

# Creativity Movement

## (formerly World Church of the Creator)

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### INTRODUCTION

The Creativity Movement was one of the most notorious hate groups in the 1990s, gaining publicity for its rapid growth and the violent incidents with which it was associated. Originally founded by Ben Klassen in 1973 as Church of the Creator, the organization fell into disarray in the mid-1990s following the criminal convictions of several of its members, the suicide of Klassen in 1993 and a successful lawsuit brought by the family of a Gulf War veteran murdered in 1991 by a COTC member. In 1996, COTC was reborn as WCOTC with the emergence of the young law school graduate Matt Hale as its leader. Hale's publicity skills, his unsuccessful battle to obtain his law license in Illinois, and a two-state shooting spree by follower Benjamin Smith in July 1999 that left two dead and nine wounded, all kept the WCOTC in the headlines in recent years. In November 2002, the WCOTC lost a copyright infringement lawsuit brought against it by the Te-Ta-Ma Truth Foundation, which had successfully trademarked the name "Church of the Creator" years ago. A federal judge ordered the WCOTC to stop using its name, to give up its Web addresses, and to turn over all printed material bearing its name. Hale refused to comply with the order and in January 2003 had arrived for a contempt of court hearing when he was arrested for soliciting the judge's murder. He remains in jail awaiting trial as members of the WCOTC and other white supremacist groups rally behind him. Currently, Thomas Kroenke, appointed "Hasta Primus" or "Spearhead" of the WCOTC before Hale's arrest, is running some of the group's operations in Wyoming.

### Quick Profile

**Leader:** Matt Hale

**Headquarters:** Riverton, Wyoming

**Founded:** 1973 by Ben Klassen; Hale assumed leadership in 1996

**Publications:** *The Struggle*

**Other media:** Web sites; online mailing lists, bulletin boards, and chat rooms

**Ideology:** White supremacy, "Creativity." WCOTC is a white supremacist group that considers itself a religion founded on the proposition that the white race is "nature's highest creation" and that "white people are the creators of all worthwhile culture and civilization." Followers of the WCOTC do not believe in God, heaven, hell or eternal life. They consider Jews and nonwhites, whom they refer to as "mud races," to be the "natural enemies" of the white race.

**Composition:** Mainly young white males, many incarcerated; the group also courts women & children

**Connections:** The WCOTC Web site lists contacts in Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Poland, Russia and Switzerland.

**Notable propaganda:** *Facts That the Government and the Media Don't Want You To Know*, WCOTC's 32-page anti-Semitic and racist propaganda booklet; *The White Man's Bible*



## RACE FAITH

The Creativity Movement, whose motto is "RaHoWa" (Racial Holy War), proclaims that its belief system, Creativity, "is a racial religion" whose primary goal is the "survival, expansion, and advancement of [the] White Race exclusively." Creators, as members of the group call themselves, do not believe in God, heaven, hell or eternal life. Race is everything: the white race is "nature's highest creation," "white people are the creators of all worthwhile culture and civilization," "every issue, whether religious, political or racial...[should be] viewed through the eyes of the White Man and exclusively from the point of view of the White race as a whole." Likewise the Creators' version of the Golden Rule: "What is good for the White Race is the highest virtue; what is bad for the White Race is the ultimate sin." Jews and nonwhites (referred to as the "mud races") are considered "sub-human" and deemed "natural" enemies. Ultimately, WCOTC hopes to organize white people to achieve world domination, "free from alien control and free from pollution of alien races....Only on the basis of recognizing our enemies, destroying and/or excluding them and practicing racial teamwork can a stable lasting government be built."



WCOTC attacks Jews, Christians, African Americans and other people of color, although Jews are particularly vilified. In *The White Man's Bible*, published by the group's founder Ben Klassen in 1981 and required reading for all Church members, Jews are the "mortal enemy" plotting to take over the world by "mongrelizing," and thus destroying, the white race. "Working towards the niggerization of America is the Jewish race," Klassen wrote. "Pushing, clawing, propagandizing with a fury unparalleled in history, the Jews are working towards their ultimate historic goal -- total enslavement of all the races of the world."

## ATTACKING CHRISTIANITY

Creators take a harsh view of Christianity as well. Unlike some others on the far right -- notably Identity adherents -- who find biblical justification for their bigotry, Creators see Christianity as a "concoction" of Jews that has been used as a "tremendous weapon in the worldwide Jewish drive of race-mixing." They claim that there is no evidence that Jesus even existed and that the reliance of Christians on faith is merely childish gullibility. Klassen argued, "Jews used Christianity and its horrible concept of hell as a powerful club on the minds of its victims, to frighten, to terrorize and to stampede its gullible victims into submission."

However, because the group must "market" itself to Christians, though disaffected or nominal, its contempt for Christianity goes unmentioned in *Facts That the Government and the Media Don't Want You To Know*, the 32-page conspiratorially anti-Jewish and racist booklet WCOTC followers have dropped on countless American driveways and lawns during the past several years. Instead, the booklet focuses entirely on

denigrating nonwhites and on hoary conspiracy theories about Jewish control of the media and the Atlantic slave trade and about the mythical Kosher "tax."

## ORIGINS

The Church of the Creator was founded in 1973 by Klassen, a one-time Florida state legislator born in the Ukraine and raised in Canada. For almost a decade before establishing the group, Klassen drifted among far-right causes, first as a member of the John Birch Society -- which he later denounced as a "smokescreen for the Jews" -- and later as Florida chairman of George Wallace's 1968 independent presidential campaign. In 1973, Klassen formed the COTC with the publication of a 511-page tome entitled *Nature's Eternal Religion*. The book was a call to "completely reject the Judeo-democratic-Marxist values of today and supplant them with new and basic values, of which race is the foundation." As his title indicates, Klassen believed that race had transcendent meaning. It embodied absolute truth; Christianity, by contrast, he disdained as a "suicidal religion."

