's (sic) own!" Using Biblical passages and interpretations, the IKA site stated Second Corinthians 6:17, Revelations 18:4, Jeremiah 51:6, Exodus 33:16, and Leviticus 20:24 called on whites to be a separate people. The IKA site also said that Deuteronomy 17:15, 28:13, 32:8; Joel 2:17; Isaiah 13:14; Genesis 1:25:26; and Romans 9:21 called on whites to segregate themselves from all non-white races.

The IKA also stated whites were the true Chosen People of God based on Deuteronomy 7:6 and Amos 3:2, which the IKA site interpreted that "God chose unto Himself a special race of people that are above all people upon the face of the earth." According to the IKA site, white people were "God's true, literal Children of Israel," as only whites fulfilled "every detail of Biblical Prophecy and World History concerning

Israel.” The IKA site stated that the first Man, Adam, was white basing this belief on the fact the word Adam was “a Hebrew word meaning: ruddy, to show Blood, flush turn rosy,” and that therefore Adam “is father of the White Race only.” The IKA site maintained that because Genesis 5:1 stated Adam was “made in His likeness,” God was also white.

While not a Christian organization, the IKA added that Christian Nations were “far superior to all other peoples,” and “Only these descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel scattered abroad (James 1:1; Deut. 4:27; Jer. 31:10; John 11:52) have carried God’s Word, the Bible, throughout the world,” and “used His laws in the establishment of their civil governments and are the ‘Christians’ opposed by the Satanic Anti-Christ forces of this world who do not recognize the true and living God (John 5:23, 8:19, 16:2-3).” The Empire Knights, with little overall information on its site, did not profess support of any ideas with a racial overtone.

### **Christian Identity**

Racial separation, the notion the United States was founded by white people to be a White Christian nation, and that white people were responsible for all positive aspects of modern civilization were the issues frequently appearing on Christian Identity sites concerning issues supported with a racial overtone. For example, the Knights Party stated America was founded as a “White Christian” nation on [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) and on its main site. Both the KPVL and Knights Party’s main site stated, “America was founded as a White nation,” and “born as an extension of White European heritage.” The Knights’ main site and the KPVL site stated, “The forming of America was to allow one place in the world where White Christians could live together in harmony.”

The WCK site included two statements that the Constitution and Bill of Rights “were written for and by White Christians,” and added that as they were for white Christians would not “be adequate for or accepted by non-whites in the future.” According to the WCK site, “Non-whites have no constitutional rights.” As a potential response to the issue of the Constitution being written for and by whites, the KPVL and Knights Party’s main sites, both supported “voluntary repatriation of everyone not satisfied with living under White Christian rules of conduct back to the native lands of their people.”

The CNK KKK stated the white race was “the irreplaceable hub of our nation, our Christian Faith, and the high levels of Western Culture and Technology.” The WCK site stated whites have created the “great nations and civilizations.” The KPVL site added, “Those who formed the very ideals that we cherish such as freedom of speech, trial by jury, innocent until proven guilty, free enterprise, etc. were of White European heritage.” The BOK site required members to “believe in White Supremacy,” while the WCK argued, “The Klan believes Whites are superior to the Non-Whites,” and the races were not equal in the eyes of God.

While being against illegal immigration is a conservative issue, when racial qualifiers were included, it becomes a racial issue, as when the [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) site stated, “Let’s do our part to make America a safer place for our families and children. Report mexicans (sic) and other illegal aliens to the Border Patrol!” The BOK site added, “What was once the great melting pot of the world, has turned into it’s (sic) sewer instead.”

Many of the Christian Identity Klan sites supported racial separation and segregation. The CURA site emphasized “white racial preservation,” while the BOK site advocated ensuring “racial purity,” and asked on its site if users “have a love for your White Race and are willing to defend this at all costs?” According to the WCK site, not only have whites “practiced segregation throughout History,” but “flourished throughout History rather than dwindling such as we are during this time of accepted race-mixing.” The WCK site added that “Nature’s law, which is a creation of YAHWEH dictates that kind reproduce after kind,” adding, “The different people of the world were never supposed to mix.” The CURA site also supported what it called “Yahweh’s Eternal Government,” and would protect whites “from destruction.” The CURA site added, “Every part of scriptural law is designed to maintain the prosperity and productivity of the racial family of Yahweh’s Children.” The Knights Party’s main site said that “Not everyone is for integration. The politicians and media just likes everyone to think so.”

The CNKKKK stated its goal was “total segregation of all the non-white races, and communism in all its forms.” The CNKKKK site added that it believed, “White blood must be kept uncontaminated by mongrel strains and protected from racial pollution,” and that the United States government “must be kept inviolate from the control or domination of alien races and the baleful influence of inferior peoples.” The CNKKKK also required that new members must assert they believe in the “segregation of the races,” and have “never engaged in an inter-racial relationship,” stating that “No person is allowed in this movement who cannot pledge themselves to the protection, preservation, and advancement of the White Race.” The Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) also stated members must be “white and not of racially mixed descent,” not

“married to a nonwhite,” and do not “date nonwhites” nor have any “nonwhite dependents.”

The Knights Party’s main site stated, “All white people are related by blood and share a common ancestry.” That common ancestry was Adam and Eve, but also included Jesus. According to the Knights’ main site, “For centuries Jesus Christ was depicted by Europeans as one of their own,” and images of Jesus, the apostles and his followers were all shown “as white.” The site maintained, however, that “Today there is an attempt to undermine the factual evidence that Jesus was white. Instead we are told that Jesus is a mixture of all races.” The Knights’ main site added, “Judeo-Christian preachers today and their anti-Christ rabbi counterparts argue that Jesus probably had black, tight curly, perhaps even kinky hair,” and historians and archaeologists “argue he would look like a typical ‘Israeli.’” But, the site countered that Jesus “was the Kinsmen Redeemer (Kinsmen: of the same blood) to a certain people – Israel, who now comprises the Anglo-Saxon – Teutonic and kindred people of Europe.” The site added, “As our nation becomes more Judiazed (sic) and non-white, no longer will our ancestors in the Bible be depicted as a reflection of us, but will be depicted as a typical dark mideastern (sic) Jew.” The site concluded, “Jesus Christ was a white man,” adding “Saying that Jesus Christ is white doesn’t make a person an evil hater... They are merely stating the facts.”

## **Christian**

Christian Klan sites included issues the organizations supported involving racial separation and supporting white heritage and culture. The AGKK site stated it excluded “from it’s (sic) membership all colored races,” which it stated was “not unlike many other orders and organizations that permit no mingling of races in their membership.” The

DRK also stated its members “must not be married or date people of other races, nor have a history of, nor have mixed race dependents, this includes adopted children.” The UNSK stated its membership was only open to “native born white non-Jewish American citizens.”

The UNSK site also stated, “We believe in staying separate, just as the Creator made us,” adding, “We believe that by race mixing that we destroy ALL races. God made people separate and we see no need to try and change it.” According to the UWK site, “We believe there can be NO compromise on the matter of the segregation of the Races,” adding, “Our forefathers protected our bloodline by enforcing segregation of the different races, which is the only reason we are white today.” The AGKK site stated whites must keep “pure the blood of the white man’s race,” and that it is the Klan’s belief “the white race in America must and shall be preserved pure from all blood-taint and kept supreme in all affairs of this white man’s country.”

Some Christian Klan sites also advocated the idea that America was a country founded by white people for white people. For example, the AGKK site stated, “This country was founded by the finest elements of the White race,” and is “to be maintained by white men as a white man’s country for the white race.” The UNSK was particularly adamant on the issue, stating, “America is a country founded by the white man, built by the white man, and governed by the white man,” adding, “It’s (sic) greatest achievements and successes were doing (sic) the times of entirely white rule.” The site also said, “Our goal is nothing LESS than retaking our country back from the Godless, communist/socialist, liberal multi-cult immoral mess its (sic) become. And returning it to the free, White Christian values of the Founders. Who were WHITE MEN.”



Some of the Christian Klan site also stated support for preserving America's white heritage or white heritage specifically, such as the AGKK, the DRK, the UNSK, and the UWK. The UNSK supported "self preservation (sic) and the advancement of the White Christian America," as well as the "survival of the very white race who got this great country into existence and led the way for the future." The DRK stated it supported "Establishing White, or European History Month in public schools," suggesting that "Black History Month, etc." was a form of "Forced racism in public schools." The UWK site stated it was "dedicated in preserving our rights as Christian, heterosexual white citizens of the United States of America."

The DRK advocated "Establishing a three-tier public school system." The MWK also advocated a "three tier school system, with white schools, black schools, and integrated schools. Allowing a choice to attend the school of preference." The UWK site used nearly the exact language as the MWK site, while adding, "This would ease tension and disciplinary problems that now prevent learning because students and teachers fear physical attack by students who are forced into an environment that is strange and uncomfortable to them."

Some Christian Klans also outright advocated "White Supremacy," such as the AGKK, while the MWK site included the statement, "Thank you for your support and White Power." The MWK site also advocated the "Preservation of the white race." The UNSK concluded that "The white race is the true chosen people of God, to have dominion over all creatures of the earth," and concluded, "This magnificent machine of white power will once again be the strongest force guiding America."

The FWK, IKKKKK, Knight Riders, TRK and SAK sites contained no messages coded as issues the organizations supported that had a racial overtone.

### **Protestant**

The TAK site made two references that the organization supported “White Supremacy,” including that it believed in “exalting the Caucasian Race and teaching the doctrine of White Supremacy.” The TAK also supported segregation based on “White Supremacy,” arguing the “distinction among the races in not accidental but designed,” and, “The supremacy of the White race must be maintained, or be overwhelmed by the rising tide of color.”

Similar to some of the Christian Klans, the TAK site also stated that the United States was a country for whites, declaring, “We must keep this a white man’s country,” and adding, “Only by doing this can we be faithful to the foundations laid by our forefathers.” The site added, “This Republic was established by White Men,” and “It was established for White men.” On this point, the TAK site also stated, “Our forefathers never intended that it should fall into the hands of an inferior race.” The TAK added:

Every effort to wrest from White Men the management of its affairs in order to transfer it to the control of blacks or any other color, or to permit them to share in its control, is an invasion of our sacred constitutional prerogatives and a violation of divinely established law.

The TAK also stated that any whites allowing non-whites political power were traitors, adding, “One of the sad facts in American political life is the readiness of so many politicians to sell their noble birthright for a mess of black pottage. They would betray their race in order to win a few black votes.” Interestingly, while arguing that the United States is a white man’s country, the TAK stated, “We would not rob the colored population of their rights, but we demand that they respect the rights of the White Race

in whose country they are permitted to reside.” The TAK site concluded, “All of Christian Civilization depends upon the preservation and upbuilding (sic) of the White Race, and it is the mission of the Ku Klux Klan to proclaim this doctrine.”

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. stated its members must be “white male or female of European descent,” and “must not be married to or date people of other races, nor have mixed race dependants (sic),” adding, “This includes adopted children.” The TAK required its members be “native born White non-Jewish American citizens,” and “must not date or be married to anyone from outside the white race,” must “not believe in the mixing of races,” and must “not have mixed race children” including adopted or step children.”

The TAK and Ku Klux Klan, LLC. both supported racial separatism using interpretations of the Bible as justification. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. argued God intended for the races to be on separate continents and they should have remained on those continents, with the exception of whites coming to North America. The site added, “We are basically Biblically correct separatists,” and as for slaves being brought to the New World, the site stated, “We believe no non-white, or any person of any other race; should ever have been brought to these shores for any reason, and conversely no white man should ever have so much as darkened Africa with his shadow.” The Ku Klux Klan LLC. also stated that while it did not agree with slavery, it made no apologies for slavery either adding, “We are unapologetic about slavery in early America, no relative of mine in the memory of our history ever owned a slave, I owe the non-white peoples nothing.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site maintained, “Many non-whites cite the era of chattel slavery, and the war as an excuse for demanding special rights and privilages (sic).”

### **Against Issues that contain a Racial Overtone**

Not surprisingly, there were significantly more issues the Klan groups were against with a racial overtone than issues they supported. Unlike the issues the Klan groups supported with a racial overtone, issues against often did not have a call to action, but instead were aspects of society the Klan groups perceived as working against whites. These aspects were often individuals, groups, policies, or issues seen as eroding whites' position as a dominant power in America's past, present and future. The most frequently mentioned issue the Klans were against was race mixing or miscegenation of the races. Klans often also made statements blaming crime on blacks and other non-whites, and concluded that whites were unfairly targeted for crime and hate laws that the Klan perceived were only enforced against whites.

#### **Non-Christian**

The Empire Knights site stated it was against miscegenation and the "deliberate genocide being perpetrated against our kind." The IKA used Biblical passages to explain race mixing was an act against God, stating, "Race-mixing is an abomination in the sight of Almighty God, a satanic attempt to destroy the chosen seedline (sic), and is strictly forbidden by His commandments" in Exodus 34:14-16; Numbers 25:1-13; Corinthians 10:8; Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Joshua 23:12-13; First Kings 11:1-3; Ezra 9:2, 10-12 and 10:10-14; Nehemiah 10:28-30, Hosea 5:7; and Malachi 2:11-12. The IKA site added, "Our people disinherit themselves when they are disobedient to God by race mixing and other great sins," adding the Old Testament was "loaded with God's commands against race mixing and His severe judgements (sic) for disobedience."

The IKA was also against what it described as the "anti-White hysteria that is plaguing the entire white world," as well as "Jewish supremacists who have always

hated” whites and have a “monopoly on information.” Also, the IKA referred to the federal government as the Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG), which it declared was a “Dictatorship Communist government.” In addition, by including a racial moniker, the IKA site made illegal immigration a racial issue by calling on the United States government to “Stop all NON-WHITE immigration,” adding, “We cannot take care of everyone in the world.”

### **Christian Identity**

A few of the Christian Identity sites stated they opposed crime or “hate crimes” against white people such as the BOK, the CNKKKK, the CURA site, the Knights Party’s main site and feeder site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com). The Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com) stated, “Non-whites and other criminals are usually engaged with unlawful activity if seen cruising slowly through your area,” and encouraged site users who see non-whites in their neighborhood to “report any suspicious individuals to your local law enforcement agency.” At the same time, the Knights’ main site stated, “Millions of white people have been victims of violent hate crimes, especially in the cities where poor white families have been unable to escape.” The Knights’ main site also discussed violence against whites in schools in a message targeting young white users, stating:

A black student in a virtually all white school would be safe and allowed to pursue an education, but we all know that any white kid in a mostly black school is nothing but an easy target for hate filled Negroes.

The site added, “Imagine the daily terror many white kids feel when being surrounded by angry and violent Negroes who just sat through a class where the teacher pumped them all up with evil stories of the White man!”

The BOK site referred to black-on-white crime as the “Dirty War,” arguing it has “lasted 30 years so far and claimed more than 25 million victims.” The BOK site added,

“For the past 30 years a large segment of black America has waged a war of violent retribution against white America.” The BOK site also used information from the White Nationalist site colorofcrime.com to conclude blacks have “committed 7.5 times more violent inter-racial crimes than whites even though the black population is only one-seventh the size of the white population.” The BOK site added, “When all the crime figures are calculated, it appears that black Americans have committed at least 170 million crimes against white Americans in the past 30 years.” The BOK site concluded, “These breathtaking disparities began to emerge in the mid-1960’s (sic), when there was a sharp increase in black crime against whites, an upsurge which, not coincidentally, corresponds exactly with the beginning of the modern civil rights movement.” The BOK site contended the “Dirty War” was never mentioned by the news media which instead “prefers to maintain a paternalistic double-standard in its coverage of black America, a lower standard.” The BOK was adamant that “The FBI and the U.S. Census Bureau, along with the mainstream media purposely distort criminal statistics” because “they do not want the American public to know the truth that Blacks are responsible for committing the vast majority of crimes here in the United States.” The WCK site was adamant that “White people leave the cities to get away from the Non-White elements.” The WCK site added, “White police officers are finding it almost impossible to enforce the law in non-white communities for fear of starting a riot or being charged with violating some non-white’s civil rights.”

Most of the Christian Identity Klans were against “race-mixing and racial equality,” such as the CNKKKK, CURA, the Knights Party’s main site, and the WCK. The CURA site stated, “It has been scientifically proven that there are multiple differences between

each individual race, both physically and genetically i.e. Bone structure, social habits, IQ levels, etc.” The Knights’ main site referred to race mixing as “morally wrong,” and a “horrible plague.” The WCK site argued race mixing was “Satan’s goal to have us violate our Heavenly Father’s law on mixing our seed with the other people of the world,” adding, “Race-mixing all through the Bible is strongly condemned by God.” The WCK site added:

If our people were honest with themselves, they would admit that when they see a White and non-white together they find it repulsive, not out of hate for any race but out of the sheer sense that what they are seeing is wrong.

For membership, the WCK required all new members “prove themselves to be 100% White,” adding, “We do not accept race-mixing in any form that includes being part black, brown, yellow or any other racially mixed breed. Including indians (sic) and jews (sic).” According to the WCK site, “To the Klan; the survival of our race is important and I find it unbelievable that the Klan is condemned for the simple fact that we want to exist and maintain our racial purity.”

According to the WCK site, the “government promotes Race-Mixing through integration,” adding, “Our children are forced to go to school with every race under the sun. They are being taught that the races are equal.” The WCK site maintained, “For years the Federal Government has pushed race-mixing and uncontrolled non-white immigration into our country,” and in doing so, “all it’s (sic) accomplished is more violence in our schools and neighborhoods.” The WCK site concluded, “Racial suicide in the name of equality is insane.” The Knights Party’s main site made frequent references to white people becoming extinct, and stated, “Many people say that sounds like a dumb idea. But out of every hundred people in the world, only 8 people are white.” The

site also stated those people “who understand the concepts of genocide,” know “how interracial mixing promotes it and the destruction of the white race.”

Many of the Christian Identity Klans were also against “Affirmative Action” seeing it as an unfair double standard, including the BOK, CURA, the Knights Party’s main site, the KPVL and WCK. The CURA site stated it opposed “the insane policies that discriminate against White people in favor of unqualified and lazy Negroes, and other ‘minorities’.” The WCK site stated that “The Federal Government promotes the destruction of our race through its many programs.” The WCK site added, the “two-faced, double-minded Federal Government... demands equality while at the same time promotes the discrimination of White people. It seems apparent to the Klan that the Federal Government no longer represents White Christian America.” The WCK also partially blamed the government not representing white people because “Whites are discouraged from taking part in political events, while the Non-whites are very encouraged.” The Knights Party’s main site echoed this sentiment, stating, “The White Christian people have been betrayed by our nations (sic) political, economic, educational, and religious leaders.” In a statement directed toward college students viewing the Knights’ main site, the site stated, “You might just find out your spot was given to a non-white because of Affirmative Action,” and that if a white student is admitted into a university that “there are no Caucasian Student Unions or European Culture Clubs and don’t even think about starting one just because there are tons of them for Blacks, Asians, or what ever (sic).” The site concluded, “If you were daring enough to try, you would be called all kinds of horrible names.”



The Knights' main site included more statements about how whites were treated in schools, with messages directed toward both parents of younger kids and the younger kids themselves. The site stated white students can see "the hatred for white people in your school." The Knights' main site added that textbooks and teachers "would have us believe that white people are stupid, uncaring, uncool, hateful oppressors who can't dance." Connecting this point back to race mixing, the Knights' site added:

Is it any wonder so many young people are experimenting with interracial dating? Who wants to date a loser and if white people are the bafoons (sic) they are made out to be then it would make perfect sense to go out with the more desirable black guy or the cute little Asian girl.

The site concluded that between schools and the media, young white people "are the modern victims of the anti-white propoganda mill."

Some Christian Identity Klans were also against non-white illegal immigration, particularly from Mexico. As an example, the arpower-light.com site stated, "Mexicans. They are illegal, they are not welcome here and they are Lawbreakers." The KPVL site stated, "America is being over run (sic) by illegal immigrants mostly from nonwhite countries who do not share the Christian European values of our nation's founders." The Knights' main site went further with the idea America was being taken over by Mexicans, arguing that "The growing and embittered non-white Hispanic population are gaining a new sense of accomplishment in their goal to rid the U.S. of the gringo." The Knights Party's main site also stated, "Illegal Immigrants and their allies are working 24/7 for their cause – and their intention is the overthrow of the United States of America." The site added, "This recent movement to turn the U.S. from a white Christian country to a non-white nation has been going on for close to 80 years." The site

concluded, “We must not let up on this most important fight – a fight for the survival of our race and our beloved faith and nation.”

The WCK site contended, “When the hordes of Third Worlders that enter our country can not (sic) work, they go on Welfare,” adding that welfare “allows the White people to pay for the Non-White people of the Country to eat and live, while at the same time causing the White people to lack in necessary funds to have children of their own.” The KPVL argued a similar theme, stating that “non-whites increasingly sap our nations (sic) resources.” The WCK site added, “White Men and Women can not (sic) have children because they pay ‘mandatory child support’ in the name of TAXES.” According to the WCK site:

Today most Blacks and other non-whites blame White's for everything that has gone wrong in their communities. They expect White taxpayers to financially fix their problems for them; White's (sic) are tired of taking the blame and or no longer willing or able to support non-white communities. This of course will breed even more hatred against Whites.

The media was also under attack from Christian Identity Klans, including CURA, the Knights party and the WCK. The WCK site mentioned “all-black TV programs that pollute the airwaves,” adding, “You can be sure to find a majority of the credits for these Black Sitcoms belonging to the Jews.” The CURA site also stated that the media “encourage our young children to be racially destructive and to behave like primitive savages.” The CURA site added that the “majority of our television networks are controlled by Jews,” and, “Most of our daily newspapers, magazines and book publishing companies are owned by Jewish con-artists and deceitful liars.” The CURA site stated it wanted to “smash this Jewish monopoly of our mass media,” and to “eliminate anti-white programming,” and for whites to “stop believing the Lies that the Jewish media is spreading.” The Knights Party’s main site stated that MTV’s “Fight for

Your Rights” was a “homosexual and race mixing campaign,” and that Sesame Street was “anti-white propaganda.” The Knight’s main site added, “Where is the warning sign for interracial relationships in a program, or the warning sign letting you know that a particular program has a homosexual agenda.”

Celebrations of Black History or of prominent black figures were also under attack from the Klan. The WCK was against Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, “Malcolm X, a known White Hater and terrorist,” Kwanza, and Juneteenth which the WCK site claimed was celebrated in Texas because “The Negroes here in Texas found out that they were freed two years after the fact. So in essence they celebrate their stupidity.”

The Knights’ main site was also against Martin Luther King Day as well a Black History Month, which it described as a “celebration of Negro culture,” where “White children across the land will be forced to under go (sic) hour after hour of non-sense about the great Black race.” The BOK site also took stands against Martin Luther King, and other members of the black community, including Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, “Ivy League professor and activist Cornel West,” and Barack Obama. Concerning the New Black Panthers, the BOK site stated, “We will not stand for black on White hate crimes nor intimidation with your thuggish ways spreading throughout the streets of America!”

On Martin Luther King, the BOK added:

The F.B.I. accumulated fourteen file cabinets of material on King, much of which as labeled ‘OBSCENE.’ It was reported King organized wild interracial sex orgies, which included acts of perversion, hired prostitutes, forced a young white civil rights workers (sic) to prove her loyalty to him, etc.

The WCK was also against what it saw as a double standard where “Whites are told that we should not think in terms of our race with pride, but non-whites are urged to

promote their race,” and “Whites are told that we should step aside in the political arena and allow non-whites more political power.” The WCK site added:

Non-white politicians openly say that in areas where (sic) their numbers are in the majority they should be the only ones that should be allowed to represent their people, while at the same time whites are told when it comes to politics we should be color blind.

The WCK site also stated:

It is always curious how there can be a ‘Miss Black America’ pageant, but the establishment (sic) would never allow a ‘Miss White America’ pageant. In many schools around the country, blacks can wear black power T-shirts with a black fist on front, but White students are expelled if they brandish a ‘White Power’ symbol or a Confederate flag.”

The WCK site contended in history, non-whites “are viewed in a proud and positive way,” but, “Nearly everything that has gone wrong is blamed on Whites today.” The WCK site concluded, “Whites are told of how bad we treated the Indians, we're told that we stole Texas from Mexico, we're told that Whites have been a leading factor in the destruction of our environment.” According to the WCK site, “The reputations of some of our White heroes from the Founding Fathers to the men at the Alamo are under constant attack,” adding “If this double standard continues, the White youth will have had it's (sic) past stripped away from it.” The WCK site concluded if a racial double standard was allowed to continue, “Our Christian civilization, culture and history will cease to exist.”

The Knights Party’s main site also commented on the perception that white young people were not being filled with a sense of white pride, adding, “White youth feel they have no cultural roots. Imagine, with all of the wonderful history – science, art, music, exploration, etc. attributed to the white race, our youth still feel they have no culture worthy of their admiration.” The site added in a message to young people that those who run the media “think normal white heterosexual people are weird,” and “Its (sic) fun

to laugh at white people and call them names in sit-coms.” Fascinatingly, the Knights Party’s main web site also targeted younger people by blaming many of the current problems in the United States on their parents, the Baby Boomers. According to the Knights’ main site, Baby Boomers “were told that the way to have peace and harmony was to take things away from white people and give them to nonwhite people,” adding, “Many of your parents can’t understand what it means to have White pride.” The site also stated, “The politicians of today are the messed up kids of the 60’s (sic). They came from the homosexual, race mixing, Communist, anti-law and order, revolution.”

The BOK site was also against multiculturalism, stating, “Over 100 languages are ripping apart the foundation of our educational system and national cohesiveness.” In addition, the BOK site called Kwanza “the multiculturalists’ answer to Christmas,” stating it was “simply invented in 1966 by a black radical named Ronald Everett.” The BOK site also stated that in 1971, Everett was convicted of assaulting a female “and he served time in prison.” The BOK site concluded, “In 1979, he was hired to run the Black Studies Department at Cal State Long Beach, in all likelihood, the first ex-con to do so.”

Christian Identity Klans blamed many problems on Jewish people. Although the WCK did not link to any skinhead or Nazi web sites, or stated it had a connection to these groups, some of the rhetoric found on the WCK site would match that of skinhead sites. As examples, while not using the term ZOG, the WCK site instead called the United States government, “the unholy satanic government,” adding that “the parasitic Jew” runs the government and “Jewish (Satanic) Holidays are taking precedent over Christian Holidays.” The CURA site, however, stated it was against the “Zionist occupied government.”

The CURA site contended, "Subversion has always been the number one tactic of the Jews in their struggle for world domination, and to systematically snuff out the white race." According to the CURA site, Jewish people had "subverted our government, our institutions, our religions, our schools, the Media." The BOK site stated it was against a Jewish tax on food:

The Kosher Food Tax is the biggest consumer fraud existing in America. Examine every item in your cupboards for either the (U) or (K) labels. These symbols represent a Jewish "blessing" and when these small symbols are detected, it means that you have unwittingly paid a tax to a Jewish religious group.

### **Christian**

The FWK, IKKKKK and SAK sites contained no messages coded as having a racial overtone the organization was against. However, the ideas of fairness, a double standard, and discrimination toward whites were a constant for the other Christian Klans. The UWK was against "Discrimination against Whites by Federal Courts and Laws," as well as Affirmative Action which the site stated was a form of "reverse discrimination." The UNSK added, "The 'politically correct' government is telling people the Klan is nothing more than a terrorist group, a hate group and a violent group," arguing instead that the Klan is made up of "proud white people struggling to survive, sworn to uphold and defend the constitution, and to honor Jesus Christ and His teachings."

A few Christian Klan groups denounced the Black Panthers, such as the MWK, Texas Rebel Knights, the UNSK, and the UWK. The UNSK site stated the Black Panthers "go on national t.v. (sic), or out in the streets and openly order their people to murder whites, and kill even the white babies," adding that the Black Panthers "do not get charged with hate crimes when they commit some of the most atrocious murders

even known.” The UWK was also against Revered Wright, Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, the Congressional Black Caucus, ACRON, Black separatists, and gangsta rappers.

Some Christian Klans denounced race mixing, such as the DRK, Knight Riders, MWK, and UWK. Interestingly, while the IKA, a non-Christian Klan, included Biblical passages to justify its stance against race mixing, most Christian Klans did not quote Scripture. The Knight Riders site argued, “God was the first segregationist. He placed us on separate continents for a reason,” The Knight Riders site concluded, “The powers that lead you to believe that race mixing and desegregation of our society is right are demonic, and are under the direction of Satan himself.” The MWK site stated its membership was made up only of “Aryans of Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Nordic, Basque, Lombard, Celtic, and Slavic background,” and did not include “Jews, Negroes, Mexicans, Orientals, and Mongrels.” The UWK site stated its organization opposed “miscegenation (race mixing). Almighty God created the various races and assigned them each a place in His plan,” adding, “His law is ‘kind after kind’ and we seek to reestablish that law.” The UWK concluded, “Race mixing is a very effective way to destroy the culture, heritage, historical roots and identity of any people.” In one of the few examples of Scripture quoting from a Christian Klan, the UWK included four Biblical passages to support its argument that God did not want the races to mix including Genesis 1:24, Exodus 33:16, Leviticus 20:24, and Joshua 23: 12-13. Genesis 1:24 was the most cited Biblical passage to explain the Klan’s position against race mixing, which read, “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind; and it was so.”

The UWK site was also against race mixing, however, not simply because of Biblical justification, but also stating, "Genetics prevent us from all being equal." The UWK site maintained, "If the races are equal, then why does Bureau of Justice Statistics show that more Blacks commit crimes than Whites? Why does the CDC show that HIV/AIDS is more prevalent in Blacks?"

Some of the Christian Klans made specific statements against the government and Obama administration. As an example, the Dixie Rangers site suggested, "Jews command a disproportionate number of positions within the Obama administration." The IKKKKK stated it did not support President Obama particularly as it related to "Obamacare." The Knight Riders site added, "In our last Presidential election, many of us were stunned by the decision of Americans to vote for the first non White (sic) to be our commander and chief." The UWK site concluded, "The danger to America is not Barack Obama but a citizenry capable of entrusting a man like him with the Presidency," adding, "American can survive a Barack Obama, who is, after all, merely a fool." The MWK was against the federal government prosecuting Klansmen for actions committed during the Civil Rights Era, stating, "The jewish (sic) and negro dominated government in Washington, D.C. has seen fit these last several years to open a witchhunt (sic) against elderly patriots."

While the Dixie Rangers, Knight Riders, and UWK did not espouse anti-Semitic language based on Biblical passages, and did not refer to Jewish people as the Devil or seed of Satan, the sites included statements suggesting the existence of Jewish controlled media. The UWK site stated, "The movie industry and media, both Jew controlled have made it a point to focus on the negative conduct of a few individuals and



use this as a brush to paint all Klan organizations.” According to the UWK site, “The vast majority of Jews do not accept the Deity of Jesus Christ or His sacrifice at their hands,” adding “The Ku Klux Klan is a Christian association which does not apologize for refusing membership to Jews.”

The DRK site stated, “Jews, who comprise less than 2% of the U.S. population, I repeat, less than 2% of the U.S. population have so much control and dominance over the flow of information in this country.” The DRK site added, “The Zionist Jews control approximately 96% of the media in this country; this includes television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, and movies.” The Dixie Ranger’s site added:

While the Zionist-controlled media attacks all things that give us strength, they promote destructive, cancerous perversions such as homosexuality, promiscuity, drug abuse, White guilt, race mixing, illegal immigration, idolatry, blind allegiance to a strong central government that robs us blind, the welfare / warfare state, the bondage of a Zionist-controlled central bank (The Federal Reserve), and dependence on the government instead of self-reliance, and community cohesiveness.

The DRK site also blamed Jewish people for other issues, such as the “curtailment of gun rights (10 out of 11 Jews in the Senate voted for the Brady Bill, while 26 out of 31 Jews in the House voted for it), forced integration (NAACP was founded by Jews),” as well as “governmental control over the internet (Bill S.3480, or the Protecting Cyberspace as a National Asset Act (PCNAA) introduced by Jewish Rep. Joseph Lieberman, I-CT).” The DRK site concluded, “All of these efforts have been spearheaded by Zionist Jews hell-bent on destroying our way of life while they control every single aspect of it.”

But, after including these statements on its site, the DRK also stated it was not an anti-Jewish organization, stating, “While the Jewish hate groups would have you believe that we are anti-Semitic; this is misleading.” The site added, “Anyone who disagrees

with the Jews is quickly branded an 'anti-Semite.' However, this is a misnomer." The DRK site concluded, "To begin with, Jews are not the only Semites. Arabs are Semites as well, having descended from the same common ancestors as the Jews." The DRK site added, "Arabs do not run our media, our banks, and our government. It is the Zionists who want complete dominance of the Middle East and are using our military apparatus, tax dollars and young lives to achieve their goals."

The DRK site also stated its opposition to what it called "White guilt," while the UWK site stated, "The Era of White Guilt is over," after whites in American elected not just a black President but "A very liberal black man who spent his early career race-hustling banks, praying in a racist church for 20 years, and actively worked with America-hating domestic terrorists."

Immigration from non-white countries was an issue on three Christian Klan sites. The MWK site was against illegal immigration from Mexico, stating, "Time for Mexico and Mexicans to get the hell out!!!," adding, "Its (sic) time to declare war on these illegal mexican's (sic)." The UWK site was against immigration from "aliens," stating, "American thought and life have been perverted from their true course by excessive alien mixtures." The UWK site added:

It is foolish to expect, and it has been proven wrong by experience, to hope that people of alien races, with different traditions, different education and different ideals, which are bred into them both by inheritance and their entire training, can within a few years, understand America, the American spirit, or the Americans ideals.

This UWK's stance against immigration, however, was not considered racist, as the UWK site concluded:

It is no reflection on other people that they are different, but it is a fact that they are, and that the attempts which they make to subvert American

thought to their own are threatening the most fundamental factors in American life.

The UNSK site concluded illegal immigrants from Mexico “hate their own country so much they break our laws to enter here, but then want us to change our ways to be like where they left.” The UNSK added that the United States borders “remain in chaos,” as the government sits “idly by while illegals swam across doing whatever it was they want to do,” and asserted that the government allows “more Hispanics and other third world minorities in” under the guise that “we are a multi racial (sic) country.” The UNSK concluded, “Well, it was not intended to be from the start.”

Minority on white crime was an issue on Christian Identity Klan sites, and Christian Klan sites as well. As an example, according to the UWK site, “Negroes have committed countless acts of violence against whites,” adding, “Arson, looting, riots, and gang attacks are but a few manifestations of the Negro violence against the White Culture.”

The UNSK was one of the few Klan sites which mentioned Muslims specifically, and stated it was against the government allowing a “Mosque to be built right at ground zero, dishonoring the thousands who died there, and their families.” The UNSK was also against allowing “prayer rugs and special rooms in our schools for the Muslims, but deny our own children the right to pray to the true God.” In addition, the UNSK saw perceived a double standard in how the Klan was treated by law enforcement whereas “radical Muslims are left alone when they have Jihad training camps all across America, and they vow to bring a holy war against us, right here in our homeland.”

### **Protestant**

Both Protestant Klans were against race mixing and miscegenation. As an example, the TAK maintained the “purity of the white blood must be maintained,” adding

that “One of the crying evils of the times is the mixture of white blood with that of Negro and other mongrel races.” Interestingly, the TAK was one of the few sites that mentioned race mixing has a long history in the United States, stating, “This evil has gone on since Colonial days until perhaps more than half of the Negroes in the United States have some degree of white blood flowing in their veins.” In addition, the TAK blamed whites for race mixing, stating, “The guilt for this state of affairs rests upon those members of the White Race who for a moment of sexual pleasure have betrayed their own kind and betrayed their own blood.” The TAK site also stated race mixing “is not only biologically disastrous but is giving rise to grave social problems.”

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site included denouncements of race mixing using Biblical passages to support its arguments, such as Acts 17:26 and Romans 9:19-24, arguing that “God wills all races to be as He made them. Any violation of God’s original purpose manifests insubordination to Him.” The site maintained, according to Genesis 1:11-12, 6:20, and 7:14, “God made everything to reproduce ‘after his own kind,’” adding that “kind means type and color. He would have kept them all alike to begin with had he intended equality.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site added Ezra 9-10, Nehemiah 9-13, Jeremiah 50:37 and Ezekiel 30:5, explained, “Misogeneration (sic) means the mixture of the races, especially the black and white races, or those of outstanding type, or color. The Bible even goes farther that this this.” According to the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site, the Bible warns “against different branches of the same stock intermarrying such as Jews marrying the descendants of Abraham.” In this last statement, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site differed from Christian Identity Klans in that it did not purport Jewish people were from the seed of Satan, but that they were not the descendants of Abraham.

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. was also against a double standard in the educational system which it perceived as an-white, stating that in schools, “White Christian children, are taught to be ashamed of their culture. Our children are taught at public expense, theirs is a culture of slavery, bigotry and oppression; they are schooled to be ashamed because they are white.” The site added that white school children are taught “to make amends” for the actions of whites in the past, and “must condemn the founders of our nation and hate their history, heritage and culture.”

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. was also against a number of leaders in the black community, specifically, Samir Shabazz of The New Black Panther Party, Louis Farrakhan, Al Sharpton, Revered Jeremiah Wright, and the NAACP.

### **The Pro-American Klan**

While the Klan of the Reconstruction Era was solely located in those states from the former Confederate States of America, the Klan of the 1920s was a national organization and frequently referred to itself as a pro-American organization advocating American-Americanism. For this reason, all sites were examined for pro-American and patriotic messages. Such messages would not only depict the Klan group as a patriotic organization, but would also align the group with the largest Klan group in the history of the United States, the Second Era Klan, which touted the organization as the protector of American values and supporter of “100% Americanism.” However, the 1960s Klan was anti-federal authority, particularly as it related to integration, while the Klan of the late 1970s and 1980s was imbued with anti-government rhetoric. Therefore, an examination of pro-American messages, or anti-government messages, would reveal whether a Klan was traditional or modern. This was particularly important as non-

Christian and Christian Identity Klans frequently blamed the federal government for being anti-white.

