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The American religious landscape is shifting, motivated by the search for belonging, comfort, and truth. Christian Evangelicalism currently features foremost in the national consciousness, not least for its unexpected but fervent acceptance and participation in the myth of Donald Trump.[1] American Catholicism is similarly seeing the rise of a convert traditionalist faction, among them J.D. Vance, who "really liked that the Catholic Church was just really old."[2] This value judgement, and its underlying assumption—that because something is older, it is better or more true—motivates an unexpected trend of American conversion to Eastern Orthodoxy, which represents yet an older Christian faith, and to some minds, a truer one.

Orthodox churches in America are reporting increases in attendance by young, conservative men, who experience participation in Orthodoxy as affirming their masculinity and giving them purpose.[3] Among the churches benefiting is the semi-autonomous, Moscow-allegiant Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), the most politically vocal and influential Orthodox church in America. In her study of Appalachian conversions to Russian Orthodoxy, Sarah Riccardi-Swartz has theorized the development of a new, and uniquely politically inflected, type of Russian Orthodoxy, which she terms "Reactive Orthodoxy."[4] Reactive Orthodoxy developed in America, largely within ROCOR networks. It is significantly concerned with prescriptive worldbuilding, moral and spiritual purity, and "nostalgic apocalypticism," which calls for return to significantly idealized "traditional" social structures, for fear that failure to do so will result in apocalypse.

The movement has several significant "sites." Belying the movement's general anti-modern bent, the Internet remains key in Reactive Orthodoxy's growth and development as a digital gathering space and a means of information and material circulation. Politically, Reactive Orthodox believers commonly identify contemporary Russia as an exemplary nation, but international relocations are rare. Instead, Reactive Orthodox believers are flocking to Appalachia, and some locals are embracing Reactive Orthodoxy in turn. One such Reactive Orthodox Appalachian, Alfred Kentigern Siewers, is changing the canon of Reactive Orthodoxy by recontextualizing Appalachia in both American history and Orthodox history. Active in the Reactive Orthodox internet scene, Siewers is applying and innovating upon key concepts of Aleksandr Dugin's neo-Eurasianist geopolitical thought in the United States.

Siewers, who blogs publicly at *ecosemiotics.com* and behind a paywall at Orthodox culture journal *Paideia Review,* is an English professor at Bucknell University, and a ROCOR deacon in Pennsylvania. Throughout his writing, Siewers combines Duginian geopolitics, Orthodox dogma, and ethnopluralist

[1] Joël E. Schnapp, "Trump, the Antichrist, and the Epstein Affair," *GWU Illiberalism Studies Program*, March 2, 2026, https://www.illiberalism.org/trump-the-antichrist-and-the-epstein-affair/.
[2] Molly Olmstead, "J.D. Vance Used to Be an Atheist. What He Believes Now Is Telling," *Slate*, August 8, 2024, https://slate.com/life/2024/08/jd-vance-tim-walz-trump-kamala-religion.html.
[3] Ruth Graham, "Orthodox Church Pews Are Overflowing with Converts," *New York Times*, November 19, 2025, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/19/us/orthodox-christianity.html.
[4] Sarah Riccardi-Swartz, *Between Heaven and Russia: Religious Conversion and Political Apostasy in Appalachia* (New York: Fordham Press, 2022).

theories with mystical spatial thinking in order to rehabilitate certain Western identities, most notably American, as existing within the Reactive Orthodox spiritual tradition, which seeks to remake the world in the image of Reactive Orthodoxy.[5] Ordained in 2020, Siewers has been active in ROCOR intellectual circles since 2013, and has participated in multiple conferences, including several at Jordanville, NY's Holy Trinity Seminary, which is a central ROCOR monastery and publishing house.[6] As such, he represents an important entry point into contemporary Reactive Orthodox discourse. In knowing what Siewers contributes to the Reactive Orthodox conversation, we can better understand the movement as a whole.

This Land is Our Land

Siewers's narrative of America's Orthodox destiny is reliant on a specific narrative of subsequent devolutions across the history of Christianity, centered mainly on the West. There are several seemingly arbitrary inflections to Siewers's rhetoric. He consistently attacks Unitarianism (which he often conflates with Protestantism) and Christian Science as Christian denominations responsible for America's cultural corruption.[7] He also asserts Appalachia's resonance with early medieval Britain, which he considers part of the Orthodox world, and suggests that Scots-Irish political and social influence infused an early United States with Christian monarchist loyalties.[8] These patterns evince an internal logic to his narrative once several personal facts are revealed: Siewers, who has Irish ancestry and lives in Appalachia, was raised Unitarian Universalist and spent time as a Christian Scientist before his conversion to Orthodoxy.[9] We must not reduce Siewers's participation in Reactive

[5] Ethnopluralism is a "racialist" ideology, rooted in the 1960s French New Right, that argues that ethnic groups are genetically discrete and all equal, but should not leave the bounded spatial areas where they "originate from."

