



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING

The Branch Davidian Symposium and Twentieth Anniversary Memorial, 18–19 April 2013

Author(s): Marie W. Dallam

Source: *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (August 2013), pp. 61–73

Published by: [University of California Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/nr.2013.17.2.61>

Accessed: 21/11/2013 10:53

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of California Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Field Notes

The Branch Davidian Symposium and Twentieth Anniversary Memorial, 18–19 April 2013

Marie W. Dallam

ABSTRACT: 2013 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Branch Davidian tragedy in Waco, Texas. On 18 April 2013 an academic symposium was held at Baylor University featuring more than half a dozen speakers who explored topics related to the Branch Davidian religious community, the raid and siege, the fire, and the aftermath. On 19 April 2013 a memorial service was held in Waco that included speakers, a reading of the names of the dead, and the unveiling of a new museum exhibit about the Branch Davidians. The two events, recounted here, provided public forums for acknowledging and reflecting on the events that took place in Waco in 1993.

KEYWORDS: Waco Branch Davidians disaster, Texas 1993, Branch Davidians, David Koresh, conference proceedings, Reflecting on an American Tragedy, Baylor University Institute for Studies of Religion, memorials

Most readers of *Nova Religio* need no introduction to the events that took place just outside of Waco, Texas, in the spring of 1993.¹ Regardless of who or where we were at the time, the grave injustices that occurred to a small religious community were, sooner or later, a startling awakening. Americans absorbed the name

Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions, Volume 17, Issue 2, pages 61–73. ISSN 1092-6690 (print), 1541-8480. (electronic). © 2013 by The Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Rights and Permissions website, at <http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintinfo.asp>. DOI: 10.1525/nr.2013.17.2.61.

“Branch Davidians” and “Waco” into public consciousness; for new religions scholars in particular, the events made a deep imprint on our field of study. The Branch Davidians became part of the scaffolding we use to understand NRMs, and some of the writings about their community’s demise have entered our canon.

Nonetheless, there are many disagreements about what happened at Mount Carmel and who is to blame, and these have not been solved by two decades of legal and academic inquiries nor by public voyeurism and pop culture appropriations. If anything, these compound and conflicting voices make distinguishing “truth” from “distortion” even more complex. The twenty-year anniversary of the events in Waco served as an opportune moment to reflect on the debacle, and in that spirit the Institute for Studies of Religion (ISR) at Baylor University sponsored an academic symposium. The event, “Reflecting on an American Tragedy: The Branch Davidians 20 Years Later,” brought a full slate of speakers together for a conference that was free and open to the public at Baylor’s Powell Chapel.² The following day, the annual memorial service for the deceased was held at the Helen Marie Taylor Museum of Life and History of Waco, organized by survivors who included Clive Doyle and Sheila Martin. The combination of the Baylor symposium and the Branch Davidian memorial provided an informative and moving tribute to a tragic series of events in American religious history.

THE SYMPOSIUM

There was strong attendance at the 18 April symposium despite the explosion in the nearby town of West, Texas that had occurred the night prior.³ About two hundred people attended, many of whom were students and faculty from Baylor, and others who were local citizens seeking to learn more about the historic events. There were other groups, too: for instance, I met several people who came because they were interested in the work of a particular presenter, and there were a few Seventh-day Adventists who were curious about examining religious connections. The other group that had a notable presence at both the symposium and the memorial was the right-wing supporters, who have latched onto the cause of justice for Branch Davidians because of their personal inclinations against big government or gun control, or both.⁴ This unusual conglomeration of audience members listened attentively, and they relished the limited opportunities to engage in question-and-answer.