Although not all the Klan groups examined included pro-American messages, almost all of the groups included references and inferences that the Klan was a patriotic organization if for no other reason than the fact the Klan was defending what it perceived were American values, or was protecting white America or white Christian America. In addition, some Klans made references to the United States flag arguing it was the true flag of the Klan.

### **Non-Christian**

The Empire Knights site did not have any pro-American stances, and instead made anti-American statements, including, “America is the murderer of our race,” and used the phrase, “The race murdering U.S. government.” The IKA site, however, did include pro-American rhetoric, sometimes using Biblical passages to support its message. The IKA site stated, “We believe that the United States of America fulfills the prophesied (II Sam. 7:10; Isa. 11:12; Ezek 36:24) place where Christians from all the tribes of Israel would be regathered (sic),” and “North America is the wilderness (Hosea 2:14) to which God brought the dispersed seed of Israel.” Interesting to once again note how often the IKA used Biblical passages to support its arguments while neither a belief in Christianity nor God was necessary for membership.

Not all of the IKA’s pro-American statements were Biblically supported, including stating the IKA “is a politically independent organization and opposes any thing, person or organization that is un-American,” and “is an organization that is pro-American.” In a pro-American message, though nihilistic warning, the IKA site stated, “You are a free

citizen of the United States of America, the greatest Country on Earth that is becoming a third world country.”

### **Christian Identity**

Christian Identity Klans often coupled their pro-American statements with inferences that the United States was in danger and only the Klan could prevent the country’s destruction. As an example, while not speaking about itself, the KPVL site stated the Knights Party was “the political PARTY of the future and the Last Hope for America.”

Other Christian Identity Klans included pro-American sentiments connected to statements that they also supported Christianity and white people. For example, while not directly a pro-American position, on three occasions, the Knights Party site at arkpower-light.com, stated a variation of, “We stand for God, Race, and Nation,” and on one occasion adding the qualifier “the White Race.” The BOK site also stated it stood for “God, Race and Nation.”

The Knights Party’s main site did contain some pro-American statements, but these statements often included connections to Christianity. The Knights Party’s main site stated three pro-American messages, including that it wished “God’s Blessings Upon America,” and loved “America and the Christian foundation of our nation.” The Knights’ main site also referred to the Klan as a patriotic group, and added, “In America our flag is still flown with pride.”

Some Christian Identity sites did contain pro-American messages, but often qualifying these statements by singling out White America. The CURA site stated, “We believe the Klan to be an American organization, intended to combat problems that

White Christian Americans are facing, inside our own borders.” The KPVL site stated it supported white American veterans.

The BOK and CNK KKK sites were the only Christian Identity Klans with unqualified pro-American messages. The BOK site identified its organization as pro-American, stating, “Klansmen are White Patriotic Christians,” adding that the Klan was a “patriotic organization,” and Klan members were “Proud Americans.”

The CNK KKK site stated it was a “politically independent organization and opposes any thing, person or organization that is un-American.” The CNK KKK also stated the American flag represented “American Liberties,” and was the symbol of the freedoms provided in the Constitution. The CNK KKK site also tied its pro-American statements into honoring military veterans, stating, “We will forever defend the principles of pure Americanism, and thus perpetuate the sacred memory of our Venerable and Heroic Dead.” The CNK KKK site added, “You may spew hate, but remember a Klansman died for your right to exist, a Klansman fought for your country, so you can exist, a Klansman still walks in front of you so you can have your freedom.” Similar to the CNK KKK’s dissociation with skinheads and Nazis among the Christian Identity Klans, the CNK KKK’s pro-American statements most likely were the influence of its International Imperial Wizard. Larsen’s influence over the CNK KKK and years in the Klan most likely explained the CNK KKK’s pro-American and pro-military stance as the site was filled with multimedia and sentiments dedicated to American soldiers and American symbolism.

The CWK and White Camelia Knights did not make any patriotic or pro-American statements. Instead, the WCK referred to the United States government as “two-faced,”



adding it “promotes discrimination of White people,” and “promotes the destruction of our race.”

### **Christian**

More than any other Klan group, the Christian Klans showed the most reverence toward the American flag, and along with the Protestant Klans were the most pro-American. The AGKK sites stated the group carried “out the purpose of forming a Patriotic society composed of only those whos (sic) privilege it was to be born under the Stars and Stripes.” The AGKK added, “We fly the American flag. Thats (sic) the original flag of the Klan.” The FWK site stated the Stars and Stripes were the flag of the Klan. The UWK site also supported the American flag, and included a description of its symbolism, stating, “Its RED is the BLOOD of American heroes that stained a hundred battlefields,” adding, “Its WHITE symbolizes the PURITY of AMERICAN WOMANHOOD and the SANCTITY of AMERICAN HOMES.” The site also stated, “Its BLUE is but a patch of the America's unclouded sky, snatched from the diamond-studded canopy that bends over our native land,” and “Its STARS represent an aggregation of UNDEFEATED STATES bound together in an inseparable union.” A similarly worded description was also found on the Christian Identity CNKKKK site.

Native born American and American-Americanism were also recurrent ideas on many of the Klan sites. The AGKK site stated, “We support 100% Americanism.” The FWK site stated it supported “the principles of pure Americanism,” adding, “We love our nation.” The AGKK sites concluded the Klan was a “Native born American movement dedicated to all the high and holy ideals and principles of real American patriotism.” The UWK site stated, “We believe America is for Americans,” and warned people visiting its

web site to continue if they were “White, with non-Jewish ancestry and are 100% American.”

The AGKK and UWK sites stated their organizations were “pro-American and opposes any thing, person, or organization that is un-American.” The TRK referred to itself as “an American secret association.” The Knight Riders site stated, “Our fraternal brotherhood is an all American White Christian organization.” The UWK stated its purpose was to “unite white persons, native-born, Gentile citizens of the United States of America, who owe no allegiance of any nature or degree to any foreign government, nation, institution, sect, ruler, person, or people.”

The IKKKKK site included a pro-American message related to fixing America, stating, “Let’s get America under control & back on track!” The UNSK concluded, “Americans have fought and died to preserve our freedom,” adding, “We need these types of dedicated men today to restore America and the white race to their proper places.” In a statement similar to “God, Race, and Country,” the Dixie Rangers site stated its organization was “dedicated to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our White Race, our Children and Families, and our Country.” The UNSK stated its goal was to “bring our wonderful nation back into God’s grace,” adding that America was “a noble nation of great people.”

The SAK site did not contain any pro-American messages, and instead, referred to itself as a Southern organization, while the MWK advocated “America First.”

### **Protestant**

The TAK site included seven references to the organization being pro-American, referring to itself as a “White Patriotic Christian organization,” and restricted its membership to those “patriotic to American ideals.” The TAK site also referred to itself

as a “distinctively American-American organization.” The TAK site referred to the United States as “the foremost nation in all the earth,” and a “great and glorious country.” The TAK site concluded that “The Ku Klux Klan is an American organization and we stand for American ideals.”

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site contained 12 pro-American statements including that it worked “tirelessly for positive Americanism,” and stood for “America first, for Americans first.” The site also commented its organization was supported by “patriotic Americans,” and new members were required to “take an oath to practice 100% Americanism.”

Interestingly, unlike Klans with Realms in other countries, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated, “The Ku Klux Klan was founded by Americans to work on American issues it was never intended for other countries.” The site later added members “must be a U.S. citizen and have a U.S. address,” as the organization did “not accept foreign nationals, or have foreign associates.” The Protestant Klans proportionately included the most pro-American messages of any of the Klan groups which closely matched the ideology of the 100% Americanism 1920s Klan.

### **The White People’s Organization**

Each site was examined for occurrences where a Klan group made the argument for the need for pro-white organizations, or made the case that the Klan represented a pro-white organization. This argument was often accompanied with a call for equality and fairness, believing a double standard existed in that if minority groups were allowed to have such associations, then whites should be as well. As an example, the FWK site stated, “Where is OUR Civil Rights group?... we have us, the supporters and members of the Fraternal White Knights!”

Some groups specifically called themselves pro-white organizations, while others indicated they were fighting for the rights and survival of white people. On the Imperial Klans of America web site, it stated, “The IKA has been a functioning pro-White organization since 1997,” and added, “Our aims include fighting for White Civil Rights.”

### **Non-Christian**

The IKA site not only described itself as a pro-white organization, but also stated it was “helping the pro-white movement by fighting against the SPLC.” The IKA added, “We will continue to love one another of our own race, culture and future no matter what the devil and his world says about us.” The Empire Knights site provided no statement that it was a pro-white organization but did maintain a connection to Wotanism, which is a white’s only religion.

### **Christian Identity**

The Knights Party’s main site made numerous references to them being a pro-white or whites’ rights organization including, “The Knights Party is fighting for the rights of White Americans,” and “We are a legally recognized, white rights political organization working to promote western Christian civilization.” The site added, “We represent white Christians,” and later stated, “The Knights Party is a professional White rights organization.” But, most significantly was the statement, “NO ONE is speaking out on behalf of my white Christian heritage and family... NO ONE but the klan (sic)!”

The Knights Party at kkk.com, did not call the Knights Party a pro-white organization, but did advocate for “solidarity in white communities around the world.” The Knights site at arkpower-light.com stated the Knights were “the promoters of White Christian civilization.” The CURA site also stated that its purpose was to “preserve and promote white heritage.” In a discussion about “White Christian Culture,” the arkpower-

light.com site asked users, “Is it wrong to instill this sense of pride and appreciation for our culture in our children – to empower our children with knowledge of their ancestry?” The KPVL site also supported the promotion of whites, and both the KPVL and Knights’ main sites both stated the “Knights Party” as a whole “will in the years to come, become recognized by the American people as THE WHITE RIGHTS MOVEMENT.” The Knights Party’s main site stated it supported both “racial pride,” and promoted “love and appreciation of our unique European (White) culture.” The Knights’ site at kkk.com called for “solidarity in white communities around the world.”

Although the White Camelia Knights did not call its organization pro-white, it did offer the insinuation that a double standard existed, stating that “If a White man were to stand up and pronounce his pride for his Race and his Heritage, he is called a Racist and a Bigot.” The themes of fairness and a double-standard were frequent on many of the Christian Identity Klan sites when discussions of pro-white organizations appeared. The WCK site included a discussion about a double-standard preventing whites from having a pro-white organization:

The White man is told that it is wrong for him to belong to a pro-white organization. While at the same time it is greatly accepted for Negroes, Jews and Hispanics to belong to Pro-Race organizations. The Negroes have the NAACP watching their rights. L.U.L.A.C. is out there watching the Hispanics. The A.D.L. and the J.D.L. is out there to remind us of the Holocaust every chance they get. But, if a White Man were to join the Klan he would more than likely lose his job and be a social outcast.

The WCK site concluded, “If you join a pro-White group that promotes the history, heritage, culture of the White race, you are given thumbs down and called a hater and a racist.”

The BOK made a similar statement while the Knights Party made two arguments, all similar to the statement on the WCK site. In one of the Knights Party’s statements on

the existence of pro-minority groups, it concluded, “There are thousands of organizations working for the interests of Negroes, Asians, Mexicans, Jews, homosexuals – you name it! Large corporations dole out the money to all kinds of groups – many who are working to crush white Christian Revival.” The site condemned the idea that “Everyone is applauded when they work on behalf of these organizations, yet the white Christian man and woman are not afforded the same courtesy.” The site concluded, “Have you ever thought to yourself, ‘I wish there was a political organization that speaks up for a white Christian person like me’? Well, there is – The Knights’ Party.”

The CURA site also claimed to be fighting for white rights, stating, “We are a fraternal, patriotic, white Christian coalition, standing up for white rights and promoting the ideas of Western Christian Civilization.” The Confederate White Knights’ web site took the pro-white stance of fighting for white existence, stating the “CWKKKK also honors every racially aware White person, past and present, that has worked or works for survival and advancement of the White race.” The CNKKKK site did not claim to be a pro-white organization, but did state one of the “Ideals A Klansman Stands For” was “The White Race.”

The BOK site stated that as an organization it defends “the interests of the White population,” and added that “the Klan has been fighting for the rights of Whites in this country, and the Klan today continues that fight.” The BOK site concluded it was fighting for “white civil rights.” Notably, the BOK site also stated it respected “other pro white organizations” and would continue to work with them. The significance of this statement was that the BOK did not specify Klan organizations but pro-white organizations which

could mean any groups that also fights for “white rights,” such as skinheads, Nazis, White Nationalists, etc. As noted, while the BOK site only linked to the MWK, it also linked to a number of White Nationalist and General Hate sites.

## **Christian**

The Christian Klans often portrayed their organizations as pro-white, but unlike the BOK, only worked with other Klans in defense of whites and stated that only the Klan protected whites from their enemies. As an example, the UWK site referred to the Klan as the only organization of white men who retained any white pride, concluding that “Zion has conquered all, and we are the slaves.” The UWK site also stated:

Now it is we, not the Negroes, who must begin to struggle for freedom; and this time there will be no sweet Abolitionists to hand us freedom on a platter and coo platitudes in our ears. Today we are disposed and alone.

The site maintained, “Today, ‘Sambo’ is a white male living in suburbia with his head up his ass, taking orders from women, immigrants and Jews.” The UWK concluded, “Today, the only white men left who have any honor are the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.” The UWK site added it was looking for members who were “God-fearing moral men and women to help us continue our noble fight for survival of the White race.” The site concluded, “The United White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan stands for: the White Race.”

The Dixie Rangers’ site included statements positioning the organization as pro-white and as an organization that stood for “White Pride,” while also arguing, along with the UWK, whites do not have a pro-white organization with the exception of the Klan.

The UWK site stated:

Do you believe that minorities have a right to express pride in their culture and heritage in this nation? Do you believe that White people have the same right, without being exposed to ridicule or a ‘witch hunt’ for doing so?

The DRK site stated its organization promoted “white heritage,” and stated the Klan was “on the front lines. We are the ones taking the heat while standing up for White people.” According to the Dixie Rangers’ site, “We feel that it is our duty to stand up for and defend our race when so many others are doing so much to weaken and destroy it.”

The UNSK concluded, “The Klan is one of the last true champions fighting for White American.” The UWK also stated, “No groups has more to be rightfully proud of than the White people of the world,” adding, “The glories and greatness that men and women of our race have won over the centuries should serve as a source of eternal pride and inspiration to White people everywhere.” The UWK site also stated, “We have been a mighty race of builders, explorers, artists, warriors, inventors, philosopher and cultivators,” and provided a list of examples of accomplishments made by white people in these fields and concluded, “To list the immense accomplishments of our remarkable race would require the work of a lifetime.” In a statement that it is a pro-white organization, the UWK site concluded, “We are determined to maintain and enrich our cultural racial heritage. So join with us, as we take back our pride in the White Race!!!” The UWK later added, “No race has more to be proud of then the White Race!!!”

The UNSK stated, “The goal of the United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is to unite White Christians through the bond of brotherhood and make them aware of the problems facing our country,” adding it was a “national organization striving to protect and preserve White Christian heritage and culture long into the future.” The UNSK resolved, “One of the things that the white race needs most is unity.”



The AGKK site stated, "The Association of Georgia Klans, is a white man's organization dedicated to the interests of the white race." The Knight Riders site stated, "We believe in the protection and advancement of the white race." The MWK stood for the "preservation of the white race." The TRK stated it supported "the preservation, protection, and advancement of the white, Caucasian, Anglo Saxon, Aryan Race." The IKKKKK stated the fiery cross was used to rally whites together against their enemies. While the SAK did not indicate being a pro-white organization, all of the SAK member organizations did.

### **Protestant**

The TAK site stated its organization was a "White Patriotic Christian organization," a "White Man's organization," and required members believe in the preservation and advancement of the White Race." The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site maintained, "The Ku Klux Klan is THE only organization dedicated to preserving white Culture!" adding that "We must be legally recognized as the voice of White Christian America," and specifically about its organization stated, "We do indeed represent the voice of White Christian America." In a statement hinting at the extinction of the White race, the site added, "We insist the white race has the right to exist, and this right must be acknowledged. If our right to exist is not established, the sure and certain destruction of all our history and heritage is at hand."

Like other Klan groups, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site commented on the double-standard that an organization supporting white rights does not exist, stating:

The black has the NAACP, the 'Native Americans' AIM, the Hispanic, La Rasa; there are representative organizations for every culture, even people who are in this country illegally have institutions that work in their interest. White people are NOT allowed to be represented in any way to any degree or they are RACISTS!

## **Traditional and Family Values**

Thematic coding included examining whether the Klan supported traditional and family values. The inclusion of traditional and family values would be a means to make the Klan appear more mainstream and rebrand their image into an organization more acceptable to white middle-class America. The Klan including references to family and family values is logical considering the term “klan,” from the word clan, literally means kinship or family. As an example, the UNSK stated, “We are a family, and we will look out for our own.”

Coding traditional and family values was not straightforward and judgment on the part of the researcher was used to differentiate when a belief was either a traditional or family value versus a conservative mainstream value. The distinction was issues not political in nature, but with a moralistic quality, would be considered traditional/family values. As an example, the Fraternal White Knights stated on its site it supported “the purity of womanhood,” indicating a desire to protect one’s family, and thus considered a traditional/family value. Common themes on Klan sites were the desires to protect women and children (AGKKK), and for Klan to work for or dedicate themselves to the future of white children (AGKKK).

### **Non-Christian**

While the Empire Knights site made no references to traditional or family values, or the support thereof, the IKA site did, but for whites only, stating, “We must leave behind a decent, white world for our children.” The IKA site also advocated, “Men and women should conduct themselves according to the role of their gender in the traditional Christian sense that God intended.” This last statement was considered a family value

although its relevance was more toward homosexuality than necessarily toward a man and woman's role in the home.

### **Christian Identity**

Among Christian Identity Klans, statements supporting traditional values were often in connection with pro-white sentiments. The Knights Party site at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com), made six references to the Knights Party's desire to provide a better future for white children, with such statements as, "We are here for our White Brothers and Sisters and their children!" and "become a part of an important grass roots White Christian Revival Movement to insure a bright future for our children!" The site also advocated "caring for the sick and poor, of educating our children in strong moral values and Christian responsibility, of strong families who stay together, (and) of personal responsibility." The Knights Party's main site at [kkk.bz](http://kkk.bz), stated the Knights supported "the traditional family," and wanted its members to "live their lives as honorable, decent, dignified white people." The site added its members wanted "to provide and preserve a future for white Christian civilization and our children." The Knights' main site also stated its membership was "men and women who love our families, Jesus Christ, and America," and wanted to teach white children "them old time values of our forefathers." The site added it placed special importance on "family involvement," adding, "Its (sic) all about family whether its (sic) our immediate family or our racial family."

The CNKKKK site stated its organization was dedicated to "working for our children's future," and stated, "All Klan events are 100% family friendly," and in some of its event photos, younger children could be seen participating. In addition, the site stated its members had a "Responsibility toward Society," and part of membership in the CNKKKK was "about giving back to the community you live in."

The BOK site made three references to supporting “traditional” or “family” values, including that it was “working to rebuild a collapsing society on the principals of honor, honesty, duty, courage, brotherhood, and patriotism,” and would work in cooperation with other Klans sharing its “philosophies, disciplines, and traditional values in order to preserve and promote our race, heritage, and faith.” This was different from previous BOK statements concerning its willingness to work with any pro-white organization, by specifically indicating a willingness to work with other Klan groups. The KPVL singled out the military families and stated it was an “organization specifically addressing the concerns of White Military Veterans, Active Duty Service Members, Reservists, and their families.”

Meanwhile, the Confederate White Knights, CURA and White Camelia Knights made no reference to family or traditional values on their sites. This was particularly interesting as CURA referred to itself as a Church and the WCK provided a tremendous amount of information about Christian Identity theology, and yet traditional and family values did not appear on the sites.

### **Christian**

The UWK and UNSK were two of the Christian Klans which specifically stated they supported family and traditional values. As an example, the UNSK site stated, “We believe in family values,” and “strive to prepare a better future for our children.” The UNSK site added, “Teaching children family values helps them to understand the importance of family, to have an identity and to live according to the practices and traditions followed in the family.” The UNSK site also mentioned, “A family is defined as one who is connected by blood, faith, love, and happiness.”

The UWK site stated its membership was “composed of White Gentile Citizens, who are of sound mind and good moral character.” The UWK site also stated it wanted members who had “strong character,” and believed in “sympathy, responsibility for others, self-sacrifice and service.” According to the UNSK site, “Family values mean culture, tradition, morals, and rituals practiced by the family.” The UNSK added, “Looking at core values, we believe in being honest, forthright, and sincere with others,” adding, “Integrity is an important value. It means our word is our bond. Remember the golden rule: ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’”

The UNSK site added, “Some things here that we hold dear to our hearts are honor, trust, devotion, dedication, commitment, integrity, and valor,” as well as courage, sacrifice and “social justice.” The UNSK site also stated its organization believed in compassion, and added that one “of the founding principals (sic) of this order was the caring for widows and orphans. Compassion for those less fortunate than us, regardless of skin color or religious beliefs.” The concept of helping those less fortunate, including those who were not white, was found on some Klan sites, including the UNSK, exemplified in the Latin motto “Non Silba Sed Anthar,” which stands for “Not for self but others.” The UNSK site added, “We have built hospitals, churches, given food and aid to the needy, taken care of widows and orphans, and many other acts and no, not just to whites.” The UNSK concluded, “Over the past decades there are numerous accounts of acts of good that the Klan has done for people of ALL races,” adding, “This is what is known as doing the Right thing.”

The IKKKKK site did make a family value statement, where from participating in cross lighting ceremonies, members were filled with the “Holy desire and determination

to be a better person.” The TRK site stated the word Klan in Ku Klux Klan, referred to family and protecting one’s family. The DRK, Knight Riders, MWK, and SAK sites made no references to family or traditional values.

### **Protestant**

The TAK site made no statements directly supporting traditional or family values. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site, however, stated it stood “for family values,” arguing that “the future of our children is at risk.” The site added, “Truly the last hope of our nation begins with our children, in them lies the future of all our history, and heritage.” The site even maintained it supported family values and protecting the future of white children, arguing, “If we do not act now, our children will spit on our graves, because when we had the chance to turn things around, we took the easy way out, and left them stuck with the end result, a weakened society.”

### **Supporting the Conservative Mainstream**

Thematically, Klan sites were also examined for support of politically conservative issues. The Klan is a rightwing organization and supports a number of traditionally conservative issues. These issues generally have two major premises: more individual freedoms and promotion of strength. The promotion of individual freedoms was demonstrated in a desire for less control from the federal government, as well as the ability to promote Klan beliefs under the tenants of free speech and freedom of association. The promotion of strength was not only nationalistic in promoting American jobs, industry and the military, but also in supporting law enforcement, and the safety of citizens from what the Klan perceived was a dangerous and violent world.

In a chicken or the egg standoff, it was difficult to determine which issues were mainstream the Klan supported, and which issues the Klan supported that were mainstream. As an example, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated:

Not so long ago the very idea of securing our nations (sic) borders was considered radical, yet the Ku Klux Klan has long called for this measure. Random drug testing of welfare recipients was unheard of by any but Klansmen, yet today certain states do this routinely. Our "radical" ideas have become mainstream.

The Knights Party's main site made a similar pronouncement, stating, "We share many beliefs with the Home schooling movement, Border Protection groups, Right to Life groups, Traditional Marriage organizations, American Sovereignty groups, Small business and Agricultural groups, Second Amendment crusades," and strongly back "law enforcement and individual rights." Not surprisingly, the UWK referred to itself as "a White Christian, right wing, conservative organization," and stated, "Our objective is freedom, not peace."

### **Non-Christian**

While the Empire Knights did not support any conservative issues, the IKA supported the First and Second Amendments, and specifically "Free Expression and Freedom of the Press." The IKA also supported the "right to peacefully assemble, the right to free speech and the right to take part in our religious ceremony of a Klan cross lighting."

The IKA also supported the "death penalty for repeat drug dealers," homeschooling, and "state's rights and states' sovereignty." In addition, the IKA requested the government put "American troops on our borders," arguing that "We do this for almost any country that asks for it. Now we want the same. Put America first."

Considering the amount of Biblical passages used to justify its positions, the IKA site also stated it wanted the United States to “Bring back the Bible,” adding, “This country was built on the Holy Bible and was originally intended to be free, White and Christian.” The IKA site therefore advocated the inclusion of “Christ in our lives, schools and public offices,” later adding, “All present world problems are a result of disobedience to the Laws of God.”

### **Christian Identity**

Some of the Christian Identity Klans supported typical conservative issues such as the right to private property (arkpower-light.com, the CNKKKK, and the KPVL), free enterprise (arkpower-light.com, BOK, and the CNKKKK), freedom of speech (arkpower-light.com, BOK, the CNKKKK, and CURA), freedom of the press (arkpower-light.com, BOK, and the CNKKKK), the right to bear arms and protection of the Second Amendment (arkpower-light.com, the BOK, the Knights Party, the CNKKKK, and CURA), free public schools (the BOK and the CNKKKK), the right to a jury trial (arkwpoer-light.com), and many supported state’s rights (the CNKKKK, the Knights’ main site, and the KPVL).

Some Christian Identity Klans also advocated drug testing for individuals on welfare or public assistance (arkpower-light.com, the Knights Party’s main site, and the KPVL), and national hospitals to quarantine AIDS patients to stop the spread of HIV (arkpower-light.com, and the Knights’ main site). On AIDS, the Knights Party’s main site and the KPVL site both stated, “The AIDS virus is almost inclusive to homosexuals and those not of European ancestry,” adding that “Everyone who gets it dies!” The Knights Party’s main site argued because AIDS is predominantly in the minority and



homosexual communities, “We may very well find that the Aids Plague will leave only white Christians at the ballot box in 20-30 tears.”

The concept of “America First” appeared on some Christian Identity Klan sites through protecting American jobs (arkpower-light.com and BOK), the deregulation of business monopolies (arkpower-light.com), outlawing the purchase of American property by foreign corporations and investors (Knights Party main site), and repealing free trade agreements like NAFTA (arkpower-light.com, the Knight’s main site, the KPVL, and WCK). The WCK site added that because of free trade agreements, “America has opened our markets to international trade which has cost us jobs and is lowering our living standards.”

The Knights’ main site and the KPVL sites stated they supported “all U.S. veterans,” adding, “We should find those that are missing and take care of those who have come home.” In addition to supporting veterans, the Knights’ main site and the KPVL sites also advocated “a strong defense department to safeguard American citizens,” but added, “The Department of Defense’s sole mission should be to defend our borders and not those of any other country or nation.” The Knights’ main site and the KPVL also supported putting “American troops on our border to STOP the flood of illegal aliens.” The KPVL advocated abolishing “all anti-gun laws,” and encouraged “every adult to own a weapon.” The site added, “Law abiding citizens should be allowed to defend their homes, business and families with out (sic) fear of the federal government treating them as the criminal.” The BOK, CURA, the Knights Party, and the KPVL advocated the death penalty and execution for those convicted of molestation and rape.

A number of the Christian Identity Klans supported home schooling, such as the KPVL. The WCK site, however, supported “truth and education,” and “not only prayer, but Christian teachings be taught in our schools.” On the issue of children, the Knights’ main site and the KPVL advocated, “Child abusers should receive corporal punishment.” The BOK site concluded, “If you are a wife beater, or abuse your children. If you fail to take well care of your wife and children. We Will Pay You A Visit!” The Knights Party at kkk.com instead stated it supported “law and order.”

The BOK and the CNK KKK also supported the Constitution “as originally written and intended,” referring to it as “the finest system of government ever conceived by man.” The CNK KKK also required members to swear to “believe in and defend the American way of life, and its Constitution and laws.” This stood as a stark contrast to other Christian Identity Klans that instead advocated a system of government conceived by God.

Although Christian Identity Klans hold a different view on religion than Christian and Protestant Klans, some still stated a desire for Jesus to have a greater influence in the lives of people, such as the BOK, the CNK KKK, and CURA. The BOK and CNK KKK sites advocated “positive Christianity,” the “right of the American people to practice their faith, including prayers in schools,” and stated members have a “Responsibility toward God.” The Knights Party’s main site stated, “America was the first Christian government,” and “America was founded as a Christian nation.” The Knights’ main site concluded, “Christianity was the key to liberty.” According to the Knights Party’s main site, the Bible teaches, “It is wrong to murder, lie, cheat, and steal,” it is “wrong for men

to have boyfriends and for girls to have girlfriends,” and “It is wrong for husbands to hurt their wives or for moms and dads to hurt their children.”

Meanwhile, the CNK KKK site took a conservative stance on gender roles. The CNK KKK site stated it believed in “the equality of men and women in political, religious, fraternal, civic and social affairs wherein there should be no distinction of sex.” In fact, the CNK KKK recently named a female member, Sister Tina, a “Grand Empress,” which the CNK KKK site stated has only been awarded two other times in the history of the Klan. However, the site also distinguished between male and female members in general, and did not accept females into full membership, as David Duke had advocated when he was Imperial Wizard. Instead, in the CNK KKK, women were still relegated to the LOTIE division, a remnant of the W K K K K. The CNK KKK site also stated, “All LOTIEs are to help with hosting events, catering, cleaning, etc...,” and added, “To make it simple women are helpers and companions to men. Not leaders, and not slaves.” The CNK KKK’s break from David Duke, as well as Don Black, and the changes they made in the Klan appear in other aspects of the CNK KKK’s beliefs as well. The CNK KKK site listed stromfront.org as a “Banned Site,” and stated it was one of three sites “CNK KKK members have been banned from joining or being any part of.” The CNK KKK site stated not only were members banded from the site, but from David Duke and Don Black in general “and any and all related sites that includes these aliens, including Facebook pages.” The CNK KKK also banned members from joining newsaxon.com and North East White Pride, both of which were listed as White Nationalist sites by the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The difference between the CNK KKK and other Christian Identity Klans, and particularly the Knights Party, was, whereas the CNK KKK had no

dealings with David Duke or Don Black and banned members from being part of their organizations, the Knights Party's main web site stated, "There are legitimate leaders in the racist movement such as David Duke, Pastor Robb, Don Black, Rachel Pendergraft," and others who the site stated "act and speak in a responsible manner."

## **Christian**

The Klan, and specifically the Christian Klans, was heavily influenced by the Bible and the Bible's teachings. This influence was apparent on the UWK site which provided insight into the meeting places of the Klan, and what Klansman were expected to find there. According to the UWK, "In a Klavern you will always find the wonderful book opened at the twelfth chapter of Romans," adding, "This is the most practical and the most complete chapter in the whole Bible on the (sic) CHRISTIAN living. It is a constant reminder of the tents of the CHRISTIAN FAITH, and is a KLANSMAN'S LAW OF LIFE." The UWK site maintained, "Every Klansman should read it the first thing every morning and endeavor to live by it during the day." According to the UWK site, Romans 12 reads, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service."

Some Christian Klans also professed traditional religious beliefs. The AGKK site stated it believed in the "Holy Bible," and in "Christ," who "died on the cross for our sins and rose on the third day." The FWK also believed in the "Bible." The Dixie Rangers Knights supported "righteous morals, and Christian values," as well as the "virtues of sexual abstinence for our youth." The MWK site supported "preserving Christianity," the "right to practice the Christian faith," and advocated for "prayers in school." The UWK site concluded, "There is a GOD," and that "The Holy Bible and The Constitution of the United States of America are the Greatest Safeguards of true liberty, Justice and the

Dignity of man ever devised.” The UWK site added, “America was founded as a Christian nation.” The UNSK also stated it believed in “Jesus Christ the Son of God,” and the “teaching of the Holy Bible.” The UWK also supported “voluntary prayer in schools.”

Some Klans professed a belief in protecting and defending the Constitution. The AGKK stated its organization was “sworn to uphold the lawful Constitution of the United States.” Other groups however simply stated they supported the Constitution such as the IKKKKK and FWK, while the Dixie Rangers site stated it believed “the U.S. Constitution to be more than just words.”

While rarely providing a full explanation, a number of Christian and Christian Identity Klan groups asserted that they believed in or supported the “Constitution as originally written.” It was not clear what parts of the original Constitution were supported, or what parts of the Constitution were no longer supported, or if this was a call against judicial activism, but it was interesting to note the number of Klans that supported this same ambiguous point, including the AGKK, the UNSK, and UWK.

Some groups mentioned specific parts of the Constitution they supported such as freedom of speech (FWK, MWK, and UWK), freedom of association (DRK), freedom of assembly and association (MWK and UWK), freedom of the press (FWK, MWK, and UWK), the Second Amendment (DRK, the Knight Riders, and the TRK), state’s rights (DRK and UWK), and freedom of worship (DRK, the FWK, MWK, and the UWK). At the same time, the UNSK site simply stated it supported freedom and liberty. On freedom of religion, the Dixie Rangers site stated, “All people who live in America by legal means have the right to live by their race and religions without fear.” The Knight Riders site was

the most pro-Second Amendment Klan, stating it supported the “NRA,” the “Right to Bear Arms,” and added, “With Guns, We Are Citizens. Without Them, We Are Subjects.”

On other political issues, the IKKKKK held significantly conservative political beliefs such as supporting the Republican control of the United States House of Representatives, and term limits for Congressmen. The UWK supported “limited government,” and promoting an “informed electorate through political education and publication of candidates’ positions on issues.”

Some Christian Klans stated they supported law enforcement (FWK, the Knight Riders, and the UWK), and the United States military (FWK and UWK). In a statement supporting law enforcement while disassociating with racism, the FWK site stated, “We stand unconditionally and unqualifiedly for the just and impartial enforcement of law and for the defense and protection of all rights and privileges of all citizens alike, regardless of race, color, creed, lineage, or tongue.” The Knight Riders site maintained its organization was “PROUD to Assist Law Enforcement in Criminal Activities in Neighborhoods and Towns.” Meanwhile, the UWK supported “building and maintain a strong U.S. military” in a “national strategy of peace through strength.” The UWK advocating a strong military included “Keeping foreign intelligence (CIA) and domestic intelligence (FBI) operations strong” to “investigate and control Communist and terrorist activity worldwide.” The UWK also advocated “Rigid law enforcement,” including “capital punishment,” stricter “enforcement of child abuse laws; rape laws and crime (sic) of violence,” and “strict enforcement of anti obscenity (sic), indecency and pornography laws.”

On economic issues, the UWK supported “free enterprise,” as well as “private property,” an “end to high-finance exploitation,” and a “balanced budget.” The UNSK supported “American made products,” encouraged Americans to “hire Americans,” and advocated “America first.” The UNSK added, “If Americans would stick together for just a little while, and boycott this imported garbage, the retailers would have no choice but to supply what we want.”

On immigration, the UWK supported “adopting laws requiring the immediate deportation of all illegal aliens,” as well as constructing “military bases along the Mexican borders and the use of military forces to patrol the border.” The UNSK advocated enforcing immigration laws, adding the government should “close the borders,” and “fine heavily the businesses who hire illegals.” The FWK concluded that “America is for Americans,” while the MWK and UWK sites supported, “National Sovereignty,” and “America First.”

Support for doing charity and service also appeared on some of the Klan sites, such as the DRK, FWK, and UNSK. The Dixie Rangers advocated “Charity Drives and Fundraising for the homeless and all children (all races)” while the FWK site stated:

The Klan has always been known for their giving spirit of charity and we practice that to this day with our donations to many different organizations that we think deserve our support including The Boy Scouts of America, The Red Cross, Toys For Tots and many others you would recognize. We also help locally with support for disaster victims, local food boxes and more!

Charity was a significant aspect of the 1920s Klan, and numerous sites contained images and discussions about the charitable work that the 1920s Klan performed for all citizens regardless of race or religion. Continuing to support charity thus formed a

connection to both the 1920s Klan as well as the concept that the Klan is a Christian organization which helps others.

In one of the few instances where a Klan mentioned an issue specific to the location of their headquarters, the MWK site stated it supported “preserving the Mississippi State flag.” In addition, while most Klans were regional, or concentrated in individual states, the UNSK was an International Klan with Realms in numerous states, as well as Germany, Belgium, and the United Kingdom. But, also unlike other Klans, the UNSK did not include its Realm sites on different URLs but they were included on the main site. Other Klans had external web sites for their individual Realms, as an example, the CNK KKK had a Tennessee site and an Australian site, but these additional sites were not included in the SPLC’s sample (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). In addition, the IKA had web sites for its Realms in Missouri and Texas that were included in the SPLC sample, but neither site worked at the time of this examination.

The information from the UNSK’s site directed toward the individual Realms provided more examples of the beliefs of the Klan, specifically targeting Realms where the issues would most resonate with whites in those areas. For example, the coal mining industry was highlighted on the West Virginia Realm page, and immigrants taking jobs in the Rust Belt or manufacturing jobs going overseas was mentioned on the Ohio Realm page. Another example was on the UNSK California Realm page which stated that California “is falling victim to the onslaught of illegal immigration.” In essence, each Realm/state page on the UNSK site had a message targeted toward the white citizens as well as contact information for users who wanted to know more, or were interested in joining.



The SAK site did not state it supported any issues coded as traditional or mainstream conservative issues, however, the SAK's member organizations did.

### **Protestant**

Similar to other Klans, the TAK site also stated twice it supported "the United States Constitution as it was originally written." By comparison, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated it supported the "Constitution as it was intended to be administered." The TAK site also stated the Bible was "the basis of our Constitution, the foundation of our government, the source of our laws, the sheet-anchor of our liberties, the most practical guide of right living, and the source of all true wisdom." With such a strong belief in the Bible, the TAK required its members to "believe in the Lord God the creator of all," to "except (sic) Jesus Christ as the Son of God and their personal saviour (sic)," and "believe in the teachings of the Holy Bible." The TAK site also stated the Constitution was "the supreme law of the land," and guaranteed "religious liberty, freedom of speech and of press," and added all of its members were "sworn by a solemn oath to uphold and defend this immortal Constitution." By comparison, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated it supported "a Nation whose highest secular law is that of our Constitution, whose highest moral law is the word of God and the recognition of the grace of Jesus Christ." The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. also supported "freedom of speech" and "freedom of religion," as well as the "separation of church and state."