Over the next decade, Klassen appeared to attract few converts to his faith, and his contribution to the radical right consisted mostly of occasional propaganda pamphlets. In 1983, he began publishing a monthly tabloid called *Racial Loyalty*, from which he anthologized articles into a number of books, the best known of which is *Rahowa! This Planet Is All Ours* (1987). In characteristic language, Klassen declared:

RAHOWA! In this one word we sum up the total goal and program of not only the Church of the Creator, but of the total White Race, and it is this: We take up the challenge. We gird for total war against the Jews and the rest of the goddamned mud races of the world -- politically, militantly, financially, morally and religiously...We regard it as a holy war to the finish -- a racial holy war. Rahowa! is INEVITABLE. It is the Ultimate and Only solution.

While extreme and bizarre, Klassen's battle cries attracted increasing numbers of white supremacists around the world. Enjoying active members in Sweden, Canada and South Africa, COTC became one of the few American hate groups with international followers. South Africa's COTC chapter drew particular attention in 1992: two professed members of an undercover police unit reported that they had been instructed by superiors to join COTC in order to recruit South African racists into a "dirty war" against the African National Congress.

Klassen's stridency also attracted hard-core bigots, and through their activities the seeds were planted for COTC's eventual demise. Most significantly, on May 17, 1991, George Loeb, a COTC reverend with a history of racist harassment, murdered a black Gulf War veteran, Harold Mansfield Jr., in a Neptune Beach, Florida, parking lot following an alleged dispute between the two men. Loeb was sentenced to life with no possibility of parole for 25 years. In March 1994, the family of the murdered sailor, represented by the Southern Poverty Law Center, filed a lawsuit against COTC seeking \$1 million in damages and the dissolution of the organization for vicarious liability in the murder.

Klassen appeared to anticipate this lawsuit and spent the last year of his life in an effort to unload COTC assets and divest himself of responsibility for the organization. In September 1992, he sold the North Carolina compound that housed his headquarters to William Pierce, head of the neo-Nazi National Alliance. Pierce, who paid Klassen \$100,000, almost immediately placed the land back on the market for \$299,900.

According to court records, the compound was sold in 1994 for approximately \$185,000 to a buyer who had no ties to the hate movement.

## SUCCESSION

In addition to unloading his assets, Klassen, in his 70s, searched for a successor to lead his church. His leading choice, Rudy "Butch" Stanko, was serving a six-year prison sentence at the time for selling tainted meat to public school cafeterias. Klassen changed his mind at some point and instead selected Charles Altvater, a Baltimore, Maryland, pizza delivery man. Even before Altvater could take control of the church, however, the indecisive Klassen appointed yet another successor, Mark Wilson (who was also known as Brandon O'Rourke), a Milwaukee skinhead leader who in fact ran COTC for six months, until January 1993. (Altvater, who remained a loyal COTC member even after his demotion, was arrested in 1992 and convicted of reckless endangerment for placing a bomb on the porch of a Baltimore County police officer's home.)

Perhaps sensing that the Milwaukee skinhead's propensity for reckless behavior made him difficult to control, Klassen abruptly dismissed Wilson and replaced him with Richard McCarty, a telemarketer previously unknown in hate group circles. Klassen's letter introducing McCarty to COTC members was virtually the last public act he performed in connection with the organization: on August 6, 1993, Klassen committed suicide, at the age of 75, by swallowing four bottles of sleeping pills.

## COTC UNDER RICHARD MCCARTY

The Church that McCarty inherited from Klassen continued to spiral out of control in 1993, even before Klassen officially introduced McCarty as the group's leader. On July 15th, eight individuals with ties to COTC - as well as to Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance and to a local gang called the Fourth Reich Skins -- were arrested in Southern California on charges of plotting to instigate a race war by bombing the largest black church in Los Angeles and assassinating Rodney King, whose videotaped beating by white police officers in 1991 spurred national controversy (and, after the officers were acquitted of criminal charges, the 1992 Los Angeles riots). Eleven days later, police in Salinas, California, arrested two skinheads on shoplifting charges -- one of them, Jeremiah Gordon Knesal, described himself to the F.B.I. as the Washington State director of COTC. During a search of the suspects' car, officers uncovered a cache of weapons and ammunition, hate literature and a page from a Portland, Oregon, telephone book listing Jewish agencies and synagogues. Questioned by federal agents, Knesal confessed to his involvement in the July 20, 1993, firebombing of an N.A.A.C.P. office in Tacoma, Washington; authorities stated that the Tacoma bombing, for which a third skinhead was also arrested, was part of a larger conspiracy to attack Jewish and African American institutions, military installations, gay and lesbian gathering places and radio and television stations.

Meanwhile, McCarty floundered as the group's leader, lacking Klassen's fire and talent for fashioning nearly nihilistic yet rousing rhetoric to excite followers. When, less than a year after Klassen's death, the Southern Poverty Law Center filed suit against the organization seeking its dissolution, McCarty quickly acquiesced. The lawsuit in turn proceeded against William Pierce; in May 1996 a Federal jury in North Carolina ruled that COTC had sold its property to Pierce only in order to avoid paying damages in connection with the pending suit, and that Pierce would therefore have to turn over to the Mansfield family the \$85,000 profit he earned from the resale.

## WCOTC REBORN: THE RISE OF MATT HALE

The COTC had a violent reputation, though little energy, when a young and avid white supremacist named Matt Hale hitched his star to the group. Born in 1971, Hale had been an avowed racist since the age of 12, when he became fascinated with Adolf Hitler and National Socialism after reading *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* and, later, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. From the 8th grade through his college years, Hale had been active in a variety of (usually tiny) racist organizations: The New Reich, the American White Supremacist Party, the National Association for the Advancement of White People and the National Socialist White Americans' Party. He discovered COTC in the early 1990s while attending Bradley University in Peoria, but he did not focus his energy on the group until 1995, when he saw an opportunity for leadership. The following year, on July 27, 1996, his 25th birthday, a group of church elders known as the Guardians of the Faith Committee "anointed" him Pontifex Maximus (meaning "highest priest") of the renamed World Church of the Creator.