The morning speakers were primarily concerned with providing an internal picture of the Branch Davidians and Mount Carmel, while the afternoon speakers were focused on the events of the siege and their contextualization in history and politics. Kenneth W. Starr, president of Baylor University, gave welcoming remarks at the symposium. He

poignantly noted that the event itself reflected the values of the Preamble to our United States Constitution, inasmuch as the speakers sought to promote justice, liberty, and general welfare of all American people through an honest and critical evaluation of the events at Mount Carmel. Further opening thoughts were offered by Byron R. Johnson, the Director of Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion. He referred to the widespread sensitivity that Waco residents have about telling people where they are from, out of fear of the conversation that might ensue. Johnson suggested that the time for shame can only end when the difficult truths about Waco are more publicly known and debated; the reality, however, is that there continue to be competing truth narratives.

In the first presentation, J. Gordon Melton of Baylor's ISR raised a variety of themes that would be examined in greater depth by speakers throughout the day, including the humanity of the Branch Davidians, errors made by law enforcement agents, the contrast between popular and academic narratives about the events, and the legacy of the violence. Melton encouraged the audience to think about changes our society has experienced in the past two decades. In 1993 we were a more naïve people and the shootouts, fire, and deaths in Waco were a shock to our national consciousness; although it is no less tragic, in 2013 we are less surprised by random outbreaks of gunfire, killing sprees, and mass tragedies. More hopefully, he noted that we are also an increasingly religiously pluralistic society, and more people today recognize that their neighbors may have very different religious beliefs. The Branch Davidians, he said, are just like any other people one might meet: likeable, intelligent, and moral; "Their strangeness quotient is no higher than mine," he added. Their bad luck was that they, along with the law enforcement agents who surrounded their property, got caught up in something "bigger than themselves" that ended tragically. Melton discouraged thinking about the 1993 events in terms of "heroes and villains," because, simply put, there were none.

Melton was followed by Matthew D. Wittmer, a librarian from Sherman Oaks, California, who has been studying the physical history of Mount Carmel since he was an MFA student at the University of Nebraska in the late 1990s. Wittmer gave a fascinating visual presentation that mapped the different parcels of land occupied by Davidians and Branch Davidians during the twentieth century and showed their relationship to the city of Waco. Using overlapping photographs and maps, Wittmer traced the changes of the physical space of the Mount Carmel siege site over time. This included the deterioration and construction of various physical buildings, the destruction and reconstruction of memorials, and changes to the landscape and general terrain. Wittmer's work of "reading the property like a document" stands out as engaging, meticulous, and a true labor of love, for he has few venues in which to display this information to an audience of interested persons.



Dr. J. Gordon Melton speaks on “The Branch Davidians and Texas Religious History” at the daylong symposium entitled “Reflecting on an American Tragedy: The Branch Davidians Twenty Years Later” on 18 April 2013 in the Powell Chapel, Truett Seminary, Baylor University. Photo courtesy of Matthew D. Wittmer.

Much of his documentation is available on his website for those who wish to explore it further.⁵

Phillip Arnold, Executive Director of the Reunion Institute in Houston, turned audience attention to theology in his talk on “The Branch Davidian Dilemma: ‘To Obey God or Man?’” Arnold challenged the audience to view the faith position of David Koresh and his followers during the time of the siege. Because they understood human events in the context of Biblical teachings and prophecy, and because they anticipated a day when the book of Revelation would be fulfilled, the events unfolding outside their door in Waco indicated that the Endtimes had begun. Thus, a strict obedience to God during those weeks took on even greater significance. Koresh broke his initial deal to surrender to the FBI because he received a message from God to wait; God later indicated that Koresh was being given the power to interpret the message of the Seven Seals as well as permission to share it with the world. Hence, Koresh set to writing, and promised to come out when the message was complete. Arnold’s perspective, based on his understanding of Branch Davidian theology, is that Koresh meant this promise with absolute sincerity.⁶ When the assault of 19 April began, it too was interpreted vis-à-vis the Bible. “The Babylonians are coming in,” Arnold imagined Koresh saying, and they would prevent the world from receiving his new revelation.