The TAK and Ku Klux Klan, LLC both supported the Second Amendment. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. also advocated that "Every person should own and carry a gun," including ex-convicts who had maintained "a clean record for 7 years," concluding, "If an individual is too dangerous to be allowed a weapon he or she should forever remain locked up."

According to the TAK site, its members' "first and highest allegiance is to the Government of the United States." The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. was also supportive of the government, on such issues as "National Sovereignty" and state's rights. The site added that its organization was "not based on mindless hatred or anti-government rhetoric." The site maintained that it showed its support of the "government through our tax dollars," as "reasonable taxation is a proper tool of good government."

The TAK site also stated, similar to ideals held by the 1920s Klan, it stood for the "American flag against enemies without and within," emphasizing "devotion to the flag of our country," and insisted "no flag shall fly above our flag, and that no flag shall float by its side." This statement was an obvious break from Klans that fly flags with Klan symbols or crosswheels, and equate those flags to the Stars and Stripes.

As a Protestant Klan, the TAK site also supported the public school system and stated that it would defend the "institution against every enemy, whether it be political or ecclesiastical." The significance of the last part, was the 1920s Klan was also against Catholic schools, and like the 1920s Klan, the TAK site stated Americanism is a "system based on a principle of utter antagonism to monarchism, whether represented by emperor, king, potentate, or pope." By comparison, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. supported home schooling arguing it was "the last best hope for America, and Americans," based on the belief "the Bible tells us that the education of our children is our responsibility." Personal responsibility was a common theme on the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site, which advocated "Equal rights for all citizens," and "Special rights and privileges (sic) for no one." The site added, "Today we still do charitable works and expect no recognition or approbation."

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. stated its members were “death penalty advocates, believing in the divine law,” adding, “For certain crimes including but not necessarily limited to: premeditated murder, mass murder, genocide and abortion; capitol (sic) punishment is called for.” Like many Christian Identity Klans, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. also supported “Quarantine for AIDS patients,” in “concentrated treatment facilities, containing, while treating, and God willing curing!” The site also stated, “its (sic) not about hating the few million suffering from this plague, but loving those who are not infected enough to protect them.” The site added, “Remember the sanitariums where those infected with T.B. and Polio went to be cured decades ago, and a preventative was found!”

Unlike some Klans, however, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. also stated it had “no argument with legal immigration,” adding, “We can and should accept legal immigrants in reasonable numbers.” But the site added, “We see a need for a ‘visiting worker’ program to meet labor needs in some parts of the country.” However, the site also supported “the Arizona law on illegal immigration.” The site also advocated that the government:

Put National Guard troops on the border to back up the border patrol agents, fix and maintain barriers along the southern border and charge Mexico or any Nation whose Nationals defy our laws with a hefty fine for every illegal returned repatriated.

### **Conservative Issues the Klan is against**

Not all Klans examined were Christian organizations, but Klan groups were generally against many issues that would also be denounced by Fundamentalist Christian groups on issues such as abortion, euthanasia, or the removal of Christianity from schools and public places. The issues coded as conservative beliefs the Klan was

against, were those issues where race or ethnicity were not included, but did include homosexuality and illegal immigration. Homosexuality was included because it is not a racial issue and because stances against homosexuality are common in conservative Christian denominations. Illegal immigration was coded as a conservative issue if it was mentioned without any racially derogatory slurs. Illegal immigration is a political issue, and a politically conservative mainstream issue that has been used by groups like the Klan to attract more mainstream members.

### **Non-Christian**

The Empire Knights site stated it was against open borders and illegal immigration, gay marriage, and “forced bussing” to integrate schools. Among its members, the IKA stated, “We will not tolerate drug users/dealers, thieves, child molesters/ abusers or anyone with immoral character in our movement.”

The IKA site stated it believed in a number of extremist conservative views found on other Klan sites, including that anyone with AIDS needed to be quarantined to “stop them from infecting our children and ourselves,” adding, “We do not want to receive services from them, especially cooking or handling our food.” The IKA also used Biblical passages to support its belief that “Homosexuality is an abomination before God and should be punished by death (Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Rom. 1:24-28, 32; I Cor. 6:9).”

The IKA also held some more traditionally conservative beliefs, such as “Drug testing for welfare recipients,” making “the purchase of American land and industry illegal for anyone except Americans,” and doing away with free trade agreements “that harm the American worker” by employing a “policy of protectionism.” The IKA site added, “We need to put America first before any other country.” The perception of the existence of a double standard against whites also appeared in the IKA’s stance to end

“reverse discrimination by doing away with Affirmative Action.” The IKA also wanted to stop abortion, defeat communism, and wanted all gun control laws declared unconstitutional.

While claiming to be a pro-American organization, the IKA site however frequently stated it was against “tyranny from big government,” that the FBI was “ZOG’s tool,” and therefore it was “distrustful of government.”

### **Christian Identity**

The Confederate White Knights were the only Christian Identity Klan that did not indicate any political conservative issues it was against. However, Christian Identity Klans in general expressed opposition to socialism, communism, and a “New World Order,” either as an attack on American free enterprise, or because communism was equated with Jewishness. The concept of a conspiratorial “New World Order” appeared frequently on many Christian Identity Klan sites which was to be expected, as Christian Identity believers also perceived that all of Christianity had been corrupted by Jewish people, and that Jewish people run media and government.

The Knights Party at kkk.com stated the Knights Party was against the “violent, wicked, socialist, new world order.” The CURA site stated “our government has been taken over by the forces of communism,” in the form of a “Zionist Occupied Government.” The CNKKKK site stated it would not allow into its membership anyone from “the Communist Party or news media.” The CNKKKK called on “antichrist World Communism” to be defeated including the “Communist NAACP and ADL.” The CNKKKK site concluded, “There are today, many alien forces entering into the United States as well as every other country, bent upon its destruction and a One World Order.” The Knights Party’s site concluded, “The anti-Christ is a one-world government

that controls all the people and says we must all become one color.” The CURA site maintained that politicians:

Use their elected powers to further the communist, new world order agenda by giving sanctuary to illegal aliens, and implementing special ‘hate crime’ and ‘domestic terrorism’ laws designed to silence white Americans, and leave them exempt from protection under the U.S. constitution.

Some Christian Identity Klan sites also stated opposition to typical politically conservative issues such as homosexuality (arkpower-light.com, the BOK, CURA, the Knights’ main site, the KPVL, and the WCK), affirmative action (arkpower-light.com, the BOK, and the Knight’s main site), crime (arkpower-light.com, CURA and the WCK), welfare (the KPVL), foreign aid to other countries (arkpower-light.com, CURA, the Knights’ main site, and the KPVL), gun control (the CNKKKK, and CURA), and the United Nations (the KPVL).

In addition, some Christian Identity sites wanted an end to all immigration (arkpower-light.com, and the CNKKKK), while some wanted an end to illegal immigration (the BOK, the CNKKKK, the Knights’ main site, and the White Camelia Knights), and some wanted an end to all non-white immigration (CURA, and the Knights’ main site). The CURA site stated, “Millions of Third World bandits enter our country illegally every year,” adding, “America is being transformed into a New Mexico.” The BOK site stated, “Illegal immigrants have every bit as much reason to ‘hate our freedom’ as do the Muslim extremists who live half a world away.” The CNKKKK site was also against birth-right citizenship.

Some Christian Identity Klans also took stands against outsourcing of labor and industries, such as CURA and the WCK. The CURA site stated it favored a “strong foreign policy that closely guards White American interests around the world,” and

encouraged “all White nations to throw off the yoke of Zionist/liberal occupation.” The CURA site also claimed a desire to ensure that “ALL aid to worthless third World nations like Israel will be cut off.” The Knights Party’s main site wanted all foreign aid to Israel to be suspended.

Homosexuality was a big issue on all the Christian Identity sites. The WCK site made statements against “Gay Pride,” calling homosexuality “a perversion of nature and a filthy, diseased and perverted lifestyle,” and added, “Homosexuals cannot reproduce, so it is only logical that they recruit others into their perverted lifestyle.” The WCK site referred to male homosexuals as “predators,” and stated that “When two men or two women adopt a child it only stands to reason that the child will be raised as a homosexual or lesbian.” Meanwhile, the Knights Party’s main site and the KPVL site favored a “national law against the practice of homosexuality.” The CURA site stated, “Homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexuals, sado-masochists, and every other type of vile perversion,” is “applauded by society, and by the vile scum that control our country.” The CURA site also stated that “special rights and privileges granted to homosexuals by the Zionist Occupied Government” should be taken away, and “Homosexuals should no longer be permitted to adopt children or marry each other.” The CURA site added, “Gay bars, gay nightclubs, and gay bathhouses should be shut down!” The BOK site stated it was against “anti-American, anti-Christian, anti-Anglo groups such as NAMBLA, Rainbow Push, Act Up, and a variety of other Homosexual, Child molesting, Pro-Third World Country Immigration groups.” In light of the amount on anti-homosexual rhetoric, the WCK site stated, “The Klan’s belief on homosexuality is not homophobic, but like all subjects, it’s based on our biblical beliefs.” Therefore, as the Klan’s stance was

purportedly to be based on Biblical belief, rather than homophobia, it was considered a conservative issue.

Education was also a big issue for some Christian Identity Klans. The Knights Party at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com), stated that it opposed “educators with a hidden agenda.” The Knights Party’s main site and the KPVL sites stated they wanted the removal of the “humanist influence in our schools,” while the Knights’ main site accused teaching colleges of being filled with atheists. The CURA site stated, “America’s public schools, colleges and universities have been turned into politically correct indoctrination centers run by deprived liberals, communists, and Jews.” According to the CURA site, “WHITE teachers and students are all too often placed in the crossfire of negro and Mexican gang members.” The CURA site also stated it wanted “to ensure that forced busing is outlawed, and that prayer will be returned to our schools,” and added, “All teachers who continue to promote anti-white and/or Communist/Socialist doctrine should be removed and replaced by decent White American patriots.”

A number of the Christian Identity Klans were against a strong federal government. The Knights Party at [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com), opposed the I.R.S., while [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com), the main Knights site, and KPVL site advocated the repeal of the Federal Reserve Act and restoring the United States to constitutional currencies. The Knights Party’s main site and the KPVL called for a balanced budget, canceling “all present debt owed to the criminal private Federal Reserve,” and wanted a “flat income tax.” The CURA site added, “The corrupt Federal system should be smashed.” The WCK site stated its opposition to “unrestrained government,” including the Supreme Court for enforcing “Separation of Church and States,” which the WCK site stated “is not



in the constitution.” The CNK KKKK opposed the “current judicial process,” as well as “the federal government trying to take away what freedom we have left.”

As a “veteran’s organization,” the KPVL was also against issues involving the military, such a women in combat positions, “Affirmative Action in military,” repealing “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell,” and the “homosexual agenda” in the military.

Surprisingly, the issue of abortion did not appear on many Christian Identity Klan sites. Three of the few occurrences were on the CURA site, Knight’s main site, and the KPVL site. The KPVL site stated, “Abortion should be outlawed except to save the mother’s life or in case of rape or incest,” and, “A woman should not be forced to carry a rapist’s seed to fruition.” The CURA site, however, also stated, “Thousands of innocent children are slaughtered each day at Baby killing centers,” as the “government has made abortion a convenient form of birth control.” The site added, “We seek to outlaw this barbaric practice, and to punish the sadistic doctors who are guilty of these crimes against humanity.”

Interestingly, considering the number of sites run by the Knights Party, or Thomas Robb Ministries, which asked for pledges or donations, and made members pay money to attend Knights’ events, the arkpower-light.com site was against “Preachers that are more concerned about their offering plate than your family’s future.” Similarly, the WCK site added it was against “the lies and false teachings of the so called Judeo-Christian ministers.” In particular, the WCK site stated, “If any Judeo-Christian minister does not preach against homosexuality, he is a liar and a deceiver.”

## **Christian**

Illegal immigration was the most frequently cited conservative issue that appeared on Christian Klan sites that the Klans were against, including amnesty and open

borders. Groups stating they were against these issues included the Dixie Rangers Knights, the FWK, IKKKKK, the MWK, the UNSK, and the UWK. The UWK charged illegal aliens with “taking jobs, housing and public assistance money needed by American citizens and creating a heavy tax burden.” The UNSK site stated, “We are most certainly against illegal immigration and the name alone states plainly why. They are illegals.” According to the UNSK site, “Many come here, and abuse our school and health systems, drain our social security funds, drive without valid drivers (sic) licenses or insurance, create and join violent gangs, deal drugs, etc.” The UNSK site added, “Our country is being invaded at will, and in no small part by a bunch of vicious lawbreakers. Drug running, rape, assault, robbery and often murder goes hand in hand with these illegal trespassers.” The site added, “Our school systems are bogged down trying to teach in English, and in Spanish,” and in a statement similar to the double standard argument the site added, “This didn't occur with the huge influx of Europeans. They had to and most wanted to learn to speak and read English.”

Some Christian Klans were also against the liberal media, mainstream media, or simply the media in general, for being anti-American, anti-white and anti-Christian, such as the Dixie Rangers, Knight Riders, and UWK. According to the Dixie Rangers site, “The mainstream media works tirelessly to denigrate and weaken the White Race by their ceaseless attacks on Christianity and Christian symbols, family values, any image or symbol representing the heritage of the Confederate States of America, the virtues of sexual abstinence for our youth, the U. S. Constitution (most notably the 2nd Amendment), freedom of association, States Rights, and the founding principles upon which our once great country was created.” The Knight Rider site concluded that public

schools teach “students how brave and heroic the black man was to stand up against the White race and demand equal rights,” adding, “The media and Hollywood continue this brain washing.”

Although it included racial qualifiers, the UWK’s stance against the media was most significantly directed at misrepresentation or bias, and stated:

Current trends in media, entertainment and even religion encourages young White women to mate with non-whites. This is genocide because the life of any race is in the womb of its women. The United White Knights of the KU (sic) Klux Klan simply loves our people enough to encourage the reproduction of our own kind. IS THIS HATE???

The UWK also stated it was against a “biased media,” and added the media is filled with “its beloved yellow journalism, lies, falsehoods, half truths (sic), and distortions.” The UNSK concluded the “news media distorts our images,” as well as the images of “Fox news, Glen Beck, George Bush, and even our own founding fathers.”

Some groups specifically mentioned being against child molesters and pedophiles, such as the AGKK, the UNSK, the UWK, and the Dixie Rangers Knights which was also against sexual promiscuity. The UNSK also stated its opposition to spouse and women abusers. In addition, some of the Christian Klans specifically stated they were against illegal drugs and/or abusing alcohol, such as the Dixie Rangers Knights, the SAK, the UNSK, and the UWK.

As conservative Christians, most Klans specifically stated opposition toward homosexuality, referring to it as an “abomination” such as the AGKK and UNSK. Other groups, stated they were against gay marriage, such as the FWK. Some groups opposed homosexuality all together, such as the Dixie Rangers Knights and the UWK. The UNSK site stated, “Homosexuality is being called an acceptable alternate life style when God’s word says clearly it is an abomination to Him.” The UWK site stated it was

also against, “Humanism, homosexual perverts, and the decadence that permeates our society and threatens our way of life.”

Some Christian Klans also mentioned opposition to communism and other economic issues. Specifically, the UWK supported “a ban on direct or indirect transfer of American technology, loans, trade credits, grants and ‘Most Favored Nation’ status to Communist and Non-Christian Nations.” The UWK site also stated, “We believe that for any single American citizen to survive the final battle that will be waged by the International Communist Conspiracy, America and its Christian Constitutional form of government must survive.” The UWK was against globalism and socialism, while the Dixie Rangers and UNSK were against welfare, the welfare state, or abuse of the welfare system.

A number of Christian Klans argued against federal authority or a strong federal government that did not allow more issues to be resolved by the states, such as the Dixie Rangers Knights, the Knight Riders, the TRK, and the UWK. Specifically, the Dixie Rangers Knights were against “a strong central government that robs us blind,” while the TRK was against the “Federal Government imposing it’s (sic) will on the rights of individual states.” The UWK site stated it was against “additional gun legislation at any level of government.” The UNSK was against “free trade agreements.”

Education and what was taught in schools was also a topic that appeared on some Klan sites. The Knights Riders site stated its organization was against “Government Controlled Schools,” and the “public school agenda.” The UWK was against “removal from textbooks of identification of traditional male and female roles,” as well as “government interference in the private and parochial schools,” and “forced bussing.”

The UWK concluded, "Our great system of public education has been turned into a propaganda agency for revolution and spawning ground for homosexuality, race mixing, sex abuse and crime."

Morality was a common issue on some Klan sites. The UWK, for example, was against sin and "evil and wrong doing," as well as the "decriminalization and/or legalization of prostitution." The UWK was also against "abortion on demand," and the "removal of Christianity and its symbols from our Government Institutions." The UNSK site stated its opposition to "partial birth abortions," as well as to atheists "putting up billboards claiming" God and religion "is all a myth, including Jesus Christ." The UNSK site concluded, "This surpasses disgusting."

Interestingly, some of the Christian Klans included statements against the violence committed by the Klan in previous Eras, particularly during the Civil Rights Era. In a question and answer section on the UNSK site, in response to the question, "Were terror tactics ever practiced by ANY Klansman?" the site responded with the answer: "Of course they were. We have all seen examples of it in history." The Dixie Rangers site was against both the violence committed by the Klan, as well as what it saw was government intrusion into the lives of white people, which caused the violence. The Dixie Rangers site maintained, "This is a sad subject to address, and by explaining it I do not in any way uphold the actions that were taken," but during the 1960s, "The United States President Lyndon B. Johnson made it mandatory that all public schools were to integrate blacks and whites." According to the DRK site, "After years of segregation the white communities were content with the way things were. They had their place, and we had ours. Its (sic) just the way things were," but added, "After the

federal government took control of the public schools, the white citizens had no one to turn to. The government had turned their backs on the white population.” After the end of segregation, the DRK site contended, “We were being FORCED to intermix with a culture that we had absolutely nothing in common with. The Klan's only way at the time was to retaliate with violence and attempt to drive the blacks out of the south,” adding, “Needless to say, it didn't help.” In a moment of apology, the DRK site added, “Sadly this resulted in many needless killings.”

According to the UWK site, “During the Reconstruction Era and the turbulent 1960's (sic) some Klansmen and Klan organizations did strike out against the overt attack on White Culture by members of the Negro race,” adding, “Occasionally, without a doubt, some innocent people became victims.” The UWK site also stated, “War had been declared against the White Culture and in any war there are innocent victims.” In essence, the UWK site did admit that the Klan did committed acts of violence against black people, but justified the violence, with the exception of “some innocent people,” because of the perceived attack on white culture. The UWK site also stated, “We don't believe in violence today. The Klan's (sic) of the 60ies (sic) almost had no chance to act in another way. It was war,” adding, “But today we don't fight our battle with violence.” The UWK site, however, disputed the idea that all Klan violence was committed by the Klan, instead stating, “The FACT remains that many of the acts of violence attributed to the Ku Klux Klan were actually committed by agents of the government and also by Negro organizations themselves.”

### **Protestant**

The TAK site stated it would not accept as members “anyone that is Homosexual, Bi-Sexual, Atheists, or are not of a sane mind and soul.” Meanwhile, the Ku Klux Klan,

LLC. was opposed to “homosexuals, atheists, or those who have been found mentally insane.” The site added, “Homosexuals, Communists, Socialists, Jews, Secularists, the NEA and countless others pour millions into the coffers of those who, for that money, will proudly betray America.” According to the Ku Klux Klan, LLC., “Homosexuality is an abomination before Yahvey (sic) God the Father,” and was also against a “Homosexual Military.” The site added, “The armed forces are even now showing an alarming incidence of homosexual rape, homosexuals are debasing and abusing heterosexuals (sic) members under their command,” and stated “We stand in firm opposition to a homosexual military and the Homosexual agenda.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site added it was also against “political correctness,” and against “people, who having been brainwashed with nearly 50 years of government sponsored political indoctrination, in the public (government) schools, media, and even from the sell out (sic) ministers in apostate churches.”

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. supported home schooling, but was against the “Public School System,” which it stated was filled with “those who hate all that the white race is,” and “whose specific agenda is to eliminate any reference to God,” and “to teach youngsters, to hate their rights, history, and heritage!” The site added, white students can “tell you all about ‘black history’ but little of their own.” In a statement against communists, public schools, abortion, and gun control, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site contended, “anti-Constitutional communists who claim there are too many guns,” will “stand on a pile of infant corpses screaming, they have the right to choose who lives and dies,” while they “blaspheme the name of God by refusing to allow prayer in our public schools.”

Stances against illegal immigration, and illegal immigrant advocacy groups, often included references to fairness and the economy. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated illegal immigration was “NOT a racial issues, it is rather, a matter of national security,” adding, “As far back as anyone can remember the Ku Klux Klan has been against illegal immigration, and then too we were called haters, bigots and worse.” The site added:

Our reasoning then was as it is now; we were concerned with our nations (sic) infrastructure, the overwhelming of our public system of education and the certain knowledge that by coming in vast numbers these (sic) would not attempt to integrate into American culture, but rather to propagate their own system of values, language and culture.

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated, “America is the ONLY nation in the world with open borders,” adding, “Now with the threat of international terrorism we must control our borders.” The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. also blamed open borders for allowing “narco-terrorists” to “bring illegal drugs in to poison our children and criminals of every stripe.”

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. also opposed abortion, stating, “Abortion, is ALWAYS murder and murder most foul.” The site added that once a woman became pregnant:

She has no right of action against her un-born child, for it too as a living being acquires certain rights, the mothers rights ends where the rights of the child begins and we believe in full faith that the right to live is acquired at the moment of conception.

Interestingly, while the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated it supported “good government” and “reasonable taxation,” and contained no “anti-government rhetoric,” the site was against Barak Obama’s “despotic rulership (sic),” and a government that “dictates nearly every aspect of your private life.” These issues however often involved the idea of a double standard. The site stated, “The ‘powers that be’ in Washington, D.C. have forced inter-racial marriage and homo-sexuality on America under the guise of equal rights through affirmative action and quota hiring systems.” The site also stated



that hate crime laws were “constantly enacted to protect ‘minorities’; yet, violence and criminal acts perpetrated against Whites are seldom, if ever, covered under these statutes,” while “Unchecked immigration is not only destroying the job and wage base in our land, but dreaded diseases such as A.I.D.S. and new strains of T.B. are brought to our shores with every new load of aliens.” According to the Ku Klux Klan, LLC., “School bussing and forced integration are destroying the quality of education in America,” as “The grading standards are lowered to accommodate and enhance the minorities (sic) lower abilities.” In support of “America First,” the site also stated, “Billions of tax dollars are handed out through foreign aid to nations diametrically opposed to American values.” The site added:

While we are accused of racial hatred and bigotry, our Nation gives billions to nations who still practice slavery, child marriage, and torture! Nations Like (sic) Israel, many of the nations of Africa, South America and Central America, up to and including the corrupt Mexican government.

### **Surprising Stands of the Klan**

Despite the Klan’s image as a conservative, Southern, and racist organization, some Klan groups took a few surprisingly liberal stances on a handful of issues. While these stances were not true for all Klan groups examined, the appearance at all made them noteworthy.

As an example, the Knights Party’s main site and the KPVL site stated they supported cutting off trade with “countries that refuse to establish strict environmental laws,” adding, “We should promote a fair system that allows for a clean environment,” while also promoting “an aggressive search for and use of non-polluting and clean energy sources such as solar energy.” The UWK supported “increased productivity and research of new sources of energy.”

Another example was from The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. which stated, "While we deplore any suggestion of marriage between homosexuals, we see civil ceremonies as an alternative," so long as churches "are under no obligation to recognize 'civil unions' and must never accept compulsion to do so." The site also added, "We see no issue with civil unions for homosexuals or those who choose to avoid or cannot qualify for Holy Wedlock." This statement is all the more surprising, because the Ku Klux Klan LLC.'s site not only stated it was against the homosexual agenda but also against the Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which had voted to "let its congregations hire pastors who are 'in a lifelong, committed, monogamous, same-gender relationship.'" The site maintained, "Such 'churches' if they can anymore be worthy of that name, are in open apostasy to Biblical principle and teaching," and the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. would not "be accepting for membership those that support this evil doctrine." However, the site added it would "not or EVER will have ANY connection with The 'Westboro Baptist Church,'" adding, "We absolutely repudiate their tactics of protesting the funerals of U.S. soldiers, men and women who die serving our Nation." This stance against the Westboro Baptist Church is significant, as the group is listed as a General Hate group by the SPLC with one of its main sites at godhatesfags.com (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. was also against "Florida Pastor Terry Jones" and the "Dove World Outreach Center," in Gainesville, Florida, for his "plans to burn the Islamic holy book on 9/11." The site added, "It is our opinion that such an act is completely UNACCEPTABLE; it is despicable, and un-American." The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. also stated it did not "support or represent the 'TEA PARTY,'" adding, "Our Associates,

members and supporters are here officially ordered: NOT to attend Tea Party events or support them in ANY way.”

A few of the Klans stated they supported the ACLU, such as the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. and the IKA. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated the issues it supported and denounced would not be decided in public rallies which “only give the media footage to over-voice or use out of context propagating fear, making those we need to reach afraid to listen to our message.” According to the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site, “We know these issues must and will be decided inside the courts and legislatures of our land, this is the battle field on which we must engage.” What was interesting was that a Protestant Klan which did not take part in rallies, and a skinhead Klan which staged large White Power concerts, both supported the ACLU. At the same time, the Dixie Rangers, a Christian Klan, stated the “ACLU founded by Jews,” and favored the “removal of Christian symbols and practices from society.” Meanwhile, the Knights Party’s main site was anti-ACLU, stating, “The ACLU will not be satisfied until blacks are no longer accountable for the crimes that they commit.” The Knight’s potential difference in views may be based on the fact that the Knights’ National Director’s son, Jason Robb, is a lawyer, and therefore can provide legal counsel to the Knights, whereas the other groups do not have a personal lawyer. But, the support from a Protestant and a skinhead Klan for the ACLU, while a Christian Identity Klan and a Christian Klan were against the ACLU, perhaps best demonstrates how the Klans overlap and differ and provides insight as to why so many organization attempt to lump all Klan groups together, when in reality, the “Ku Klux Klan” includes very different organizations with different leaders, beliefs, ideologies and religious ideologies. The only unifying link between all the Klans

examined was the belief a double standard existed against whites, and depending on the ideology of the Klan group, whites' only response was racial separation or war.

### **Results of In-depth Interviews**

In total, seven individuals from seven different Klan web sites agreed to participate in this study, an acceptable number of respondents in a qualitative examination, particularly based on the limited population and when dealing with an understudied population difficult to access (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; & Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The seven participants were interviewed using a short question guide of semi-structured open-ended and closed-ended questions (Appendix C), beginning with open-ended questions and alternating back and forth between closed-ended and open-ended questions based on the participant's responses. More direct questions were asked in later interviews as themes began to emerge from the content analysis and in-depth interviews in order to fill in any gaps from the analysis to better understand the Klan (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Interviews were conducted over the phone or using Skype, and all interviews were transcribed by the researcher. The seven participants were provided an informed consent form via email and verbally agreed to be participate in this study prior to the interview.

Among the seven participants, six were male and one was female. The ages of the respondents ranged from mid-40s to over 60-years-old. In total, five of the seven participants were web masters of their site, while two were in leadership positions within their Klan and therefore contributed content to the site. The seven participants live in different states across America including Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Tennessee, and Virginia. None were from the Deep South. In addition, six of the seven individuals that participated were either in Christian or Protestant Klans or stated the

Klan was a Christian organization. Only one participant was from a Christian Identity Klan. All of the participants indicated they were white, non-Jewish, and Christian.

All Participants were told they could participate in the study, remain anonymous, and keep their Klan organization anonymous. However, four participants asked specifically that their names and organizations be used. Individuals who wanted to be identified included Cole Thornton, the Imperial Wizard of the United Northern and Southern Knights (UNSK); Sister Tina, the Grand Empress of the Church of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CNKKKK); the Reverend, Dr. Travis Pierce, the National Membership Director for the Ku Klux Klan, LLC.; and Richard Bondira of The Indiana Historical Research Foundation (TIHRF). While Bondira is not a member of the Klan, he is the web master of The Indiana Historical Research Foundation site, listed by the SPLC as an active Klan site in 2009 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). However, Bondira is a self-proclaimed Klan expert and three of the other 24 Klan web sites provided direct links to his site, but his responses are based on his interactions with the Klan and from his research on previous Eras of the Klan and not based on his own membership in the Klan (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

Only Dr. Pierce and Cole Thornton were not web masters of their Klan's sites. Pierce, however, is an official spokesperson for the Ku Klux Klan, LLC., and a member of the organization's governing board. Cole Thornton is the UNSK's Imperial Wizard, and is involved in the appearance and information posted on the UNSK site, and provides messages on the site to UNSK members and non-members.

The three participants who did not request to be named were all Imperial Wizards (IW) from their respective Klan organizations, and web masters of their sites. As they

did not ask to be specifically identified in this study, each was given a pseudonym, as per the informed consent form, to keep their names and organizations anonymous. The three Imperial Wizards and web masters will therefore be referred to as James, Thomas, and Philip. Both James and Philip are from the Mid-West while Thomas lives in the South.

Sister Tina was the only female interviewed, and a Grand Empress, a position which Tina stated has only been granted three times by the Klan. Tina is also the web master of the CNK KKK main site, and other CNK KKK sites not included in this examination as they were not included in the SPLC's list (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The CNK KKK is the only Christian Identity Klan to participate in this study. But, while the CNK KKK was coded as a Christian Identity Klan in this study, in the interview with Tina, she referred to the CNK KKK as a Christian organization, and added that members could believe in any Christian denomination including Christian Identity (Tina, pers. comm.). Therefore, while the CNK KKK was coded as a Christian Identity Klan in this study, according to Tina, the CNK KKK is a Christian Klan that allows members to be Christian Identity adherents (Tina, pers. comm.).

### **Contacting Ku Klux Klan sites**

Every Klan web site on the SPLC's list (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010) with working contact information was emailed and asked to participate in this study. Klans that did not respond were contacted multiple times, using every email provided or online forms (See Table 4-1). Some groups never responded to repeated inquiries, and only four Klans declined a request to participate. One of the groups to decline was the Knights Party which has five of the 25 total Klan sites on the Internet, as well as three blogs which are all written by Knights Party leaders. Interestingly, the Knights Party's

main site specifically stated the Knights Party welcomes interviews with the media and students. On the site's Questions and Answers page, in response to the question, "Do you grant student interviews?" the response on the site was:

Yes, we give many student interviews - hundreds. Just call our national headquarters at 870-427-3414 to arrange for a time. A spokesperson will be happy to assist you. Don't be shy...we don't bite.

In fact, the Knights Party's main site made the point of stressing the need for the Knights to reach out to the media and students. On another page the site stated a goal of the Knights party was "to legally break through the liberal wall that surrounds America's colleges and universities – to reach and instruct students in the reclaiming of their schools." The site recounted the means to break through this "liberal wall" was by providing students "another side of the story instead of only receiving information from organizations such as the ADL, NAACP, or ACLU." According to the Knights' site, the Knights Party has specific people within the organization to speak with the media and stated, "Klansmen and Klanswomen are not public representatives of the Klan and are NOT permitted to give or conduct interviews with the media," but added, "We have authorized media personnel for this purpose." The site stated that the Knights Party's National Director, Thomas Robb, "has trained spokesmen and spokeswoman on staff at headquarters to answer questions from radio, television, or newspaper reporters as well as the general public who call wanting to join or even out of curiosity." According to the Knights Party site, "Hundreds of interviews are given to high school and college students each year who are working on school reports or term papers." However, while the Knights Party was not contacted by phone, after repeated inquiries, the Knights Party declined to participate in this study via email.

Among the six Klans that participated, all were located in the Mid-Atlantic region, Mid-West and Upper South, but no Klan groups from the Deep South agreed to participate. When asked why he thought no Klans from the Deep South or Texas agreed to participate, Philip responded:

I think there is a lot more mistrust of the media and the government from the Klans down in that area, and I understand the mistrust of the media because I have dealt with a lot of media myself, and I have seen how some of the media twist our words (Philip, pers. comm.).

In total, five of the Klans that agreed to participate were Christian or Protestant, with the exception of the CNKKKK which considers its organization to be Christian, and TIHRF which is not a Klan. In addition, six of the participants indicated they were members of traditional Klans, while Bondira explained the beliefs of traditional Klans. When Dr. Pierce was asked why only members from Christian and traditional Klans agreed to participate, he responded:

We don't have to lie to you. It is the same story every day, all day long. That's why the web site is there; you got some facts to double check and correspond with. So, we don't have to make it up as we go (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Pierce added, "That makes it very easy to talk with you or anybody else" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). In addition, as opposed to Klans with racial slurs on their sites, Dr. Pierce added he agreed to participate because "We have a realistic agenda, not some pie-in-the-sky, hate mongering, 'Oh, we are going to send all the Blacks to Africa.' Ridiculous, impossible, and stupid to even open your mouth and speak those kinds of words" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). In addition to being able to provide answers to questions based on Klan ideology, some participants said they were willing to participate simply to provide another side of the Klan rarely presented in the media. When asked why she was willing to participate, Tina responded, "I actually get a big kick out of the fact that



somebody who is not Klan is interested and that to me is all part of who we are” (Tina, pers. comm.).

The seven participants were all from different organizations and all were either web masters for their site or were involved in the maintenance and content of their sites. All seven were asked questions about their Klan’s site in order to better understand the purpose for creating and maintaining Ku Klux Klan web sites beyond what could be found from analyzing the Klan sites alone (Appendix C). The questions were designed to gain a better understanding of the mechanics and operations of these sites, as well as the motivations for having sites. Participants were asked if they use a free web hosting service, if they had changed the URL for their site, if their site had been hacked, where they get ideas for their sites, how frequently their site is updated, how they decide which multimedia to put on the site, how it is decided if the site would sell merchandise, and the purpose of providing external links to other Klan sites or to non-Klan sites. In addition to questions about the mechanics of their sites, participants were also asked how many Klan members they believe are in the United States today, what the Klan believes, if they think the Klan is a racist organization, what motivates people to join the Klan, who are typical members of the Klan, what was the purpose for having a Ku Klux Klan web site, and what were misconceptions about the Klan.

### **Web Hosting and URLs**

James and Thomas were the only two participants who indicated their Klans used a free web hosting service (James, pers. comm.; & Thomas, pers. comm.). James explained, “I use a free web site template with our domain name for God’s sake,” and added, “Hence, a cheap web site that is short and sweet and to the point” (James, pers. comm.). Thomas explained he used a web hosting service “because as long as they

were getting paid, they didn't have a problem with the content, and the content itself I don't consider it to be totally distasteful. It may be politically incorrect, but it is still America" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Although Thomas used a free web hosting services, he also added, "I created it and I maintain it" (Thomas, pers. comm.).

The CNKKKK site was one of the largest sites examined and used a hosting service. Tina explained, the CNKKKK main site as well as the Tennessee and Texas sites, and the Australian Realm site at cnkkkkdownunder.com, all used a web hosting service run by an individual not in the Klan (Tina, pers. comm.). Philip explained that his Klan owned its own domain name and added, "We own our own hosting and all that" (Philip, pers. comm.). Cole Thornton mentioned the UNSK has "a regular web master that we pay" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.), while Dr. Pierce said the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. "purchased the domain, kukluxklan.bz," adding, "We own it" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Participants were also asked if they had used different URLs in the past. Only two of the seven participants indicated they had used a different URL in the past. While James' Klan and the CNKKKK had previously used a different URL, Thomas had only used one URL for his Klan organization, while Richard Bondira said he had never changed the URL for his site since he created it in 1995 (James, pers. comm.; Richard Bondira, pers. comm.; & Thomas, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce also commented his Klan has "never had any other domain name or extension of any kind. It has always been that same address" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). The UNSK also had not changed URLs, but has incorporated other Klans into its organization which has meant some members now use a different URL as they have become part of a larger Klan.

## Web Site Hacking

Only three participants mentioned their sites had been hacked. The sites hacked were generally the larger sites that did not use free web site templates or were hacked before the sites used a more secure web hosting service. Philip maintained his site had “pretty good security,” and he has never had a problem with the site being hacked (Philip, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce also explained the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site had never been hacked, but added:

I know it has happened with many others. Many of the sites that are out there in the public domain, so to speak, they usually get picked off, destroyed, whatever, twelve times a week, and if it's open to the public, open access, anybody can get into it, and you're doomed right from the beginning (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Research shows Klan sites are often hacked by individuals who disagree with the ideologies of the Ku Klux Klan. But, according to those interviewed, their sites were not hacked by people who disagree with the Klan, but by individuals from rival Klans with different ideologies.

Richard Bondira recalled in the 1990s he did have “a bit of a hacking problem” on his site and added, “The problem with hackers is that they can be from rival Klans” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira explained the individuals who hacked his site were from “bogus or illegal Klans,” and “were people that had been expelled from other Klan groups and formed their own rival Klans and dedicated their lives to destroy everybody else” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). But, since the 1990s, Bondira said he has had few problems with hacking by Klan members or members of the general public (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

Cole Thornton explained the UNSK site gets “hacked a lot,” adding, “We had people come on and put porno on, put all kinds of racial garbage on, and it finally came

down to we found a person that does web sites professionally” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). The UNSK decided to hire a professional web master after the site was hacked only six months before the interview with Thornton. Six months earlier, Thornton explained, “We got hacked and were taken down that time, we lost everything that was on the site, everything, so we had to start from scratch and rebuild the whole thing over” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). The CNK KKK site also had a problem with hacking prior to Tina becoming the web master, and prior to the CNK KKK using its current host server. It was because the site was hacked that the URL was changed from cnk kkk.com to cnk kkk.net, although the SPLC still had the site listed as cnk kkk.com (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). According to Tina, “The person who hacked it was actually from another Klan” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina added, “There are a lot of Klans trying to take over other Klans, and it’s bizarre quite honestly” (Tina, pers. comm.). After the cnk kkk.com site was hacked by an individual from another Klan, Tina convinced Ray Larsen to shut down the site altogether and she helped create the new one at cnk kkk.net (Tina, pers. comm.).