[6] Alfred Siewers, "Dr. Alfred Siewers Speaks on St Sergius and the Language of Creation," Holy Trinity Seminary (Jordanville, NY), October 23, 2014, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXB2fjqekkQ; ROCORstudies, "Perceptions and Realities of Contemporary Converts to Orthodoxy in North America," April 5, 2023, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQJpHcHaKfA; Alexander F. C. Webster, Alfred K. Siewers, and David C. Ford, eds., *Healing Humanity: Confronting Our Moral Crisis* (Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Seminary Press, 2020).

[7] Paul Siewers, "The 50th Anniversary of Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future–From 'It's a Small World' to the 'Synagogue of Satan': The Role of American Civil Religion in Global Apostasy," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, September 10, 2025, https://ecosemiotics.com/2025/09/10/the-50th-anniversary-of-orthodoxy-and-the-religion-of-the-future-from-its-a-small-world-to-the-synagogue-of-satan-the-role-of-american-civil-religion/; Paul Siewers, "From Christian Science to Orthodox Christianity," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, April 21, 2024, https://ecosemiotics.com/2024/04/21/from-christian-science-to-orthodox-christianity/; Alfred Kentigern Siewers, "Culture, Cultishness, and American Politics Today," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, November 11, 2024, https://ecosemiotics.com/2024/11/11/culture-cultishness-and-american-politics-today/.

[8] Paul Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Christian Mission to America," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, September 7, 2025, https://ecosemiotics.com/2025/09/07/the-jacobite-imagination-and-the-orthodox-christian-mission-to-america/; Paul Siewers, "Early British Christianity: St. Gildas, Glastonbury, and Traditions of the Noble Joseph of Arimathea," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology,* May 26, 2024. https://ecosemiotics.com/2024/05/26/early-british-christianity-saints-gildas-joseph-of-arimathea-and-glastonbury/; Paul Siewers, "The Return of the King? Jacobitism vs. Jacobinism in Appalachia and Russia," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology,* May 21, 2021. https://ecosemiotics.com/2021/05/21/the-return-of-the-king-jacobitism-and-jacobinism-in-appalachian-and-russian-cultures/.

[9] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Christian Mission to America."

Orthodox discourse to personal polemics; however, it is key to distinguish what is standard to Reactive Orthodoxy from the particulars that Siewers contributes to the movement's discourse.

Reactive Orthodoxy is just one expression of Russian Orthodoxy, often, but not always, coinciding with ROCOR membership and convert status.[10] Russian Orthodoxy in turn is one of multiple autocephalous, or self-governing, national churches within the Eastern Orthodox Church, and only around 1% of the American population has identified on a census as adhering to *any* kind of Eastern Orthodoxy.[11] Moreover, Orthodoxy's small numbers are often paired with sparse demographic documentation, and Orthodox institutions in America have largely been progressive and amiable, which draws very little media attention. Reactive Orthodoxy presents a new, online Orthodoxy, in which long-bearded men in cassocks appear framed like an icon on YouTube, X (previously Twitter), or TikTok, delivering public lectures or, in true influencer fashion, answering their followers' questions. Engagement highlights the disparity between Reactive Orthodox ideal and social reality; under a video from Orthodox internet personality Fr. Peter Heers titled "Why Are There No Women on Mount Athos?", comments include "Just imagine the peace and quiet :)" and "What is it about human nature that just won't accept directions?"[12] Reactive Orthodoxy's representatives, Heers and Siewers among them, preach the values of humility and seclusion from temptation, but the movement itself thrives on attention, largely garnered through public performance of reactionary moral outrage against claimed spiritual corruption.