Arnold stated that Koresh and his followers grappled with understanding God’s intentions all along, and so in the end they may have envisioned possible outcomes that would be in line with prophecy. This,

then, leads to questions about the fire. Who caused it, and why? Arnold opined that it was neither deliberately caused by the government, nor was it suicide. While it may have been a mere accident, it is also possible that a member could have lit it, anticipating a wall of divinely protective fire.⁷ Arnold did not seek to answer the fire question definitively, but rather to show that a theological explanation is viable. Ultimately, Arnold conveyed a mastery of Branch Davidian theological reasoning and helped the audience understand Koresh's style of biblical interpretation, both of which added an invaluable element to the symposium.

Catherine Wessinger of Loyola University New Orleans, the last of the morning speakers, has spent more than a decade working with survivors to preserve and share their stories.⁸ With all of the voices that have weighed in on the Waco situation over the years, those receiving the least attention seem to be those of the members. Wessinger seeks to correct that, making sure the perspectives of survivors are included when we evaluate the events of 1993; in addition, she spoke about the lives of several deceased Branch Davidians, to give them a presence as well. Most interestingly, in the context of telling members' stories Wessinger raised a number of the objections people have long made about Koresh's behavior, including his polygamous marriages and the fact that some of the women involved in them were adolescents. She drew attention to the troubling nature of this fact while also contextualizing it: for example, the legal age for marriage in Texas at that time was 14 with parental consent; Koresh's own mother gave birth to him at age 14; and the marriages were supported by Branch Davidian theology. Furthermore, she pointed out, child abuse is not the jurisdiction of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), the agency that conducted the initial raid, hence in many ways the sticky issue of Koresh's wives is not relevant to the events of the siege. As always, Wessinger's ability to confront hard truths about Branch Davidian practices while still showing tremendous respect for the people themselves does much to combat the tendency to dehumanize them—a tendency that began, she notes, with the raid on Mount Carmel on 28 February 1993.

Wessinger's presentation was punctuated by Clive Doyle and Sheila Martin, survivors who came forward for a brief Q&A segment. Doyle gave a thorough and informative answer to a question about injustices during the civil and criminal trials. In a subsequent conversation with the author, he indicated that he wants people to understand how much Davidians and Branch Davidians are integral to the past century of history in Waco, and that they should not be marginalized as cultural aberrations. Martin, who along with Doyle signed copies of her memoir during the course of the day, explained that as much as her story has been preserved in her book it is also now the story of a person she used to be. She finds some parts of that person unrecognizable; twenty years, she added, is a long time.



Branch Davidian survivors Clive Doyle and Sheila Martin at the twentieth anniversary memorial service on 19 April 2013 in the Helen Marie Taylor Museum of Life and History of Waco. Photo courtesy of Catherine Wessinger.

The afternoon slate of presentations sought to widen the public lens. Gary Noesner, a former FBI agent and chief negotiator during the first three weeks of the Waco siege, provided his own perspective on the events that unfolded there. As in his autobiography, Noesner was not shy to criticize the FBI's handling of the situation.⁹ Because of earlier success at Talladega prison, where the tactical operations of the Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) had saved countless lives, some tactical commanders came into Waco with "a false sense of infallibility."¹⁰ The legacy of Talladega may well have influenced the mindset of various parties involved in managing the Waco siege, and Noesner suggested that this at least partly explains why tactical maneuvers ultimately trumped negotiation. Noesner was rotated off of the Waco assignment in late March, because, as he discovered later, he was considered "an impediment to stronger action." On 19 April, he said, he watched the events unfold on television from FBI headquarters, disgusted that it had turned out so badly. He refers to that day as "one of the biggest black marks" on the FBI.