Hale revitalized the organization; it began to attract hundreds of mostly young male followers -- as well as a considerable amount of media attention due to the legal and illegal actions of a handful of dedicated members. Hale and his supporters propagated their message through aggressive pamphleteering, the proliferation of WCOTC-affiliated Web sites, newsletters, a public-access cable show ("White Revolution") that has aired in three states and highly publicized, albeit often sparsely attended, public meetings.

## HATE ON THE INTERNET

WCOTC has made extensive use of cyberspace. The Internet "has the potential to reach millions of White People with our message and we need to act on that immediately," Hale states. "We call on all Creators and White Racial Comrades to go to [Internet Discussion Groups] and debate and recruit with NEW people." He adds, "post our URL [Universal Resource Locator, i.e., Web site address] everywhere, as soon as possible."

The group's main site is extensive, updated frequently and designed to make membership easy: visitors are provided a membership form, a list of local "churches" and a lengthy membership manual that explains Creativity and covers topics like the WCOTC wedding ceremony, advice on dealing with law enforcement and a "Child Pledging Ceremony."

Linked in a "Creator Webring," more than 30 WCOTC subsidiary sites share substantial content with the main site but also serve a variety of more specific purposes. Several are operated by WCOTC chapters in different states, including Arkansas, Michigan, New York and Ohio. Other sites are designed for skinheads, women and children. WCOTC also has an international Web presence, with sites representing chapters in Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Poland, Russia and South Africa.

## OUTREACH TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Unlike most other hate groups, WCOTC makes a concerted effort to reach out to women. It offers two venues for women -- The Women's Frontier and The Sisterhood of the WCOTC, each with its own Web site and newsletter. Although church ideology does not consider men and women to be equal, women do play a central role -- they are not only encouraged to become members but also to become leaders, "While the Church first and foremost views women's most natural and important role to be that of mother to beautiful



White children and loving wives to our glorious White men, our women members, just as our male Creators, can become ordained Reverends and rise to positions of influence." At present, the WCOTC Web site lists two contacts for The Sisterhood and two for The Women's Frontier. The Sisterhood advertises itself primarily as a place to "provide an outlet for [white women] to express their feelings of racial loyalty in positive ways," such as writing poetry and providing support for other "white sisters," while The Women's Frontier focuses on direct racial activism, such as distributing WCOTC propaganda and attending meetings and rallies.

The WCOTC also actively recruits children. The WCOTC Kids! site (subtitled "Creativity for Children") utilizes youth-friendly graphics to attract young Web users. The main page explains that "the purpose is to make it fun and easy for children to learn about Creativity." Instead of going into detail about the group's racist ideology, children are offered "games and stories and stuff," like crossword puzzles with the following clues: "The \_\_\_ are the deadliest enemies of the White Race" or "\_\_\_ was the greatest White Leader that ever lived." The answers, "Jews" and "Hitler," are provided on a separate page.

## RECRUITMENT WITHIN THE PRISONS

WCOTC expends considerable effort recruiting and maintaining members in prison, many of whom are violent criminals. In fact, roughly 30 percent of the domestic contact points for the WCOTC are prisoners.

Additionally, one of the contact points for The Sisterhood, "Sister Anne," is specifically designated as the "Prisoner Support Contact." On The Women's Frontier Web site, a page has been devoted to "Political Prisoners"; according to the site, "a political prisoner is a man or woman who has taken conscious action for our Race, resulting in their persecution, arrest, and imprisonment." Two of the five prisoners who had been listed are convicted murderers (the site notes that "the WCOTC does not necessarily condone the actions of all individuals on this list").

## MONEY

The best recruitment tool for the organization is Hale himself. Always promising to be controversial, he has been frequently quoted in periodicals and has appeared on numerous radio programs and on tabloid television shows hosted by Jerry Springer, Ricki Lake and Leeza Gibbons. In July 2000 he was interviewed by Tom Brokaw for an NBC report titled "Web of Hate"; additionally, in September 2000 he was included on an MSNBC panel addressing "Race in America."

Despite Hale's talent for keeping his name and the WCOTC in the spotlight, however, the church is best known for the actions of its 1998 "Creator of the Year," Benjamin Nathaniel Smith. By all accounts, Smith (b. 1978), who grew up on Chicago's affluent North Shore, had been troubled and angry for some time before first encountering WCOTC and its teachings. Only a college sophomore (at Indiana University, where he transferred after a stormy year and a half at the University of Illinois), he had already tried to establish a white supremacy group when, in the spring of 1998, he noticed a flier with Hale's number tucked under the wiper blade of his car. The two later met for dinner. Smith energetically devoted himself to Hale's cause, distributing WCOTC booklets and fliers. In January 1999 he gained his "Creator of the Year" laurels for attracting "more media attention to the Church than any other Creator resulting from his massive

distribution of Facts That the Government and the Media Don't Want You To Know." Hale encouraged other WCOTC supporters "to view Brother Smith's activism as an example to follow."

Later that year, Hale earned a law degree from Southern Illinois University and passed the Illinois bar exam. He was denied a license to practice by the state bar, however, due to his bigotry. At a subsequent hearing in April, testifying before the bar's Character and Fitness Committee, Smith praised his new mentor: "He's given me spiritual guidance....When I first met him, I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do with my life, what direction I was going to go." On July 2, 1999, a separate state panel turned down Hale's application. He released a statement declaring, "I have been denied my most precious rights of speech and religion. If the courthouse is closed to 'NON APPROVED RELIGIONS,' America can only be headed for violence." That night -- the beginning of the July 4th weekend -- Smith went on a 40-hour shooting spree that left two dead and nine wounded before the young gunman fatally shot himself in a stolen van as police pursued him through the Illinois countryside. The victims were all members of racial and religious minority groups, including African Americans, Asian Americans and Jews.

Hale initially claimed that he scarcely knew Smith, then conceded that the two were closely associated and had in fact met days before the shooting. He continued to disavow any prior knowledge of Smith's plans.<sup>1</sup> He told The New York Times, when asked if he thought Smith's actions were connected to the Illinois State Bar's decision: "I do. I very much do." To date, Hale has avoided any liability in the case, although several suits have been filed against him.