### **Ideas from Other Sites**

Interestingly, Thomas concluded most Klan sites were very similar regardless of ideology, stating, “If you look at a lot of the Klan’s web sites it is usually the same rhetoric. It is the creed, the mission, and for the most part they are all the same” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Tina concluded the same, which may explain why statements found on Klan sites frequently appeared word-for-word on other sites (Tina, pers. comm.). According to Tina:

I look at a lot of other Klan sites, and they are the same old hash over and over and over and over again, and I am like, well, what if I was thinking, ‘Why would I join your Klan, it is the same site as I’ve seen under a different

name, just a few words changed here and there.’ Same for the graphics (Tina, pers. comm.).

Tina added she saw one Klan site “that had pictures that had nothing to do with the Klan and they stole those pictures off my main site, which I have a little bit of a giggle about” (Tina, pers. comm.). The reality is all Klans conceivably share the same history from between the Klan’s founding during Reconstruction through the decline of the 1920s Klan, which can account for some repetition in content among the sites. The difference in Klans, and therefore web sites, is based on the influence of the post-1920s Klan on the current organizations.

However, while some participants admitted to looking at other Klan sites, none of the participant said they get ideas for their site from other Klan sites. Instead, according to Bondira, while he does not get ideas from other Klan sites, his site gets plagiarized often from other Klans (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Thornton also said his site is plagiarized often (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton added that he had visited another Klan’s site and read “a lot of what I had written, just words changed around a little bit” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton added, “We don’t go to other web sites, we’ve got too much to do with our own” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce also commented the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site has been “copied a time or two, and we have actually had to prove the material was ours for them to take the material off their web site” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Generally, the participants professed that the thoughts and ideas expressed on the site were not copied from or plagiarized from other sites, but were their own beliefs. As an example, Thomas explained the work on his site “is pretty much mine, my working, my thought processes. There is a statement on there by my Grand Dragon, but

for the most part, everything else is my thoughts” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce mentioned, “Our site is totally original, top to bottom. We do not copy other web sites” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce continued, “Our agenda and our work is so different from what the others do that we can’t copy them. We just can’t, it wouldn’t represent our organization” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.)

According to Tina, she did not get ideas to use on the CNK KKK site from other Klan sites, but she does get ideas on “what not to do” (Tina, pers. comm.). She added, “I did have a look at other Klan sites and I go, ‘Oh, my God, oh it is no good’” (Tina, pers. comm.). Instead, Tina said, “Sixty-percent of what’s on the main site is suggestions from the members and also suggestions from the general public” (Tina, pers. comm.). In addition, Tina commented that while she does “not get inspiration from other Klan sites,” she did say she gets inspiration from “military sites where they are honoring the military” (Tina, pers. comm.). As an indication, the CNK KKK site did contain a number of pro-American military music videos from artists like Toby Keith and Tim McGraw, as well as images depicting the American flag or pro-American symbolism. Tina explained she put the pro-military videos and images on the site because she too was a veteran, and added, “They’ve inspired me and if they inspire me, I swear to God, they are going to inspire other people” (Tina, pers. comm.).

### **Updates**

As it was difficult to determine the frequency with which Klan web sites were updated based on the content analysis, the question was posed to participants to determine how often sites included new information to members and the general public. In general, sites were updated with varying frequency depending on the web masters. In response to the question, Bondira explained he was working on a major overhaul of his

site, but in general updated his site frequently, adding, “if I come across some little thing here and there that I think is interesting enough, I will pop it right in. Other times I’ll accumulate” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.), Bondira said he had a lot of new material he wanted to add to his site, and would be adding “until I run out of space for doing that” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira concluded, “If you are going to have people come to your web page again and again, it is a good idea to put new stuff on from time to time” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Tina said she updates the site regularly based on suggestions from members, non-members, and Imperial Wizard Ray Larsen, although she admitted at the time of the interview, the site “has not been updated as much as I would like” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina did, however, explain some changes made to the site are not readily visible to site users, but updates were made frequently, stating, “You spend hours on a site, tweaking it, pulling it down, and putting it up” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina also commented, “The site grows. It is not one that is going to be big and stagnant” (Tina, pers. comm.). Thornton replied the UNSK site is updated “pretty much weekly,” adding, “It is a continuous ongoing change and we have a regular webmaster that we pay” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Most sites, however, were not updated as frequently, and instead changes were made at regular intervals. Philip said he updated his site “four times a year” (Philip, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce stated the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site was updated “every six to twelve months depending on what is available or what is needed,” but added, “usually the one thing that gets added to is our FAQ section which is huge” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce continued that the FAQ page gets updated more frequently “because people still have some pretty far out ideas of what we do, why we do it, and what we

believe. People tell us what we believe instead of reading what we say we believe” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). The infrequent updates, and the number of sites with FAQ sections, hint that the material is not intended for members but for non-members. It should be noted, however, even if a site does not make frequent updates, guestbooks and chat rooms offer a venue for information to be added with greater frequency, yet would not require changes to the site as a whole.

### **Multimedia**

Graphics, images, music, and videos are important on Klan sites because they provide site users a better understanding of the ideology of the Klan organization beyond simply the rhetoric provided, as imagery and symbolism provides a window with which to view the Klan examined, particularly as web masters use these images to portray the ideology of the group. Therefore, it was important to understand the decision making that went into deciding which images appeared on a site. As an example, the MIOAK is a symbol from the Second Era Klan, and its presence on a Klan web site indicates a link to the 1920s Era KKK, and represents a traditional Klan. Knowing the significance of the MIOAK in Klan symbolism, Thomas explained he included it on his site because, “The MIOAK is the Mystic Insignia of the Klansmen and that is our code. That is who we are” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas added he also included an image of a fiery cross because “the cross lit, that symbolizes our rituals, it symbolizes the light of Jesus,” but added, “It is not a burning of the cross” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Cole Thornton reiterated this point of Klan symbolism, stating, “There is a lot of misconception about the Klan that we desecrate the cross. That is a fallacy” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton continued, “A true Klansman is not going to damage



the cross. The cross lighting is a very sacred, religious ceremony” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

For the CNK site, Tina explained decisions about images on the CNK site were made by her and the CNK’s Imperial Wizard Ray Larsen (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina continued, “Members send me photos. I look at them. If I like what I see, I put them up. If I don’t like what I see, I don’t put them up” (Tina, pers. comm.). When asked, however, why so many of the photos on the site were of Ray Larsen, Tina commented, “I actually built the National Knights site, the main site, in dedication to Ray” (Tina, pers. comm.). She added, “Ray is a personal friend of mine as well as being my IW; he is my mentor as well” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina later added, “Ray is the central figure in the CNK and that is how it should be. Any Imperial Wizard of any Klan is the central figure and that is how it should be,” adding, “if you take it like a military unit, he is the Commander in Chief” (Tina, pers. comm.).

### **Logos**

While it was determined that 14 of the 25 sites examined had logos (Appendix F), Cole Thornton was one of the few Klan leaders who discussed the process of determining a logo for a Klan site. Thornton explained the UNSK had “several people draw different ideas and then the Imperial Board, who is basically the Imperial Wizard’s cabinet and runs the UNSK at the national level, and we took a vote on which ones we wanted to use” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thomas however stated he himself chose the logo for his site because the logo represented his Klan, included his Klan’s name, and created a connection between his Klan and the Klan’s history by including its “namesake” adding, “that’s who we are. That’s the name of our organization” (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Confusingly, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated the Triple Tau was the organization's logo, but Dr. Pierce explained an image on the site of a Klansman on a horse carrying an American flag also acted as a logo and appeared on some of its merchandise (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). According to Dr. Pierce, the image was a graphic which, "Most of the board liked and said, yes, let's put that one up there. It is cool, it has enough color, it stands out nicely" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce continued that the logo was an original design and the organization "had the copyright to that image," and added, "We are very picky about making sure that what we are producing is our and ours only" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

### **Merchandise and External Links**

Research has shown that Klan groups sell merchandise as a means to collect additional revenue, but only four of the 25 sites examined included direct merchandise sales. One of the four Klans that did sell merchandise directly was Dr. Pierce's Ku Klux Klan, LLC. According to Dr. Pierce, his Klan does "make several products for our membership, and that is what is in the store, there are only a couple of items there because we are not in the business to hock some t-shirts" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). To explain why the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. then sold merchandise to non-members, Dr. Pierce continued, "Maybe we ordered 5,000 t-shirts and only 4,000 sold, so if we have extras, we put them in the store, so the public helps move the merchandise" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce continued that the store was only to "move surplus merchandise," adding, "We do not create merchandise for sale to the public" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). In essence, his response disputed the research, while at the same time providing a hidden insight that 4,000 members bought t-shirts, thus leaving 1,000 shirts for sale to non-members.

Previous research has also shown merchandise sales and providing external links to other web sites are a frequently used method by some Klan groups to promote a web site to a larger audience. In addition, research has shown that when an organization provides an external link to another organization's site, it indicates a working relationship. Dr. Pierce explained that the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. did not link to other Klan sites to generate traffic, saying Klans that include numerous external links "are trying to up their numbers and so forth on the search engines. We don't do that. We're not going to do that" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce added, "We are not going to provide a lot to an organization or individuals that we do not feel represent our cause, our thinking" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). In essence, Dr. Pierce's response confirmed research showing groups will provide links on their sites to other organizations to promote both organizations and indicate the organizations share similar beliefs. Thus a Klan site with skinhead, Nazi, or White Nationalist links should be considered an ideological similar group.

James explained, that not only do Klans work with other Klans and organizations and provide external links on their sites to these outside groups to demonstrate a working relationship, but that Klans also work with organizations the site does not link to, as exemplified in James' response that his Klan will "work with other Klans above ground and below" (James, pers. comm.). Linking to another Klan group does indicate a similarly minded ideology, illustrated most clearly by the number of Klans in the SAK. As an additional example, Thomas discussed how his Klan was part of the Middle Eastern Alliance of Klans, an umbrella outfit similar to the SAK (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas continued, "We have a total of seven different Klans in it. We are separate entities, we

are separate Klan organizations, we are what I would consider to be traditional Klans but we also work with other organizations” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thus, while Thomas’s site did include external links to some Klan sites, it did not include links to all the members of the Middle-Eastern Alliance, and he never mentioned who all the participating Klans were in the Alliance (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Evident from Thomas’ response was that not providing a link to other Klan groups does not indicate different Klans do not work together or hold similar ideologies with other Klans when no links are provided, only that these connections are not readily advertised. This was most apparent from discussions with some of the participants when they explained they agreed to participate in this study after conferring with an Imperial Wizard from other Klans who had already been interviewed, and yet no external links between these different Klans were observed on their sites.

### **Klan Numbers**

In the interviews conducted, participants were asked how many Klan members they believed there were in the United States today. Participants were told they could either estimate the total number of Klansmen and Klanswomen in all the groups that called themselves Ku Klux Klan, or just in those groups they considered to be “true” or “traditional” Klans. While many Klan members know individuals in other Klans, they do not know everyone, particularly members of Klans with different ideological views. Only one person interviewed made an attempt to guess at the Klan’s total membership. Tina explained total Klan numbers did “range in the thousands” (Tina, pers. comm.). But, her estimate was based on her belief that, “There are some Klan groups out there that make beautiful web sites, and they only have two members, but the fact is that those two members are doing something, so, yes, I do believe they should be counted” (Tina,

pers. comm.). However, as two members with a web site would not meet the requirements for the SPLC's sample, it would be impossible to know if such individuals and Klans would be included in the SPLC's total membership estimate of current Klan members in the United States.

According to the SPLC, there were between 5,000 and 8,000 active Klan members in the United States in 2008 (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.), and 187 active Klan chapters across the United States in 2009 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). When asked about the SPLC's estimates, Dr. Pierce responded, "Their figures are woeful and disastrous" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce continued, "Their numbers are way off base, believe me, I looked through their Intelligence Report and see all the names of these various groups, and I know which ones are out of business, which ones haven't been in business in 20 years," and added, "They are like the Government Accounting Office, you can't believe one figure that they put down" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Part of the problem is with so many different Klan organizations, having so many different ideologies, in an organization that keeps its membership secret, any estimate will inevitably be wrong. This point was made on the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site which stated, "It has been our experience that we cannot give an acceptable answer to members (sic) numbers, critics either swear our numbers are grossly inflated, or that we are hiding our numbers, either way it does not matter." The fact is, in a way, it does not really matter, because any group claiming to be the Klan is automatically labeled as the Klan by the media and the SPLC. As the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site stated, "Anyone wearing the semblance of a robe is automatically assumed a Klansman." The site added, "It is impossible to guarantee every robed individual you might see on television

is in fact a Klansman. Many of those still today who claim the mantle of Klan are little more than Nazis in sheets.”

Despite the Klan having no clear estimate of their total numbers, there are additional reasons why the Klan does not attempt to estimate their membership. Part of the reason is not only to maintain the mystery of the Invisible Empire where any and every one could be in the Klan, but also to engage in activities while remaining clandestine. Some Klan sites specifically stated they kept its membership a secret to perform duties within the community. The UWK site stated, “We are a great secret organization to aid the officers of the law and we can do our best when we are not known to the public.” The UWK site added:

By this means we see and hear everything. We know the evil forces but they do not know us. By our secret membership we gather a world of evidence and help to gather thousands into the meshes of the law that would otherwise escape.

Another reason to not provide estimates of membership or provide information about Klan members is to protect their identities. Thornton commented that in the few interviews he was willing to do, he would never discuss names or numbers because it was personal information, adding, “If you tell what the members’ names are, you are putting them and their kids at risk” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Yet for all the reasons not to provide an estimate, the most common reason from participants was they simply did not know how many Klansman there were in the United States because Klans do not publish their numbers, membership, or membership rolls. As James concluded, “We are the Invisible Empire” (James, pers. comm.). James added, in relation to the number of individuals in true Klans versus bogus Klans, there are probably “few true Klansmen and many wanna be’s” (James, pers. comm.). But,

James' response does not provide a true answer because of the difficulty with separating the traditional Klans from the non-traditional White Nationalists Klans in sheets.

When asked how many Klansmen there were in the United States, Thomas replied:

I couldn't tell you the number of Klansmen out there. I really have no idea. Nobody talks about numbers, and when you ask anyone who talks about numbers, for the most part, they are full of shit. It is not something that is discussed (Thomas, pers. comm.).

But Thomas did concede the Klan would never achieve the membership numbers the Klan once did in the 1920s, at least in terms of the percentage of the United States population (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Another problem with estimating total membership is separating Klan members from Klan sympathizers. As the Klan becomes more mainstream, more individuals may come to agree with the Klan and yet not join. Thomas concluded that whites who state they could never be in an organization like the Klan, believe many of same things as these groups, "whether they know it or not" (Thomas, pers. comm.). According to the UWK site, while the Klan may not be strong in numbers, there are many people who believe as the Klan does, stating, "There are literally millions of White Christians who are fed up with the status quo. There can be no question that millions agree with the principles of the Klan." The UWK concluded, "There is only one outstanding group working with the interest of those nameless millions, and that group is the Ku Klux Klan." Thornton made a similar conclusion, stating, "We have a lot of people who are sympathizers that don't wear a robe" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton continued, "I have been told by people all over the country, different places I've been, 'Look, I might

not sign up, but if you ever need me, I'm there” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton concluded, “So there’s a lot of what you could call closet Klansmen” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Dr. Pierce also mentioned that the Klan has many supporters who are not members and concluded, “For every one dues paying member, you need five to six supporters” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce added, “We have people who are Blacks, Hispanics, who are Filipinos, and so on who send in regular donations of support to this organization” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce continued that the non-white supporters “are not members, they will never be, they don’t want to be a member, but they want to support the work that we are doing and they financially help us out to the best of their abilities which certainly we appreciate” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

### **What does the Klan believe?**

Klan web sites were examined to determine issues the Klan supported and did not support, including those with a racial qualifier. Analysis showed that Klan ideology and membership requirements varied by Klan group, but specific underlying beliefs were observed among all the Klans examined. For the in-depth interviews, the original interview guide did not include a question on the beliefs of the Klan, but did allow participants to contribute any additional information not asked during the interview, and asked about messages designed for members and non-members. After the first interview, it was determined a question should be added to the interview guide asking participants about their beliefs and the overall beliefs of the Klan. The responses provided during the interviews matched many of the same beliefs found during the analysis of web sites, and supported the observations made during the content analysis.



## **Double Standard**

One theme on almost every Klan site was the perception that a double standard existed between whites and non-whites in how whites were portrayed in the media, treated by the government and politicians, looked at by society, and handled by law enforcement. The Klan also believed in an incompatibility between whites and non-whites, and advocated racial separatism, believing white or American culture was too different from non-white culture, and thus needed to be protected. These same themes also appeared in interviews with participants, and combined created a perception whites were no longer allowed to have pride in their culture and heritage. The Klan perceives a double standard where whites live in fear of being called a racist or fear of being proud of their heritage. According to participants, this fear prevents whites from standing up against a perceived anti-white double standard promoted by the media, government, and society.

Dr. Pierce believed the double standard in society was so pervasive that he explained:

We can't fight the propaganda machine successfully and overcome the image that those who want you to be in fear want you to have. We cannot do it. One heart at a time, one mind at a time, one person at a time, perhaps (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Dr. Pierce reckoned white Americans today live in fear:

Fear of being called racists, fear of being seen as un-accepting of other cultures, even as the Muslim Jihadist holds his sword above your neck, you dare not say that you are offended by his religion. No, no, no, make him smile as he cuts off your head. We don't want to offend anybody (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

In general, all the participants articulated a belief that multiculturalism had supplanted Americanism, at least white, Christian Americanism, and most whites were

afraid to speak out against multiculturalism, with the exception of the Klan. As an example, Tina commented, “Multiculturalism really wants you to be absorbed into one sort of miss mash of things and lose traditions and cultures and languages” (Tina, pers. comm.). James commented the Klan was against Americans’ “loss of freedoms, sodomite marriage and sex education, anti-Christian attitudes, and its outright insult and discrimination toward America, lack of a safe society to raise your children,” and instead supported “the downright continued existence of the White race” (James, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce concluded, “This is what’s happened to America, and it is frightening, and the KKK is the only organization in America today that dares to stand up in the face of this ill-liberating political correctness and say you are wrong” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

In an odd twist, the participants essentially argued whites were being oppressed by minorities or a Jewish controlled media and government. In particular, the Klan viewed the media as anti-white and anti-Christian. According to Bondira, the media are “totally anti-white and totally anti-white man in particular” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). In a sentiment also found on the Knights Party’s main site, Bondira continued that advertising encourages race mixing and portrays white males as inferior:

Look at the commercials advertising a whole variety of products on TV. Study those commercials. Commercial after commercial, you are going to be seeing a white woman with a non-white. Sometimes a white woman with white children, and a non-white man, supposedly the father, however that happened. You are going to see the dumb white man with the smart liberated woman making him look like a fool. Or you’re going to see the dumb white man being taught or instructed the right way by a black man or some other non-white. Now this is product commercial advertising. They are trying to sell you a lawn mower, but they are also selling you racial brainwashing, in particular, anti-white brainwashing. Now this doesn’t happen by accident (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

The participants also did not trust the media, even the conservative FOX News. According to Thomas, “The news is lies. You know, NBC, ABC, CBS, the only one you

can get half way a little bit of truth from is FOX... and even they are swayed to a certain extent” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Unlike the other participants interviewed, however, Thomas was the only one who insinuated the existence of a Jewish controlled media, stating rather apologetically before cutting himself off that “The media, you know, and I hate to get into this, you know, it is all run by the Jews, you know, and I don’t want to come off as a...” and then abruptly stopped his response to the question about the media and their portrayal of the Klan and race (Thomas, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce also commented on how the media covered race with a double standard, and concluded, “If a crime is committed against a person of color it’s always a front page headline, 16-point type with color pictures and in depth stories” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce added:

Of course when the opposite is true, and for instance, a Black guy wipes out an entire white family, it is on the back of page 40, in the smallest possible print, and they try not to mention the race of the assailant (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Pierce concluded the news has a double standard with the way it covered crime because black-on-white crime “is not news any more, it happens so often. It’s every day” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce also contended the Klan faced a double standard in the media (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). According to Pierce:

We have learned over the years to accept a double standard. We are always going to be the bad guys no matter what we do. I can give you a list of charities we contributed to last year and we would still be the bad guys (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

But, the most frequent example of the perception of the existence of a double standard against whites was the argument minorities had groups like the NAACP and LA Raza, or minority institutions like Black or Latino Student Unions, or minority entertainment outlets like B.E.T. or Spanish-language channels, while no such

organizations existed for whites. Bondira concluded, "You have the United Negro College Fund, the NAACP, all these things can freely advertise for a racial slant for minorities. Try advertising anything for whites" (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira concluded, "Thou shalt not say anything good about the white race" (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

Participants also felt whites were not allowed to express pride in their heritage or in being white without the accusation that such an expression automatically meant the individual was a racist. The Klan was therefore seen as the only pro-white organization in existence, as an NAACP for white people. Interestingly, when asked about this, Dr. Pierce responded, "So, what is the Klan? It is an organization that works for the benefit of white, Christian America. That is our central focus. All else is wrapped up in that" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce later explained the Klan is "for Americanism, the Constitution, the rights of our people, our history, heritage, and culture" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). According to Dr. Pierce, the Klan is a pro-white organization, adding, "If we do not speak up for White Christian American, who will? What politician will speak up for White Christian America? What college professor will speak up for White Christian America?" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce instead concluded politicians, college professors, and the media, "will speak up about gay rights, they'll speak about the terrible slavery of 1860, they will speak of anything, anything in this world except the fact that this nation was founded by white Christian people for white Christian people" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). According to Dr. Pierce, it is the Klan that says, "This nation has been a blessing to every country on the face of the earth." He added, "It should be heard" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce continued:

We are entitled to have it heard and no one else will speak, so therefore we will do it, and we will do it until the Lord returns because that is our job, and so that is what we do, that is the difference we make (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

## **Racial Extinction**

Another oft-cited belief among the participants was that whites, in general, were in danger of becoming extinct because of race mixing, which created the Klan's desire for racial separatism. Regardless of the religious ideology of the individual Klan sites, most cited a belief that whites were a worldwide minority, and even in the few countries where whites currently make up the majority of the population, they were becoming less white and less Christian. Most participants also made similar statements. For example, Bondira concluded:

Countries are being flooded by non-whites against the will of the majority of the people. The governments are ignoring it and they are just forcing this stuff, this race mixing, and this race mixing has just one result in the end: the extinction and extermination of the white race (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

The perception of potential racial extinction was often met with anger and resentment where whites were not allowed to state what to them was obvious in that whites are a shrinking percentage of the world's population, and in danger of becoming extinct, and along with that all white culture and heritage. Resentment was clear from James who stated:

They call anyone who advocates the continued existence of the white race a hater and a racist and there is no need for an organization to stand up for the white race just because, at the moment, in America we are the most populous (James, pers. comm.).

Thomas added, "Look at what I consider the white genocide taking place in this country," and concluded, "I don't want to be a minority" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Being a minority while white was a topic also brought up by Bondira, who said, "You don't have

as many white people as you used to have” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira added, “The population is 60 some odd percent white now. When I was a kid, it was 93%, and we were virtually drug free and crime free compared to today” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira continued:

Now that we are shrinking down to close to the 50% mark, crime is everywhere, drugs are everywhere. It shows the morals of the country have gone to hell. Our society is just becoming... a Sodom and Gomorrah and I expect us to end up the same way being destroyed (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

In addition to the belief that whites did not have an organization looking out for their interests with the exception of the Klan, and the perception the media and society chastise anyone who talks about being pro-white, the CNK KKK, DRK, and UWK sites also all insinuated “white guilt” prevented some whites from being willing to look out for the interests of other whites. Thomas added to this idea stating, “The problem with the white race is we don’t stand up for ourselves and for each other. We don’t do that” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas added:

There’s a few of us that do, but for most of us, it has been bred out of us, it has been leached out of us. It has been guilt, yeah, white guilt. Everything is about white guilt. It is wrong, and that is what I try and let people do, to be proud of who and what they are (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Thornton made a similar statement, adding, “It is like any time you mention white anything you are a racist, and we try to educate our people in that, you’re white, be proud of it. There is nothing shameful of being white” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Tina added that in today’s “multicultural world,” whites are made to feel “guilty because they are actually proud of what they are and what they believe,” and added, “Why should I be ashamed of the fact that I am a white Christian? I don’t find that shameful. I am very proud to be a white Christian” (Tina, pers. comm.).

## **A Christian Klan**

Being white was an important aspect of Klan membership in all Klan groups, but so too was being a Christian, and a requirement for the Christian and Protestant Klans. While the Klans were broken into four groups, non-Christian, Christian Identity, Christian, and Protestant, the most commonly cited characteristic or belief of a true Klansman in a traditional Klan was the belief in God and Jesus. When asked if Klans that accepted pagans or atheists into their membership could be considered a true Klan, James responded, "In my opinion and in the study of Klankraft, a sacred and undying principle of the Klan, no man can become a Klansman who denies the existence of the Christ Child" (James, pers. comm.). Klankraft as James refers to it encompasses the rituals, ceremonies and symbolism of the First and Second Era Klans, including the Bible, the cross, and belief in Jesus. James later added, "I am God fearing and raise my children to be the same way" (James, pers. comm.). Thomas also concluded Klans which allow pagan or atheists as members "aren't true Klans" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Bondira concluded the same thing, adding, "You have to be a Christian to join. Now, if they say they take atheists and pagans and such, then they are not real Klan. They're imposters who have taken the name" (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

Christianity had an important role in Klan ideology, particularly for Christian and traditional Klans as a connection back to previous Eras of the Klan. While it may seem there is an incompatibility between being Christian and being in the Klan, all of the participants interviewed insisted the two were linked, particularly under the purported guise that being in the Klan did not make a person a racist, and that a traditional reading of the Bible was in line with Klan ideology. As an example, James explained the Klan was "founded on the Christian God and our laws reflect the Ten Commandments"

(James, pers. comm.). Philip concluded that as Klan members, “We take God for His word and for what he said,” adding, “We don’t believe, well, He didn’t exactly mean that” (Philip, pers. comm.). Cole Thornton made a similar assessment, stating the Klan was “pro-Christian and we take the Bible literally” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Philip added that some churches in the United States “are kind of watering down the messages that are in the Bible, and the Klan does not water that message down,” particularly under what he perceived was “a lot of attacks on Christianity” (Philip, pers. comm.). Perhaps because of this, Dr. Pierce concluded the Klan “has always worked for the benefits of the White Christian people” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

When asked how someone can tell the difference between a real Klan and a bogus Klan, Bondira explained, a real Klan “has the Twelfth Chapter of Romans as the Klansman’s law of life. Any Klansman not living by the Twelfth Chapter of Romans is therefore not a Klansman, he’s an imposter. The Klan says specifically it is for Christians” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). According to the UWK site, the Twelfth Chapter of Romans reads, “I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service.”

### **Traditional and Family Values**

Christian, traditional and family values such as charity, honor, honesty, duty, courage, and brotherhood, appeared infrequently on most Klan sites as a whole. But, these issues were more prominent on traditional Klan sites, but also in interviews with members of traditional Christian and Protestant Klans. Thornton explained:

Family values we are very big on. You teach your kids to do the right thing, you don’t teach your kids to go out there and hate. Blind hatred will drive



you insane, and I've got a big problem with that (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

But, in addition to teaching family values, the Klan was also adamant it performed charitable works within the community. One example of charitable works was mentioned by Thornton who explained the UNSK "will do food baskets at certain times of the year for needy people," and included in the baskets a card which read, "You have been helped by a member of the Ku Klux Klan" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton continued, all donations were done anonymously, and the card did not have the UNSK's name on it, and the donations were made to families of all races (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). According to Thornton, "That is not enticing them to join, but it is telling them the truth – you've been helped by a Klansman," and added, "There's a lot of people walking around with those cards" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Although the CNKKKK is a Christian Identity Klan, Tina also explained how the CNKKKK was involved in anonymous charitable acts (Tina, pers. comm.). Although the CNKKKK's headquarters is in Indiana, Tina lives in Tennessee, and explained how the CNKKKK's Tennessee Realm supports as many as 34 families with money and food (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina continued that most of the families "don't even know where the money comes from," and added, "We know they are struggling so what we do is put money in envelopes and put it in mailboxes or we'll drop food packages off" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina explained that the CNKKKK helps those in its community, adding, "Not all people that we support are white. We do support non-whites as well" (Tina, pers. comm.). Bondira mentioned on his site he included "photographs of Klansmen giving food baskets to black families, or radios to black families that couldn't afford one," as a

means to show the Second Era Klan, and traditional Klans, view charity as pillars of Christianity and Klan action and belief (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

A frequent family-value belief found on many web sites was that the Klan existed to protect, secure, or ensure the future of white children. Interestingly, according to James, this theme originated from Wotanism founder David Lane, and is known as “the 14 words,” which states, “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children” (James, pers. comm.). Wotanism, or Odinism, is a pagan religion based on Norse mythology, and individuals who believe in Wotanism are accepted into non-Christian Klans as well as the BOK. But, while “the 14 words” were born out of Wotanism, derivations of the root concept appeared on most Klan sites as well as in interviews. The idea behind the “14-words” is essentially a traditional family value of providing for one’s children, but its exact usage demonstrates an overlap between Christian Klans and White Nationalist groups even when done unintentionally. As an example, James explained a typical traditional Klansman works with fellow members “in whatever way needed to further the advancement of the White race and the secure future for our children” (James, pers. comm.).

However, with the exception of James, the rest of the participants interviewed provided support for the traditional and family values and the desire to ensure a better world for one’s children without a racial qualifier. As an example, Thomas explained:

I want a world that’s still going to be here for my children’s children. I want them to be able to succeed. I want for them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the right to be able to go out and strive to succeed (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Thornton concluded, “The Klan is a family, with brothers and sisters, we are a family” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

## **An Evolving Klan from its Violent Past**

The First Era Klan battled against perceived government interference and a perceived changing society where whites lost their once dominant power, where non-whites were seen as violent enemies, and where some whites, represented as Carpetbaggers and Scalawags, were considered white traitors who turned their backs on their racial family. The Second Era Klan, with its belief of 100% Americanism including defense of the Constitution, emphasis on Christianity and the Bible, anti-immigration stance, and belief in charity and giving, was the most idealized Klan, and also the largest Klan in American history. Not that the Second Era Klan was not violent, but, according to Bondira, “the majority of the people who were Ku Kluxed were white” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.) Individuals who were Ku Kluxed could be beaten, whipped, lynched, shunned, or killed. For example, Bondira’s web site includes numerous newspaper stories about white men being Ku Kluxed for not taking care of their families or for bootlegging during Prohibition.

The Third Era Klan, most frequently depicted in the media and the one most Americans remember, was a violent Klan in the South that fought against integration and attacks on White dominance. Not surprisingly, some Christian Klan sites denounced the violence committed by the Klan in the 1960s, while participants interviewed also made similar denouncements. When asked about how America views the Klan today, Thomas said that, “They look at the Klan back as we were in the ‘50s and ‘60s, and I will tell you, yes, the Klan was very violent at that time. The Klan had had periods of extreme violence” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Bondira also denounced the Third Era Klan, and said, “It is true in the 1960s there were some savage murderous Klan groups. These were individuals acting on their own” (Richard Bondira, pers.

comm.). But, Bondira who maintains that the Klan has been more or less corrupted since the Second Era Klan, continued that the Klans of the 1960s “were not following the teachings or the creed of the true Klan. These were imposters, illegal groups. They’re gone. They were all brought to justice, and their leaders were put into jail” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Specifically, Bondira mentioned the “White Knights of Mississippi,” and referred to them as “a murderously savage Klan group,” though “not very big outside of Mississippi, but tremendously powerful in Mississippi” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). He also accused the White Knights of Mississippi of being responsible for the murder of “those three civil rights workers” in Philadelphia, Mississippi in the 1960s (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). But, all the individuals interviewed spoke against violence as a tactic to achieve the Klans’ goals, either stating the 1960s showed violence did not work, or alluded to the fact violence only leads to members going to jail. Tina added, “There is a lot of things that happened in the Klan that were not good. That is why they were changed in the new Eras” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina concluded, people in the Klan “grew up and matured, and realized, hey, this is wrong, and so they changed it, and that is how it should be” (Tina, pers. comm.).

### **An Evolving Klan from its Nazi Past**

The Fourth Era Klan of David Duke and Don Black, with its influence from White Nationalism and neo-Nazi ideology, and abandonment of Klan symbolism, attempted to use the media rather than let the media work against it, and failed. In fact, many of the current traditional Klans did not want to have anything to do with Duke or the leaders of the Fourth Klan. The perceptions of Duke varied, but one of the most frequently expressed was the idea Duke did not represent the views of the traditional Klan. As an example, according to Cole Thornton, David Duke “is so full of hate for the Jews that he

will side with the Muslims who are sworn to kill us being Christians because we are infidels, but because they are against the Jews, he thinks we should align with them” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). For Thornton, Duke’s anti-Semitism overrode his pro-Christianity, which was out of line with traditional Klan ideology. Bondira argued, Don Black, Thomas Robb of the Knights Party, and David Duke:

Were all Nazis first and then realizing that nobody is going to go for the Nazi movement much, threw on Klan robes, thinking that they would do a lot better. And if you look at their early literature back in the ‘80s and stuff, it was all kinds of books about Hitler and the Third Reich, nothing about the KKK (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

Bondira concluded, “That is where you get a lot of people confused about the Klan Nazi association” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Tina added she did not agree with the agenda of David Duke or Don Black, and the CNKKKK site specifically stated its members were not to have any dealings with either (Tina, pers. comm.). According to Tina, David Duke desired the media spotlight and “just went on there and goes, give me money, give me money. He’d give membership to a dog. Somebody wrote in and filled out for his dog and gave \$20, and he got a membership card” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina added, “That man’s got nothing to do with Klan. That’s not Klan. That’s political boosting of yourself” (Tina, pers. comm.). About both Duke and Don Black, Tina concluded, “Our motto has always been not for self, but for others. None of what David Duke and Don Black have done has been for anybody else but themselves” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina continued, “What they did is, they basically set off on the weaknesses of others for their own personal gain” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina later added, “To me, would you rip off your own family member? Then, why would you rip off a Klans member?” (Tina, pers. comm.).

The Klan of David Duke and Don Black, who have gone on to form White Nationalist organizations, had little in common with the Klan of the Second Era, and while some Klans continue to follow the path of the Fourth Era Klan, most have returned to the ideology of the First and Second Eras, as well as having moved away from the violence of the Third Era. In addition, unlike the Fourth Era Klan, today's traditional Klans do not aggrandize themselves in the media and appear on talk shows, nor does it include connections to skinheads and Nazism. According to Bondira:

Fortunately, these skinheads and Nazis who plagued the Klan in the '80s and '90s, poisoned it like crazy, were pretty much driven out. Of course, the damage has been done. Most of the illegal activity blamed on the Klan in the '90s was done by Nazis impersonating the Klan (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

A modern traditional Klan follows the example of the Second Era Klan including its symbolism and beliefs. But, the Klan of the Third and Fourth Era cannot be ignored. The Klan of the 1960s and the Klan under David Duke are the Klans most often portrayed in the media and widely believed to represent the current Klan by the general public especially while some groups calling themselves Ku Klux Klan continue to replicate the example of the Third and Fourth Eras. According to Thornton, "The bad examples are the ones that are usually shown," by the media of the Klan (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). But, not all Klans are modeled after the Third and Fourth Era Klans, as the UNSK explained on its site, "We are not the Klan of the 60's (sic) you see on TV, nor are we idiots that parade around for your amusement like many of you have seen on shows such as Jerry Springer."

### **The New Klan of the 1920s**

During interviews, respondents portrayed Klan belief as part contemporary conservative ideology and part fundamental religious revival. Thomas concluded, "I

think if you actually embrace the Klan and try to practice what the Klan teaches you, that it can make a better person out of you” (Thomas, pers. comm.). The issues of gun rights, immigration, welfare reform, America First, and a liberal media and education system were all topics that were mentioned in the interviews. As an example, Thomas referred to the Klan as a “conservative movement,” and explained his Klan planned on “getting involved in a petition for welfare reform and this is for people on welfare to have mandatory drug testing. If you come up positive, you’ll lose your welfare” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce added that the Klan is pro-life and believes, “Abortion is murder under all circumstances” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Also, a number of Klan sites specifically stated the Klan was against Communism. While some of these Klans may have been against Communism because of its association with Jewish people and the Jewish Karl Marx, when asked about the CNKKKK’s strong stance against communism, Tina made no references to Judaism (Tina, pers. comm.). Instead, Tina explained, “The Klan is a Capitalist society, it is not Communist. We are going to be naturally against the Communists. We don’t believe in the socialized stuff” (Tina, pers. comm.).

Immigration was an issue frequently appearing on a number of Klan sites and has also been cited in research as an issue that has been used by groups like the Klan to recruit new members. Immigration is also a conservative issue, however, particularly as it relates to illegal immigration. When asked what issues have motivated people to join the Klan recently, Philip responded, “I think illegal immigration is a big thing” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip continued, “I think people are tired of seeing these illegal aliens come to our country and having all these benefits while all these taxes are increased to

pay for it all and it is put on the backs of us” (Philip, pers. comm.). With many members from the blue collar sector of the workforce, Philip also tied the current economic conditions with a stance against illegal immigration in that, “The economic situation is motivating people because they are so disenfranchised” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip continued that whites were joining the Klan because while they were out of work themselves, they saw jobs going to illegal immigrants (Philip, pers. comm.).