Siewers's focus on Appalachia is also a Reactive Orthodox hallmark. In the Reactive Orthodox paradigm, urbanization and globalization are signs of spiritual and social corruption. Accordingly, Reactive Orthodox narratives value Appalachia's relative dearth of development as a marker of purity. Appalachians, whose region has suffered exploitative resource extraction and infrastructural neglect, have long relied on informal support networks to supplement unreliable federal aid. Now, some Appalachians see conversion to Reactive Orthodoxy as an avenue both to express deep disillusionment with American, and "Western," social politics, and to affirm what they desire: a government that shares their social and political concerns, and acts on them for the social good. As converts turn to Reactive Orthodoxy, they are also turning to Vladimir Putin, who has positioned Russia as the global defender of tradition and Christianity, and are seeking an American counterpart to Putin, who they imagine will realign American society with ROCOR understandings of religion, identity, and truth.

Siewers pursues this truth in his own writing through the theoretical lens of *ecosemiotics*, or meaning-making in and through the natural world. This led him in 2025 to conclude, through a Tolkienian reading of Northern Appalachia, that Donald Trump is Aragorn.[13] In this example, Siewers is participating in Reactive Orthodox sensemaking, contributing to a body of shared social knowledge by mapping real-world entities onto fictional or mythic structures. Particularly important for our purposes is the motivated reasoning at work, which begins with a conclusion—my environment should look and function the way I think it should—and subsequently selects and interprets evidence that facilitates arrival at the desired conclusion. In this narrative, Orthodoxy is an absolute political necessity; it cannot be replaced by any other religion, nor can it accommodate the existence of any

[10] "Convert" Orthodox as opposed to "cradle," or born into a culturally Orthodox family.
[11] Pew Research Center, "Orthodox Christians," accessed June 13, 2026, https://www.pewresearch.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-tradition/orthodox-christian/.
[12] Orthodox Ethos, "Why Are There No Women on Mount Athos?" July 22, 2024, Youtube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZKZtZt16UI.
[13] Paul Siewers, "A Tolkienian Guide to Northern Appalachia," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology,* May 3, 2025, https://ecosemiotics.com/2025/05/03/a-tolkienian-guide-to-northern-appalachia/.

others. Siewers argues that America's ethnocultural and spiritual roots, exemplified by his own home region of Appalachia, demonstrate a fundamental similarity to Russia, including a predilection for monarchy, and that America yearns not just for *a* king, but *the* King—a Christian monarchy that will manifest an Orthodox America.[14] Guided by transcendent traditional morality calling for a return to the simple life, Siewers imagines an America that will join Russia in a campaign to spread Russian Orthodoxy and traditional morality across the globe by suppressing undesirably vocal progressive, queer, and nonwhite social elements, which he considers the contemporary manifestations of ancient heresies. This is a form of the "nostalgic apocalypticism" that characterizes Reactive Orthodoxy, but Siewers's iteration is marked by his integration of transcendent Duginian geopolitics.

Recent scholarship suggests that, following a career of fundamentally anti-Western neo-Eurasianism (ironically reliant on Western theorists foundational to National Socialist thinking), Dugin is redirecting to the West, attempting to rehabilitate America under Donald Trump as an anti-liberal titan, ready to join Russia in messianic war against agents of modernity abroad and at home.[15] With this reassessment from Dugin, Reactive Orthodoxy, which has always preferred to rehabilitate America rather than abandon it, can now add Dugin's deterministic geopolitics to its arguments that what America needs is Orthodoxy, assigning immutable Ur-qualities to physical spaces and populations and thus prescribing (in the guise of describing) what, and who, belongs in an Orthodox America, and how that America should act upon the world.

Siewers was at least aware of Dugin's work before this shift—he first mentioned him in 2023, in an article arguing that significant commonalities exist between "foundational Appalachian American philosophy and Russian views of nature as especially expressed in the works of [Fyodor] Dostoevsky and the philosophers Ivan Ilyin, S.L. Frank, and controversially Alexander Dugin."[16] Since then, Siewers has cited Dugin's tellurocracy-thalassocracy distinction to divide "tradition-oriented" civilizations like Russia from "progress-oriented" civilizations like England and the United States.[17] Siewers sees these archetypes at war in contemporary America, with "Atlantic" culture enforcing the "Western" ideologies of nihilism, globalism, and technocracy, against a "heartland" culture that stands for tradition, hierarchy, and simple living— and that, if victorious, will bring America closer to Russia. Here, Siewers links America's "heartland" culture to a "Byzantine civilizational zone" which produced Orthodoxy, and which "had a foundational influence on areas in the west related to Northern Appalachia, notably around the Irish Sea."[18] In another article, he further elaborates that

> [T]he Irish Sea was said in many ways to have the most continuity from early Christian culture in the West of any other region in Western Europe. From that Irish