## RECORD OF VIOLENCE

We of the CHURCH OF THE CREATOR are not hypocrites. We openly state that some people need killing, that killing has always been with us and will always be with us....Killing our enemies, too, is under certain circumstances a necessary measure for the survival of our own race. Therefore we condone it, and it, too, is no sin in our religion." (Ben Klassen, *The White Man's Bible*)

Despite the WCOTC's longstanding and deserved reputation as one of the most violent white supremacist groups in the United States, Hale has consistently maintained that the group's ultimate objective -- the survival, expansion and advancement of the White Race -- can be achieved through legal and nonviolent means -- unless, he says, the "Jewish Occupied Governments of the world use force to violate our right to freely practice our religion." If this "violation" occurs, Creators believe that they have "every right to declare them ["the Jewish Occupied Governments of the World"] as open criminals violating the Constitution and the highest law of the land...and we can treat them like the criminal dogs they are and take the law into our own hands." Accordingly, the group has not condemned the violent actions of its followers; following Smith's rampage and subsequent suicide, Hale portrayed the gunman as a martyr. "As far as we're concerned," Hale said of the carnage, "the loss is one white man."

The record of violent and criminal behavior by WCOTC followers includes these examples:

- In August 1997, an African-American father and son leaving a rock concert in Miami were accosted by a group of WCOTC skinhead members distributing the group's literature. According to the Miami Herald, about 11 skinheads participated in the beating, kicking the pair in the back, chest and face, and smashing beer bottles on their heads. In April 1998, WCOTC Florida State Director Jules Fettu and fellow Creators Donald Hansard and Raymond Leone were arrested and charged in the attack.

According to the arrest affidavit, Fettu yelled "white power" and racial epithets and raised his hand in a white power salute during the beating. Hansard and Leone pleaded guilty; Fettu was convicted after a trial and sentenced to five years in prison.

Additionally, Guy Lombardi, the group's Southeast Regional Director at the time, pleaded guilty to charges that he tried to intimidate a witness in the case.

- Leone and Hansard were also charged in another WCOTC-related crime in Florida. They and two other members, Angela King and Dawn Witherspoon, were indicted on hate-crime conspiracy charges stemming from a March 29, 1998 armed robbery of a Hollywood, Florida, adult video store and assault of the store's owner. According to the indictment, the four chose the target "because the defendants...believed that media outlets were controlled by 'Jews,' and that it was permissible to steal from 'Jews.'" The WCOTC members reportedly patterned the robbery after a similar incident in William Pierce's *The Turner Diaries*, and planned to send the money from the heist to WCOTC's Illinois headquarters. All of the defendants pleaded guilty, and Witherspoon was sentenced to 13 months in jail, Hansard to four and a half years, King to six years and Leone to more than eight years. Leone and King's sentences were later reduced after they turned state's evidence and helped bring about the conviction of Florida WCOTC leader, Jody Lee Mathis. Mathis was convicted for selling a stolen shotgun but spent only five months in prison, allegedly because he gave authorities information about the group's leadership.
- Two California brothers, Matthew and Tyler Williams, have been charged with the July 1999 double murder of a gay couple in Redding, California, and are also facing a trial in federal court for the June 1999 arson of three Sacramento-area synagogues. Following their arrests, investigators searched their Redding, California, home and found ammunition and literature from the WCOTC.
- In August 2000, two Connecticut members of the WCOTC, Bruce Silvernail and Brian Davis, were arrested in upstate New York with a carload of guns and ammunition as they allegedly traveled to an illegal firearms training session in Washington County, New York. Silvernail, a former member of the Ku Klux Klan, was charged with possession of stolen property and criminal possession of a weapon, both felonies because of a previous felony conviction, and faces up to two years in federal prison. Davis, one of three individuals named 2000 WCOTC "Creator of the Year," was charged with one count of drinking while driving and two counts of having a loaded firearm in a car, both misdemeanors. He pleaded guilty and paid a \$2,000 fine.



# Report Updates (2002-2005)

## THE CREATIVITY MOVEMENT IN 2005

March 14, 2005

Since Matt Hale's arrest in January 2003, the Creativity movement has languished. In fact, the movement has become less an organized group than a loose array of largely uncoordinated white supremacists who use the trappings and language of the group's original founder, Ben Klassen.

Creativity always appeared hierarchical, with official titles for members and specially designated positions ranging from state leader to prisoner coordinator, but in fact the group revolved around Hale. He resurrected the organization in the 1990s, oversaw its expansion to dozens of chapters and several hundred members and was at the center of its media-friendly public events. Although some disaffected members broke away and others grumbled, Hale was generally able to hold the group together.

Creativity's defeat in the trademark lawsuit over its name was a body blow that threatened its identity. Hale's 2003 arrest was a decapitation. Together, the two events devastated Creativity, especially given Hale's inability to lead the group from jail after the federal government, concerned that he might incite followers to violence, imposed severe communications restrictions.

The movement collapsed. Some formed "independent" Creativity cells, others left to join extremist groups like the Klan and White Revolution. The efforts of loyal members to reorganize or reenergize were largely unsuccessful.

In the two years since Hale's arrest, there have been no, public Creativity meetings, rallies, protests or literature distributions. Some Creators have been active online; while Creativity Web pages tend to be short-lived, Internet activity has kept the movement alive, and may help form the future basis for a reorganization of the group.

Remnants of the Creativity Movement in the United States include the following:

**California** - One Creativity member operates the "Creativity Prison Ministries" out of Porterville, California.

**Florida** - Long a center of Creativity Movement activity, Florida still has a number of Creators in its state, including Jerald and Tressie Overturf, who launched a brief and unsuccessful attempt in 2004 to take over the movement while Hale was in prison. Jerald Overturf, recently released from prison, was the former head of the Creativity Movement in Florida, and the Florida Department of Corrections has Creativity activists in its facilities. A few other members in Florida have been active, at least online, since Hale's arrest.

**Illinois** - Former location of the "headquarters" of the Creativity Movement at the home of Matt Hale's father, Illinois still has several Hale loyalists, most notably one of the few followers he corresponds with regularly from prison, Kathy Robertazzo.