Despite his criticisms of some of the FBI's actions, Noesner dismissed the religious worldview of Branch Davidians as irrelevant, and said that he decided very early on that theology would not be part of serious negotiations. He stands by that decision today. On the few occasions

they did engage in religious conversation, he felt that Koresh played games with agents and kept changing the rules so that Koresh was the only one who could ever be right. Noesner perceived the religious teacher as self-centered and manipulative, with a “hypnotic stranglehold” over members, and that that aspect of his personality was the primary thing agents needed to consider during negotiations. Outside of his formal presentation, Noesner expressed frustration that scholars of religion continue to be “soft” on Branch Davidians, by which he meant uncritical of Branch Davidian actions, and one-sided in where they place blame. Though firm in his position, Noesner was willing to engage in difficult conversations with numerous people and proved himself to be a good sport in a crowd that was somewhat hostile toward his stance and the agency he represented.

Noesner was followed by Stuart Wright of Lamar University, who spoke on “The Role of State Militarization in the 1993 Branch Davidian Conflict.” Wright discussed the raid and the siege, en route addressing two related points that he considers central to understanding the disastrous outcome: why the ATF conducted a military-style raid when many other, safer options were possible, and why the FBI continued to use a military approach during the fifty-one day siege. Wright’s position is that both of these avoidable errors were caused in part by misinformation and in part by a larger political context. Federal agents had a distorted view of Mount Carmel, believing it to be a highly militarized environment. They thought members were dangerous to outsiders and potentially suicidal. These impressions were based on poor sources, Wright said, as they had consulted only apostates and other detractors, but further distortions seemed to stem from agendas at play within the agency itself. For example, ATF paperwork alleged that methamphetamine was being produced on the property, and while this had no basis in fact it facilitated the inclusion of military personnel and other special resources. Wright also pointed out that the decision to conduct a military-style raid was made several months in advance, prior to surveillance. When one considers the timing of all of this, Wright concludes it is possible that the ATF’s determination to follow a particular course of action in Waco was made out of “institutional self-interest.” Specifically, it may have been an attempt to ingratiate itself with the incoming Clinton administration, which had a clear agenda to tighten gun control.¹¹

Wright concluded by examining some of the long-range consequences of the events in Waco. He pointed to the explosive growth of the militia and Patriot movements during the 1990s, as well as stalemates within current gun control debates. Many of those who argue against gun control restrictions today, dubbed “Second Amendment Fundamentalists,” are specifically concerned with the need for unfettered access to weapons to protect themselves against the government,

rather than against random thieves or other criminals. “Now where,” Wright asked slowly, “do you think they got a crazy idea like that?” His rhetorical question provoked a surge of laughter from the audience. Waco, he suggested, is the subtext of present-day resistance to stricter gun control.

Despite the array of issues Wright’s talk tackled, it became clear that gun control was what certain audience members responded to most strongly. When the floor opened for questions, nearly every person with a raised hand sought to further the gun control conversation, though they did not all take the same stance nor approach it in the same way. Wright, surprised and chagrined at the turn the Q&A was taking, said he hadn’t meant to make that the focus of conversation, merely to raise it as one example of the lasting implications for what happened in Waco. The response of the audience surely proved his point about Waco’s legacy on conversations about gun control.

The symposium was rounded out by Philip Jenkins of Baylor University, who is interested in Waco’s implications on popular culture and politics. He asserts that in the past two decades, perceptions of Waco have influenced American debates on the role of government in private life, the extent of our religious freedom, and our approaches to terrorism. One part of Jenkins’ argument was that events like the Waco siege never happen in a vacuum no matter how unique they really are, because the public is subject to media mapping. For example, a bombing of the World Trade Center had occurred on 26 February 1993, and on 10 March 1993, abortion doctor David Gunn was murdered in Florida by a religious anti-abortion extremist.¹² Though these events, along with the siege in Waco, had no actual relationship to each other, at times the media contextualized them together in one conversation and thus heightened public concerns about unexpected violence on American soil.