[14] Paul Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Christian Mission to America."
[15] Matthew Sharpe, "Old wine in a postmodern bottle: Aleksandr Dugin's 'Fourth Political Theory' and Aurel Kolnai's *War against the West*," *Studies in East European Thought* 78 (2025), https://doi.org/10.1007/s11212-025-09703-3; Nicola Guerra, "From neo-Eurasianism to Trumpism: Aleksandr Dugin and the making of conservative internationalism," *Studies in East European Thought 78* (2026), https://doi.org/10.1007/s11212-025-09820-z.
[16] Paul Siewers, "Into the Woods: Russian and American Traditions of Nature, a Northern Appalachian Perspective," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, November 28, 2023, https://ecosemiotics.com/2023/11/28/into-the-woods-russian-and-american-traditions-of-nature-a-northern-appalachian-perspective/.
[17] Paul Siewers, "America at 250: More Than an Idea, a Country," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, January 2, 2026, https://ecosemiotics.com/2026/01/02/america-at-250-more-than-an-idea-a-country/; Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Christian Mission to America."
[18] Paul Siewers, "Orthodox Christianity in Northern Appalachia," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, July 23, 2023. https://ecosemiotics.com/2023/07/23/orthodox-christianity-in-northern-appalachia/.

> Sea world came much Christian influence on what became Scotland, England, and also the Vikings who themselves participated in the founding of what became Russia. This was also in modern times of course the home zone of the Scots-Irish.[19]

This is the basis for Siewers's recurrent claims that Ireland has an innate Orthodox quality, that American culture shows clear signs of this "Anglo-Irish-Scottish Appalachian [influence], out of sync with mainstream Enlightenment-based norms," and that Appalachia thusly is both a prototype of a pure, Orthodox "heartland" America and a conduit for its realization.[20]

Siewers does not cite his sources on this series of claims, so it is impossible to be certain of this connection, but the first page of a cursory Google search of "was Ireland Orthodox" brings up, among official diocesal websites, a post titled "Orthodox Ireland." The post is from a blog called *OrthoChristian*, which itself is the English-language portal for *Pravoslavie*, a Moscow-based Russian Orthodox forum run by ROC Metropolitan Tikhon Shevkunov. Written by Wynand Vladimir De Beer, another Russian Orthodox convert scholar, the post on *OrthoChristian* claims that Ireland was effectively Orthodox from 431 until 1072—for 18 years past the Great Schism.[21] Due to its prevalence in the search results, and the site's alignment with ROC leadership, it is a distinct possibility that this particular source became Siewers's basis for suggestion that Ireland was, however briefly, an incubator of Orthodoxy in the fallen West, and thus rehabilitatable into the Orthodox world.

This focus on identifiable physical spaces as imparting Orthodoxy leads us to the second key Duginian feature of Siewers's thought, his concept of the ecosemiosphere. In Dugin's 2012 *Fourth Political Theory*, he asserts that *ethnos*, to which liberalism is fundamentally opposed, "is the greatest value of the 'Fourth Political Theory'... a community of language, religious belief, daily life… as an organic entity written into an 'accommodating landscape,'" and which functions best when organized in discrete, ethnically homogeneous polities.[22] In later work, he has further defined the *ethnos* as "located on a defined territory and distinguished by a common morality," citing older Russian definitions that claim the term denotes a shared, or "single," origin within an *ethnos*.[23]

In 2013, in an edited collection, Siewers claimed to coin the word "ecosemiosphere," which he then defined as "an ecological bubble of meaning… which can be considered spiritual as well as material."[24] Ten years later, in a now-pinned blog post, Siewers described "Orthodox Christian Northern Appalachia" as

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[19] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Christian Mission to America."
[20] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Christian Mission to America"; Paul Siewers, "Groundbreaking for new Russian Orthodox Church in the central Susquehanna Valley," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, October 5, 2023, https://ecosemiotics.com/2023/10/05/groundbreaking-for-new-russian-orthodox-church-in-the-central-susquehanna-valley/.
[21] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Christian Mission to America"; Vladimir de Beer, "Orthodox Ireland," *Orthodox Christianity*, accessed January 27, 2026, https://orthochristian.com/52572.html.
[22] Aleksandr Dugin, *The Fourth Political Theory*, trans. Mark Sleboda and Michael Millerman (London: Arktos Publishing, 2012), 41; Siewers, "Orthodox Christianity in Northern Appalachia."
[23] Alexander Dugin, "Foundational Elements of Ethnosociology," *Arktos*, September 29, 2023, https://arktos.com/2023/09/29/foundations-of-ethnosociology/.
[24] Paul Siewers, "Environmental Humanities and Ecosemiotics," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, December 31, 2013, https://ecosemiotics.com/2013/12/31/environmental-humanities-and-ecosemiotics/.