The media and education system are both considered by the Klan as liberal institutions. Bondira specifically saw Baby Boomers as responsible for the perceived anti-white and anti-Christian teachings in education and the media. Bondira blamed many of America’s problems on:

All those liberals that got cranked out of the Commie schools back in the 50s (sic) and 60s (sic) that are running things, all those aging hippies that blew their brains out on LSD and are now running things, and can’t raise their own kids or grandkids to save their lives (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

Bondira continued, “The insane have taken over the asylum, and that’s what’s in control out there, and they are totally anti-white and totally anti-Christian” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira added, “Just look at how much anti-Christian stuff is subtle in the mass media, documentaries, TV shows, what have you, and anything Jewish is glorified” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). On education, Bondira concluded he intended his site to combat the perceived “politically correct atmosphere that we live in where the truth is ignored through politically correct lies where they are rewriting history under our noses and nobody seems to protest much” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira added, “History is supposed to be the truth about our past, not the fables that satisfies current political attitudes which you can get in any dictatorship or communist country” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Specifically about the media and the Klan, Bondira



commented, “The media says the KKK did this, the KKK did that,” but does not differentiate between what he called the illegal and violent Klans and the Christian fraternal Klans (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

While the Klan opposes the media, education system, and liberals, it does support the Constitution, or at least the Constitution before those groups and institutions the Klan opposes altered their pro-white and Christian interpretation. Specifically, a number of Klan sites supported the Constitution as originally written and intended, but did not provide an explanation of what this meant such as the AGKK, BOK, CNKKKK, Ku Klux Klan, LLC., TAK, UNSK, and UWK. In discussing the role of the Klan as a pro-American organization, Thomas explained, “I love this country” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas added, “I believe in the Constitution as it was original intended by our forefathers and not the bastardized version that keep being shoved down our throats and changed to suit people’s purposes” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce explained, “We are supposed to be equal before the law, not equal by the law” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). It could be suggested, based on additional interviews, the current Constitutional interpretation the Klan is against grants special rights to minorities, whereas the original Constitution was viewed as a system of government and society that treated everyone equally. As an example, Dr. Pierce said the Klan works “on behalf of white Christian America” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce continued:

Along with that comes, of course, the defense of the American Constitution, the Republic of the United States of America, and the laws that apply to all citizens without special rights or privileges for anyone based on their race, sexual orientation, or any number of other criteria that can be dreamed up (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Pierce concluded, “Those who have done that have created divisions among the people and they have made us into the mess that we’re into today” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

comm.). As for the Klan's role in 2011, Dr. Pierce explained the role of the Klan today was to teach "young people about their rights and obligations as citizens of the United States. What the meaning of the Constitution really is and what it's about" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

### **God, Race and Nation**

Support for the idea of "God, Race, and Nation" was specifically found on three Klan sites, but the concept formed the basis for Klan belief. As an example, when asked what the Klan believes, Tina stated confidently, "Being proud of your God, your race, and your nation" (Tina, pers. comm.). But, while most Klans recited this mantra in some form, a striking difference was observed among Klans in their emphasis on God, Race or Nation. Non-Christian Klans placed more emphasis on Race rather than God or Nation as they did not require a belief in God to be members, and often espoused anti-government sentiments. Some Klans, like the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. focused on Nation, and believed the Ku Klux Klan was an American-only organization and therefore should not have foreign Realms. Dr. Pierce was adamant on this point stating, "The Klan is a uniquely American organization. That is why we do not recruit members outside the U.S." (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). But, other Klans instead focused on Race, and concluded all whites could be Klan members in their own country. According to Tina, "Every country in the world has the same problems" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina specifically mentioned the United States, Italy, France, Australia, and New Zealand (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina concluded, in these countries, whites are "losing our culture, we are losing our traditions, we have people that are breaking the law, we have illegal immigrants, we have people with Socialist ideas trying to come in and corrupt our way of life" (Tina, pers. comm.). For the CNKKKK, Tina explained, "Every country has its

own site, so every site is tailored for that particular area” (Tina, pers. comm.). The UNSK also included an internal a link to its European Realm, while the TAK included a link to the True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights Crusaders for Canada. According to Tina, the Klan was patriotic but that their patriotism was for whites in any country they lived in (Tina, pers. comm.). She concluded, regardless of country, whites everywhere faced the same problems and believed in the same things, and added, “The issues are reasonably the same. It is all about people losing jobs, people losing their rights, getting traditions back, stuff like honoring the dead, honoring the military,” and being “law abiding” (Tina, pers. comm.).

### **The Patriotic Klan**

Among the six members of the Klan, all six stated pro-American and patriotic beliefs about their members and organization. For example, James stated, “I am a patriot. I will fight till my dying breath for my country” (James, pers. comm.). Philip concluded the goals of the Klan are to

Uphold traditional Christian American values in our time now, and secure the rights and liberties of all Americans, not just white Americans, but all Americans, because we do stand by the Constitution, and by doing that we are helping not just white people but all Americans out (Philip, pers. comm.).

Philip added that the Klan “is an organization that is looking out for the interest of America mainly” (Philip, pers. comm.). Following this same logic, Dr. Pierce concluded the Klan “is an American thing. It always has been” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). In another example, Tina argued the Klan has four main principles, which she believed would also be the principles of many Americans (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina explained, the first principle “is a patriotic one, you protect your country and you’ll die for your country” (Tina, pers. comm.). The other three principles, according to Tina, were that

members of the Klan protect the American Constitution, protect the right to private ownership of property and business, and protect the rights of women (Tina, pers. comm.).

While the individuals interviewed in this study all made patriotic statements about their Klan and the members of their Klan, non-Christian and Christian Identity Klan with ties to White Nationalist organizations often included statements repudiating the American government or claimed America was under ZOG control. Tina commented that she was upset by groups claiming to be Klan while not being patriotic (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina said, in addition to Non Silba Sed Anthar, “The side motto of the Klan is ‘God, race, and nation.’ This is what infuriates me. Why are these other Klans or people pretending to be Klan, not supporting the country they are in?” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina continued, “It seems to be that the general consensus in the so-called White Nationalist Movement is that everybody belongs to ZOG” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina continued:

We don't go around like some of the other White Nationalist Groups, ‘Oh, the military is just full of Zionists and ZOG’ and this that and the next thing, and paranoid about somebody taking you over or whatever. There are some weird ideas (Tina, pers. comm.).

Tina added, “There are some people in the White Nationalist Movement who believe everybody is out to get them. I do actually believe there should be a mental health requirement in some groups” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina’s comments indicated a clear break in ideology between traditional Klans and White Nationalist groups in white robes. Dr. Pierce also compared traditional Christian and Protestant Klans to non-traditional Klans with ties to White Nationalist organizations (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). While the White Nationalist Movement and non-traditional Klans with ties to White Nationalist

groups believe the government is Zionist controlled, Pierce stated, the Klan “is a patriotic movement” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

### **The Klan and Violence**

Although 15 of the 23 Klan sites examined included statements denouncing violence, all six of the Klan members interviewed denounced violence, particularly as it related to membership. Klan members interviewed often explained a Klansman who commits a crime and goes to jail cannot help the Klan, and therefore violence was not tolerated. As an example, Thomas explained, “I don’t consider myself to be a terrorist. I do not go out advocating violence. I do not. I tell my members quite the opposite” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas added that in conversations with his members he tells them, “You do nobody any good inside a jail cell. None, and I will boot anybody that cannot behave themselves” (Thomas, pers. comm.). But, in keeping with the common theme on numerous Klan sites, while violence was not tolerated, members could act in self-defense, and as Thomas continued, “You can defend yourself, you can protect yourself, you can protect your family, you can protect another Klansman, but you do not go out and start trouble. You remember, you are a Klansman 24-hours a day” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas also advocated self-defense in the protection of America and American freedom, concluding, some “People want to be told what to do, but not all of us do, and the ones that don’t, the ones that want their freedom, there are going to be people like me, and they are the ones that are going to be willing to fight for it if that’s what happens” to prevent the loss of personal freedom (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas added, “I am more than willing to die for it,” but added, “I would hope that it doesn’t come to that” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Tina stated that the CNKKKK denounced violence and added, “We do not support illegal activities” (Tina, pers. comm.).

Personally, Tina commented she does not “go around bashing people with my beliefs because I think that is rather rude, but I don’t want them to bash me with their beliefs either,” and added, “I go around peacefully doing whatever I was doing” (Tina, pers. comm.).

### **Racism and Racial Separation**

Although 10 Klan sites did not specifically denounce racism, all seven participants interviewed made statements that neither they nor their Klan were racist. Instead, participants interviewed would state being racist meant hating everyone of another race and while they did not want to integrate with other races or race-mix, they did not believe this made them racist. As an example, Thomas stated he did not hate others because of their race, but said he did hold hate in his heart, explaining, “I don’t hate a person because of the color of their skin. I hate what is being done to my country. That is what I hate” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas went on to say that as a small business owner, he has clients that are black and added, “Everyone is treated equally in this business” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Another example came from Thornton who spoke about “blind hate” of other races and people, and maintained, “Kids don’t need to have their heads full of that garbage. They need to understand what human values are; love your fellow man, do for your fellow man, and it is not easy” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

During her interview, Tina commented on Klan sites using racial slurs, and said, “I don’t believe you need to go, nigger, nigger, nigger, or kill or hate and all,” adding, “That is such a narrow, horrible view” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina continued that those Klans with racist language on their sites were “focusing on what they think they can get shock value out of, and quite honestly... all they’ve done is just hurt themselves” (Tina, pers.

comm.). Ironically, although the CNK KKK denounced racism, and Tina contended the CNK KKK was not a racist group, she disagreed with Klan sites using racial slurs, but the CNK KKK site did contain anti-Semitic statements as well as references to non-whites as “beasts” (Tina, pers. comm.).

Although 13 of the 23 Klan sites stated their organization is not racist, nine Klan sites specifically advocated racial separation and segregation, sometimes under the guise of the incompatibility between the races, sometimes with Biblical justification, sometimes with the argument that either whites are superior to non-whites and should not mix with them, or profess pride in being white and a desire for the same for their children. As an example, Thomas argued, “Look at what is going on in the world today, and what I see is a blending of society. There is no separation. We are told to embrace diversity” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas continued, “I don’t want to become one. I want to stay who I am. I don’t want to merge. If nothing else, history should have shown that integration has failed” (Thomas, pers. comm.). As a Biblical justification, Thornton explained:

Our belief is, being Christians, God created the races separate and He gave each its strengths and its weaknesses and its culture, genes, and when you start mixing that together it is like mixing animals together, you are destroying what the Creator made, and I don’t understand why people are so hell bent on that (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Thornton concluded, “This is not being racist. We are separatists” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton continued, “The Creator made the races different and we believe they should stay that way, just like whatever he created” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Thornton added, “We don’t go out and preach against a person because of their race or their creed, not the true Klan. The true Klan is not taught that, it does not preach it”

(Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Tina added that the CNKKKK were segregationists, adding:

Segregationist means we will go and live our little lives in what we want to do, we're not about taking over other people's races, taking over other people's homes, taking over other people's lives and controlling them. That is very much not the Klan (Tina, pers. comm.).

Tina added, "Segregationists are close to Separationists, which basically states that in the Bible, with the Tower of Babel, God made races and people different for a reason" (Tina, pers. comm.).

As an all-white organization, race did play an important role for every Klan organization. In addition to membership for whites only, who were non-Jewish, two of the participants mentioned issues involving race such as beliefs whites had something to fear from non-whites. Like many of the Klan sites with links or information from the colorofcrime.com web site, Thomas mentioned "black on white crime," and continued, "Look at any place that is run by minorities. What kind of conditions are those countries in?" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas concluded Haiti was a "no man's land," while South Africa after apartheid "was not any place you would want to live," and because of the number of non-whites in major cities in America that "you don't want to be a part of it; you don't want to live there" (Thomas, pers. comm.). But, while race did have an important role in the beliefs of many Klans, most Klans denounced racism, and as Tina explained, "If you're really going to boil it down, the Klan now, really has little to do with race" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina added, "It's really got to do with your tradition, your culture, and your belief system, and Christians have been targeted all over the world and this is where they are actually standing up" (Tina, pers. comm.).



The race of Barak Obama has also been seen as a major reason for recent increases in Klan members. But, when Barack Obama was mentioned during interviews, it was often not because of his race, but his policies. On the subject of Obama, Tina remarked:

Say Obama was white; he still is an idiot regardless. Quite honestly, it is not really about Obama being black, it is about Obama being an idiot. He is destroying the country. It is not your race that makes your country be destroyed, it is your policies (Tina, pers. comm.).

Overall, the Klan saw Obama as a socialist, and as an example, Thomas stated, “We have a President who is now bent on socialism,” and added, “I would not be surprised if before his two years are up he declares some sort of Martial Law so he can keep his king self in power” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Philip concluded Obama “has done enough to harm our country and bring a lot of socialism and communism, and to me it looks like he has been very divisive as President” (Philip, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce added, “Just say, I just don’t like Obamacare, and how many times will you be called a racist in five minutes?” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce continued, “It doesn’t matter that the policy stinks and it is destroying America. You are a racist because you dared to disagree with a Black President. This is the mob mentality we have” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

But, whether it was his race or his policies, Bondira explained that Obama has been an asset to the Klan in recruiting and was “why the Klan backed him up when he was running against Hillary Clinton in the primaries” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Tina continued, contrary to research, it was not Klan web sites that had led to a recent growth in the Klan, instead stating, “You can squarely put the rise of the Klans to do with Obama. He actually has been the best recruiting tool we’ve ever had” (Tina, pers.

comm.). Tina added, "You know what the reason was? Because people got complacent. They thought, you heard it, the shock in people's voices of, 'Oh my God, we've got an African-American as President, and he's a Muslim. How did that happen?'" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina's response to the people's question was "Because you let it happen," and added, "People suddenly realized they are not living in the 1950s anymore. The world is changing, and yeah, they can't just sit there and expect other people to do stuff for them" (Tina, pers. comm.).

### **Reasons for Joining**

In some respects, the leadership of the Klan, and specifically the individuals who agreed to participate in this study, whose ages ranged from the mid-40s to over 60-years-old, are influenced by their age, which, in turn influences the Klan. According to all of the participants, older Klansmen do not yearn for an America they never knew, but the one in which they grew up. Visions of a perceived utopian America of years past with a majority white, conservative, and Christian country, influences current Klan ideology. In reality, the Klan is not a youth movement, but a reactionary movement, made up of organizations led by older whites who disagree with the direction of the country. According to Bondira:

Your older guys who join the Klan are the ones who kind of remember what America was like when it was America and not this international conglomerated dumping ground for all the unwanted people of the Earth. They remember when they had a bright future to look forward to when they were young (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

While the Klan was made up of mostly older members, younger whites often joined more aggressive and violent groups like skinheads. This connection was the most evident in the IKA. The IKA accepts skinheads as members, and has been

criminally and civilly pursued by the SPLC. This cause and effect has not been lost on the traditional Klan. According to Thornton:

Younger people, especially teenagers, older teenagers, getting close to the 20 mark, a lot of them are drawn into the skinheads because it is action. It is what they think they should be doing like going out and busting heads, whatever other kind of garbage they come up with (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Thornton added, the UNSK has “had quite a few converts” of former skinheads who join the UNSK (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). But, Thornton added that the UNSK is “very leery of taking them,” and has only done so after former skinheads “get a little bit older and they realize, hey, this isn’t what I’m about, really not what I am into,” of “going out and beating on somebody or other types of voodoo garbage” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). According to Tina, members of the CNKKKK are generally thirty-plus, adding, “We don’t have a lot of youth because quite honestly, between 20 and 30 years-old, their priorities are girlfriends, whatever, trying to get a job, trying to make ends meet, stuff like that” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina added, younger people are “not focused on the wide issues. They are more focused on what is happening more directly in their lives” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina went on to say:

When you get past the age of 30, you priorities change. It is just a natural part of life. You start saying, I’ve got kids now, and they are starting to go to school, what is their future going to be? And that is our basic core membership. We are looking at our own kids. I am a grandmother, I look at my grandson and I wonder, what is your future going to be? As you get older and you progress, that is exactly what you are looking at. You are looking at the political issues. You are looking at what would you like to see. I would like to see my little grandson be able to ride his bike up and down the street without getting mugged or run over, a drive by shot, or having to run over needles and stuff like that (Tina, pers. comm.).

In essence, according to the participants, Klan members tend to be older because they have families and therefore more to lose, and know they cannot go around committing

violence and possibly be thrown in jail. Thornton also added that Klan leaders were older because, “They have been around it longer, they’ve had more life skills, dealing with people” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

In further explaining the ages of Klan leadership, Thomas continued, “I go to some rallies with some individuals they’re pushing their 70s and 80s. They’ve been in the Klan for 30, 40, 50 years. Well, they are on their way out, but what they say stays” (Thomas, pers. comm.). For his part, being in his early 50s, Thomas continued he was now in a leadership position to pass along Klankraft to members in their 30s, adding, “Now it is my turn to pass it on to the younger individuals just to keep the Klan alive” (Thomas, pers. comm.). According to Thomas, younger whites are joining the Klan, not because they believe society has somehow changed from what it once was, but because of a sense there is something wrong with today’s society (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas added, “Their mindsets are turning this way because we are headed in the wrong direction” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas argued some younger whites see a double standard in society, and are drawn to the Klan for answers, stating, “There are people who do realize that it is wrong and those are the ones who seek us out” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas concluded that younger people “look at the people who have been on welfare for generations and they are driving their Cadillac. They’ll sit there and watch government housing developments get built and within two years it has to be torn down again” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas added, younger whites drawn to the Klan “see inequality, the injustice, that well I must be the wrong color. If I was Mexican or black I would qualify for these things. But, because I am not, I don’t” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Bondira made a similar argument, stating that after being exposed to a double standard

in society, younger whites look to join the Klan, specifically mentioning, “The ones in schools in particular see how the black kids get preferential treatment, get away with anything, and the white kids are treated as second-class students” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira added, “When they see stuff like that happening they get very resentful” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

### **Purpose of the sites**

This study attempted to answer the question, Why does the Klan create web sites? While research shows the Internet has been a recruiting boom for groups like the Klan, respondents concluded few individuals join the Klan after simply viewing an organization’s site, and instead, traditional methods were still best means of recruitment. To clarify, James concluded, “Face-to-face contact is the better means of reaching people” (James, pers. comm.). Philip made a similar statement arguing, “As far as recruiting, we try to do that in person with people,” adding “That is the best way to reach out to people for them to actually meet a person and speak to them in person” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip continued that after members of his organization met a potential recruit it was then the recruit would be referred “to the web site for more information” (Philip, pers. comm.).

Even though the UNSK is a large Klan with Realms across the country and in Europe, Thornton explained, “Nobody gets in without a face-to-face meeting, and we are large enough and cover enough territory where that’s a reality with us” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton continued, after a face-to-face meeting, potential members went through an application process which he described as a “pretty long process” and included a “thorough background check” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton added, after recruits’ backgrounds are checked, “They are taken in on a

probationary status for usually a year before they are allowed to be sworn in” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton maintained, “We don’t want just everybody and we turn down, in all honesty, we turn down more people than the average group takes in a year” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton concluded, some individuals may become attracted to the UNSK after viewing its web site, but the UNSK was not an Internet Klan and did not accept members without a lengthy application process (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton added, “If you start taking everybody, then you’ve got problems” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Dr. Pierce explained that information on the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site was “for non-members. It is informational, it’s historical” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce added:

What we are trying to impress people with is, number one, that we are not a secret organization. We are an organization that has some secrets just like General Motors has their secrets... we do have a few of those that we do not announce to the public. But, almost 90% of everything else, we have an answer for and are willing to publish it (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Dr. Pierce added that the information on the site, and particularly the FAQ section, was provided to non-members or individuals doing school reports and added, “Our members generally don’t need that, they already know these things” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Significantly, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site did not provide an online means to join the organization. Therefore, while the site was intended for non-members, it was not intended to recruit non-members.

Instead, Klan web sites were information portals and public relations outlets to let the public know the Klan exists and what it stands for. Tina maintained, “Yes, more people are joining the Klan because the Internet age is out there” (Tina, pers. comm.).

Tina added:

The Internet, how we see it and how we use it as a tool, is exactly the same as putting an ad in the paper, or a radio ad out there or advertising on the TV as well; it is a medium and that is basically all we see it as (Tina, pers. comm.).

Tina continued, “Everybody has a computer in their home, and why not use technology for getting the message across, and yes, if people see that and want to join, they can join” (Tina, pers. comm.). However, as Tina concluded, “Basically, we would get about five-percent of our membership from the Internet. We don’t get a heck of a lot” (Tina, pers. comm.).

In addition to asking participants the purpose for creating web sites, some Klan sites also provided an explanation. For example, the IKA site stated the “advent of the Internet and other technologies,” had delivered groups like the Klan “a serious advantage in dealing with our present situation.” The IKA site added:

In the past decades, white activists have been limited to relying on personal contact, flyering, and other forms of printed literature to communicate to and recruit our people, and our movement was stunted as a result of this deprivation.

According to the IKA site, the Internet has allowed making contact with individuals easier, and this ease of contact “has had dramatic effects on the movement, and now new recruits are joining our ranks at exponentially increasing rates.” Essentially, the IKA site stated the Internet has made it easier for the IKA to recruit new members and allowed them to recruit more members than through traditional methods alone. This statement at first would lead to the conclusion that more individuals were joining the Klan simply after viewing Klan web sites. However, the IKA is not a traditional Klan, and its focus on recruiting through the Internet was another break from traditional Klans. In addition, the reality is people do not join the Klan simply after viewing a web sites, but instead gain a means to make contact with the Klan after viewing the site, thus

beginning the traditional membership process. For example, James stated that some individuals express interest in his Klan after viewing his Klan's web site, but added that, "75% of the people who contact us for membership from seeing us on the net are considered unworthy" of membership into his Klan (James, pers. comm.). James added, "We, as a group, do not just accept anyone" (James, pers. comm.). The Internet acts as an advertisement for the Klan, in an accessible and worldwide forum, as opposed to a billboard, television or radio spot, newspaper ad, or even a public rally.

According to the Knights Party's main site, "Movies and TV give the impression that Klan people are ignorant and backward. They do this to prevent people from getting more info." The Knights Party at kkk.bz, stated having a presence on the Internet means it no longer has "to rely on the media to get our message out to the masses. We don't have to use our limited resources to put on countless rallies across the nation to get 5 seconds of air time followed by 5 minutes of anti-Christian/Klan editorialism (sic)." In the Question and Answer section on the Knights Party's main site, the site provided the following response as to why they have a web site:

We want to give an accurate portrayal of The Knights. Most people base their opinions on what we call "comic book research". They go to the library and pick up a book written by someone who has his own agenda. They may watch a ridiculous Hollywood movie or watch the Jerry Springer show and then think they are experts on the Klan. Hogwash! Any good researcher goes straight to the source. On this website we offer our ideas, explanations, goals, agenda, beliefs, etc. for your examination - straight from the national headquarters of America's largest and oldest Klan organization - the authority on the subject.

Interestingly, included in this answer is both the insinuation the Knights Party is the oldest and largest Klan in the United States, as well as an authority on Klan beliefs. However, the site frequently referred to the Knights as a political party and white racist organization, and not the Ku Klux Klan, and dissociated with the nomenclature,



rituals, and symbolism of the First and Second Era Klans. In fact, the Knights Party's main site stated, "We do not use most of the traditional terms once used by Klan groups." The Knights' site added, "It is not our desire to be historical reeactors (sic) nor confuse the public with odd sounding names." Essentially, the Knights Party explained the purpose of its site was to explain the purpose of the Knights Party and its ideology, not of the Klan as a whole. But, even if the Knights' site was meant only to provide information about the Knights party, it was still an informational site and was not used for recruitment.

The most frequent explanation given as to why the Klan creates and maintains web sites was as a means to provide information to the public about America and the Klan. The UNSK web site stated, "See if we don't tell you more truth and give you more real information about what is really happening to White America than any of the news sources." The UNSK site added, "There is much more to this Order than is ever presented by the press, or by magazine articles or documentaries." Meanwhile, Bondira's TIHRF site stated:

The History Channel, (and most modern historians and educators as well), are just plain lying when they put forth, as fact, the myth, that the KKK was dedicated to lawlessness and violence for the sake of racial hate and just rode around at night looking for innocent Negroes to hang. They are deliberately and knowingly rewriting American history for the sake of appeasing special interest minority groups at the expense of, and against the wishes of, the majority of US citizens. The citizens of the United States are being stripped of their true history, heritage, and national identity

The UNSK, a traditional Christian Klan, and TIHRF site as an informational portal, provided responses that most closely matched those of the respondents in this study, in that the purpose of Klan web sites was not to recruit new members, or to provide information solely about the individual Klan organization as did the Knights Party site.

Instead, the purpose of Klan sites, according to all the individuals interviewed, was to provide information to the public about the Klan and white, Christian America. According to James, the purpose of his Klan's site was to "use the most inexpensive means of getting the word out to those that want to listen" (James, pers. comm.). James added that his Klan' site "is a short introduction to (James' organization) and what we stand for and what we are, a Traditional Group" (James, pers. comm.). Thomas concluded the purpose for his Klan's site was educational too, stating, "We just want to wake people up. We just want people to open their eyes, look around, and see what is actually taking place" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas added, "It is about trying to educate, trying to get people racially aware to what is going on," adding his web site was about "slapping people upside the face and saying, 'Look, this is what is happening today'" (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Dr. Pierce provided a response similar to others interviewed saying that the purpose of the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site was "mostly informational, educational material to try to help people understand that, they don't have anything to fear from the Klan" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). As Dr. Pierce explained that the purpose of the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site was to "Stop the rumors, state facts, give information... in a free and open format not only to this country but the world" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce later added the web site "also helps to, I think, stop rumors" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce continued:

Rumors are something that is, especially in this organization, that need to be dispelled immediately and as quickly as possible, and that is why we also have a section in there where we explain our position about the Westborough Baptist Church. People assume for some reason we must be in league with them. But we strictly point that out on our website that that simply is not the case (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

According to Dr. Pierce, “We still get calls from people that say, ‘You still hangin’ black people?’ Well, my God, if we were, it would be front page news and every newspaper in America every day” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce added, “If the Internet does nothing else, it at least helps to prove to people that 98% of the urban legends and garbage that they hear are simply made up” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Essentially, in addition to informing the public about what the Klan is, the participants interviewed said the sites were also intended to inform the public about what the Klan was not, and specifically that it was not like the non-traditional Klans claiming to be the true KKK. Tina explained the purpose of the CNKKKK site was “to stop the negative propaganda from the fake groups out there that are claiming to be Klans. That is one of the major reasons why it is up there” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina added, a lot of misinformation exists about the Klan because of bogus Klans “claiming it to be true,” saying, “I feel sorry for the poor people who have no idea what the Klan is about who will be reading and believing” what the bogus Klans claim are the beliefs of a real Klan (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina continued, “We get a lot of people making inquiries, questions, and that is the actual education side of it and is the reason that site is up there” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina concluded if individuals had a question “then please write in and ask. The worst thing is blissful ignorance” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina confirmed the site was “about education, education for our members, for the public, for researchers, for anybody that is slightly interested” (Tina, pers. comm.).

Bondira also stated his site was also a way to provide information and let people know more about the Klan (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). According to Bondira, “Anybody who looks at my site is going to see that it is an objectively historical site”

(Richard Bondira, pers. comm.) Bondira concluded his site was intended to let people know “the positive side of the KKK which is what the organization was all about,” rather than the media’s portrayal of the Klan (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira maintained the media, including the History Channel:

Just take the misdeeds of one-percent of the membership and blow it way out of proportion and try to give you the image the organization was created as a terror group, a hate group, and something that was out to just attack innocent people for virtually no reason (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

According to Bondira, the media focus on the violent 1960s Klan and some of today’s rogue and illegal Klans that do not follow the tenants of the true Klan (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira added that the media “continues to blame all Klans for the misdeeds of the few” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). But, as Dr. Pierce added:

Those few groups who try to act out like Hollywood Klans and play the games that they hear through their urban legends and so forth, all end up in jail or dead – every one of them. No exceptions. None of them have gotten away with one thing (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

In addition to being educational resources, other Klans maintain sites to let people know the Klan is still in existence. As Thomas explained, he created a web site for his Klan because, “I wanted them to know that we’re here” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas added, “As far as why the web site was put up, it was to let the people know that we are here in the state” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Contrary to previous research, Thomas concluded he did not see his Klan’s web site “so much as a big recruitment tool, but it lets people know our validity, we are here, we are real, we are a traditional Klan, we do come from experience” (Thomas, pers. comm.).

If anything, the Internet was seen as simply another tool to spread the message of the Klan, and if along with that came the possibility of new members, the participants who were Klan members all agreed that it was an added bonus, but not the sole

purpose of the sites. Thomas did believe more people were joining the Klan, but not because the Klan was on the Internet and not because the Klan was using the Internet to recruit. When asked, Thomas responded, "Is the Klan growing? Yes, the Klan is growing" (Thomas, pers. comm.). But, Thomas added, "Is it the web sites so much that is doing it? I don't think so" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas concluded that the web sites "lets other people know we are here," but added, "It is not our main recruitment tool. That is word of mouth" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Philip did not consider his Klan's site as a main recruitment tool, but did see the value in having the site for people to find out about his Klan and then possibly join. Philip concluded that the Internet was "sort of for recruiting too, because I know people find us through doing searches on search engines, so I am sure it does help recruit to a certain degree" (Philip, pers. comm.).

But, when asked if research was correct and web sites help the Klan recruit new members, Dr. Pierce responded, "It is not as true as most people like to think" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce added, "We don't care if people join or not. That is not the point of the site. You notice there is no application on that site" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). In fact, including the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site, nine of the Klan sites examined did not provide an online application. Dr. Pierce explained, "We don't have an application that they just fill out and overflow us with paperwork. We are looking for quality of individual not quantity" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce later added, "I would rather have 50 people that I can count on, that I know their stand, that I know they are willing to do the work and make things happen, than to have 500" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

In addition, Tina mentioned her Klan's site was for educating current members (Tina, pers. comm.). According to Tina, the CNK KKK site is "for educating our own" members with what the CNK KKK believes and to refute what she described as rumors about the Klan from the media and other Klans (Tina, pers. comm.). In fact, a number of sites included regular messages from their Imperial Wizard or other high-ranking members directed at current members on such topics as Klan mergers, issues in the media such as the Tea Party and elections, or any media exposure the Klan had recently received.

But, in addition to providing members with information about their Klan and about American society and politics, members use sites to privately discuss issues specifically related to their Klan. As an example, Philip explained, "We do have a private area for members, but that is more for people to have a secure chat area basically" (Philip, pers. comm.). Thornton concluded, the UNSK site was "like a meeting place" for members, particularly as the UNSK is spread out across the country and in Europe, and the member's only areas provides a space for members "to get to understand each other and each other's feelings a little better" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton said the UNSK site had a "private section that the public can't see that is for members only. And that is where a lot of the workings of what we're doing as a group go on" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton, however added, "But of course, all of that can be monitored by the Feds and the police departments" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Interestingly, four of the six Klan members interviewed mentioned being under surveillance by law enforcement. Humorously, before beginning to record our interview, Tina stated that if the recording equipment did not work it might be possible to contact

the F.B.I. as they monitor all of her phone calls and she added that during the interview a series of clicks might be heard which meant the conversation was being recorded (Tina, pers. comm.).

When asked if he felt the federal government monitoring the UNSK site was an invasion on his privacy, Cole Thornton explained, "I don't really care because the more they look, the more they realize that we are not preaching offensive violence, and instead what the true Klan is, and I feel they find that by really seeing what the members are saying" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton continued:

They have a dossier on me, and that is fine, because in the meetings I have had with the police of all levels, they know that I am doing everything in my power, and so is the leadership of the UNSK, to make sure everything we do is legal and operating legal. Nobody sitting in jail is going to do this movement any good (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

### **Who are members of the Klan?**

While no Klan web site or participant provided an estimate on the number of Klansmen and women in America today, all of the participants broadly defined members of the Klan or individuals who would join the Klan. The participants all described a typical Klan member as an average, white, conservative, Christian American. In his interview, Thomas concluded his membership was made up of "all working stiffs" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thornton added, "A typical Klansperson today is one that even in today's society walks with honor, and integrity, and values and good Christian morals, and grows, and who studies and strives to learn more and better himself and to help others" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Philip provided the most detailed explanation of a typical Klansman stating, "To me, a typical Klansman is someone who is patriotic towards the United States of America, upholds the Constitution, assists the duly constituted law officers of the land in

carrying out their duties through the example of reporting illegal immigrants and things like that,” as well as “a good citizen” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip also said that a typical member would be responsible for “taking care of our families and also taking care of people in our community that might need help... and just trying to preserve our heritage and history” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip added a member must also “accept the Bible as being the word of God,” and “believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he died as a sacrifice for our sins, that God raised Him from the dead” (Philip, pers. comm.).

According to James, typical Klans members and members of his Klan, were Christians with a “good standing in their community, willing to put his Klan above himself but not before his natural family” (James, pers. comm.). According to Dr. Pierce:

The typical member is at least 18 years of age, is white, and has a job, has a place to live, has a family, and has something to live for and work for and prosper for, so he has something to lose. He has something at stake (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Like many Klans, Dr. Pierce explained membership in the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. also required members to not use drugs or abuse alcohol (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Tina added:

We do not accept pedophiles, rapists, arsonists, terrorists, we don't accept people that are drug addicts, alcoholics, you know, if somebody's been clean for 10 years, well, they've got their lives back together again, and that is fine, we will accept them. But, they must stay clean and sober, and if they don't, they're immediately removed (Tina, pers. comm.).

Dr. Pierce also explained, unlike leaders of previous Era Klans, a member of the Klan today “is not somebody who is looking for their fifteen-minutes of fame, for that is all they are going to have in this world” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce added, “Our people are responsible, they pay the bills, they do the work. They make America



move. They're just everyday people" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Tina explained Klan members were "just the average person on the street" (Tina, pers. comm.).

Interestingly, a number of Klan members were military veterans exemplified by the fact the Knights Party has a veteran's only division with the KPVL. As an example, Tina said she "served 13 years in the Australian military as a commissioned officer" (Tina, pers. comm.). In addition, Tina explained 80% of the members of the CNKKKK were veterans (Tina, pers. comm.). From the interviews, it appeared Klan members who had been in the military missed the sense of camaraderie, cohesion, and discipline they had found, and have since found again in the Klan. Thomas mentioned he "spent nine-and-a-half-years in the military," adding, "I took an oath twice to defend this country from all enemies, foreign and domestic" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas later added, "When I was in the military, there was that 'us against them.' When I rode motorcycles there was this 'us against them.' I enjoyed that" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas went on to explain how he found that same mentality in the Klan that he once had while in the military and when riding motorcycles (Thomas, pers. comm.).

According to Bondira, the characteristics of a typical Klan member are vastly different from how Klan members are portrayed in the media (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira explained the media depicts the Klan as "a bunch of ignorant, tobacco chewing rednecks that make up the Klan. When in reality some of the finest people in the country were members of the Klan" (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira continued that some of the Klans' past prominent members including Presidents and Supreme Court Justices (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce also disputed the notion the Klan was only made up of "illiterate rednecks" when asked if his Klan had a

web site in order to attract more white-collar members (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). According to Dr. Pierce, “The Klan has always, always been a middle-class organization, but it also had the support of the business communities and the local governments and so forth throughout its history” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce continued, “Ignorant rednecks is what the government and our opposition want you to believe” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). But, Pierce added, “There is no empirical evidence to suggest that other than opinion or propaganda” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Instead, according to Pierce, some of his members were doctors and lawyers and stated, “These are not redneck people. That is what our opposition would have you to believe, and we haven’t minded that because as long as they keep underestimating us, we make better progress” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

### **Catholics in the Klan**

The Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s was a white Protestant organization and routinely attacked any Roman Catholic influence on the United States including Catholic schools, Catholic immigration, and Catholic political candidates. But, among the 20 Klans examined, when the Knights Party sites are collapsed into one organization and TIHRF site is removed, only two of the 20 Klans did not accept Catholic members. Therefore, although none of the participants described a typical Klan member as Catholic, membership in 18 Klans, including non-Christian Klans, would be open to Catholics.

According to Thornton, the UNSK “is a non-denomination Klan,” and its members possess “the beliefs and the basic tenants of the Christian religion,” thus qualifying Catholics for membership (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). As opposed to the Protestant-only Klans and the 1920s Klan, Thornton added, “The old anti-Catholic thing is not true Klan really, I mean, really, Forrest had Catholics that rode with him” (Cole Thornton,

pers. comm.). Thornton concluded, “We’re all sinners saved by grace, and we try to grow from our weaknesses, so I don’t want to eliminate someone because of their doctrines” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). James mentioned while he was raised Methodist, his wife is a Catholic (James, pers. comm.). Philip added, “I mean if they believe, then it doesn’t matter if they are Catholic, Baptist, or any of that” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip also acknowledged while the Second Era Klan was anti-Catholic, he maintained:

I know that there was problems with the Catholics, and I believe a lot of that was derived from the Klan back in those days thinking the Pope was an influence in the political situation in America. But, I don’t really think it was against the Catholic religion in particular (Philip, pers. comm.).