**Massachusetts** - Several Creativity members, including Tony Menear and Robert Griffith, remain active in this state.

**Michigan** - A few Creativity members, including Joel Dufresne, have been somewhat active since Hale's arrest.

**Missouri** - Adam Jacobs, formerly the Florida leader of the Creativity Movement, now claims its "World Headquarters" at his residence in Springfield.

**Montana** - A tiny breakaway Creativity faction has existed in Montana for several years, organized by Slim Deardorff and Dan Hassett (as well as Rudy Stanko of Wyoming and Dane Hall of California). Hassett has said he has left the group.

**New Jersey** - Several Creativity members, some also members of other groups, are active in New Jersey. There have also been Creators in the state prison system.

**Ohio** - Creativity activist Mitchell Irwin has been trying to mobilize a Creativity cell in the Cleveland area.

**Virginia** - Virginia was home to one of the more active members of the Creativity Movement, John King of Newport News. Following Hale's arrest, King worked to prevent both the accession of a new leader and any radical reorganization of the group. He remains one of Hale's more loyal supporters.

**Washington** - In Vancouver, Washington, Melody and Jason LaRue operate Hypatia Publishing and Klassen's Teachings, publishing Creativity literature. The two broke with Matt Hale in 2002, and they and a few others operate an "independent" Creativity cell.

### THE CREATIVITY MOVEMENT IN 2003

May 13, 2003

The first half of 2003 was a rocky time for the Creativity Movement, which has been struggling to cope with two related legal setbacks: the loss of a trademark lawsuit that has resulted in the group being stripped of the right to use its original name; and the arrest of its leader, Matt Hale, in January 2003 on charges that he solicited the murder of the federal judge who presided over the trademark trial. Hale's trial date is set for September 22, 2003.

With the arrest of Matt Hale, around whom most of the operations of the group centered, the Creativity Movement's main challenge has been to survive at all. Hale's ability to lead the group from jail has been limited at best, and some members have raised the question of whether the group should choose a new leader or "Pontifex Maximus"-an issue angrily quashed by Hale loyalists such as Virginia adherent John King, who stated that members "OWE it to this man, to stand behind him in this frivolous case brought by the Jewdicial system."

Other Creativity adherents suggested changing the very nature of the group. Pittsburgh adherent Hardy Lloyd announced in February that the days of "memberships and street rallies" were drawing to an end and that "the time of the LONE WOLF is drawing ever nearer." He proposed a new group, "Cobra Command," his

answer to "infighting, arrests, disunity and information distribution." This "leaderless resistance" structure, with no real leader and no hierarchy, would presumably be less vulnerable to disruption or destruction. Hale's own leadership efforts were significantly disrupted. In February, a federal judge ordered that Hale be denied bond, stating that he was a "danger to the community" and a "flight risk." Because Hale had been denied social visits, his efforts to lead his group were limited largely to sending out messages from jail to his followers. Even these efforts seemed in danger; Attorney General John Ashcroft ordered the invoking of "special administrative measures" that significantly reduce a defendant's ability to communicate with the outside world (measures imposed when the government believes that a jailed person could send information to "conspirators at large"). These measures included even monitoring Hale's conversations with his attorney; however, a judge overruled this particular provision in April, saying the restriction violated Hale's Sixth Amendment rights.

The Creativity Movement received another blow at the end of April, when Judge Joan Lefkow, presiding over the trademark case, ruled that the group had not been complying with court orders regarding trademarked materials and ordered that the group pay a \$1,000 a day fine for each day it continued to use its old name. She also ordered the group's Web sites shut down until trademarked terms were removed and ordered the freezing of bank accounts held by the group or by one of its leaders, Thomas Kroenke. She authorized U.S. Marshals to seize materials containing trademark violations if the group does not turn over such items for destruction. Finally, she ordered the group to turn over its membership list.

The result of all these developments has left the Creativity Movement disrupted, with significant limitations on Matt Hale's ability to lead it, and on the group's ability to get out its racist and anti-Semitic message to followers through publications and Web sites.

### **RACIST GROUP HOLDS ANTI-IMMIGRATION RALLY IN MAINE**

January 16, 2003

About 30 members of the anti-Semitic and white supremacist group World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) held a meeting on Jan. 11 at the Army National Guard Armory in Lewiston, Maine, in protest of the recent immigration of 1,100 Somalis to the town.

The group went ahead with the meeting despite the arrest of its leader and planned speaker, Matt Hale, who last week was charged with soliciting the murder of a federal judge in Chicago. Hale was to have spoken on "The Invasion of Maine by Somalis and How We Can End It."

In place of Hale, "Reverend" Jon Fox, the WCOTC Illinois state leader, spoke about the danger of the White race being destroyed by a so-called "national conspiracy" that wants to rule the world. Fox stated that his message is being ignored by the "Jewish-controlled mass media." He added, "We're not into hate. We're into love, but we love our own kind."

Besides Fox, there were two other WCOTC speakers: Robert Freeman of Old Lyme, Conn., and David Stearns of Portland, Maine. Stearns said that the so-called "conspiracy" has become personal for Maine, adding that immigrants are taking away the unskilled jobs that he did as a child. "It's a battle for survival," he said. All three speakers called for Hale's release from prison.

The meeting at the armory was relatively peaceful, with the group leaving from the back of the building into a waiting van. Approximately 200 protestors had assembled outside the armory where the racist meeting took place.

The state assembled a massive police presence, described as the largest law enforcement callout in Maine's history. Only one protestor was arrested for disorderly conduct. "I don't think we could have imagined it would go so well," said Phil Nadeau, the assistant city administrator.

Nearby, over 4,000 people gathered at a counter-rally in the Bates College Merrill Auditorium for two and a half hours, with the rest overflowing outside. The diverse "Many and One Coalition," formed by anti-racist Lewiston residents, was joined by many other groups.

Among the participants in the Bates counter rally were the Minneapolis-based Somali Justice Advocacy Center, and various Maine officials including Gov. John Baldacci, state Attorney General Steven Rowe, and U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins. Gov. Baldacci said, "We stand united as one in Maine when it comes to neighborliness, when it comes to tolerance, when it comes to opportunity."