> an "ecosemiosphere," a term I coined… to describe a region of God's Creation that has a particular collection of cultural narratives and meaningfulness, interwoven with a specific ecological landscape, shaping "natives."[25]

Here, Siewers approaches Dugin's idea of *ethnos* from a different angle; where, following Dugin, the *ethnos* belongs naturally in an accommodating landscape, resonant with congruent energies, Siewers describes the ecosemiosphere as a type of bounded physical space that naturally produces its congruent *ethnos*. The very act of naming an ecosemiosphere becomes a normative statement about reality in a space: "Orthodox Christian Northern Appalachia" asserts not only that the physical land of Northern Appalachia is and should be fully and purely infused with Orthodoxy, and its associated cultural narratives and moral qualities, but that the "natives" of Northern Appalachia should in turn develop to fit this cultural and moral landscape. Siewers certainly held similar thoughts before his first documented mention of Dugin—in 2021, he sought to problematize the "native-settler" binary in regards to his specific Appalachian sub-region, depicting a social conflict caused by "faculty-settlers… imposing their own 2020s cosmopolitan neo-colonial culture… their social utopia of 'equity and inclusion'" on "'indigenous cultures in Appalachia includ[ing] long-time Scots-Irish [and] Anglo" populations.[26] This is remarkable, given that Siewers himself is a "faculty-settler" from Chicago.

But at the same time, it indicates the permeability of the native/settler in-group/out-group distinction. One need not be born into Orthodoxy, nor in Appalachia, to be part of Orthodox Christian North Appalachia; just act as though you belong in Orthodox Christian Northern Appalachia, and you will. Conversely, if you act in ways deemed out of accordance with Orthodox Christian Northern Appalachia, you do not belong there.

It is this prescriptive view of Appalachian identity that Siewers identifies with America's "heartland" culture, which, if victorious in the "culture wars," will draw America closer to Russia and install a (Reactive-sympathetic) Orthodox government in its rightful pride of place in American society. To present this circumstance as inevitable, Siewers constructs a *longue duree* narrative that blends eternal social anxieties with specific contemporary social grievances, skipping across time and space to tell a specific, intentional story about Orthodoxy's history and its role in the world.

Always Darkness, Never Dawn

Reactive Orthodoxy's investment in Orthodoxy being the one true faith, and the subsequent necessity for Orthodoxy to have cultural control, requires Siewers to chart a history of the Eastern Orthodox Church that sees it surrounded by enemies at the end of days. To achieve this goal, Siewers employs a consistent formula. First, he identifies an event within the history of the Orthodox Church; next, he identifies the perceived enemies of Orthodoxy that arose from that event; finally, he links those enemies to the social ills of the modern West, implying that Western spiritual degradation has allowed these forces to proliferate, and this should not have happened, and it *would* not have happened in an Orthodox society.

With this last rhetorical tactic of disidentifying a certain quality or element with a given time period or culture, Siewers is engaging in a form of presentism, applying contemporary value judgements or social norms to historical circumstances. Accusations of presentism today are more commonly

[25] Siewers, "Orthodox Christianity in Northern Appalachia."
[26] Paul Siewers, "Academic 'Settler Culture,'" *First Things*, June 16, 2021, https://firstthings.com/academic-settler-culture/.

directed at progressive creators for decisions that contradict our popular understanding of the past; Siewers is neither less culpable nor less influential just because his critique comes from the right—or, as he might phrase it, from the East.[27] Indeed, his presentism is doubly disguised: first off, we tend to assume the past was more conservative, so contemporary conservative values inserted into historical representations can easily be overlooked as belonging to the context. Second, Siewers phrases his claims with the authority of Orthodoxy behind them, borrowing the assumed legitimacy of institutionally propagated "historical truth" to present them as unassailable. We must acknowledge and accept these motivating influences in the structure of Siewers's narrative to truly understand it; however, we need not validate, affirm, or disprove them in the process. Siewers professes to believe that America would be better if it was an Orthodox country; to this end, he interprets history in a way that supports this conclusion. Moving forward, I demonstrate how Siewers employs his formula to reinterpret a number of events across time as evidence of Orthodoxy's political necessity in America.