Jenkins further argued that the most important effect of Waco was the way it contributed to our national perception of terrorism from the mid-1990s until 2001. The Waco siege led to rapid growth in extremist right-wing groups in the United States, and ironically it also caused the government to become timid about shutting such groups down lest there be “another Waco.” On 19 April 1995, there was a specific instance of domestic terrorism when the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma was bombed by American citizens who were militia movement sympathizers.¹³ This solidified a change in American perceptions of terrorism, such that the greatest terrorist threat was believed to be Neo-Nazis, Patriots, and other conservative militia groups. Our myopia on this point essentially blinded us to other, more dangerous forms of radicalism that were building strength overseas. Jenkins argued that instead of keeping some attention on situations abroad, Americans focused on building safety at home through social changes such as hate

crime laws. The ultimate consequences of this are still reverberating through society, though they began in earnest on 11 September 2001. Thus, because of how the events in Waco informed social ideology and political policies, its effects are significantly greater than we imagine.

THE MEMORIAL

The memorial event was held on the morning of 19 April. The fifty to sixty people attending were a mix of survivors, family members of those who died, a handful of scholars, and some far-right types and other hangers-on. The program unfolded slowly, led by Clive Doyle.¹⁴ He welcomed everyone as part of the “homecoming,” and was careful to note survivors who were unable to attend. When speaking about events related to Mount Carmel, especially those who died, Doyle frequently becomes emotional; he is not embarrassed by his unchecked emotion, and explained to the audience that it is a byproduct of the trauma he experienced. At one point when he began to cry while speaking, a man on the front row called out, “We love you Clive!” This was Charles Pace, the self-proclaimed prophet who occupies the Mount Carmel property, and a controversial fixture at the annual memorial service. Doyle did not acknowledge Pace, merely pausing to collect his thoughts and then moving on.¹⁵

The first segment of the program focused on legal issues. Doyle spoke about the work of Mike McNulty, a filmmaker who is concerned with government overreach and the persecution of private citizens; Doyle read several entries from McNulty’s blog.¹⁶ The legal theme was continued by the second speaker, Dick Reavis of North Carolina State University, a former journalist who wrote an early book on the Branch Davidian situation.¹⁷ Reavis was originally sent to Waco to report on the siege for the *Dallas Observer*. Because he decided it would be helpful to learn about Branch Davidian religious beliefs from members themselves, other journalists disparagingly called him a “groupie.” Reavis, however, felt that his attempt to provide a balanced picture increased the integrity of his reporting. He was also of the opinion that federal agents were not appropriately concerned with the perspective of Branch Davidians. For example, when agents scoffed at the idea that God had spoken to Koresh and told him to wait inside instead of surrendering, the agnostic Reavis felt one should take Koresh at his word rather than dismissing the possibility. Both then and now, he characterized the federal agents’ actions as “ignorant, arrogant, and negligent,” and believes that their reasons for disrupting the Mount Carmel community violated both the First and Second Amendments.

One of the highlights of the memorial was the presentation and unveiling of a composite photo plaque of the deceased, created by Matthew

Wittmer, which he donated to the museum for exhibition. The photos are arranged in the pattern of the original crape myrtle tree memorial, and each person for whom no photo exists is represented by a rubbing of his or her name stone.¹⁸ Others who spoke briefly at the memorial event included Catherine Wessinger, J. Gordon Melton, and Helen Marie Taylor. The formal part of the program concluded with the reading of the names of the dead, which began shortly after noon, and which is the central ritual event of the annual memorial service. Less formal events continued through the afternoon and included a social meal, comments from other survivors, and tours of the museum.

Upstairs from the memorial a brand new permanent exhibit about the Branch Davidians is now on display. The one-room exhibit is a careful reconstruction of the group's history, and is a replacement of one that had been there for many years.¹⁹ Museum owner Helen Marie Taylor funded the recreated exhibit, which features display cases of photographs, documents, and other artifacts and plaques of text. In the center of the room is a large model of the Mount Carmel property that was made by the defense team for the criminal trial in San Antonio in 1994. Doyle commented that he always thought the details of this particular model made it "the best" of those he had seen. If one is passing through Waco a quick stop at this museum to view the exhibit is worthwhile, though it may be necessary to arrange an appointment in advance as the museum hours are sporadic.