Although no new Somalis have arrived in Lewiston since August, the town's mayor, Laurier Raymond, felt that the Somali immigrants had placed a huge burden on the town's assistance programs and schools. On Oct. 1, 2002, he sent an open letter to the Somali community, which asked them to reduce the stress on the town's financial resources. Five days later, a group of Somali elders responded by pointing out the contributions made by the Somalis to the town and accusing the mayor of bigotry.

The WCOTC, along with other white supremacist groups, felt that they could exploit the situation in Lewiston by promoting their racist ideology there. The WCOTC planned the meeting with hopes of galvanizing support among local residents.

## **WHITE SUPREMACIST LEADER ARRESTED FOR SOLICITATION OF MURDER**

January 8, 2003

Matt Hale, leader and self-proclaimed "Pontifex Maximus" of the racist and anti-Semitic World Church of the Creator, was arrested January 8 at a Chicago courthouse on charges of soliciting the murder of a federal judge and obstruction of justice.

Hale, 31, of East Peoria, Ill., was taken into custody by FBI agents and members of the FBI's Joint Terrorist Task Force at the Dirksen Federal Courthouse, just before he was scheduled to appear at a contempt hearing in a civil trademark infringement case involving his organization.

According to the indictment, between Nov. 29 and Dec. 17, 2002, Hale solicited an individual to forcibly assault and murder U.S. District Judge Joan Lefkow, who was presiding over the trademark case involving Hale's group.

The indictment charged Hale with engaging "in conduct constituting a felony that has as an element the use, attempted use, and threatened use of physical force against ... U.S. District Judge Joan Humphrey Lefkow."

The indictment was announced by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, Thomas J. Kneir, Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago Office of the FBI, and Terry Hillard, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department.

The Anti-Defamation League, which has long monitored the activities of World Church of the Creator, applauded law enforcement officials for Hale's arrest, saying that through their vigilance, "law enforcement prevented a potentially deadly crime against a member of the federal bench."

The World Church of the Creator is a vehemently racist and anti-Semitic group with a propensity for violence that includes murders and assaults.

"Like law enforcement, we have been very concerned about Matt Hale's increasingly violent rhetoric," said Richard S. Hirschhaut, ADL Chicago Regional Director.

If convicted of soliciting murder, Hale faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000, and the obstruction of justice count carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

A foundation that trademarked the name Church of the Creator had successfully sued Hale's racist group over the rights to the name. Lefkow had angered Hale by issuing an injunction ordering his organization to turn over for destruction printed materials bearing the group's name and by later ordering Hale to appear in court to explain why he should not be held in contempt for defying the injunction.

In June 1999, the Committee on Character and Fitness of the Illinois State Bar rejected Hale's application for a law license. Not long after, a friend and follower of Hale, Benjamin Smith, went on a two-day shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana that targeted ethnic and religious minorities. Smith killed two people and injured nine others before killing himself as police closed in on him.

The last time Hale had met with Smith, days before the killing spree, they discussed Hale's law license problems. Hale subsequently acknowledged that his legal setback was a factor in the shooting spree. "If people can't speak, violence automatically results in society," he said then.

The World Church of the Creator has suffered in popularity recently and Hale has been unable to prevent some defections. Nevertheless, he still has a dedicated core group of followers, as well as a larger group of sympathizers. It is possible that Hale's arrest could cause supporters to lash out, either against the government or their more traditional targets of Jews and racial minorities.

### **CREATIVITY MOVEMENT "MOVES" TO WYOMING**

December 12, 2002

Matt Hale, leader of the racist and anti-Semitic group World Church of the Creator (WCOTC), announced last week that he was moving the group's headquarters from Illinois to the Wyoming home of one of his followers. Hale said he had no plans to move to Wyoming himself.

The announcement came in the wake of a recent federal court injunction ordering WCOTC to turn over or destroy materials bearing the group's name because of trademark violations. Hale's efforts to avoid losing



his group's materials, yet at the same time maintain the support of his followers, have placed him in an increasingly precarious position. His actions so far have ranged from efforts to avoid seizure to hints at physically resisting enforcement of the injunction.

Hale made it clear that he was unwilling to comply with the courts. In July, Hale informed his followers that he would not stop distributing WCOTC materials, claiming that he had a constitutional right to distribute them that trumped any court order.

Even after the injunction was issued, the group remained defiant. John King, editor of a WCOTC e-mail newsletter, stated that "we are and will remain THE WORLD CHURCH OF THE CREATOR no matter what any jewish judge may say." Furthermore, he announced that he would soon publish the names and addresses of "all the jews and jew-lackeys" involved in the court case.

Hale called the injunction a "slick, draconian order" that placed his group in a "state of war" with U.S. District Judge Joan H. Lefkow, who issued the order against WCOTC in a lawsuit by the TE-TA-MA Truth Foundation, which successfully trademarked the name "Church of the Creator" years ago.

Hale quoted deceased WCOTC founder Ben Klassen saying that the "Jewish Occupational Government" were criminals violating the Constitution and that "we can...treat them like the criminal dogs they are and take the law into our own hands."

Although Hale announced that he had appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, he claimed that he had neither "the power nor the desire to change our religion to meet the dictates of a corrupt judge," and accused Judge Lefkow of becoming "part of the criminal conspiracy" to destroy rights.

Hale continued his offensive against the injunction with a press release in early December in which he stated that any confiscation order was a violation of the Constitution that should be opposed "by whatever means," and reiterated that the injunction placed the WCOTC in a state of war. To one local reporter, he characterized the injunction as "fighting words," and said it must "be resisted by any means necessary."

While Hale gave interviews, WCOTC members debated the implications of the court order and possible responses. Many were clearly agitated, so much so that one Illinois member, Scott Ronald Gulbranson, had to quiet them. In a Creativity newsletter, he said that "anybody who has thought about getting his guns needs to remember to calm down," and suggested that if the WCOTC did resort to "guerrilla style warfare," it would lose.