Siewers begins his narrative of Orthodoxy's eternal endangerment in late antiquity, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD, well before the Great Schism that created the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. At the Council of Chalcedon, the Christian Church affirmed Jesus Christ's dual nature as wholly both divine and human. Here, Siewers identifies the Monophysites and Nestorians, who believed in a sole divine nature and two distinct natures, as heretics whose failure to hold tension between Christ's two natures resonates in contemporary "secular identitarianism."[28] The next relevant event is the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680 AD, at which the Orthodox Church similarly affirmed Jesus Christ's dual wills and energies, divine and human, and against which Siewers identifies Monothelitists and Monoenergists as heretical for believing in a single will or energy. Siewers links these ancient heresies to a modern-day social quality: identification with a "mystical sense of a group identity," which he exemplifies by naming "people of color and queer people."[29] In identifying with a racial, ethnic, or sexual group, Siewers suggests, these individuals are negating the only identity that matters: human identity, as created by God.

Siewers then moves from 680 to 879 AD, with the Eighth Ecumenical Council, at which the Orthodox pentarchy (Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Rome) condemned the addition of the *filioque* clause to the Nicene Creed; to Siewers, this event, which marked a broadly Western Christian divergence from the Orthodox view of the Holy Trinity, lay the groundwork for a modern Western worldview that Siewers characterizes as intensely individualist, driven by greed and an understanding of the self as existing in oppositional relation to all other existence.[30] Siewers also ties this worldview to the existence of the Catholic Papacy, suggesting that this innately Western individualism is to blame for the Great Schism of 1054 (which separated Rome from the other four sees of the Orthodox pentarchy and created the Catholic Church) by extending the Monophysitist and Monothelitist heresies so far that Western political and religious leaders have come to lead corrupt, individualist corporate states, in which the nation and the leader are seen to reciprocally embody

[27] Fortress of Lugh, "Why Helen Can't be Black: The Moral Case for Helen of Troy's Greek Ethnicity," May 23, 2026, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWq8XVQo5y4.
[28] Paul Siewers, "Essentializing the Eschaton: Theological Roots of Today's Schizophrenic Identity Confusion," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, December 27, 2025, https://ecosemiotics.com/2025/12/27/essentializing-the-eschaton-theological-roots-of-todays-schizophrenic-identity-confusion/.
[29] Paul Siewers, "Today's Monothelitism and the Witness of Orthodox Apologetics," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, May 22, 2023, https://ecosemiotics.com/2023/05/22/todays-monothelitism-and-the-witness-of-orthodox-apologetics/.
[30] Siewers, "Essentializing the Eschaton: Theological Roots of Today's Schizophrenic Identity Confusion."

each other without necessary influence from the Church.[31] Siewers places this sweeping characterization of Western leadership as individualistic and secular, in contrast with Orthodox *symphonia* (the concept of a dually-yoked church and state where religious dogma dictates law), which he connects to the two-headed eagle of Imperial Russia. To Siewers, Marxism and its offshoots (most notably Communism) are the natural end point of Western individualism, representing a soulless machinized worldview that was externally imposed upon a spiritually Byzantine Russia, just as Catholicism corrupted the West in 1054.[32] Luckily for the West, this is where the Irish Sea, infused with Byzantine civilizational energy, becomes relevant as a temporary incubator for the Orthodox faith—just as, we might note, ROCOR leadership of the 1920s saw the United States.[33]

Following the Great Schism, and Ireland's comparative retention of Orthodoxy until 1072, the next inflection point that Siewers identifies is 1688's Glorious Revolution, during which the Catholic James Stuart was deposed from the throne of England and replaced with the Protestant Mary II and William of Orange. To Siewers, this moment represents yet a more extreme Western divergence from the Orthodox worldview (with Catholicism here comparatively preferable to Protestantism, though neither is comparable to Orthodoxy), and marks a "Whiggish embrace of secular progress" that Siewers contrasts with his chosen heroes of the age, the Jacobitist movement.[34] Siewers links the largely Scottish and Irish Jacobites, who (unsuccessfully) supported the restoration of the Stuarts to the monarchy, to social elements he identifies as monarchist sympathizers across time via "an ongoing resistance against modernity."[35] He names English and American Romantic authors as perpetuating the Jacobite spirit and paralleling the Imperial Russian slogan "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality" to residual American Jacobitic sympathies symbolized by Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address identification of America as a "nation under God" or the inclusion of the phrase "in God we trust" on American currency.[36]