The combination of the memorial events of 18–19 April 2013 demonstrated a truism alluded to by Gordon Melton at the start of the Baylor Symposium. In the years immediately following the tragedy, many people offered simple stories that "explained" what had occurred in Waco. Rightfully so, these have fallen apart over time, primarily through an increase in public knowledge and understanding. Hence, the Branch Davidians were not merely members of a "destructive cult" bound for violence, as once thought; rather, they were members of a developed religious community that demonstrated theological continuity and exhibited little in the way of violent tendencies. Likewise, "deluded psychopath" David Koresh cannot be blamed for all of the events. Many intelligent and devout members were involved in decision-making during the siege, just as they had made conscious decisions to join the community because their deepest religious questions were answered there. And finally, the tragedy was not an "evil government conspiracy," but rather a series of mixed-quality decisions made by government agents who were not fully prepared to handle the task before them, who did not always communicate very well, and who could not understand the worldview of the Branch Davidians. One by one, the easy explanations of Waco have fallen away. As the events of 18–19 April 2013 demonstrated, what we are left with is a complex story that seems to grow more complex with each retelling.



Clive Doyle discussing the model of the Branch Davidians' residence at Mount Carmel, which is housed in the Branch Davidian exhibit at the Helen Marie Taylor Museum of Life and History of Waco. Photo courtesy of Matthew D. Wittmer.

ENDNOTES

¹ In case you are that reader: The Branch Davidians—or students of the Seven Seals, as they preferred to call themselves—were a small Seventh-day Adventist offshoot. In 1993 their primary location, where many members lived and others visited, was a property outside of Waco, Texas called Mount Carmel. Their teacher and prophet was David Koresh. On 28 February 1993 numerous armed agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) carried out a raid on Mount Carmel to serve warrants related to firearms; a shootout ensued, and four agents and six Branch Davidians were killed. The FBI then took over, attempting to negotiate for everyone to leave the property. It became a siege situation that lasted fifty-one days. Although thirty-five Branch Davidians came out (fourteen adults and twenty-one children) most refused. On 19 April 1993

FBI agents began tactics to force members out. They used tanks to rip holes in the building and inserted CS gas. After several hours a fire ignited and quickly spread through the building. Nine Branch Davidians survived the fire, but seventy-six others died.

² This event was held at Baylor University on 18 April 2013; video streams of the speakers are available at <<http://www.isreligion.org/tv/conferences.php>>. In 2003, Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas held a symposium titled “Waco: Ten Years After”; the papers from that conference are available online at <www.southwestern.edu/academics/bwp/pdf/2003bwp-stewart_etal.pdf>.

³ A fire in the West Fertilizer Company caused a large explosion of ammonium nitrate that was stored in one of the buildings. Damage to the town was extensive. More than two hundred people were injured, and fifteen people died. The cause of the initial fire is not yet known. The following day, cleanup from the explosion caused significant delays on the major highway that passes through Waco.

⁴ This latter group comes in all types, though from my own observations most who attended these particular events were older white males. Some of them are quite friendly, with one even circumspectly inviting me to Austin, Texas for an organizing meeting.

⁵ The address for his website is <<http://www.stormbound.org/waco.html>>.

⁶ Koresh was only able to complete the First Seal prior to the fire on 19 April. The text, with an editorial preface by Phillip Arnold and James Tabor, was first printed as an appendix in James D. Tabor and Eugene V. Gallagher, eds., *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America* (Berkeley: University of California press, 1995). A version with a slightly different introduction can be found at <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/text/religion/koresh/Koresh%20Seals>>.

⁷ In many biblical books, including Daniel, Zechariah, Thessalonians, and Revelation, there are references to fire protecting God’s people.