Hale, though, had his own plans. On December 6, 2002, he announced to his followers that he was moving the "World Headquarters" of the WCOTC to Riverton, Wyoming, home to one of Hale's most loyal followers, Thomas Kroenke (promoted to "Hasta Primus," or Hale's chief assistant).

A former private investigator, Kroenke moved to Wyoming in 1999 and got a job with the Wyoming Department of Corrections (where he learned about WCOTC from an inmate). According to Kroenke, he is currently on paid leave because his superiors learned of his involvement with the hate group. One of Kroenke's first actions as "Hasta Primus" was to encourage WCOTC members to contact the law firm representing the TE-TA-MA Foundation to demand that the firm cease its "harassment."

The decision to move "Headquarters" to Wyoming was clearly tied to avoiding the injunction. Hale informed WCOTC members that the group's materials "are now in Wyoming safe and secure" and assured them that "no tyrant's paws will ensnare our Holy Scriptures!" He also suggested that he was "planning many surprises for our enemies both inside the court room and out." The Wyoming move would provide Hale "with more time for this purpose." To a Wyoming reporter, Hale said that he could not be specific about all the reasons for the move, but said, "We are, of course, being persecuted right now by the federal court system."

Some of Hale's followers applauded the Wyoming stratagem. Charles Smith, an Ohio member, stated on the WCOTC's message forum that "this ought to throw a monkeywrench into their little ZOG (Zionist-Occupied Government) party, at least for a while. Must be rather disappointing for these steins to watch their prime catch slip right through their fingers." Bill White, operator of a Maryland extremist Web site, Overthrow.com, even claimed that federal court orders could not apply in Riverton because it was located inside an Indian reservation (an incorrect assumption).

At the same time the WCOTC tried to keep its literature and materials intact, it also sought ways to protect its Internet sites. In early December, the moderator of the WCOTC discussion forum announced that he had been instructed to find a secondary domain name for his site in case the WCOTC lost control of its current one. However, he was confident that his servers were protected and that the Foundation could not gain control of them.

Nevertheless, in October and December, the WCOTC made some changes to its Internet domain name registry.

The administrative and technical contacts for its Web pages are now listed as "SW Forest Services," a company with an address allegedly in Haiti, but which gives a telephone number with a Washington state area code (which, however, is disconnected) and an e-mail address from a Swiss Internet company. The servers that host these sites are located in California. These changes may possibly be part of an attempt to make seizure of the WCOTC's Internet domain names more difficult.

The loss of the trademark case puts Hale in a difficult position. If he complies with the injunction, adopting a new name for his group and turning over its old materials, he faces both financial loss and the loss of respect from many of his followers, as well as other, unaffiliated white supremacists. Yet to defy the injunction invites a confrontation with the law—even a possible physical confrontation if authorities move to seize WCOTC materials.

Hale's maneuvers suggest that he is trying to buy time for himself and his group, obscuring where trademark violating materials may be located while remaining openly defiant of the court order. When time runs out, however, Hale's options will be fewer and he himself may be more desperate.

### **RACIST GROUP ORDERED TO STOP USING NAME**

November 27, 2002

The World Church of the Creator, one of the nation's most notorious racist and anti-Semitic groups, has been ordered by a federal court to stop using its name, to give up its Web addresses, and to turn over all printed material bearing its name.

The injunction, issued by U.S. District Court Judge Joan H. Lefkow of the Northern District of Illinois, follows the group's defeat in a trademark lawsuit brought by the Te-Ta-Ma Truth Foundation, which successfully trademarked the name "Church of the Creator" years ago. The World Church of the Creator, presently run by Matt Hale, initially won in district court in January 2002, but lost on appeal. As a result, Hale's group no longer may legally use any form of the phrase "Church of the Creator."



Court-order confirms that items bearing symbols such as this are a trade-mark infringement.

The injunction, issued November 19, orders Hale's group (and anybody who might be acting for it) to refrain from using the name "Church of the Creator," or variants such as "World Church of the Creator," "WCOTC," "COTC," or even the words "Church" and "Creator" together in the same name. This includes its use in Hale's Internet domain names "churchofthecreator.com" and "wcotc.com," which Hale was ordered to transfer to the Foundation.

Additionally, the court ordered Hale's group to deliver up for destruction all publications, signs, banners, clothing, or other products that would infringe upon the Foundation's trademark (except where it is feasible to remove or obliterate the trademark from the item). Hale must furthermore contact all Internet directories and search engines in which his group appears and ask them to delete any references that might violate the trademark.

Lefkow further noted that the Foundation may be entitled to an award of damages, to be determined in the future. She gave the group 30 days to provide a report in writing that sets forth the manner and form by which the World Church has complied with the injunction.

This court order presents the World Church of the Creator with the loss of the racist brand name it so assiduously built up in recent years, and it is unclear whether Hale will voluntarily abide by the injunction. In August, Hale proclaimed that he was "not about to quit distributing" his materials and that "should the Jewish Occupational Government attempt to use force to stop us from distributing them, we would obviously be presented with a situation by which we as free citizens would have to resist by whatever means necessary any such abridgment of our Constitutional rights."

In the summer of 1999, when the Illinois State Bar denied him a license to practice law, Hale released a statement saying that "America can only be headed for violence." That night, one of his followers, Benjamin Smith, went on a 40-hour shooting spree against racial and religious minorities that killed or injured eleven before Smith shot himself as police closed in on him. Hale later said that Smith's actions were connected to the State Bar decision.

#### **WCOTC ACTIVITIES SINCE 9/11** August 8, 2002

It didn't take long for the World Church of the Creator to devise a response to the most important event to date of the 21st century. Within a day of the September 11th attacks, leader Matt Hale issued a press release with a headline that read, "Pro-Israel Policy Costs Thousands of Lives Today." Hale made clear that

he was going to exploit the tragedy in an effort to fuel anti-Semitism. He and other group members took to the streets distributing flyers with the slogan, "Let's stop being human shields for Israel," and urging Americans to "find a nationalistic government that will look after their interests and not the interests of the Jews." When the U.S. military effort began in Afghanistan, Hale suggested that the war was for the benefit of the Jews and he criticized the people "chomping [sic] at the bit to annihilate the anti-JOG (Jewish Occupied Government) forces in Afghanistan." In an April 2002 press release, he described suicide bombing as "an obviously effective technique that courageous Palestinians in their determination to expel the Jewish invader of their lands have decided to employ." The following month, Hale changed the cover of the group's primary recruiting publication, *The Facts*, by adding a picture of the burning World Trade Center towers with a Star of David emblazoned over them. He claims the group has distributed more than 35,000 copies of the booklet since the attacks.