Thornton added:

I don’t think the Catholic Church is sending people to hell and I don’t think like in days of old, that the Pope has enough control that he is going to tell the people in this country how to vote and they are going to do it, and that was a big fear of the old Klan. It was the power that the Pope had, and he does not have that kind of power today (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Interestingly, Bondira argued the 1920s Klan was not even very anti-Catholic, explaining how the 1920s Klan performed charitable works for Catholics, and “took memorial wreaths to the graves of Catholic World War I soldiers” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

Philip concluded, “I see the Catholic Church taking a strong stand against abortion and things like that. They uphold the sanctity of human life. That is what the Klan tries to do as well” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip finished by stating, “We definitely haven’t had problems with Catholic members” (Philip, pers. comm.). Tina made a similar conclusion, stating, “We have Catholics in the Klan now because somebody finally realized, duh, we’re Christian, so are Catholics” (Tina, pers. comm.). As for the Klan previously

excluding Catholic members, Tina continued, “Somebody did finally wake up and finally realized, that’s a bit silly, and they go, OK, getting back to basics, what are the four principles of the Klan? It had nothing really to do with how we are on the Catholic Church,” and explained the CNKKKK had Catholic members, Protestant members, and Christian Identity members (Tina, pers. comm.). In essence, while most Klans accept Catholics as members, the misconception over the Klan’s anti-Catholic bias remains, along with other general ideas of who are members and what they believe.

### **Misconceptions about the Klan**

After discovering few Klans maintained an anti-Catholic bias, the interview guide was adapted to include the question, “What is a common misconception about the Klan?” The added question was used to supplement the original question on the interview guide of, “What do you think is the average American’s view of the Klan?” In total, five of the six Klan members interviewed were from traditional fraternal Klans, with the exception of Tina from the CNKKKK. Therefore in the following discussions, when Klan members pointed out misconceptions about the Klan, they are referring to general misconceptions people have because of all Klan organizations being lumped together with traditional fraternal Klans. The Klan members interviewed from fraternal traditional Klans, as well as Tina from a non-traditional Klan, all explained that because any Klan which use the title Ku Klux Klan is portrayed as representative of the Klan as a whole, the traditional Klans are viewed negatively even though their organizations are quite different from non-traditional Klans. Non-traditional Klans include those with ties to racist skinheads and Nazis, Klans with more in common with White Nationalist organizations, or Klans which claim to be political parties, churches, or paramilitary organizations. In fact, because of the number of non-traditional Klans claiming to be true Klan, Thomas

concluded, “You look at most Klan organizations and I would tell you that maybe one in ten is actually worth a damn” (Thomas, pers. comm.).

### **Racialist versus Racist**

According to all of the participants, a common misconception about the Klan was that the all Klan members are racist. A similar response was made to the question about how Klan members interviewed felt the average American perceived the Klan. The participants all explained they were not “racists” but were “racialists” or “separatists.” For example, James stated, “There is a difference to being a racialist and a racist. A Nazi is a racist but those in my Klan are racialists. Racialists are those who care for their race above all others” (James, pers. comm.). James added, “I, and any true Klansmen, does not deny the right of any other race to exist so we should not expect those other races to object to our furthering the advancement of our race” (James, pers. comm.). While it may appear to be a bit of semantic jousting to describe the Klan as racialists rather than racists, this outward portrayal is consistent with previous research and would rebrand the Klan not as an anti-minority organization but as a pro-white organization.

When asked about the public perception of the Klan, all of the participants responded that the American people in general did not like the Klan. But, even though the participants conceded the general public did not like the Klan, they all included a caveat that the general public was against the Klan because of the way the Klan was portrayed by the media and the government, and not from having met or known a Klansman. In fact, when asked why he agreed to participate in this study, Philip explained it was because of the general perception of the Klan based on the media’s portrayal (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip argued misconceptions about the Klan continue

because of media coverage and research done by “People not actually speaking to a member and getting their perspective on things” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip continued that media coverage and research on the Klan was one of violent and Nazi-influenced Klans, and the media and academic portrayals were creating misconceptions about the true Klan (Philip, pers. comm.). When asked about the portrayal of non-traditional Klans as representative of all Klans, Philip concluded, “I believe they have hurt the image (of the Klan) in a bad way” (Philip, pers. comm.).

When asked how he thought the average American viewed the KKK, Thomas responded, “They don’t like us, but most of them now have been so brainwashed” (Thomas, pers. comm.). Bondira made a statement saying, “The average person views the Klan in a negative way because that is all they’re ever allowed to see” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Philip concurred, “I think that the general population still probably has a bad opinion of us” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip added, “They think that we’re a hate group. They think we go around trying to harm other people and intimidate them, which we don’t” (Philip, pers. comm.).

Thornton, added, “That the Klan hates blacks is probably the biggest misconception about the KKK” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). According to Philip, “The biggest misconception is that we are a hate group. I don’t believe we are a hate group” (Philip, pers. comm.). He continued, “We look out for our race which is our family. We look out for family first. That doesn’t mean we hate other races” (Philip, pers. comm.). Philip added, “In the Klan’s doctrines, you are instructed to treat everyone equally,” adding, “You are not supposed to treat people different based on their race, creed, color, or religion. So I think that’s a huge misconception” (Philip, pers. comm.).

According to Dr. Pierce, the reason for the misconceptions about the Klan was because few Klans in existence today are true Klans, and in his opinion was why his organization specifically chose the name Ku Klux Klan, LLC. (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce recounted, "You should've seen the looks we got when this group was established. They'd say, what's the name of this group, and I would say, the Ku Klux Klan, and they said, but what is the name of it? I said the Ku Klux Klan" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce added, "It was good enough for the founders; I think it will work for us" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce continued by commenting on the number of Klan groups that incorporate the name Ku Klux Klan in their title, but do not simply call their organizations the KKK: "There are northern, southern, east, western, divided loyalty whatever groups, their titles keep getting longer because they keep cramming stuff in there trying to be something that the Klan was never intended to be" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

### **The Klan as a Church**

Dr. Pierce, who is also a Revered, was adamant during his interview that the Ku Klux Klan was never intended to be a church (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Although only two Klans examined used the word "church" in their titles or referred to their organizations as "churches," according to Pierce, "The original Klan prescript said we are not a replacement for or a substitute for a church. That was never the intention of the founders" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.)

Richard Bondira concurred and added, "The Klan said in writing that it was not an establishment of religion, that everyone's religious beliefs was according to any denomination they were raised in" (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira said that while a true Klan was Christian, it is not a church, and those Klans which declared their

organization a church had done so “strictly for political reasons thinking they had more freedom under the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment, if they were regarded as a church” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Bondira added, “So here’s guys going against the Klan’s definition of its own self for the sake of modern political protection” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). The most significant word in Bondira’s statement, however, was “modern,” as some “modern Klans” have moved away from being traditional fraternal orders into a political parties, churches, or paramilitary groups.

The only individual interviewed for this study with a connection to Christian Identity and one of only two Klans that called themselves a church, was Tina from the CNKKKK. According to Tina, the National Knights “became the Church of the National Knights” because, “There were good people being incarcerated in the prison system, and what was happening was they were not getting the rights they should have been getting, and the only way to enter a prison system is under a church label” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina also mentioned that the CNKKKK does have a prison program (Tina, pers. comm.).

Although Tina did not explain if the members of the CNKKKK prison program were members of the CNKKKK prior to being incarcerated, on the CNKKKK site is a June, 2009, news story from MVM News about CNKKKK Imperial Wizard Ray Larsen protesting outside of the Iowa State Penitentiary “claiming mailings from the church were being denied to two inmates.” According to the MVM News article posted on the CNKKKK site, Larsen claimed that “through mail correspondence he converted two ISP inmates, James Cloyed and Travis Golie, from paganism to Christianity, but that during the past year the inmates have been denied his mailings.” Larsen was involved in the



June, 2009, protest because becoming a church has allowed the CNKKK to deliver information and support to incarcerated members in other prisons.

According to Tina, the reason why the CNKKKK wants to send material to its incarcerated members is because, "The majority of people who are in our prison program, they have learned their lesson, they want to be functional members of society" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina continued, "Isn't that the best thing about Christianity? The fact that you can forgive, give a person another chance, a second chance in life?" (Tina, pers. comm.).

Tina explained the CNKKKK was able to become recognized as Christian Identity church because the CNKKKK's Imperial Wizard Ray Larsen, "is a Baptist preacher," and a "revered of Christian Identity" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina added that, "the Church of the National Knights is a 100% Christian community service group," and explained that its membership was made up entirely of "Christians, and we do follow the structure of the Bible, and so that allowed us to get church status" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina concluded, "We are not saying that Ku Klux Klan is a church or religion; we are saying the National Knights is a church and we do have a Christian following" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina added, "You will find that we are the only Klan group in existence that is actually an incorporated legal church" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina also explained "having a church status on us, we actually saw as a next progression in where the Klan actually should go" (Tina, pers. comm.).

Although the CNKKKK has ties to Christian Identity and has church status, Tina insisted the CNKKKK was a Christian organization and not a substitute for a church (Tina, pers. comm.). She said, "A lot of our members do go to church every Sunday, but

Christianity is not just about one night a week. It is all about seven days a week” (Tina, pers. comm.). In an email correspondence with Tina after the interview concerning why the CNKKKK had a Christian Identity connection, she explained, “A Christian is a Christian,” and Christian Identity was simply one of many Christian ideologies (Tina, pers. comm.). As for membership, Tina explained in her email, “You can be any Christian to join the CNK” (Tina, pers. comm.). Thus while the CNKKKK was one of only two Klans referring to itself as a church, the CNKKKK saw itself as a Klan first, but with the additional benefit of being declared a church in order to support members who were incarcerated.

### **The Nazi Klans**

During the interviews, another frequently cited misconception the participants believed the American people had was that the Klan was a skinhead or Nazi organization. As an example, James commented the general public was confused and misinformed about traditional Klans and commented, “They view us as Nazis because of the groups that seek publicity and the view the mainstream media want to portray” (James, pers. comm.). When asked about Klan groups with Nazi and skinhead connections, wear swastikas, or accept pagan or atheist members, James explained, “I don’t really consider them Klan. If they cow-tow to the Nazi ideals then they are against the Klan. National Socialism is a foreign form of government and we swear to uphold the U.S. Constitution” (James, pers. comm.). When later asked again about Klans with relationships to Nazi organizations, James said, “Klansmen fought against the Nazis and Axis in World War II. That should answer anyone’s questions to that” (James, pers. comm.). Thornton added:

One of the biggest anti-Nazis we've got is our European Supreme Dragon who is from Germany and he is very pro-German. But, he is very anti-Nazi, and he takes it as an insult for anyone to be in the Klan and also to support Nazism (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Richard Bondira commented specifically on Klans with Nazi connections and stated, "The phony and bogus Klans believe anything they feel like. They make it up as they go along, 'Yes, I'm a Klansman, Heil Hitler.' It would be the same as saying, 'Yes, I'm a Christian, Hail Satan'" (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). Tina concurred, "It is a little annoying when you've got people that are abusive and you say, 'Why?' and they go, 'Oh, because you're just like a Nazi'" (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina added, "We actually don't support National Socialism in any way, shape, or form. We don't support anything the Nazi's believe in" (Tina, pers. comm.). When asked specifically if the CNKKKK works with skinheads or Nazi groups, Tina stated, "We don't affiliate with them whatsoever" (Tina, pers. comm.).

Dr. Pierce concluded there are some ideological differences between Christian and Protestant Klans which leads to some misconceptions about the Klan among the general public (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). But, Dr. Pierce stated the greatest misconception about the Klan is that all groups that use the name Ku Klux Klan have connections to skinheads and Nazis (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce explained that Klans with ties to skinhead and Nazi groups were not real Klan groups but bogus Klans (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). According to Pierce, "We have Klan groups that, you know, if you went to one of their meetings, that you'd swear were at one of the pool hall joints in Germany" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Pierce continued that the Nazi Klans "are rabid haters with no agenda of any sort except to express their hatred"

(Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce added, "They can hate themselves into oblivion. Nobody cares" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

When asked about Klans conducting swastika lightings or included swastikas as a symbol of their organization, Thomas explained, "I don't consider them Klans," and added, "They are a hate group, the Aryans" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Later Thomas added, "We do not light swastikas, we do not wear swastikas on our robes or attire" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thornton agreed, "I think it is a travesty and an abomination," adding, "Nazism is anti-Christian" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton added that the UNSK are "not Nazi supporters," and the true Klan has no connection to skinheads and Nazis and never would" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton continued, "There are some aligned with the Nazis and want to try to take over everything and it is a real problem. They are not going to do it. The Klan will never lay down for that" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Thornton explained he often gets asked about "The Christian Identity Movement and the Nazi Movement, and skinheads," and added that people could "come on our site and see we're anti-skinhead, anti-Nazi, and that's a big help for people looking for the real Klan" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton later continued the UNSK "membership is consistently anti-Nazi," and added he was against groups calling themselves the Klan "going out with five or six people standing on the courthouse steps screaming and hollering. That doesn't accomplish anything" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). In particular, Thornton was referring to those Klans which he said:

Go out here that yell, you know, the 'N' word, and we've seen it on the History Channel, where a guy goes out on a street and screams that the 'N's' are scum of the earth and that kind of stuff. Well, a person who does that is an idiot (Thornton, pers. comm.).

## **Bogus and Con Artist Klans**

None of the six Klan members interviewed claimed to be wealthy despite their leadership positions in their Klans. In addition, all six stated in their Klans and in all traditional Klans, no member achieved any financial gain because of their membership. Instead, all seven participants condemned those Klans whose leadership received financial compensation, or whose leadership used their positions to promote themselves to receive media attention. Dr. Pierce commented in some Klans, "Their leaders are paid a salary, given paid vacations, all kinds of things, but that is not the case here" and added, "In our organization, anyway, no one makes a dime" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). According to Thomas, "The Klan brings itself down through corruption, through individual's perversities or power hunger," and added this has been a problem for the Klan going back to the 1920s (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Cole Thornton explained there are some Klans "who are set up or are in it for financial gain" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). But, Thornton added, "The true Klan is not. It is a life of self-sacrifice and giving and doing for others" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton continued that members of true Klans take "a vow of sacrifice, you know, our motto of Non Silba Sed Anthar, we try to live it, Not For Self But For Others. You take self out of the picture" (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce concurred and said that in a traditional Klan, "Every dime goes towards the cause" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Thomas made a similar statement and added that his Klan and "Other members of the Middle Eastern Alliance, I believe, that they are into this for the same reason that I'm into this, they are not in it for the money, they are not what I could consider used car salesmen" (Thomas, pers. comm.).

According to Thornton, rogue Klans are “a big problem that we are facing and that is people that get in it for the money or what they think is fame, getting their picture taken, or put on the news and doing all kinds of stupid things” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Dr. Pierce mentioned, “If you notice on our web site, you don’t even see our leader’s name anywhere,” while in some Klans the Imperial Wizard’s name “is like every third sentence. Not on our web site, because it is not his Klan, it is our Klan. It is us working together” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

During the interviews, the Knights Party was cited by three different Klan members as not a true Klan, and instead was seen as an organization led by individuals in it for the money. The Knights Party, and the Knights’ National Director, Thomas Robb, were also negatively mentioned after a fourth interview when the interview was no longer being recorded. More than any of the other participants, Richard Bondira had the most to say against the Knights Party. Bondira contended:

You do have Klan impersonators, and a lot of them are just conmen like Thomas Robb. His webpage claims to be the mainstream Klan and all that, the official Klan, etc. He is a professional con artist who is out there shaking down suckers for dues and donations (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

Bondira continued:

He is a dream seller, a word merchant. He leads people in circles. He looks for true believers, feeds them with propaganda, hits them for donations left and right, and his memberships, they last about two to three years. Sooner or later even the dumbest of them realize that I’ve been in this thing for two to three years. We make no progress, we go nowhere, we do nothing. He doesn’t have any activities for his members to get involved in. He won’t even let people organize the branch in their own state even if they’ve got a group of people that want to form up a branch, he handles it all from his national office, and all’s he does is give them propaganda leaflets and hit them for donations. And yet he is presenting himself as the true official KKK (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

Once again, it should be noted that the Knights Party had a main site, three feeder sites, three blogs, and the Knights Party Veterans League site, and stated on their main site Thomas Robb frequently conducted interviews with the media and students, but the Knights Party did not participate in this study.

### **Klan Symbolism**

Another misconception about the Klan raised by Bondira, was that the Confederate flag was not a symbol of the Ku Klux Klan. Bondira contended neither the original Klan nor the 1920s Klan “waved the Confederate flag,” and twice stated it “is not a Klan symbol” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). According to Bondira:

The Confederate flag came into use in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960’s (sic) by the entire South because it was the anniversary of the Civil War, the anniversary of the Reconstruction, and they were being hit by a second Reconstruction (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

He added, “So all over the town everybody was waving the Confederate flag as an act of defiance to the Johnson administration. Now the Klan, of course, was waving it as well, but they weren’t the first ones to do it” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

The topic of Klan symbolism also came up in the interview with Cole Thornton. According to Thornton, “We don’t salute with our right hand and that is symbolic. The left hand is what is used in basically all of the Klan’s salutes, and you know, here again is where the Nazi garbage came into being” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton explained, “The Klan was founded a long time before the Nazi movement and the Klan salute with the left hand was there many many years before the Nazi’s came into existence” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton added, “So anytime they’re saluting with a right hand, it is a Nazi salute in my opinion. He’s a Nazi” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

## **The Researcher as Data**

According to Goodwin, “It is difficult to understand how we might possibly gain a rich understanding of what attracts individuals to extremist movements by reducing interviewees to units of analysis and summary scores, reducing their motives to a selection of pre-determined choices” (2007, p. 5). To understand the Klan and Klan members requires more than simply viewing Klan web sites and inferring from the literature. Instead, to understand the Ku Klux Klan and Klan members, the researcher must construct the reality of what is being examined by emphasizing “the subjective interrelationship between the researcher and participant,” and repositioning the researcher as the author of that reality (Mills et al., 2006, p. 2). Glasser and Strauss (1967) conclude the researcher’s attitudes and thoughts are part of the inductive quality to grounded theory. Blee (1998) adds that researchers do an injustice to their work when they dismiss their own experiences while conducting research. For this reason, my own observations as a researcher were deemed essential to understanding members of the Klan. My experience with Klan leaders, however, was with members of less extremist Klans, as only one participant was from a Christian Identity Klan and none were from a non-Christian Klan. Therefore, their responses and attitudes reflected the less extremist rhetoric of their organizations.

Blee (1998) contends members of extremist groups are often unwilling participants in research studies because disclosure could make members a target for the police, their enemies, or family members who are not aware of their membership. But, Bondira and the six Klan members interviewed in this study did not appear fearful of repercussions from participating, and none said they tried to hide their membership from the public. In fact, while all participants were informed that they would be allowed to



participate and remain anonymous, four of the seven specifically asked that their names and organizations to be included in this study. Thomas never asked that his real name or his organization's name be used, and was therefore given a pseudonym, but during his interview he said:

There are people in the town that I live in, everybody knows who I am. Everybody knows what I am. The police in the town know who I am. I don't hide it. I tell people on a daily basis who I am. It is not something I am ashamed of (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Tina is also known in her neighborhood as a member of the Klan and explained that she wears a jacket with "the National Knight's patch on back of it" (Tina, pers. comm.).

Overall, the participants were not ashamed of who and what they are, as evidenced in Tina's statement, "Why should I be ashamed of the fact that I am a white Christian? I don't find that shameful. I am very proud to be a white Christian" (Tina, pers. comm.).

Although there is a difference between being white or Christian and being a Klan member, Tina recounted a number of stories where she revealed her membership to non-members. As another example of an individual who wanted their name used, Dr. Pierce explained, "I am not worried about anonymity," and asked to be mentioned specifically by name along with his organization (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). None of the participants mentioned being afraid or being targeted by enemies, while most said in their leadership positions that they have had numerous discussions with the police and federal authorities about their organizations. In addition, none of the participants mentioned being worried that their family might find out about their membership, and many spouses of participants were members. In fact, James mentioned his wife was a Klan member, and Tina said her husband was a Klan member (James, pers. comm.; & Tina, pers. comm.). In addition, Thomas explained his wife was "second in command" of

his organization, and added, “She has 33 years of experience in the Klan. Her Daddy was Klan, her granddaddy was Klan” (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) concluded some fringe groups are unwilling to expose their organizations to academic scrutiny. It is unclear why so many Klans agreed to participate, based on the relatively small number that exist. But, I was asked my racial and religious heritage in my first interview with James, and it is possible being a white, Christian male, provided me with an advantage, with the belief I would be more open to the messages presented by the participants. The first interview with James is significant, as Thomas, Richard Bondira, and Cole Thornton all mentioned they agreed to participate after having spoken with “someone” about an interview I had already done (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.; Richard Bondira, pers. comm.; & Thomas, pers. comm.).

Overall, only four Klans denied a request to participate in this study. One Klan sent an email response back stating it did not want to participate believing the media and researchers lie, but did direct me to its web site to learn more about the organization. Another Klan that declined to participate explained in an email from its Imperial Wizard that he was “not interested” in participating. A web master for a third site stated they appreciated the offer to participate but declined. Finally, the Knights Party also declined, but the response back included links to a number of articles providing insight into the beliefs of the Knights, as well as an article from the University of Florida web site warning students to be cautious when walking alone on campus at night. So although four Klans declined to participate, none did so maliciously. When I asked Tina about why some Klans would not agree to participate, she responded, “I hope no one was rude to you,” but added, “Some people are scared” (Tina, pers. comm.).

Prior to this examination, my dissertation committee as well as family members expressed their concern for my own personal safety. Blee (2007) commented in her study of skinheads that sometimes members of extremist groups will attempt to intimidate researchers to achieve favorable coverage. But, at no time did any of the participants threaten me or even make remotely threatening comments towards me or anyone else. Instead, the participants only asked that I not take their responses out of context, and some asked to see the final report. But, the participants also knew any and all responses would be included in this study. Although I never attempted to antagonize any of the participants, they must have assuredly known any threatening comments they would have made would have been included in this study. Participants most likely wanted to portray their group with the best possible image, and making any threatening comments would have defeated this purpose.

Overall specific themes of a double standard in society, the media, and the government, were all apparent from the interviews with Bondira and the Klan leaders, and all respondents commented on multiculturalism, a changing America, and a society and government they perceived as anti-white and anti-Christian. The consistencies in the observations between the interviews and content analysis supported the choice of questions asked and methods chosen (White, 1989). DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) contend that when conducting in-depth interviews where respondents can interpret questions differently, the likelihood of different individuals responding to questions with similar answers adds to the overall believability of those responses, and thus provides validity to the study (White, 1989). Based on my content analysis and seven interviews,

I feel I was able to better understand the Ku Klux Klan more than would have been possible through content analysis alone.

Based on the seven interviews, I believe that Klan members wanted to believe it was possible to turn back the clock on the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Rights Movement, and the Gay Rights Movement, and that members have difficulty adapting to a changing and more multicultural country and world. In an attempt to combat these changes, the Klan members used history, religion, the Bible, or selections of statistics from various sources, to justify their beliefs that other religions and races are inferior and negatively changing America. Rather than claiming to be racist, participants, instead, blamed the different races and religions on the changes in society that the Klan and Klan members disagree with, and see these changes as detriments to whites and white power and privilege. This thinking leads to the mentality of a zero-sum game where for non-whites to achieve, whites must suffer (Brown, 2009). There is, in effect, perhaps a dangerous situation growing where Klan members feel a sense of powerlessness in their inability to stop change and stop a more open and multicultural society from replacing a white and Christian dominated society. This idea was articulated by Bostdorff who concluded that "many men today, especially white, heterosexual, working class men, feel a greater sense of powerlessness" and a "feeling of being under siege," from "social changes such as the wider acceptance of interracial marriage, non-Christian religions, and homosexuality," which drives the need to join organizations like the Klan (2004, p. 350). The Klan members interviewed appeared to have a sense that they were fighting a lost cause, but were looking for any means to advance their message, which in this case, was to portray the Klan as the best possible

savior of United States and white dominance. It could be suggested the Internet is simply another tool to advance this message, and at the same time, knowing the Klan is engaged in a propaganda war that they are losing, some participants may have also viewed this study as another means to advance their message and project the image of the Klan as relatively benign organizations dedicated to white rights. In essence, the Klan is made up of “good ol boys” as Adams and Roscigno (2005) concluded, and in some respects, a Klansman today is nothing more than the Southern Democrat, or Dixiecrat, of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, but with a computer.

The six Klan leaders interviewed were all over the age of 45, and two were in their 60s. This was significant because from the outset this study attempted to examine if current Klan members were drawn into the Klan since the Civil Rights Movement, or were holdovers from the era of segregation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed segregation, but the Civil Rights Movement continued through 1968, less than 45-years-ago. For the Klan to advocate racial separation or argue America is changing, or has changed, fits within the historical perspective of Klansmen who were alive prior to the Civil Rights Movement and remember American society prior to desegregation. Although an Australian, Tina commented, “Has America changed? Has it disintegrated from what its original purpose was? A lot of people would say ‘yes’” (Tina, pers. comm.). Bondira concluded, “Your older guys who join the Klan are the ones who kind of remember what America was like when it was America,” and later added, “They remember when they had a bright future to look forward to when they were young” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). As surprising as it may seem, participants saw the Klan as a patriotic, Christian, conservative, and pro-white organization, no different from any

other organization representing any other special interest group. In addition, the participants saw the Klan as a pseudo-protection agency, out to protect American freedoms and American culture, and specifically, white culture and freedom.

None of the seven participants admitted to being racist, which is not surprising as this would counter the Klan's recent attempt to appear as a pro-white organization, rather than an anti-minority organization (Rajagopal & Bojin, 2002). However, 10 of the 23 Klan sites examined did not contain any statement denouncing racism. Although none of the participants were from any of the 10 web sites that did not denounce racism, participants' levels of prejudice and racism must still be called into question. Despite not admitting to being racist, the participants did not want their children and grandchildren to date non-whites or non-Christians, often did not allow members to be in a relationship or have ever been in a relationship with a non-white, and did not want non-white or non-Christian cultures replacing white and Christian culture as the dominant culture of the United States.

I had much the same reaction from my interviews with Klan leaders that Goodwin (2007) did in interviewing members of the British National Party (BNP). Goodwin (2007) stated he found members of the ultra-nationalist BNP had a desire to uphold and improve the democratic institutions in which they lived, and were concerned over how the conservative way of life was being changed. The participants were all from the least extremist Klan organization, with the exception of Tina, and their descriptions of the Klan were similar to Goodwin's descriptions of the BNP and its members (2007).

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

This examination makes no value judgments on the various Klans, their actions, or their beliefs. Instead, this study was an attempt to better understand an organization with a history dating back nearly 150 years and which has had a dramatic impact on the United States during some of the most significant moments of America's history, including right after the Civil War, during World War I, and during the Vietnam Era. In this nation's 235-year history, the Klan has existed for all but the first 90 years. Despite the fact the Klan has changed numerous times since it was founded in December of 1865, the Ku Klux Klan continues to exist on America's cultural, political and social landscape, and is therefore worthy of study.

This study used grounded theory and a mixed methods design wherein Klan web sites were examined and then in-depth interviews were conducted with Klan web masters, Klan leaders involved in the decision making process of Klan web sites, and Richard Bondira whose web site is intended as an informational portal about the Klan. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews was also used to add emphasis and provide support for information discovered through content analysis of Klan web sites. Specifically, the content analysis was used to better understand, "What is the Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?" as well as "What does the Klan believe?" At the same time, content analysis was also used to further illustrate and explain, "Why does the Ku Klux Klan create and maintain web sites?" as well as "Who are members of the Klan?" The in-depth interviews were used to support the evidence discovered during the content analysis, as well as to more specifically answer the questions of "Why does the Ku Klux Klan create and maintain web sites?" as well as "Who are members of the Klan?" Using

the constant comparative methods, the researcher created and compared categories and responses from both the content analysis and in-depth interviews to help explain the data, and better understand the research questions posed (Frey et al., 2000). This study was guided by a constructivist approach and grounded theory, and made no attempt to predict reality or human behavior. Instead, the goal was “to explore... not test” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 135). This study attempted to better understand an organization that has been largely understudied, so future research could use the findings discussed to continue to examine the topic, with a new guide and greater understanding of the Ku Klux Klan.

According to Goodwin (2007), American researchers have largely ignored right-wing extremist groups, and what little research done is often conducted through a computer screen. But, by avoiding researching groups like the Klan and understanding the motivations of the Klan’s members, the Klan has been allowed to subsist, adapt, and survive, and, as research suggests, also allowed it to grow (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.).

By using a mixed method design, and incorporating in-depth interviews, this study sought to interview Klan members to ask them about their own beliefs, ideologies and motivations. The questions posed in this study were an attempt to fill in the gap in research on the Klan and Klan web sites.

This examination attempted to understand the Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, what it believes, who its members are, and why it creates web sites. Any one of these questions would be daunting to answer definitively, as no single answer exists, just as no single Klan exists. The Klan today is fragmented and has become an amorphous



entity without a singular voice or message to present to the public. In essence, there is no one true Klan, and the media have made a poor attempt at distinguishing the truly violent and racist Klans from the more mainstream Klans.

According to the SPLC, there were 44 active Ku Klux Klan web sites in 2009 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). But, by the Spring of 2011, only 29 of the 44 web sites were in existence. Among the 29 Klan sites, however, four were blogs from two different Klan organizations, and these 29 sites only represented 20 Klan groups. But, among the 20 organizations calling themselves “Ku Klux Klan,” some had more in common with White Nationalist groups, skinhead groups, and neo-Nazi groups, while others claimed to be churches or political parties.

The most significant results from the content analysis of web sites, was providing a means to distinguish the various Klans into more politically and socially mainstream Klans, i.e. the Christian and Protestant Klans, and the more extremist and racist Klans, i.e. the Christian Identity and non-Christian Klans. This distinction allowed the researcher to move ahead with better understanding the research questions posed of “What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” “What does the Klan believe?” “Who are members of the Klan?” and “Why does the Ku Klux Klan create and maintain web sites?” But, to fully understand the purpose for creating and maintaining Klan web sites, it is important to understand what the modern Klan is and believes.

### **What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?**

According to the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site, “The name Ku Klux Klan is public domain, anyone can use it for any purpose.” The UNSK site stated, “There are many different Klans around the country, ruled by many different leaders. There are even some rogue Klans ruled by rogue leaders.” Evident from these two statements is the

idea there is no one “Ku Klux Klan,” and instead there are many organizations that use the name but hold different beliefs, are governed by individuals with different beliefs, and often have little connection or working relationship with other organizations using the name of the Ku Klux Klan.

For example, as more mainstream Klans, the UNSK and Ku Klux Klan, LLC., hold relatively similar ideologies. But, even between these two Klans, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. is regionally based, does not have Realms in foreign countries and does not accept Catholic members, while the UNSK has Realms in 21 states according to the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010), has Realms in three foreign countries according to the UNSK site, and accepts Catholic members. Therefore, even between two Klans with relatively similar ideologies about being patriotic, pro-white, supporting family values, and disassociating with racism and violence, the two organizations maintain vastly different beliefs on what the Klan can and should be.

According to the Knights Party’s main site, currently there “are around 200 different Klan groups in the nation,” adding, “They are all locally based or at the most regionally based.” But, while the Klan is the “Invisible Empire,” it is unclear on what the Knights Party based this estimate of 200 Klans on, as assuredly hundreds of Klans cannot be hiding from observation, and this, therefore, would appear to be a gross overstatement.

In addition to claiming more than 200 different Klans exist, the Knights Party site also claimed most Klans were merely social clubs, used confusing names for the leaders of their organizations, and had no course of action or goals. Specifically, the Knights’ site stated many other Klans “all use the terminology and ceremony of the

twenties and are fraternity styled,” adding, “They are not politically focused and resemble a club.” The Knights Party’s main site added, “The terminology was created by William Simmons,” but such “terms are not used by The Knights Party. They are more closely associated with Klan reenactment type groups.” To support this statement, and provide further proof of the difference between the Knights Party and other Klans, the head of the Knights is Thomas Robb who has the title of “National Director” and not Imperial Wizard.

According to the Knights Party’s main site, when Col. Simmons reorganized the Klan in 1915, “He patterned the Klan after a fraternity. The early 1900’s (sic) was a time of fraternities.” The site added, “They had odd sounding titles, secret words, and lengthy ceremonies in which certain officers stood in certain designated spots, said certain phrases, etc. It was a fraternity much like the Odd Fellows, the Elks, the Moose Lodge, or any other.” The Knights’ main site maintained, “They had no unifying political goal. It was simply a fraternity for white Christians.” According to the Knights Party’s main site, “All other Klan groups in the nation still run their clubs in the fraternal manner of the twenties, except The Knights.”

In essence, the Knights Party site stated the majority, if not all other Klans, are clubs and fraternal organizations which continues to distance the Knights from other Klans. As an example, the Knight Riders site stated it was “a Christian fraternity, and a secret society.” According to The Indiana Historical Research Foundation, the original Klan began in 1865 “as a harmless fraternal order,” and was then “reorganized under Grand Wizard Forrest to be a protective society of regulators who fought to restore law and order and protect the rights of the disenfranchised.” According to TIHRF, “The

'disbandment' of the KKK in 1869 was, in fact, an ending of one phase and the beginning of another." The Indiana Historical Research Foundation continues, "Between 1869 and 1877 the KKK changed from it's (sic) former self into a body of men who essentially formed a 'White' lobby." Based on this explanation, the Original Klan was both a fraternal order and a pro-white organization, and some of the symbolism the Klan is known for today including the robes and many of the titles such as "Grand Wizard," were established during this period.

In 1915, when the Klan revived under Col. Simmons, TIHRF states, Simmons, much like those involved in the original Klan, "wrote everything down," including "the rules, regulations, ceremonies, activities, functions, structure," and not only were the rules written, "but copyrighted and placed on public record for all the world to see." The site continues, "Imperial Wizards Simmons, Evans, and Colescott made it plain and clear that the KKK was not a religion, church, or political party. It was a Protestant Fraternal Order." Evident once again from TIHRF, the Klan is a fraternal order and not a church or political party, and should not be based around religion like many of the Christian Identity Klans. In addition, based on TIHRF site, the Klan incorporates specific ceremonies, titles, and rituals, all of which are and were available on record.

According to The Indiana Historical Research Foundation, when the Klan was revived again in 1946, in what the site called "the Klan's Third Era," Grand Dragon Samuel Green "established his Klan as a Fraternal Order," and through the years, "Though it occasionally engaged in political activity and other things, whenever a branch of the Klan established itself in a new area, incorporated, or was chartered it always did

so as a Fraternal Order.” Clearly evident from this last point is the idea that the Ku Klux Klan is a fraternal organization.

The issue with attempting to understand, “What is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” is that many groups do not want to be fraternal pro-white organizations or follow the rituals, ceremonies, and symbolism of traditional Klankraft as devised by the Reconstruction and 1920s Klan. Yet, any group including the words “Ku Klux Klan” in their name or incorporating any of the aspects of the Klan are all grouped together in the SPLC’s sample (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010).

So then, what is the Ku Klux Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? The reality is that there is no one Ku Klux Klan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The UWK site stated, “There are over 35 different Klan factions operating in the United States today,” adding, “They vary from methods, objectives, and philosophy.” To continue, while the Knights Party would not fit the definition of a “true” Klan as it is not a fraternal order, and instead referred to itself as a political organization within the white racist movement, it did provide on its main site an interpretation of the KKK, to answer the question, “What is the Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” According to the Knights Party’s main site:

The Ku Klux Klan could best be thought of as a concept or idea. The Ku Klux Klan was born in America. It pledged to stand for the U.S. Constitution. It demanded the protection and advancement of women and children. And it put Jesus Christ at the forefront of all beliefs. In fact, their beliefs were formed by what they felt to be good and holy and acceptable to God.

In this examination, organizations using the name “Ku Klux Klan,” were broken into four factions: the Protestant Klan, the Christian Klan, the Christian Identity Klan, and the non-Christian Klan, but the divisions go even deeper than these four categories, and often overlap. According to the Knights Party’s main site, the reason the Klan is so fractured with so many rival groups, is because, “The Jewish anti-white agenda has

implemented a divide and conquer game plan in an attempt to stunt the growth of white Christian Revival.” However, as this study suggests, the reason the Ku Klux Klan is fractured is not because of a Zionist conspiracy, but because so many groups exist claiming the banner of the Klan, and yet disagreeing on what the Klan is or should be. In addition, it could be argued, the Klan is fractionalized and split into different groups with competing ideologies, because there is no authority figure such as a Col. Simmons, to be the official voice of the Klan, and to distinguish which organizations are Ku Klux Klan groups from those groups that are Klan in name only. Lacking a figurehead for the Klan, and with no one Klan able to break through the clutter and be recognized as the “real Klan,” there is disunity among the Klan and this disunity has also led to rivalry. But, in reality, there was also no face to the Klan during Reconstruction either. During his testimony before Congress during the U.S. House of Representatives special *Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Affairs of the Late Insurrectionary States*, Nathan Bedford Forrest denied any involvement or even knowledge of the Ku Klux Klan (United States Congress, 1872). Significant in that Forrest would lie to the Committee about knowledge of the Klan, much less his involvement, indicates the Klan is a secret organization that does not readily admit all its secrets and beliefs to an outside audience. Therefore, any commentary about the beliefs and interworking of the Klan, from Klan members or Klan web sites, must be greeted with a level of skepticism concerning the truth and accuracy of all statements. Forrest’s testimony also indicated that essentially, the Klan during Reconstruction was a faceless organization of loosely organized Klan groups often operating independently, and oddly reminiscent of the Klan today.

According to TIHRF, since the Second Era, the Klan has broken into unconnected groups and some have become “bitter rivals of each other.” The site also stated, with “no unifying national control these various Klans went in many different directions, some continued as fraternal orders, others became more political.” Thus, while the site maintains a Klan is a fraternal order, some Klans have split from the original intent of the Klan and have become political. However, TIHRF site also stated, some groups have also become violent. According to The Indiana Historical Research Foundation site, during the 1960s “some Klan groups became murderously savage.” The Third Era Klan changed the overall perception of the Klan and split what was once a less fractured organization into competing and independent groups. Some Klans continued to act as fraternal organizations in the perceived defense of white rights and Christianity. Other Klans continued to engage in violent behavior using the mask of the Klan against those perceived as enemies of white people. While the perception of the Klan of the 1960s as a violent organization in the South is justified, it was a Klan far removed from the one of the 1920s when roughly 10% of the population of the United States was a member (Lewis & Serbu, 1999). But, disunion between the Klans is caused by more than just a lack of one overall figurehead, or disagreements over rituals and ceremonies, or even disagreements concerning whether the Klan is and should remain a fraternal organization.