Siewers's narrative of the early United States as resonant with Orthodoxy is largely reliant on Jacobitism as a go-between to link American culture, which Siewers credits (residually Jacobite) Scots-Irish immigrants with shaping, to an Orthodox worldview.[37] Effectively, he argues that early American culture, which was defined by comparatively Orthodox Scots-Irish immigrants, aligned with Orthodox morality, and thus the United States was intended to be an Orthodox nation. Siewers localizes this Scots-Irish immigrant influence to Appalachia, even as he extends it by claiming that more U.S. presidents were of Scots-Irish descent than any other ethnic group, and mobilizes Duginian geopolitics to describe Appalachia, which he links to conservatism and religious sentiment, as a "land-based homeland culture," characterizing America as it was meant to be, and not America as it is today.[38] Siewers cites features of American government, from "the monarch-like presidency to the arcane aspect of the separation of powers and checks and balances" to liken the early United States to the *symphonia* of the Orthodox Byzantine Empire, such that "[attacks] on traditional Constitutional frameworks in the U.S. [today are] the equivalent of attack on Christian monarchy a century ago"—this last in an ostensible reference to the 1918 execution of the Russian royal family by Bolshevik

[31] Alfred Kentigern Siewers, "ICXC NIKA: The Liberty of Theosis," in *Healing Humanity: Confronting Our Moral Crisis*, ed. Alexander F. C. Webster, Alfred K. Siewers, and David C. Ford (Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Seminary Press, 2020).
[32] Siewers, "ICXC NIKA: The Liberty of Theosis."
[33] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Mission to America"; de Beer, "Orthodox Ireland."
[34] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Mission to America."
[35] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Mission to America."
[36] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Mission to America"; here, it is noteworthy that the phrase "in God we trust" did not appear on American currency until 1956, during Eisenhower's presidency.
[37] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Mission to America."
[38] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Mission to America."

revolutionaries.[39] While Siewers romanticizes the early United States, there remains a turning point at which America's nature shifted, which Siewers localizes to the 1950s and 1960s, the period of his own childhood.

Siewers identifies what he terms the "Eisenhower-Dulles era" as the decade in which Christianity began to decline in America, eclipsed by an "American civil religion" instrumentalized by political and social elites to mobilize support for contemporary political purposes—first the Cold War, then the sexual revolution and civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s.[40] Siewers's phrase "American civil religion" is best understood as referring to a Unitarian version of Protestantism simplified into global accessibility by American elites, meant to marshal widespread American support for anticommunist activism. In his eyes, however, this "civil religion" was fatally influenced by Eisenhower's espousal of "Judeo-Christian" culture, which Siewers paints as an oversimplified, mistakenly ecumenical term that invited Orthodoxy's ancient enemies, the rationalist, individualist Monophysites, into American social influence.[41]

Siewers identifies Christian Science as another deleterious social element in American society, a claim which he fortifies by highlighting what he sees as a suspicious trend of Christian Scientist sympathies in American social, corporate, and political elites of the mid-20th century. Siewers names Walt Disney and the Council on Foreign Relations as Christian Science-affiliated agents of secular progress, and suggests that Christian Scientist influence on American society invited increasing influence from "non-Christian Asian religious influence in America" and was partly to blame for the 1972 Watergate scandal.[42] Also central to Siewers's narrative of American religious devolution is notorious cult leader Jim Jones; Siewers chooses to classify Jones as a "mainline Protestant," also emphasizing Jones's connections to LGBTQ+ activist Harvey Milk and California politician Willie Brown to suggest a connection between progressive social activism and Jones' mass-murdering cult.[43] In Siewers's narrative, both are motivated by that same Western sense of individualism rooted in ancient heresies that deny Christ's human nature and exalt human will as divine.

Following the end of the 1970s, Siewers glosses through the end of the 20th century, gesturing briefly to Christian Scientists in elite positions in America and what he calls the "woke" faith of the 2010s, to the modern day, when Orthodoxy and traditional culture in America are under attack, even as the time is ripe for America to embrace its Orthodox destiny.[44] In Siewers's narrative, the increasing visibility of queer identity, coupled with awareness of and action against systemic inequality, is proof that harmful social elements are wielding dominance over American society, motivated by a fundamentally Western, individualism-fueled narcissistic strand of thought and exported globally by America in its current form, that of a corporate state.[45] Moreover, Siewers links the prevalence of these progressive elements to what he considers the United States' contemporary policy failures: the