Yet despite a sense of renewed activism on the part of some core members, there are indications that the group's popularity may be waning. Hale has continued to organize public meetings but they have drawn diminishing attention - with the notable exception of his York, Pennsylvania, rally. In October 2001, prominent WCOTC leader and Women's Frontier head Lisa Turner left the group, citing personal reasons but suggesting she had issues with its leadership. Melody and Jason LaRue, longtime members from Washington, departed the next day for what appeared to be similar reasons. Once boasting more than 65 "contact points" spread across 22 states, the WCOTC Web site now lists less than 40 contacts, many of which are little more than e-mail addresses.

The WCOTC has also been involved in frequent litigation. In November 2001, the Illinois Supreme Court rejected Hale's contention that a statute requiring charities to register and report their finances was unconstitutional. The decision stemmed from a complaint filed by the state Attorney General that sought to apply the law to the WCOTC. Hale continues to argue that his group is a church, not a charity.

In January 2002, a trademark infringement lawsuit brought against the WCOTC by "Church of the Creator," a religious organization based in Oregon, was dismissed after a federal district court ruled that the name is a "generic" term akin to "Church of God" or Church of Christ." Subsequently, however, in a July 2002 decision that could ultimately force Hale's group to change its name, the Seventh Circuit Court overturned the decision, finding "Church of the Creator" to be a "descriptive" rather than "generic" phrase, and that therefore the WCOTC violated Church of the Creator's trademark. The appeals court ordered the lower court to enter an appropriate judgment in favor of Church of the Creator. Hale announced he will appeal this decision to the full Circuit Court, but he has also indicated that he may refuse to abide by an adverse ruling.

Hale continued to use the courts in his efforts to secure a law license. In March 2002, his lawsuit against the Illinois State Bar, the Illinois Supreme Court and individual defendants for having denied him the license, was dismissed. By May 13, his lawyers had filed an appeal of that decision at the U.S. Court of Appeals in Chicago.

WCOTC did score a legal victory of sorts in June 2002, when a federal district court held that an employer had demoted Christopher Lee Peterson, a WCOTC member, on account of his religion. The court found that "Creativity" met the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's definition of religion: specifically, the court found that Creativity, notwithstanding its opposition to the "notions of equality that undergird the very non-discrimination statute at issue," had characteristics of a belief system which "espouse notions of

morality and ethics and supply a means of distinguishing right from wrong." Hale has already used this decision to try to influence prison officials and other public officials.

Finally, on June 3, 2002, Hale announced his candidacy for the East Peoria City Commissioner's office, a position he ran for unsuccessfully in 1995. He called his effort the beginning of "a long and dynamic campaign to win governmental power for our Cause—a campaign that will both frighten our enemies, inspire our friends, and bring further widespread notoriety to our Church and to Creativity." The election is scheduled for April 1, 2003.

### **WHITE SUPREMACIST GROUP USING TERRORIST ATTACKS TO FOMENT ANTI-SEMITISM**

August 8, 2002

"Facts the Government and Media Don't Want You To Know," the conspiratorially anti-Jewish and racist booklet distributed widely by the white supremacist World Church of the Creator (WCOTC), has a new cover: a picture of the of the burning World Trade Center towers with a Star of David emblazoned across it.

WCOTC leader Matt Hale recently announced a "Creator Spring Offensive," during which the group aims to distribute 100,000 copies of the 32-page document on driveways, lawns and doorsteps nationwide within six months. Hale encourages "Creators" to purchase any amount - from 1,000 copies for \$100 down to 200 copies for \$20, the minimum order.

These distribution blitzes are a common tactic for WCOTC and are typically promoted in honor of white supremacist dates or birthdays - such as Hale's or that of deceased WCOTC founder Ben Klassen.

So far, the group is targeting Salt Lake City, Utah, claiming that its heavily Mormon population has historically been "sympathetic" to white racism. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, as the Mormon Church is formally known, has emphatically rejected this inference as "outrageous" and calls the theory that one race is superior both "abhorrent and tragic."

This is only the latest in a long string of attempts by Hale and other white supremacists since September 11, to blame Jews, Israel and U.S. aid to Israel for the terrorist attacks. Hale wasted no time, issuing a press release shortly after the attacks, under the headline "PRO-ISRAEL POLICY COSTS THOUSANDS OF LIVES TODAY." The release, calling for an end to U.S. aid to Israel and the "liberation" of the U.S. from "the manipulations of the Jews that have had such terrible consequences," set the tone for Hale's subsequent actions and rhetoric.

He urged followers to be as active as possible in spreading his message, calling for a "fervent and immediate response." His followers did respond: Within a week of the attacks, they had distributed fliers in Phoenix, Arizona, featuring the slogan, "Let's stop being human shields for Israel," and urging Americans to "find a nationalistic government that will look after their interests and not the interests of the Jews." Members in Spokane, Washington, distributed the same fliers.

Since that time, Hale has led demonstrations in his hometown of East Peoria, Illinois, in which he and followers displayed signs with messages such as "America Before Israel" and "Arabs & Jews Get Out." He also continues to make outrageous accusations, such as that the war in Afghanistan is for the benefit of the



Jews and that "this Jewish-dominated [U.S.] government...is quite willing to force non-Jewish Americans to become human shields."

Just a few weeks ago, he asserted that "The 'war on terrorism' is a phony war designed to take the minds of the people here at home off the real problems and destroy the enemies of the corrupt United States Government and illegitimate Israeli state." Regarding the death of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl at the hands of Pakistani militants, he wrote, "We couldn't care less about the death of this Jew who along with the rest of his parasitic race are clearly a form of vermin far more dangerous in fact than the kind that run on four legs..."