An additional reason for the disharmony between Klans is because some individuals who become involved in the Klan do so for their own self-aggrandizement. This is particularly true of those Klans led by what TIHRF called “con artists,” what Thomas referred to as “used car salesmen” (Thomas, pers. comm.), and what Thornton

described as “people that get in it for the money or what they think is fame” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). There did appear to be some self-aggrandizement among some of the Klans that would frequently project the Imperial Wizard of the group as the face of the organization, particularly the Knights Party which revolves around the Robb family.

Therefore, while there are numerous Klans all competing for ultimate legitimacy, these Klans can be broken into two groups: fraternal Klans (traditional), and the con artist, church, and paramilitary Klans (non-traditional) of individuals who do not follow the rituals, ceremonies and ideologies of the Klan. For this study, by dividing the Klans into two categories of traditional and non-traditional, as opposed to four categories based on religious differences, it becomes easier to understand the Klan, and easier to see how no one true Klan exists.

### **The Two Klans**

The difference between the two categories is that traditional Klans are modeled after the First and Second Eras, while the non-traditional Klans, much as the Knights Party site stated, see the Klan as a concept, and their rituals, ceremonies and symbolism more as suggestions rather than tenants of the KKK. Religious differences also remain important as most Christian and Protestant Klans fall into the traditional category, while most Christian Identity and non-Christian Klans fall into the non-traditional category as they have abandoned much of First and Second Era Klankraft. The most significant examples of abandoning Klankraft would be lighting swastikas during Klan ceremonies, not using the titles prescribed to ranking Klan members, attempting to be a political party or paramilitary organization.



The non-traditional Klans can be thought of as White Nationalist organizations in robes, often espousing Christian Identity theology. This idea is all the more apparent based on descriptions from the Southern Poverty Law Center of White Nationalist and Christian Identity organizations. According to the SPLC, “White Nationalist groups espouse white supremacist or white separatist ideologies, often focusing on the alleged inferiority of nonwhites” (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2011, p 46). Meanwhile, the SPLC defines Christian Identity as a “religion that is fundamentally racist and anti-Semitic” (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2011, p. 47). Not surprisingly, while only two of 12 traditional Klans included racist language on their sites, all eight of the non-traditional Klans included racist language and racial slurs on their sites. In addition, the non-Christian Klans and the BOK included the most racist slurs, while the Christian Identity Klans contained the most anti-Semitic language with an ideology based on the idea that Jewish people are the offspring of Satan while non-whites were inferior “beasts” created by God before Man (Becker et al., 2001; & Blee, 1998). The non-traditional Klans, and their messages, were the opposite of mainstream and clearly racist. The non-traditional Klans have more in common with White Nationalist groups and have abandoned much of traditional rituals, ceremonies and symbolism of traditional Klankraft. But, these groups continue to use the name.

Both the traditional and non-traditional Klans can use the name Ku Klux Klan because it is in the public domain, and there is no authority that can stop any group of individuals from coming together and calling themselves the Ku Klux Klan regardless of their beliefs, membership, or ideologies. Despite the fact so many ideologically different groups today use the name, almost all of the groups examined identify with the label of

“Ku Klux Klan.” It is suggested that these organizations use the name Ku Klux Klan for the sole reason that the name itself, “Ku Klux Klan,” resonates with people. The name conjures an image in people’s minds of rebellion, of a white racist organization, of mystery, of violence, and of an “Invisible Empire,” regardless of a group’s actual connection to the rituals, ceremonies, or symbolism of the First and Second Era Klans.

Cole Thornton provided an explanation of the power of the name Ku Klux Klan. According to Thornton, at a UNSK “anti-gay protest several years back,” he was asked, “Why not change the name?” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Thornton’s response was “Well, if we weren’t the Klan, how many people would have been by here to see us today?” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

According to the Knights Party’s main site, “The Ku Klux Klan could best be thought of as a concept or idea,” but, even more than that, it is a name, and a name that garners attention. The Knights Party’s main site stated they use the name Ku Klux Klan as a “matter of principle.” The Knights Party site also stated it uses the name Ku Klux Klan because, “It is an organizational asset,” and because it “is a tactical asset.”

According to the Knights Party:

The controversial nature of the KKK attracts tremendous interest. No one can respond to a cause if he or she has never heard about it. Those who may be inclined to suggest that we change our name, should note that, directly or indirectly, they probably wouldn’t be reading these lines right now if not for our Klan association.

It is this tactical reason that explains why the Knights Party, and many non-traditional Klans that have more of a connection to the White Nationalist Movement rather than the Klan, use the name. The Knights Party’s main site even admitted:

There are many groups who wish to preserve and advance the white race. Most people have never heard of these groups. Their group has no name recognition. The fact is that the benefits of having an organization with

world wide (sic) name recognition far outweighs the bad publicity that some people associate with the name Ku Klux Klan. It's all in the advertising.

A tactical, organizational, and advertising asset, as well as a concept, is how the Knights view the name Ku Klux Klan, which explains its connection to an organization it has little in common with, and whose rituals, ceremonies, and symbolism it has abandoned. But it is a connection, and the Knights Party and many other non-traditional Klans use that connection and name "Ku Klux Klan" to have their message heard. Most people have never heard of some of the sites and organizations that the Knights link to such as the "White Pride Media Network," "Soldiers of the Cross TV," "Council of Conservative Citizens," or Thomas Robb and the Thomas Robb Ministries. But, people know the name Ku Klux Klan. They have heard of the Klan, and whatever the Klan does and wherever the Klan goes, it gets attention, warranted or not, because of that name. The Knights Party's main site added, "ANYONE – ABSOLUTELY ANYONE - can say they are in the ku klux klan, are the leaders of the ku klux klan, or can start a group or club called the ku klux klan." Notably, the site never capitalized any of the words in the name, because all that matters is the name. The Knights Party's site also stated, "Our name gets their attention. Before you can get someone to support your ideals, you must first get their attention. The name Ku Klux Klan does."

The BOK site made a similar argument to the one found on the Knight's site to explain why it uses the name Ku Klux Klan:

If we did not stand up honestly and use the historical and true name of our movement, in all likelihood they would never have heard of us! The liberal media can block out from the American people any innocuous sounding 'right wing movement,' but they cannot block out a movement by a group they themselves have represented as such a dire threat to their own agendas.

The BOK site added, "The Klan name and symbol break through the paper chain of the media and bring us to the attention of those who would not otherwise know us."

According to the BOK, "Before you can convince someone about the correctness of an idea, you must first reach that person with your message."

In essence, non-traditional Klans use the name "Ku Klux Klan" to garner attention for their White Nationalist agendas. But, it is suggested in this study that the traditional Klans keep the name because they believe in the Klan and the rituals, symbolism, and ideology of the Klans of the First and Second Eras. During his interview, Thomas explained, "I want to keep our history alive, and I am talking about the Klan. I am proud of the Klan. I am proud of the history" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas continued, "I love the rituals. I love the history. I like the Klankraft, I like the robes. I enjoy the brotherhood, the sisterhood" (Thomas, pers. comm.). Thomas later added, "I want to keep the Klan alive" (Thomas, pers. comm.).

When attempting to understand "What is the Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?" the most obvious answer is that the Ku Klux Klan is a name; a name that carries meaning to all those who hear it, as well as all those who use it. For members of traditional Klans, the name signifies that they are adherents to the rituals, ideologies and symbolism of the Klan from the fiery cross to the hooded robe. Philip reinforced this idea stating, "We are basically a Second Era Klan. I mean a true traditional Klan is styled after the Second Era" (Philip, pers. comm.). In essence, for members of traditional Klans, the name represents a connection to the Ku Klux Klan of the Reconstruction Era and of the 1920s, and the use of the name represents their desire to return America to what they believe is America's once great past (Duffy, 2003).

But, for non-traditional Klans, the name is a means to an end, and a way to promote White Nationalist ideology and Christian Identity theology to unsuspecting recruits and an unsuspecting media. As the BOK site stated, the name Ku Klux Klan provides it with “the attention of those who would not otherwise know us.” If the Council of Conservative Citizens holds a rally, no one knows, and it barely gets a mention in the media. But, if a group of individuals in white robes and hoods holds a rally, protesters and the media are there. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site made this point succinctly, stating if the Klan calls the media and says, “This is the position of the Ku Klux Klan, they will listen and report.” But, the name is also a double-edged sword, because although the name gets media attention, it also drives away people who might otherwise be susceptible to the Klans’ message. The name, in effect, is a help and hindrance. Groups can therefore use the name to get attention, or use the name because they believe in the Klan and Klankraft, but using the name hurts their agenda and prevents their message from being viewed as acceptable to most white Americans. In essence, to use the name garners attention, but it also maintains an association with an organization with a long and violent past. For some groups, using the name may also be a deliberate embracing of the Klan’s violent past and a conscious decision to connect their organization to Klan violence and intimidation to make the group appear more powerful.

### **What does the Klan Believe?**

Creating encompassing themes of Klan beliefs proved difficult between the 20 different Klan organizations with varying ideologies, and stands on various issues. This study concludes that two types of Klans currently exist: the traditional and the non-traditional Klans. The two types of Klans have varying philosophies on membership, and disagree as to whether the Klan is a fraternal organization or a political party, church, or

paramilitary group. But, the political beliefs and political issues expressed on Klan sites and from Klan leaders interviewed were essentially the same for both traditional and non-traditional Klans.

All of the issues the Klans did and did not support, both with and without racial qualifiers, fit around a few basic categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The Klans today, for the most part, remain anti-Semitic, support racial separation, believe whites are the superior race, rally against government intervention and expansive government programs, believe America was created by whites for whites, perceive non-whites as a danger, and follow a conservative view of the Bible with regards to homosexuality, race mixing, promiscuity, drugs and alcohol, and white peoples' position in the world. But many of today's Klans are patriotic and support the military and law enforcement, are willing to fight for their country, stand against communism and socialism, and like many conservatives, believe the country has gotten off track or lost its way.

Before any data collection was conducted, this study looked for Klan beliefs under a few basic themes: pro-American, pro-white, pro-traditional values, and pro-conservative political ideologies. All of these themes were found to varying degrees on Klan web sites and in interviews with Bondira and leaders of six Klans. Some Klans and Klan leaders even specifically highlighted these themes. Dr. Pierce related, "We take several stands. We take them very seriously. We categorize them all under what we call Americanism" (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Yet, some Klans, particularly the non-traditional Klans often included anti-government messages or argued the government was under Zionist control. Therefore, while the Americanism theme, although more prominent for traditional Klans, with the exception of those Klans focused on the South,

did not relate to all Klans and only 80% of the Klans examined included such messages. In addition, only 60% of Klan sites promoted traditional and family values. The theme of being a pro-white organization was conceptualized as a move away from being an anti-minority organization to being seen as a pro-white organization (Becker et al., 2001; & Duffy, 2003). Although 95% of the Klans included pro-white organization messages, all of the non-traditional Klans included racist statements or slurs on their sites. Finally, while the theme of political conservatism did fit most Klans, and 85% included conservative messages, but it was overshadowed by some Klans' more extremist rhetoric. In essence, the preconceived themes did not fit with the overall beliefs of all the Klans based on analysis of Klan sites and interviews with Richard Bondira and Klan leaders, and instead became categories within grand themes of Klan belief (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Based on the issues raised on Klan sites and through interviews, Klan beliefs, for all 20 Klans examined, fell into two themes the researcher coded as separation, and double standard. While not all Klans specifically denounced racism, most called for white Christian separation from non-whites, white race traitors, whites engaged in race mixing, and Jewish people. In addition, most Klans articulated the idea that whites faced a double standard from the media, government and society at large, perceiving them as anti-white and anti-Christian and thus preventing whites from being treated fairly. These two themes were constructed through purposeful examination (Jones, 1987) of both the Klan web sites and interviews with Bondira and Klan leaders. Previous research has also suggested Klan belief falls under the theme of a double standard (Adams & Roscigno, 2005; & Duffy, 2003) as well as racial separation (Douglas et al., 2005).

## Separation

Numerous examples can be found where the theme of separation dictated Klan ideology. Even the Knights Party, conceptualized as a non-traditional Klan, included statements on its site it was a “white separatist organization” and part of the “separatist movement.” As another example, the non-traditional IKA concluded, “‘Desegregation’ and ‘special privileges’ for niggers, gooks, muds and faggots became the ‘Law of the Land,’” only after the Civil Rights Movement, and supported racial separation and frequently used Biblical justification for its stance. Not surprisingly, previous research has also suggested the Klan frequently uses a biblical justification to promote racial separation regardless of the religious orientation of the organization (Douglas et al., 2005). Using a biblical argument, the Knight Riders site argued, “God was the first segregationist,” while the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. argued, “We are basically Biblically correct separatists, we believe that God intended all races to be separate, we believe this is a Biblical Principal (sic).” Thornton concluded that the Klans should support racial separation believing it was following God’s law as “God created the races separate,” and added, “This is not being racist. We are separatists” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Racial separation was also seen as the only means to ensure the existence of the white race as many Klans saw the end result of race mixing as the end of white culture and heritage. In addition, race mixing was seen as destructive to the white race as any children born through race mixing were not seen as white. It was also believed to be a deliberate attempt to exterminate the white race. Nihilistic tendencies were clearly evident on some Klan sites that perceived an all-out conspiracy perpetrated against whites by the government, the media, and Jewish people to exterminate white Christians.



But, separation meant not only separation from non-whites and Jewish people, but also from individuals with AIDS, communists, socialists, homosexuals, liberals, immigrants, proponents of multiculturalism, and members of academia. For example, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. supported “quarantine for AIDS patients,” in “concentrated treatment facilities.” The Knights Party’s site stated it was against “Liberals, Leftists, Socialists, Humanists, Jews and outright communism.” The WCK site stated, “Homosexuality, like a cancer, must be cut out of society or it will grow until it kills the body, like a cancer.” The UNSK site concluded, “We are most certainly against illegal immigration,” while the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site added, “As far back as anyone can remember the Ku Klux Klan has been against illegal immigration.” The CNKKKK site claimed that liberals had corrupted the Bible, stating that as an organization it believed “in the Bible before liberals translated it.”

In essence, the theme of separation encompassed the categories of pro-American, pro-white, pro-traditional values, and pro-conservative political ideologies. The Klans perceived all of the groups in the aforementioned list as being anti-American or at least the Klans’ version of America, which the TAK site claimed “was established by White Men (sic),” and “established for White men.” Separation obviously encompassed the category of being pro-white as well because it emphasized the need, according to the BOK, that “pure American blood must be kept uncontaminated.” The DRK site concluded the “Zionist-controlled media” promotes such anti-traditional value issues as “homosexuality, promiscuity, drug abuse” and “idolatry.” In a statement desiring separation from communists, Tina explained, “The Klan is a capitalist society, it is not communist” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina concluded that the Klans are “going to be

naturally against the communists” (Tina, pers. comm.). In numerous instances and facets, the Klans as a whole desired to separate themselves, their members, and all white Christians from those groups and forces seen as working against the beliefs of the Klans, and white, Christian America.

### **Double Standard**

The theme of a double standard was the most pronounced as the Klans perceived whites were not treated fairly by society or that non-whites received special treatment from the media, government, and society, while whites were not afforded the same consideration. For example, the UWK supported a handful of issues to prevent a double standard it perceived as directed toward whites, and favored such issues as “passing legislation to prevent discrimination against whites by the courts,” and supported the “promotion and advancement of the constitutional principles of freedom and justice even for White people.” According to the UWK site, “There is only one major segment of the population which is NOT encouraged to take pride in its own heritage and the achievements of its ancestors, that group is the White race.” The UNSK site also commented on the perceived double standard in the United States, stating whites should be allowed to have organizations fighting for their rights and culture “without being called ‘racist’ for it.” Thomas was the most adamant on the idea of a double standard concerning organizations to represent the interests or culture of whites, and when asked specifically about this point, responded with an argument found on many Klan sites:

Why is it that only Whites can hate? Why is it only Whites can't have pride in their race and if they say it out loud it is racist? You can have Black History Month, you can have BET, you can have Black beauty pageants, you can have all of these different things. You can have La Raza, you can have the Black Panthers who can intimidate voters outside of polling booths

and our government lets them off after they have been found guilty (Thomas, pers. comm.).

The Knights Party's main site included perhaps the longest diatribe against a perceived double standard, and whites not being allowed to take pride in their culture, or have organizations working in the interests of whites on any issues. The Knights' site stated:

African Americans in sports, have their own Black Coaches Association. In law enforcement, they have the Black Police Officers Association, in government and politics; they have the NAACP, (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) etc. We see Latino groups, Asian groups, Arab groups, etc. with similar organizations, but what about a White organization? That today, is a blasphemous word because it's usually considered prejudice against all minorities in this country. But considering the above statements, why is it a "Dirty Word" to say that you're proud to be White and that you would like to have your own organization that celebrates the achievements of the White race? If the above organizations are considered acceptable to the general public, then why not have a White Entertainment Television Network, a White Coaches Association, etc.? I believe that the sum of the problem can be associated with one word ...History. The White person has been stereotyped as being prejudiced, uncaring, and even barbaric in some cases.

As a justification for the continued existence of the Klan, and as a means to combat the perceived double standard, Philip commented the Klans look "out for the interests of our race first just like NAACP does for black people. Every ethnic group has groups looking out for their interests. I just consider us a group that looks out for the interests of white people" (Philip, pers. comm.). Pertinent to this theme is the perception that for minorities to achieve or gain political or economic power means whites must therefore lose political and economic power in a zero-sum game (Brown, 2009).

But, the perceived double standard was not only against whites, but also against Christianity. The Knights Party's main site stated, "The personal anti-Christian beliefs of many in the entertainment industry can taint the programming they offer." According to Bondira, the media, society, and the government were anti-Christian, and commented:

The powers that be... are totally anti-Christian... and removing everything Christian from a Christian country to the point where even Christian holidays are suppressed, and Kwanza and other non-Christian holidays are being more mentioned or given greater coverage or publicity than the Christian holidays (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

The perceived effect of a double standard in society according to the Klans was the loss of white and Christian culture. Tina concluded, whites around the world were “losing our culture, we are losing our traditions” (Tina, pers. comm.).

Interestingly, the Knights Party site said calling whites racist for wanting racial separation was another form of double standard:

We do want to point out though that while it may come as a shock to many there are blacks who believe in racial separation. Marcus Garvey was a black nationalist who led millions of his fellow American born Africans on a mission to return to their homeland. The government shut them down. Today the black Muslims, unlike the integrationist NAACP, support separation and are opposed to race mixing and homosexuality.

In essence, the theme of separation encompassed the patriotic, pro-White, traditional values, and conservative political ideologies categories. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site combined those organizations perceived as working for the rights of minority groups with the idea the groups were also anti-American stating, “We work against the agenda of anti-American groups and organizations that seek the destruction of our Nation regardless of the race creed or color of their membership.” The site added, “These groups include but are NOT limited to: NEA, (National Education ASSN), La Rasa, A Marxist organization, NAMBLA, (North American Man Boy Love ASSN)” and the NAACP. While including the category of traditional values, the UNSK criticized minority special interest groups, and said if site users didn’t “know the meaning of honor, stop reading right here and go join the n.a.a.c.p. (sic).” To position its organization as pro-white, the Knight Riders site stated it worked for “the protection and

advancement of the white race.” But, to combat a perceived double standard, the Knight Riders site also said, “It is not illegal to be proud that you are white, always remember that!!” As a conservative issue with a racial qualifier, the Knights Party stated affirmative action was a form of a double standard perpetrated against whites, and argued the government should “abolish ALL discriminatory affirmative action programs.” The Knights’ site also said, “The federal government has enacted programs and laws designed for the exclusive discrimination against those of White European ancestry.”

### **Problem and Solution**

The themes of racial separation and a double standard combine to form the idea of a problem and a solution. For the Klans, the problem in America, and for some Klans a problem around the world, is the perception that whites are held to a double standard wherein they are not allowed to be proud of their culture and heritage and not allowed to form or join groups which act on behalf of white Christians, such as the Ku Klux Klan. The solution therefore is racial separation, where whites remove themselves in some way from a society perceived as against them. This solution had three forms. One solution, found on the IKA site, as well as word-for-word on the BOK site, was very Jeffersonian in the concept of society being based on the average white American citizen/farmer who provides for his family and himself without government assistance and with limited government interference. While Jefferson may not have been the impetus for the idea, the IKA and BOK both stated that white Americans should engage in racial separation by being more agrarian:

We believe in moving out of the big cities and away from the problems the white culture is facing to work hard on our land and pray for the peace of the city we live in. Our race has always lived better off in smaller towns, and only a return back to the rural farming culture will save America.

A second solution was for whites to simply go about their daily lives unencumbered by the media, government, and society. The concept was Libertarian in advocating a more limited government, an end to forced integration and multiculturalism, and limited intrusion into the lives of people. This solution was articulated by Tina who explained:

Everybody's got a right in this world to exist. No one has a right to tell you you have to speak Japanese and run around with a Komodo dragon as a pet, and if you don't then you're not accepted. What right do they have to tell you to destroy all your history, your culture, your language, and your family values because it doesn't suit what they want, and this is where we in the National Knights are very different from other Klans. If you want to do that, fair enough keep it to yourself. We are going to pretty well keep it to ourselves. Very great quote actually, from once again, Ray Larson, he was in a Texas courtroom and I can't quite honestly remember what the case was about. But, Ray had said, he looked at the prosecutor, and he said, quite honestly, he said, "I keep to my business and you keep to yours, and if we ignore each other, we're going to be really happy in this world." And that to me sums up the whole of what the Klan should be (Tina, pers. comm.).

Interestingly, while these solutions come from non-traditional Klans, they offer two widely accepted solutions among some Klans as to how whites should deal with a double standard in society. Not surprisingly, both solutions lean towards political conservatism, one Jeffersonian and the other Libertarian. But, both solutions entail retreating from society rather than changing it, and both are doomed to fail. It would be impossible for all whites to leave American cities and become farmers, and even if it were possible, there is nothing stopping non-whites from doing the same. Tina's solution is also an impossibility because it requires that whites ignore a more multicultural society and for society to ignore whites. Instead, to be successful, both solutions would call for an entirely new and separate nation. Not surprisingly, Blazak (2001) concluded that creating an all-white homeland, ethnically cleansed of all non-

whites and race traitors, is the goal of the skinhead movement, which further connects non-traditional Klans to the White Nationalist and skinhead movements.

The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site provided an alternate solution as well as an explanation of the role of the Klan in modern society and the actions a Klansman should take to improve American society. The solution on the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site encompassed many of the concepts found in this study of being patriotic, Christian, politically active, non-violent, non-racist, and involved in charitable works. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC's solution was also frequently found in some form on other traditional Klan sites. According to the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site, a Klansman today works to:

Educate our people on their rights and responsibilities as good citizens. We instruct on peaceful activism, and politics. We are building a grass roots voting block Nation wide (sic). We are not a charity but we remain mindful of the needs of the less fortunate (sic) in our communities, doing good is a hallmark of Klankraft. We support the Christian faith through our churches. We work tirelessly for positive Americanism, we work without hate or violence, yet with a firm resolve against the **agenda** of those who hate America, our Representative Republican form of government and our National Constitution. We stand for America first, for Americans first.

But, even this more practical and plausible idea, compared to the two proposed by the non-traditional Klans, offers no real solution of how to deal with a perceived double standard or offer a means to separate from non-whites and non-Christians. In effect, the Klans are trying to take on the world and hold back the tide. But, it is an impossible battle when the message is from an organization seen as violent and racist by most Americans. In fact, a degree of irony exists that a group would use the name Ku Klux Klan, which is associated with violence and intimidation, in order to promote a progressive and positive agenda.

## **Rebranding the Klan Image on the Internet**

The Klans use the Internet to inform white America of the problems they face because of a double standard in society, and suggest their organization is the solution. But, to be the solution, the Klan organizations have to appear as a viable solution. The issue of how to be a viable solution appears to be where the traditional and non-traditional Klans truly split in ideology and purpose. Non-traditional Klans, for the most part, seek to withdraw from society and form paramilitary groups, churches, or political parties to promote their organizations as viable solutions to society's perceived double standard, and to prevent the extinction of whites and white culture and heritage. Not surprisingly, the solution offered by non-traditional Klans is also reminiscent of the beliefs the White Nationalist movement. According to Duffy, White Nationalists want to return "society to its roots," and a desire to "overthrow practices causing it to stray from the right path and to establish a new, more perfect society" (2003, p. 308), or, in essence, a new country.

The traditional Klans, however, appear to recognize the success of the Klan during Reconstruction and the 1920s, and seek to emulate that example while operating just below the surface as did the First and Second Era Klans. But, to emulate the First and Second Era Klans means appealing to a wider section of society as well as following the rituals, ceremonies, and traditions of the First and Second Eras. Traditional Klans create web sites as a means to market a rebranded image by going around the media and traditional methods of message dissemination, to appear as viable solutions to society's perceived double standard, and become more mainstream organizations capable of representing a larger segment of whites. In some ways, this desire has become a reality as the Klans' message is no longer limited to what the media report on the various Klan



groups, and instead, Klans can now broadcast their own message via the Internet. The message traditional Klans project and attempt to inform the public about is of pro-white, patriotic, conservative, and Christian organizations, renouncing violence and racism, and still have a symbolic connection to the Klan of the past.

But, rebranding the “Klan image” as more mainstream is not popular among some non-traditional Klans. In fact, some non-traditional Klans stated they would not “soften” their image, appear mainstream, or disassociate with racism. For example, the CURA site stated, “Subversion has always been the number one tactic of the Jews in their struggle for world domination, and to systematically snuff out the white race.” The site added:

Often the Jews will try and subvert our movement to fit their own agenda, by finding a ‘PC’ wannabee (sic) lackey, who will quickly gain support from our people and other Klansmen, and soften certain racial sentiments that the Jews find to be a direct threat leading to their exposure. If they can subvert our movement, and manage to ‘soften’ our stance on certain issues that are utmost critical to our wellbeing, then surly (sic) they would have not only weakened the effectiveness of our movement, but also decreased our people’s chances of survival!

### **Why does the Ku Klux Klan Create and Maintain Web Sites?**

Bostdorff (2004) argues that while extremist sites vary in their level of sophistication, most include images and multimedia to supplement the ideologies the Klan wishes to present to site users. While sites did vary in number of internal links as well as the use of multimedia such as images, videos, and music, decisions on which images to put on the site were done for three purposes: to represent the ideology of the specific Klan organization, to show the activities of the Klan, and to update the sites. For example, Thomas included the MIOAK on his site because it represented the Second Era Klan as the “Mystic Insignia of the Klansmen,” and therefore represented the

ideology of his Klan as a traditional Klan organization (Thomas, pers. comm.).

Meanwhile, Tina included various pro-military videos on the CNK KKK site because the organization was pro-military and because 80% of its members were veterans (Tina, pers. comm.). In explaining how images on the CNK KKK site show the activities of the Klan, Tina commented, "We need to show that we are family and we are united, and we can have fun. That yes, we do get cakes made up for people's birthdays" (Tina, pers. comm.). In fact, the CNK KKK site showed four different photos of Ray Larsen and the birthday cake made for him by a member of the Tennessee Realm of the CNK KKK. But, the majority of images on Klan sites showed Klan activities including rallies, cross lightings, and even Klan weddings. Multimedia is also frequently added to Klan sites to so show the site gets updated, even historical sites like TIHRF. Bondira explained, "If you are going to have people come to your web page again and again," then the multimedia and information need to be updated frequently for people to come back (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

This study suggests the three reasons for including and updating multimedia on site was also indicative of the purposes of Klan sites. The sites were intended to be educational for non-members by representing the ideology and beliefs of the Klan. Klan sites were also intended to be educational for non-members by making them, as described by Thomas, "racially aware" (Thomas, pers. comm.). In addition, the sites were intended, to an extent, to recruit, which explains why sites included multimedia of Klan activities to show potential members the Klan was active and not an Internet Klan, or sites would include links to join. But, the sites were also for members and were

updated frequently to provide information about what is going on in the world and with their Klan organization.

### **Information for Members**

When asked the purpose for the UNSK web site, Cole Thornton explained the site was for members and non-members, and to provide information for both (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Research by Adams and Roscigno (2005) was one of the few studies to conclude a purpose of Klan sites was for current members. The researchers also insisted the sites were intended to create unity among members (Adams & Roscigno, 2005). The need to create unity among members was supported by Thornton, who explained that members spread out geographically, across the country and world, used the forums on the UNSK site as a means to discuss issues and the goals of the Klan (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). In a similar fashion, the SAK site, an umbrella organization of different Southern Klans, included a closed forum where members of the various Klans could discuss issues and events.

Tina also argued the CNK KKK site was used for members (Tina, pers. comm.). According to Tina, "Surprisingly, a lot of our members, maybe they've been in the Klan for 10 to 15 years and still have never been trained, they've never been trained as Klan," and these members of the CNK KKK use the web site to learn more about the beliefs of the Klan as well as the rituals involved in membership (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina also stated many members cannot make it to Indiana to see the CNK KKK Imperial Wizard Ray Larsen and enjoy seeing photos of him on the CNK KKK web site (Tina, pers. comm.). According to Tina, "He has been the mentor to hundreds of people and I assure you there's people that love seeing the pictures of Ray and they can't get to him because they are in different parts of the world or different parts of America, and they

just enjoy seeing those old photos” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina also deduced current members must use the site because of the number of suggestions she receives from members about information or images to put on the site, and added, “I can see where the IPs are coming from, and it’s really great to see that there is people, our own members, looking up the web site” (Tina, pers. comm.).

But, Klan sites also provide information to members through regular updates of issues facing the individual Klan. As an example, the UNSK site included regular updates from Cole Thornton, which he has written four to six times a year since 2007, with notifications about issues facing the UNSK as well as information about recent mergers with other Klan organizations.

In addition, the inclusion of future events on Klan sites for members to attend was another way for members to be involved. But, future events were sometimes also for members of other organizations to participate to create inter-Klan unity or inter-White Nationalist unity. While only 11 sites included information about upcoming events, some did state the events were open to other ideologically similar Klans, or ideologically similar organizations. As an example, the IKA included an announcement about the 2011 Nordic Fest on its site which was open to “White Patriots” including skinheads and neo-Nazis. In addition, the MWK site announced its “11th annual July Crosslighting,” to be held on July 17, 2011 in Lee County Mississippi, and added, “All traditional klans (sic) are welcome.” Events welcoming other “traditional Klans” were common, especially among members of the SAK.

### **Education for non-Members**

For non-members, Thornton explained his site and most Klan sites were used as “an information tool for the public” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Schafer argues Klan

sites are often used to provide information to non-members by frequently including a “form of text library” where non-members can learn more about the Klan (2002, p. 75). A number of sites did have forms of text libraries where the beliefs and ideologies of the Klan were explained. The largest was found on the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site on its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. According to Dr. Pierce, the FAQ section on the site was “typewritten some 30-odd pages long if you worked it all out and we continue to add material” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). There were 30 different sections on the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site’s FAQ page and topics included “What does the Klan do?” “Do we hate non-whites?” “Nazism and the Swastika,” and “illegal aliens.” The UWK site also included a “Questions” page where the UWK responded to 14 frequently asked questions about the Klan including, “Are all the Ku Klux Klan’s the same?” and, “Is the media image of a Klansman correct?”

According to Philip, his Klan’s “site is basically for non-members, it is basically like an Internet brochure that describes who we are and what we stand for” (Philip, pers. comm.). Cole Thornton commented the UNSK site was “also used as an information tool for the public, where they can come along and do research and find out about the UNSK and what we’re really about” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Tina also concluded the CNK KKK site was for non-members, and intended it as an educational site and research tool (Tina, pers. comm.).

Previous research suggests Klan web sites allow non-members direct contact with members (Bostdorff, 2004; Gerstenfeld et al., 2003; Lee & Leets, 2002; & Levin, 2002). The results of this study concluded this was true as all but two sites, the AGKK and CWK, included contact email addresses or online forms for non-members to contact a

Klan organization. The interactive nature of the Internet allows non-members access to the Klan in a way never before possible. The Klans are no longer limited by physical distance from individuals who want to know more about a Klan. In addition to email and online forms, Klan web sites also had open forums, guestbooks, Twitter and Facebook accounts, which allowed individuals across the country or across the world the opportunity to interact with Klan members, learn more about a Klan, ask for more information, watch videos of a Klan in the news, and even submit membership requests.

According to Tina, the CNKKKK has:

A lot of people making inquiries, questions, and that is the actual education side of it and the reason that site is up there. I want people to see it. I don't care if they are non-white, I don't care if they are Muslim, I don't care who they are, if they are rich or poor or polka-dotted or whatever. If they have a question, then yes, please write in and ask the question (Tina, pers. comm.).

Tina saw the site as a means for people to learn about the Klan, and added:

What I am trying to do with the Church of the National Knights' site is give a rounded view about what we actually are because a lot of people don't actually know what the Klan does or what it is actually about (Tina, pers. comm.).

Dr. Pierce said, the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site was intended to show users:

We are not out there victimizing anybody, that we have a realistic agenda, that we have a positive agenda, that we are a Christian-based organization and that the leadership and the people involved are Christians, and these are the messages that we are trying to put out there and what we are trying to do (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

These messages were apparent in FAQ or Questions sections on some Klan sites, and in multimedia on Klan sites. With the exception of three cartoons found on the IKA site, none of the Klan sites included depictions of violence. Instead, multimedia, for the most part, showed Klan ceremonies and cross lightings, as well as former prominent members of the Klan including Presidents and Supreme Court Justices. In essence, more than for

providing information to members or to recruit non-members, the purpose of Klan sites appeared to act as what Dr. Pierce described as “mostly informational, educational material” to non-members (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

### **Recruiting non-Members**

Previous research has shown the Klan creates and maintains web sites to recruit new members (Brown, 2009; Douglas et al., 2005; Gerstenfeld et al., 2003; Thiesmeyer, 1999; & Williamson & Pierson, 2003). However, research concluding the Klan creates web sites for the purpose of recruiting was mixed based on the results of this study through interviews of Klan leaders and content analysis of Klan web sites. Only the IKA’s web site specifically articulated the idea of using the Internet to recruit, while the Knights’ site included numerous opportunities for non-members to join or become supporters. However, 14 of the 24 Klan sites included online options to join or to submit a membership request, and 10 of the 20 Klans included an online option to join once TIHRF site was removed and the Knights Party sites were collapsed. But, only five of the 55 videos on Klan sites encouraged individuals to join the Klan, and three were the same video on the BOK site. The best explanation as to the value of the Internet in recruiting new members was made by Dr. Pierce who concluded, “There is some gain in membership from having a web site, but frankly, most people who want to join, it wouldn’t matter if we had a web site or not” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). Instead, Thornton concluded the purpose of Klan sites was “informing the public of what is going on” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.).

Vertigans (2007) was one of the few researchers who suggested that despite the popular use of the Internet among Klan groups, it was interpersonal contact among friends and loved ones through face-to-face meetings that had the greatest success in

recruiting new members. The conclusions drawn by Vertigans' (2007) were supported, in the current study, based on interviews with Klan leaders. According to James, when recruiting new members "face-to-face contact is the better means of reaching people," and concluded 75% of people who contact him after viewing his Klan's web site are deemed "unworthy of membership" (James, pers. comm.). Philip added, "As far as recruiting, we try to do that in person with people" (Philip, pers. comm.).

Essentially, while some Klan leaders interviewed concluded the Internet has helped recruit new members, rather than being seen as strictly a recruiting tool, the Klan leaders saw the purpose of having web sites as an "Internet brochure." The Internet was simply another means for people to learn about the Klans, where they exist, and what they do and do not do, and then request more information. The Internet has allowed Klans to expose their message to more people than traditional methods alone, and through this exposure, more people are becoming interested in the Klan. It could be argued that Klan web sites are not intended to recruit individuals to Klan organizations, so much as to recruit non-members to believe in a Klan's message. In this sense, a web site truly is informational in its attempt to change the public perception of the Klan, and once this is accomplished, attempt to convert individuals to follow Klan beliefs if not a Klan itself.

### **The Ku Klux Klan as an Idea**

In some ways, the Ku Klux Klan really is an idea, and an idea that refuses to go away. The KKK has made numerous appearances and each time it has appeared it has been in a different form as a new "Lost Cause," taking on issues from government intrusion, immigration, integration, and to attacks on Christianity. But, the Klans today are disjointed, more so than at any time since Reconstruction when numerous groups



appeared wearing robes and calling themselves different names: sometimes Ku Klux Klan, sometimes the White League, and sometimes Knights of the White Camelia. Today's "Klan" is the same with numerous groups sometimes wearing robes, and sometimes wearing the uniform of skinhead, Nazi, or White Nationalist organizations, yet all under different names. Interestingly, it was Abraham Lincoln, whose assassination led to the harsh conditions of Reconstruction under Andrew Johnson, who famously said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." And yet that is what the Klan is doing today as traditional and non-traditional Klans compete for ultimate legitimacy and for their message to be heard through the Internet. But, as Adams and Roscigno argue, while white extremist groups like the Klan remain disunited and "marginalized" by popular media representations that portray the Klan "as laughable and only nominally threatening," they in fact "remain an active and dangerous component of our society" (2005, p. 759).

It is unclear what role the Ku Klux Klan can have in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, be it a political organization, paramilitary organization, church, or fraternal order, but what is clear from Klan web sites and from Klan members interviewed, is that they believe the Klan does and can have a place and a role in America. As Thomas concluded, the Klan:

Has come to the aid of this country a couple of different times in her history and we have helped her out. One day, and I firmly believe this, they are going to be looking at an organization like ours, and at other organizations, and they are going to want us to bail them out again, and then once we have done that, they will want us to go away again (Thomas, pers. comm.).