[39] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Christian Mission to America"; Siewers, "Today's Monothelitism and the Witness of Orthodox Apologetics."
[40] Siewers, "The 50th Anniversary of *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*."
[41] Siewers' linking the use of the term 'Judeo-Christian culture' to describe America to the entrance of harmful social elements calls to mind veiled anti-Semitic messaging. Thus far in my research, I have not seen Siewers make denigratory comments about Judaism or the Jewish community; he certainly has connections to anti-Semites, but I am not prepared at this point to describe Siewers unequivocally as anti-Semitic.
[42] Siewers, "The 50th Anniversary of *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*."
[43] Siewers, "The 50th Anniversary of *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*."
[44] Siewers, "The 50th Anniversary of *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*."
[45] Paul Siewers, "Christian Cosmology vs. Essentialist Identitarianism," Christian *Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, February 22, 2025, https://ecosemiotics.com/2025/02/22/christian-cosmology-vs-essentialist-identitarianism/; Siewers, "Today's Monothelitism and the Witness of Orthodox Apologetics."

U.S. COVID response, national border policy, U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Secret Service's failure to apprehend Donald Trump's attempted assassin at a 2024 campaign rally, and rising nuclear tensions.[46] Siewers is largely Trump-ambivalent, despite the Aragorn connection, but just days before the 2024 election, Siewers published an opinion piece in *The Federalist* maligning the Harris-Walz ticket; one subhead declaims, "Kamala Tied to Sexual and Other Marxists."[47] In the face of these many and pervasive threats to social cohesion, Siewers's solution is clear: Orthodoxy is the answer.

To Siewers, all other forms of Christianity have had a hand in the onset of now-dominant Western secular, "identitarian" culture, and they now (falsely) advocate for harmony and tolerance between groups of difference as a way to retain their all-encompassing social control.[48] Where secular Western culture seeks to impose "rationalist" beliefs such as evolution and subjectivity of identity, Orthodoxy distinguishes itself by enforcing a strict interpretation of humanity as heterosexual and cisgender. To Siewers, this is sufficient to prove that Orthodoxy merits legal and political privilege in American society, so that the faith may perform its destiny of "[holding back] the self-will of reckless elites in a rising global technocracy."[49] To close the circle of his argument, reliant on his previously established belief in Scots-Irish (Jacobite, monarchist) cultural influence throughout America, Siewers argues that America and Russia are actually foundationally similar, with (conservative, monarchist) Appalachia exemplifying America's true "heartland" tellurocratic quality, and that America's modern spiritual ills come from an unfulfilled longing for a faith tradition it belongs to—Orthodoxy—and a missing king to complement the Orthodox Church in realized *symphonia*.[50]

Conclusion

Siewers's argument relies on deeply deterministic notions of identity and faith as tied to land and blood, and uses these notions of identity to depict contemporary America as a fallen nation in need of the Orthodox faith. Assertions that America should be Orthodox are to be expected in Reactive Orthodoxy, but Siewers is unique in constructing a narrative that argues that America already *is* Orthodox; it just doesn't know it yet. All things considered, it is objectively unlikely that America is going to become an Orthodox nation, but abstracting the argument a degree, Siewers, and Reactive Orthodox believers in general, are not *actually wrong* that they are taking part in a "culture war" between progressive and conservative social tendencies. Siewers's narrative is part of the same discourse as Dugin and the ROC's transcendental legitimation of Russia's war on Ukraine and the West in the name of tradition. As he situates that narrative within the American conservative political scene, he demonstrates a new, noteworthy development in Reactive Orthodoxy; one that solves the question of America by recasting it as a sleeping giant, soon to rise and join Russia as twinned titans of global illiberalism, empowered to carry out a messianic mission against enemies of Orthodoxy worldwide.

[46] Paul Siewers, "The revolution will be live-streamed," *Christian Ecopoetics and Apologetic Theology*, August 5, 2024, https://ecosemiotics.com/2024/08/05/the-revolution-will-be-live-streamed/.
[47] Paul Siewers, "What's Behind Kamala Harris' Connection to a Mass Murdering Cult Leader?" *The Federalist*, November 1, 2024, https://thefederalist.com/2024/11/01/whats-behind-kamala-harris-connection-to-a-mass-murdering-cult-leader/.
[48] Siewers, "Christian Cosmology vs. Essentialist Identitarianism."
[49] Siewers, "ICXC NIKA: The Liberty of Theosis."
[50] Siewers, "The Jacobite Imagination and the Orthodox Christian Mission to America."