⁸ Wessinger’s work has resulted in three published volumes of Branch Davidian autobiographies: Bonnie Haldeman, *Memories of the Branch Davidians: The Autobiography of David Koresh’s Mother*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007); Sheila Martin, *When They Were Mine: Memoirs of a Branch Davidian Wife and Mother*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009); Clive Doyle with Catherine Wessinger and Matthew D. Wittmer, *A Journey to Waco: Autobiography of a Branch Davidian* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

⁹ Gary Noesner, *Stalling for Time: My Life as an FBI Hostage Negotiator* (New York: Random House, 2010).

¹⁰ The Talladega prison situation occurred in Alabama in 1991. Prisoners rioted and gained control of a unit within the building, holding eleven employees hostage for more than a week. Relying on their last resort, tactical operations by the elite HRT, the FBI successfully ended the situation without any serious injuries. Noesner noted that while the FBI negotiators played a crucial role in the outcome they were generally overlooked as people praised the HRT. He believes this influenced the institutional mindset that began to favor tactical operations over negotiation.

¹¹ Philip Jenkins subsequently echoed this point in his talk. He said that President Clinton proposed consolidating the ATF under the FBI, and that the ATF deliberately turned Waco into a theatrical event to help prove the agency's independent value.

¹² Six people were killed and over one thousand were injured in the World Trade Center event, which was caused by explosives in a van parked under the North Tower and was linked to Islamic extremists. The perpetrator of the Gunn murder was Michael F. Griffin; he was sentenced to life in prison in 1994.

¹³ This incident caused the deaths of 168 people and injuries of several hundred, as well as significant damage to many buildings in downtown Oklahoma City. Three men were convicted of the bombings including primary actor Timothy McVeigh, who was executed in 2001. McVeigh was at least partly motivated by disgust for the federal government, which he felt had acted tyrannically in situations such as Waco and Ruby Ridge, Idaho.

¹⁴ Most of the speakers at the event were filmed and the videos were posted online. They can be found by searching for "20th anniversary Mt. Carmel" on the YouTube website.

¹⁵ Pace joined the Mount Carmel community in 1973 when Ben Roden was the leader. Eventually he promulgated his own version of biblical teachings but was asked to desist by Lois Roden, Ben's successor. Pace subsequently moved away and started his own sect called "The Branch, the Lord (YHVH), Our Righteousness." He was never a follower of David Koresh. After the siege Pace inserted himself into legal disputes over the Mount Carmel property, and he moved there in 1997. Today he and some of his followers are the sole occupants of the land.

¹⁶ McNulty's website is: <<http://copsproductions.com>>. Documentary films about Waco on which he has worked include: *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* (Los Angeles: Somford Entertainment, 1997); *The F.L.I.R. Project* (Fort Collins, Colo.: COPS Productions, 2001); and *Waco: A New Revelation* (U.S.: MGA Films, 2003).

¹⁷ Dick J. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

¹⁸ An earlier memorial at Mount Carmel was a field of eighty-two crape myrtle trees planted on the west side of the property in 1995 by survivors and supporters. Over time, a stone engraved with the name, age, and nationality of one of the deceased was added to the foot of each tree. The trees were removed in 2009 by Charles Pace, who pruned and replanted them along the sides of the road leading into the property; to date, the trees have survived this move. The name stones were stacked and cemented together near the entrance to the property. Pace destroyed both the stone and the tree that memorialized David Koresh, though a new stone has since been created and added to the others in the monument.

¹⁹ The original, deliberately "non-controversial," exhibit was built by museum studies students and staff at Baylor in the mid-1990s. In 2012 it was relocated by its owner, the Waco Museum Association, to an exhibit space in the *Waco Tribune-Herald* building. The Museum Association wanted to make the exhibit more regularly accessible to the public, as the Helen Marie Taylor Museum had experienced periods of being closed off and on over the years.