To support this notion, James quoted a letter from Thomas Jefferson, "As revolutionary instruments, when nothing but revolution will cure the evils of the State, secret societies are necessary and indispensable, and the right to use them is inalienable by the people" (James, pers. comm.).

### **What can the Klan be?**

While this study examined, “What is the Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” perhaps just as important is, “What can the Klan of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century be?” When asked what the Klan needed to do in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to remain relevant, Richard Bondira concluded, “For 2011, the Klan is going to have to modernize” (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.). But, the Klan is modernizing through the Internet and has begun to incorporate perhaps the most powerful tool thus far in the history of the world to spread their message. The Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site summed up this point arguing, “In order to remain relevant the Klan MUST, be modern, up to date, able to use the best tools to reach our people.”

Today, Klans create and maintain web sites to inform the public that the Ku Klux Klan is still around and has been around for nearly 145 years. Through the Internet and images, music, logos, videos, merchandise and social media like Facebook and Twitter, Klans are attempting to harness the power of technology to spread their message. But, for non-traditional Klans the message is one of White Nationalism, separatism, and often of an inevitable race war (Blee, 1998). For traditional Klans, the Internet is used to rebrand their Klans’ image as pro-white, conservative, patriotic and Christian organizations, while advocating “participation in and a restructuring of American democracy” (Adams & Roscigno, 2005, p. 767).

In opposition to existing research, this study finds the reason Klan groups create and maintain web sites is not to recruit, but to spread their Klans’ message. The question remains, however, once/if the Klans spread their message of the perceived existence of a double standard and the need for racial separation, then what? The non-traditional Klans appear to have no answer with the exception of the Knights which wants to be a White Nationalist political party, while the IKA wants to be a paramilitary

organization. But, retreating from society or forming an all-white homeland are impossible goals, and perhaps this is why so many Klans fail because, frequently, their solutions are an impossible to achieve agendas.

Dr. Pierce provided an answer for traditional Klans, and concluded, “We are trying to move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our agenda is clear. We want to take our issues before the courts and the legislatures” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). According to Dr. Pierce:

We believe that more positive change can take place. That is the next great battlefield in the Civil Rights era and Civil Rights work is to get into the courts and legislatures. That is what we’re about. We are not beating anybody over the head. We are hiring attorneys (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

Pierce added:

We want to be an organization qualified to take these issues before the courts and legislatures. They may not like these issues, they may not want to hear them, but we should have the standing and the right to bring them to the front and say, look at it, give us an up or down, give us a wink or a nod. Give us something. Don’t ignore us (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.).

This would appear to be the only viable solution for a Klan organization, to hire lawyers, and become engaged in society through the court system and legal reform on such issues as school prayer, illegal immigration, or affirmative action. But, it would appear the Klans may not even have to take some issues to legislatures, as many of the issues the Klans support are already being debated in state legislatures across the country (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2011). This is not surprising as previous research has shown that a number of ideas that originated within the rhetoric of groups like the Klan “have been incorporated into the mainstream of American political discourse” (Becker et al., 2001, p. 451). For example, as recently as June of 2011, the state of Florida passed legislation requiring welfare recipients to undergo drug

screening, while the state of Alabama passed one of the toughest anti-illegal immigration laws in the country.

The Ku Klux Klan is a reactionary movement to a changing society and culture. But, it is not the only current conservative reactionary movement in the United States, and some have suggested a connection between the Klan and the Tea Party. The connection to the Tea Party and the Klan is particularly interesting after the NAACP released a press statement on July 13, 2010 stating, “Over 2,000 NAACP delegates today unanimously passed a resolution – as amended – called ‘The Tea Party Movement,’ asking for the repudiation of racist Tea Party leaders” (NAACP, 2010). The press release continued, “The resolution condemns the bigoted elements within the Tea Party and asks for them to be repudiated” (NAACP, 2010). The press release and resolution took place during the NAACP’s 101st National Convention in Kansas City (Good, 2010). At the convention, Democratic Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee compared the Tea Party to the KKK and made the following remark about the Tea Party and the Klan:

All those who wore sheets a long time ago have now lifted them off and started wearing, uh, clothing, uh, with a name, say, I am part of the tea party. Don’t you be fooled. Those who used to wear sheets are now being able to walk down the aisle and speak as a patriot because you will not speak loudly about the lack of integrity of this movement (Good, 2010).

Interestingly, a number of similarities can be drawn between the Tea Party’s agenda and that of traditional Klans. Both the Tea Party and traditional Klans advocate Americanism, limited government, conservative and traditional values, and both have been charged with being racist. But, the Tea Party does not have the negative and violent history of the Klan, and has been successful in recent elections. Although the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. site specifically stated its organization “Does NOT support of represent

the 'TEA PARTY,'" other Klans may see the Tea Party as a means of achieving their agenda. In effect, a group like the Tea Party could become the more liberal wing of the Ku Klux Klan.

Researchers, however, will have to continue to monitor how the Klans and other extremist groups react as political legislation is passed or defeated. Will Klans begin to lean more politically, like the traditional Klans and the Tea Party, or will they radicalize and become more violent, like the non-traditional Klans? It will be for the Klans to decide.

### **Future Research**

The Ku Klux Klan is not a stagnant organization. Since its inception the Klan has continued to evolve. But, just as the Klan continues to evolve and develop, so too do Klan web sites. When the content analysis for this study began in January of 2011, there were 26 active Klan web sites on the Internet among the SPLC's sample list of 44 Klan sites and 29 active Klan organizations (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010). The 26th site was the United White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Oklahoma Realm site located at oklahomakkk.com. In January of 2011, the site was only a homepage with no links or contact information. The homepage did provide the name of the United White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan at the top of the page, a logo and two graphics, but there was no information on the site, and nothing for viewers to click or any means to contact the web master or any group members. But, by March of 2011, the site was no longer on the Internet. In addition, the Dixie Rangers Knights of the Ku Klux Klan site at dixierangerskkkk.com was not active as of January of 2011, but became active by March. Similarly, the BOK's site at knightskkk.com, was active in January of 2011, went offline, and then reappeared by March, but again disappeared by June of 2011. Also,

the New Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan International LLC. site at [theklan1865.com](http://theklan1865.com) was not online between January and March of 2011, but appeared again in June of 2011. During this study, a number of Klan sites were discovered on the Internet which were not included in the SPLC's sample, such as the main site for the Knights Riders of the Ku Klux Klan, located at [knightriderskkkk.org](http://knightriderskkkk.org). Finally, some sites also updated after the content analysis of this study was completed. For example, by May of 2011, the White Camelia Knights of the Ku Klux Klan site added an internal link to a videos page on its site which included five new videos and a link to the "WCK YouTube Channel," where site visitors could view more WCK videos.

This constant flux is illustrative of the Klan and Klan organizations, and demonstrates the difficulty of maintaining any one overall and all inclusive list of Ku Klux Klan web sites. As further proof, the SPLC's Spring, 2011 Intelligence Report, released after the analysis of sites was completed, lists 29 active Ku Klux Klan groups in the United States in 2010 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2011). But, only 16 of the Klans that appear on the 2011 list of active Klans were also on the 2010 list (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010; & Southern Poverty Law Center, 2011). The Spring 2011 list included 49 active Klan web sites, by June of 2011, a number of these sites were no longer active including some that were no longer active when this study was conducted between January and March of 2011, such as the Traditional Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan at [tckkkk.org](http://tckkkk.org).

It is unclear why so many Klan sites and Klan groups appear and disappear, and is an area that should be explored in future research. A number of possible explanations exist, including that it is difficult to be a Klan member when members know that most of

American society does not like the Klan (Thomas, pers. comm.). Individuals may also become disillusioned with the Klan when they realize it is not like skinhead groups that are actively violent (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). In addition, running a Klan is difficult, as Tina explained, by saying that “There is a lot of paperwork in the Klan” and a lot of “responsibility” (Tina, pers. comm.). Sites may also get hacked, groups may become incorporated into larger Klans, and sites may use free web hosting services and get shut down by hosts for including offensive material. But, with so many possible reasons, it is not difficult to understand why so many sites and Klans frequently appear and disappear.

While this study attempted to better understand the beliefs of the Klan, the purpose of their sites, and the goals of the Klan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the study was a snapshot of the various Klans and their web sites, as they existed between January and March of 2011. However, new issues and new Klans may change the overall interpretation of the Ku Klux Klan. For example, more Klans may appear that do not require members to be Christian and would dramatically affect the sample and general understanding of the Klan and Klan organizations. In the current study, eight of the 20 Klans were non-traditional. But, a rise in paramilitary and violent Klans would change the overall interpretation of what the Ku Klux Klan believes. At the same time, the historical election of Barak Obama as President was seen as a potential recruiting device by some Klans, and affected the ideology of Klan groups and their interpretation of the world. After Obama’s election, Tina explained, “You heard it, the shock in people’s voices of, ‘Oh my God, we’ve got an African-American as President, and he’s a Muslim. How did that happen?’” (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina concluded, “People suddenly

realized they are not living in the 1950s anymore. The world is changing” (Tina, pers. comm.). Perhaps another unforeseen event will change the trajectory of the Klans and their ideals, just as Reconstruction or the Civil Rights Movement did. In fact, Thornton explained just such a scenario, stating, “We’re an Invisible Empire, and when the time comes, if it is the right stance to take, we will go in force and go out in public, and I don’t mean that threateningly, but there is safety in numbers, because we are a big target in public” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Any number of unforeseen events may dramatically impact the United States and the Ku Klux Klans’ reaction to it, such as a future terrorist attack or an economic depression.

The themes of a double standard and racial separation found in this study of what the Klans believe remain relevant. But, as the world changes, so too will the Klan groups examined. Researchers must frequently come back to the beliefs of the Klans, and examine their purposes and ideologies, to be able to truly understand America’s oldest extremist group. This study used a constructivist approach to grounded theory, and future research should examine Klan web sites, literature, and multimedia, for the specific themes of advocating racial separation and a double standard in society. In addition, rather than simply examining extremist sites as recruiting tools, sites should be examined as informational portals and conversion devices to convince non-members of extremist ideologies.

Based on previous studies, too often the Ku Klux Klan was dismissed by researchers, and this easy dismissal led to a great misunderstanding that there are, in fact, various and competing Klans with vastly different ideas and beliefs particularly as they relate to symbolism and rituals. Specifically, with few exceptions, researchers, the



media, and groups like the SPLC and ADL have mislabeled the Klan, lumping all organizations together when some resemble fraternal social clubs while others have the potential to be violent and criminal organizations. In addition, researchers need to move away from their computers and study the actual Klan members, and members of all extremist groups, rather than make assumptions based on web sites and leaflets (Goodwin, 2007). For example, Schafer (2002) argues that groups like the Klan sell merchandise to spread group ideology, while Corte and Edwards (2008) suggest profits from merchandise sales provide Klan groups with revenue streams to pursue traditional activities. But, only four of the 25 sites sold any merchandise directly. One of the four sites that did sell merchandise directly was the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. Dr. Pierce explained his Klan did not sell merchandise to create an additional revenue stream, and added that the Ku Klux Klan, LLC. was “not in the business to hock some t-shirts” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). But, it was only from interviewing a member of a Klan organization that it was discovered that previous research, at least as it concerns some groups, was not correct, and that groups may sell paraphernalia as a means to dump excess merchandise, and not to use profits to pursue other activities.

Researchers must also interview members of non-traditional Klans. With the exception of the CNKKKK, all the participants in this study were from traditional Klans. The insight gathered from interviewing members of non-traditional Klans may provide a greater understanding of what motivates an individual to join a Klan group. Specifically, interviewing members about their motivation for joining a non-traditional Klan rather than a skinhead or neo-Nazi organization or a White Nationalist group, could provide additional insight into the motivations for joining a Klan. These reasons may move

beyond Thomas' response of, "I love the rituals, I love the history, I like the Klankraft, I like the robes, I enjoy the brotherhood, the sisterhood" (Thomas, pers. comm.). The reasons for joining a non-traditional Klan that does not follow the same rituals or Klankraft, and often do not wear Klan robes, but light swastikas rather than crosses, could lend further support to the suggestion that some individuals join the Ku Klux Klan for the name and not the Klan's rituals, symbolism, or traditions. Therefore, future research should examine what attracts individuals to extremist groups like the Klan, and would involve a larger sample than this were involved in this study, specifically of members who were not in leadership positions, or individuals who were simply thinking about joining an extremist group.

This study suggests that Klan groups are motivated by more than a desire to recruit new members as a purpose for creating web sites. Therefore, individuals should be examined for their reactions to Klan web sites. Both Klan members and non-members could be examined using Uses and Gratifications Theory to determine what site viewers do with the information contained on Klan sites, or their motivations and expectations for using the web site, and how they interpret and integrate that information into their own lives. In essence, individuals who also perceive a double standard in society may seek out solutions for the need to address the problem, and find a Klan as a solution. But, such an investigation would need to be conducted with non-members or Klan members not involved in the development of content and messages on the sites.

Finally, researchers and particularly communication researchers need to examine groups on the fringes of society, such as the Ku Klux Klan, skinheads, neo-Nazis, and

far-right and far-left groups in the United States. Simply ignoring such groups or dismissing them as fringe elements does not provide an understanding of who members are and what members believe. This also means not being afraid to do such research. Blee argues, "Researchers of social movements like organized racism rightfully are concerned" that their name and career may be tarnished or harmed "by the political stigma attached to those they study," but such fears prevent a better understanding of the experiences and beliefs of these groups (1998, p. 388). Violence is committed by many fringe groups, and understanding the motivations for joining such groups and committing such acts may help prevent future violence.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study that could not be prevented was that only one of the eight non-traditional Klans agreed to participate. Additional interviews with members of more extremist non-traditional Klans may have altered the understanding of the Ku Klux Klan. Non-traditional Klans are much more racist and include more racist rhetoric on their sites. The results of this study were heavily influenced by the participation of mostly traditional Klans as they were the only ones willing to participate, and because they were also more likely the groups that could present a realistic agenda.

Seven participants representing seven different, mostly traditional Klan web sites, were interviewed for this study. The individuals interviewed were all aware they would be asked questions by a member of the academic community as part of a dissertation study. A concerted effort may have been made to present the most outwardly friendly and mainstream view of the Klan, and project the best image possible of the Klan. I did wonder if the participants' responses were custom made for my interview or reflected their sincere belief. In fact, Dr. Pierce mentioned near the end of his interview, "We are

trying to get our message out there” (Travis Pierce, pers. comm.). The message of course was of a non-racist and pro-American Klan, much different from the one typically seen in the media. Cole Thornton also explained the reason he agreed to participate in the study, “I am just trying to help explain what we are, who we are, and what we are really about” (Cole Thornton, pers. comm.). Conceivably, there was most likely an attempt to project the best image of the Klan possible during the interviews to influence the conclusions drawn in this study. Participants may not have been entirely forthcoming about their beliefs, a problem in all in-depth interview studies about sensitive topics (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002), but for the most part, much of the responses found in the interviews matched the rhetoric on the web sites of the participants, with one exception as discussed below.

In the interview with Tina, her rhetoric about herself and the CNK KKK did not match the rhetoric on the CNK KKK web site (Tina, pers. comm.). Tina is the Grand Empress of the CNK KKK and the web master of the site, but Ray Larsen is the Imperial Wizard. Tina’s numerous stories about giving to charity and even a black Christian charity appeared at odds with some of the rhetoric found on the CNK KKK site based on its Christian Identity ideology (Tina, pers. comm.). Specifically, references on the CNK KKK site of non-whites as “beasts” appeared completely at odds with Tina’s interview where she said those Klans which included racist rhetoric on their site believe in “such a narrow, horrible view” (Tina, pers. comm.), when her web site provided just such a view of non-whites. Tina even mentioned in the interview, “This is what people need to learn. Not all blacks, African Americans, or Negros, or whatever, are all bad. Not all Klansmen and Klanswomen are all bad either. You do have rotten apples in the

bunch, but why should a minority take the majority?” (Tina, pers. comm.). It seemed like this admission particularly related to her.

Interviews lasting between 30 minutes and three hours in which the interviewees do most of the talking, provides ample opportunity for participants to make less-than politically correct statements. One example came from Thomas who began to discuss a Jewish-controlled media, but cut himself off (Thomas, pers. comm.). Another example occurred in the interview with Richard Bondira who talked about the Holocaust. Bondira did say that the Holocaust occurred, but that it was not accurately portrayed in the media, and that the media and Jewish groups overemphasized the number of victims of the Holocaust (Richard Bondira, pers. comm.).

In addition, some of the interviewees believed various conspiracy theories to be fact. For example, Tina mentioned Obama being a Muslim. Meanwhile Thomas discussed, “Obama wanting to take away what can be put on the Internet, limited access to certain subjects,” and that George Soros is one of the “people who run the United States” (Thomas, pers. comm.; & Tina, pers. comm.). But, while these theories may appear outlandish, they may not be limited to members of the Ku Klux Klan. In fact, in August of 2010, as many as 18% of Americans believed Barack Obama was a Muslim (Pew Research Center, 2010).

But the fact that Klan members believe in some conspiracy theories may be similar to the idea that some mainstream, conservative, political discourse originated in extremist rhetoric (Becker et al., 2001). Does a belief in conspiracy theories about who controls the media and the government lead to involvement in the Klan, or does

involvement in the Klan lead to an indoctrination of conspiracy theories? Based on the number of Americans who believe Barak Obama is a Muslim, it may be both.

APPENDIX A  
CODING SHEET FOR WEB SITES

Klan organization:

Web site:

Listed in SPLC sample: yes/no

Date accessed:

Does the site provide a contact email for the web master: yes/no

What is that email?

Does the site provide contact email addresses for other members of the organization: yes/no

Who are these members (1):

What is their email address (1):

Who are these members (2):

What is their email address (2):

Who are these members (3):

What is their email address (3):

Does the site include a chat room: yes/no

Is the chat room for members only: yes/no

Does the site sell Klan paraphernalia/merchandise: yes/no

Does the site include promotional material such as leaflets to be distributed: yes/no

If yes, how many leaflets: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the site offer a link for viewers to join the Klan: yes/no

How many internal link pages does the site have: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the site link to other sites: yes/no

Are they Klan sites: yes/no

What are the Klan sites:

Are they non-Klan sites: yes/no

What are the non-Klan sites:

Does the site have a counter: yes/no

If yes, how many hits does the site show: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the site include information about upcoming events: yes/no

Does the site include information about past events: yes/no

Does the site have a logo: yes/no

Does the site contain multimedia: yes/no

Videos: yes/no

How many: \_\_\_\_\_

Photos: yes/no

How many: \_\_\_\_\_

Music: yes/no

Is the multimedia only on the homepage: yes/no

Does the site include a disclaimer that their organization does not encourage violence: yes/no

Does the site specifically state the Klan is not a racist organization: yes/no

Provide the exact statement:

Does the site claim its Klan organization represents the "true Klan": yes/no

Does the site specifically state it is a pro-American organization: yes/no

How many times does the term "pro-America" or its derivatives appear on the site: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the site specifically state it is a claim it supports traditional values: yes/no

How many times do the terms "traditional" or "family" values appear on the site: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the site specifically state it is a pro-white organization: yes/no

How many times does the term "pro-white organization" appear on the site: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the site disassociate with Nazis and skinheads: yes/no

Provide the statement:

### Qualitative Analysis

If the site has a logo, what is it:

If the site includes videos, are they news stories, messages from a Klan leader in video format, videos of Klan rallies:

Does the goal of these videos appear to provide more information about the Klan and its beliefs, educate/indoctrinate site visitors of issues affecting the country that Klan supports or is against, or to demonstrate Klan member participation in rallies or cross lightings?

If the site contains photos, who or what is depicted in the photos:

If the site contains music, what is it:

Does the song contain lyrics: yes/no

If the song does not contain lyrics, describe the music:

If the song does contain lyrics, which Klan does the song represent (is it a Civil Rights era song, a Civil War/Reconstruction era song, or a modern song):

What is the message in these songs:

Does the site include inflammatory language or derogatory language or slurs against religious, ethnic or racial minorities, and if so what:

Does the site claim its Klan organization represents the "true Klan" and how so:



Does the site claim the Klan is Protestant, Christian (including Catholic), Christian Identity, combination, or other:

For what issues does the site claim the Klan stands for that have a racial overtone:

For what issues does the site claim the Klan is against that have a racial overtone:

What traditional/mainstream issues does the site say it supports:

What issues does the site claim the Klan is against:

Provide screenshot of the homepage for the site:

## APPENDIX B INFORMED CONSENT

**Protocol Title:** White hoods and keyboards: An examination of the Klan and Ku Klux Klan web sites

**Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.**

### **Purpose of the research study:**

The purpose of this study is to examine the marketing techniques and beliefs of web masters and web site creators of Ku Klux Klan sites. Specifically, this study examines the creative thought process that goes into creating a Klan web site and your feelings and beliefs on the site and society in general.

### **What you will be asked to do in the study:**

You will be asked to respond to a series of questions about the site you have either created or maintain and how effective you believe the site to be, as well as a few questions about your motivation for creating or maintaining the site.

### **Time required:**

1 hour

### **Risks and Benefits:**

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research. There are no direct benefits to participation.

### **Compensation:**

No direct compensation will be given for participating in this research, but should you request a summary of the findings from this study, it will be provided by email upon the study's completion.

### **Confidentiality:**

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file in my office. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed.

### **Voluntary participation:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. You also have the right to not answer any question that you chose not to answer or do not wish to answer.

### **Right to withdraw from the study:**

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

**Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:**

Andrew Selepak, Graduate Student, Department of Journalism and Communication, Weimer Hall, PO BOX 118400, Gainesville, FL, 32611, 352-273-1644

**Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:**

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

**Agreement:**

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Grand Tour question

1. Why does the Ku Klux Klan create web sites?

### Mini Tour Question

1. Who are members of the Klan?

### Survey Questions

1. Did you create this site or do you only maintain it?

Create       Maintain

2. Do you maintain your own ISP or do you use a host?

Own ISP       Host

3. Have you ever changed the URL for your site?

Yes       No

4. If you have the changed the URL for your site, what was it before?

5. Are you a member of the Klan or only maintain the site?

Member       Maintain only

6. Do you get any ideas for your site from other Klan web sites? If so, which sites?

7. How do you decide which pictures, graphics, videos, or music to use on your site?

8. How often do you change the pictures and graphics on your site? And how often do you update the site in general?

9. Does the group you maintain a site for have a logo or emblem, and if so, who created it, what is it, and what does it symbolize?

10. Do you create messages for members and non-members? And if so, what is the difference?

11. How effective is your site in convincing new members to join your group?

12. How many Klan members do you believe there are currently in the United States?

13. What do you think is the average American's view of the Klan?

14. How old are you currently?

15. How far did you go in school?

16. Do you believe the Klan is a racist organization? Why or why not?

17. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

APPENDIX D  
ACTIVE KU KLUX KLAN SITES AS OF MARCH OF 2011

Association of Georgia Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (AGKK)

Web site: [associationofklanskkkk.weebly.com](http://associationofklanskkkk.weebly.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2010):

Conyers, GA

Religion: Christian

Brotherhood of Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (BOK)

Web site: [knightskkk.com](http://knightskkk.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Marion, OH (Headquarters); and Richmond County, VA

Realms according to the SPLC:

Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming

Religion: Christian Identity

National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CNK KKK)

Web site: [cnkkk.net](http://cnkkk.net)

Actual name of organization: Church of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Wrong web site provided in SPLC list. SPLC listed site as cnkkk.com

Chapters according to the SPLC:

South Bend, IN (Headquarters); Olathe, CO; Chicago, IL; Dowling, MI; Las Vegas, NV; Port Jervis, NY; Logan, OH; Brush Creek, TN; San Antonio, TX; Simms, TX; Texarkana, TX; and Mercer, WI

Realms according to the SPLC:

Arizona, California, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia

Religion: Christian Identity

Confederate White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CWK)

Web site: [tinyurl.com/y9llklc](http://tinyurl.com/y9llklc)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

None

Realms according to the SPLC:

None

Religion: Christian Identity

Dixie Rangers Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (DRK)

Web site: [dixierangerskkk.com](http://dixierangerskkk.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Walker, LA

Religion: Christian

The Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Empire Knights)

Web site: [knights311.org](http://knights311.org)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Homosassa Springs, FL

Religion: non-Christian

Fraternal White Knights (FWK)

Web site: [fraternalwhiteknights.com](http://fraternalwhiteknights.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Charles City, IA (Headquarters); Toney, AL; Highland City, F; Lakeland, FL; Plant City, FL; Cedar Rapids, IA; Clear Lake, IA; Dension; IA; Des Moines, IA; Ionia, IA; Mason City, IA; New Hampton, IA; Riceville, IA; Rockwell, IA; Waterloo, IA; Adolphus, KY; Philadelphia, MS; Alexandria, TN; Brush Creek, TN; Clarksville, TN; Franklin, TN; Hohenwald, TN; Linden, TN; Nashville, TN; Readyville, TN; Shelbyville, TN; Woodbury, TN; Powhatan, VA; and Roanoke, VA

Religion: Christian

Imperial Klans of America (IKA)

Web site: [kkkk.net](http://kkkk.net)

Not listed in SPLC's list of 44 Ku Klux Klan web sites

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Houston, TX (Headquarters); Gainesville, FL; Dawson Springs, KY; Eugene, MO; and Mapaville, MO

Religion: non-Christian

International Keystone Knights of the Ku Klux Klan INC (IKKKKK)

Web site: [ikkkkk.org](http://ikkkkk.org)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Colt, AR (Headquarters); Pinson, AL; Young Harris, GA; Elwood, IN; and Cleveland, OH

Religion: Christian

Knight Riders of the Ku Klux Klan (Knight Riders)

Web site: [knightriderskkkk.com](http://knightriderskkkk.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Elijay, GA (Headquarters); Bainbridge, GA; Brunswick, GA; Byron, GA; Harrisburg, IL; and Tunas, MO

Religion: Christian

Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Knights Party)

Actual name of organization: Knights Party of the Ku Klux Klan

Web site: [arkpower-light.com](http://arkpower-light.com)

Web site: [kkk.bz](http://kkk.bz) (main site)

Web site: [kkk.com](http://kkk.com)

Web site: [newporttennessee.net](http://newporttennessee.net)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Harrison, AR (Headquarters); and Concord, AR

Religion: Christian Identity

Knights Party Veterans League (KPVV)

Web site: [knightspartyveteransleague.com](http://knightspartyveteransleague.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

None

Religion: Christian Identity

Ku Klux Klan, LLC (Ku Klux Klan, LLC.)

Web site: [kukluxklan.bz](http://kukluxklan.bz)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Compton, AR

Religion: Protestant

Mississippi White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (MWK)

Web site: [mwkkkk.com](http://mwkkkk.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Petal, MS (Headquarters); Brookhaven, MS; Bruce, MS; Meridian, MS; Olive Branch, MS; Pearl, MS; Tremont, MS; and Tupelo, MS

Religion: Christian

Order of the Ku Klux Klan (TIHRF)

Web site: [kkklan.com](http://kkklan.com)

Actual name of organization: The Indiana Historical Research Foundation

Chapters according to the SPLC:

None

Religion: Christian

Southern Alliance of Klans (SAK)

Web site: [sakkkk.com](http://sakkkk.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

None

Religion: Christian

Texas Rebel Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (TRK)

Web site: [texasrebelknightskkk.com](http://texasrebelknightskkk.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Splendora, TX

Religion: Christian

Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (TAK)

Web site: [traditionalistamericanknights.com](http://traditionalistamericanknights.com)

Actual name of organization: True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Potosi, MO

Religion: Protestant

United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (UNSK)

Web site: [unskkkk.com](http://unskkkk.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Fraser, MI (Headquarters); Longmont, CO; Hampton, FL; Chicago, IL; Mays Landing, NJ; North Providence, RI; Kingsport, TN; and Gordonsville, VA

Realms according to the SPLC:

Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, and South Carolina

Religion: Christian



United Realms of American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CURA)

Web site: [curakkkk.com](http://curakkkk.com)

Actual name of organization: Church of the United Realms of America Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Ukiah, CA; and Shelbina, MO

Religion: Christian Identity

United White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (UWK)

Web site: [uwkklk.com](http://uwkklk.com)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Longview, TX (Headquarters); Beardstown, IL; Belleville, IL; Homer, LA; Monroe, LA; Sarepta, LA; Shreveport, LA; Tullos, LA; Detroit, MI; Monroe, MI; Dayton, OH; Atoka, OK; Henryetta, OK; Holdenville, OK; Oklahoma City, OK; Shawnee, OK; Tulsa, OK; Amarillo, TX; ArkLaTex Region, TX; Beaumont, TX; Buffalo, TX; Corpus Christi, TX; Dallas, TX; Forney, TX; Fort Worth, TX; Goose Creek, TX; Houston, TX; Lufkin, TX; Marshall, TX; Midlothian, TX; Pan Handle Region, TX; San Antonio, TX; San Saba, TX; Vidor, TX; Waco, TX; Wichita Falls, TX; and Cheyenne, WY

Realms according to the SPLC:

Southwest Arkansas, Illinois, South Louisiana, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Wyoming

Religion: Christian

White Camelia Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (WCK)

Web site: [wckklk.org](http://wckklk.org)

Chapters according to the SPLC:

Cleveland, TX

Religion: Christian Identity

## Blogs

Imperial Klans of America (IKA)

Web site: [realmofky.blogspot.com](http://realmofky.blogspot.com)

Thomas Robb Blog

Web site: [tarobb.blogspot.com](http://tarobb.blogspot.com)

Thomas Robb is the National Director of the Knights Party

Knights Party blog

Jason Robb Blog

Web site: [jasonrobb.blogspot.com](http://jasonrobb.blogspot.com)

Jason Robb is the son of Thomas Robb

Knights Party blog

Rachel Pendergraft Blog

Web site: [rachelpendergraft.blogspot.com](http://rachelpendergraft.blogspot.com)

Rachel Pendergraft is the daughter of Thomas Robb

Knights Party blog

## Dead Klan Web Sites

Brotherhood of Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
Web site: [bok33.org](http://bok33.org)

Great Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
Web site: [gkkkk.com](http://gkkkk.com)

Imperial Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
Web site: [imperialchristianknights.com](http://imperialchristianknights.com)

Imperial Klans of America  
Web site: [kklk.net/Missouri/index.htm](http://kklk.net/Missouri/index.htm)  
Web site: [kklk.net/texas](http://kklk.net/texas)

Indiana White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
Web site: [indianawhiteknights.webs.com](http://indianawhiteknights.webs.com)

Master Klans of America  
Web site: [masterklansofamerica.com](http://masterklansofamerica.com)

New Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan International LLC  
Web site: [theklan1865.com](http://theklan1865.com)  
Update: Site was active on June 20, 2011

Supreme White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
Web site: [supremewhiteknights.webs.com](http://supremewhiteknights.webs.com)

Texas Knights of the Invisible Empire Inc.  
Web site: [tktie.org](http://tktie.org)

Traditional Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
Web site: [tckkkk.org](http://tckkkk.org)

Traditional Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
Web site: [tk311.com](http://tk311.com)

United White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
Web site: [kklklavern7.com](http://kklklavern7.com)  
Web site: [oklahomakkk.com](http://oklahomakkk.com)

World Knights of the Ku Klux Klan  
Web site: [worldknights.org](http://worldknights.org)

APPENDIX E  
KLAN SYMBOLS



Figure E-1. MIOAK

Source: <http://www.kkklan.com/mioak.1.gif>



Figure E-2. Blood Drop Cross

Source: <http://www.kkklan.com/mioak.1.gif>



Figure E-3. Imperial Seal of the 1920s Ku Klux Klan under Col. Simmons

Source: <http://www.kkklan.com/mioak3.gif>

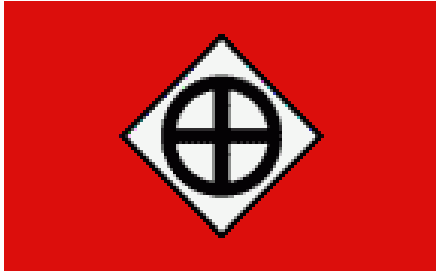


Figure E-4. Crosswheel flag

Source: <http://www.arkpower-light.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderpictures/knightsflag1.gif>



Figure E-5. Crosswheel behind image of Klansman

Source: <http://curakkk.com/mainpic.JPG>

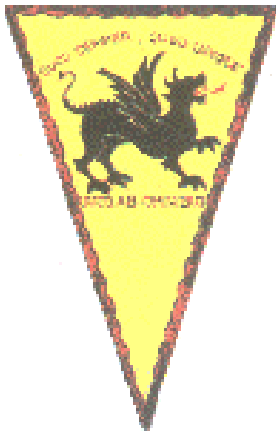


Figure E-6. Grand Ensign of the Reconstruction Era Klan

Source: <http://www.kkklan.com/ensign1.gif>



Figure E-7. Grand Ensign from the Reconstruction Era Klan

Source: <http://www.kkklan.com/ensign2.gif>



Figure E-8. Blood Drop Cross flag

Source: <http://www.kkklan.com/ensign3.gif>



Figure E-9. Klan salute with left hand

Source: <http://www.kkklan.com/truefl4.gif>

APPENDIX F  
KU KLUX KLAN LOGOS



Figure F-1. Brotherhood of Klans Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Source: <http://knightskkk.com>



Figure F-2. Church of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Source: [http://cnkkkk.net/data/\\_uploaded/image/002.jpg](http://cnkkkk.net/data/_uploaded/image/002.jpg)



Figure F-3. Dixie Rangers Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Source: [http://dixierangerskkk.com/images/top\\_bgr1.jpg](http://dixierangerskkk.com/images/top_bgr1.jpg)



Figure F-4. Imperial Klans of America

Source: <http://kkkk.net/images/newcrest1.jpg>



Figure F-5. International Keystone Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Source: <http://www.mississippiwhiteknights.com/IKKFIX.JPG>



Figure F-6. Knights Party at newporttennessee.net

Source: <http://newporttennessee.net/images/newportlogo.jpg>





Figure F-7. Knights Party at kkk.bz

Source: <http://kkk.bz/main/wp-content/themes/kkk/images/Header.jpg>

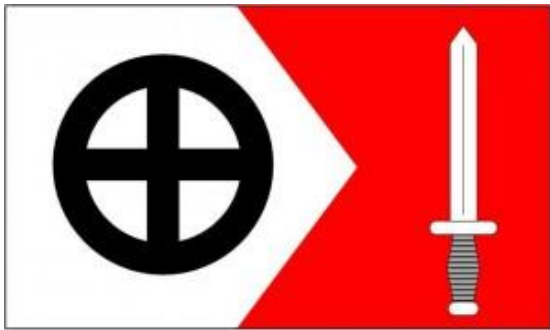


Figure F-8. Knights Party Veterans League

Source: <http://www.knightspartyveteransleague.com/main/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/KnightsPartyVeteransLeaguebanner-300x178.jpg>



Figure F-9. Ku Klux Klan, LLC. (1)

Source: <http://kukluxklan.bz/picture/store/pin-kkk.jpg>





Figure F-10. Ku Klux Klan, LLC. (2)

Source: <http://kukluxklan.bz/picture/service-america.jpg>



Figure F-11. Mississippi White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Source: [http://mwkkkk.com/MWKLogo\\_small.gif](http://mwkkkk.com/MWKLogo_small.gif)



Figure F-12. Southern Alliance of Klans

Source: [http://sakkkk.com/images/SAK\\_1.jpg](http://sakkkk.com/images/SAK_1.jpg)



Figure F-13. True Invisible Empire Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Source:

<http://traditionalistamericanknights.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderpictures/taklogo.jpg>



Figure F-14. United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Source: <http://unskkkk.com/images/Confederate29.gif>

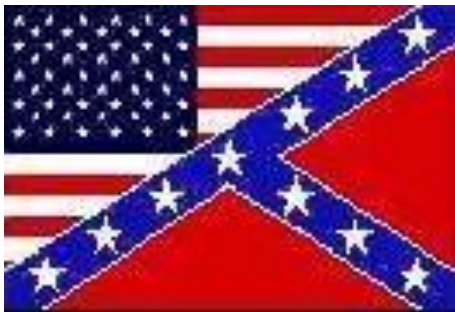


Figure F-15 Church of the United Realms of America Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Source: <http://www.curakkkk.com/confederateamericanflag.jpg>

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Andrew G. Selepak was born on February 10, 1978, in Fairfax, Virginia. Andrew is the only child of Ronald and Josephine Selepak, and the grandson of George and Catherine Selepak and George and Mary Kanala. He received his B.A. from The University of Virginia in U.S. History where he wrote his undergraduate thesis on Nathan Bedford Forrest and the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction in the American South after the Civil War. After graduating from UVA, Andrew worked in radio for two years on a variety of stations as an on-air host for music, sports and news programs. After working in the radio business, Andrew returned to the university setting and earned his M.A. in Health, Risk, and Crisis Communication from George Mason University, in Fairfax, Virginia. Andrew wrote his graduate thesis on perceptions of liberal bias in the media. During his graduate work at George Mason, Andrew was encouraged by his professors to continue his education, earn a doctorate, and become a college professor.

Andrew was born and raised in Virginia, but moved to Gainesville, Florida in August of 2007, to work on his PhD. During his doctoral work at the University of Florida, Andrew has had the opportunity to teach courses in Broadcast News Writing, Media Writing, Script Writing, and Sports Reporting. Many of his hundreds of students have graduated during his four years teaching at the University of Florida and gone on to careers in the media across the country. During his time at Florida he has also worked on research studies focusing on individuals living on the fringes of society, social media, and media effects. This dissertation is a culmination of Andrew's work which began while he was an undergraduate and has developed during his academic career.

Andrew received his Ph.D. in Mass Communication from the University of Florida in August of 2011, and plans on pursuing his passion for teaching and doing research at the university level and helping future students follow their goals of working in the media industry. Andrew will also continue to focus on his research interests in political communication and on those individuals on the fringes of society who often go unnoticed or ignored.