

The Struggle to Publish My Eisenhower Book

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Dwight Eisenhower was a distant relative of mine by marriage. His brother, Roy, married Edna Shade who was related to the Eckhoff family. My mother's mother was an Eckhoff. I have been collecting material about 'Ike' for about 40 years and finally published an article in a peer-reviewed journal, *Kansas History*, on his religious upbringing. My article was given the Edgar Langsdorf Award for superior writing, as determined by a panel of judges appointed by the Kansas Historical Foundation. The award included a healthy cash stipend and a large walnut plaque in the shape of the state of Kansas.

When my book on Eisenhower was finally ready to be considered by publishers, I sent it to several, all of which rejected my conclusions, and thus my book. In the meantime, I was able to publish a summary of it titled *Religion and the Presidency of Dwight Eisenhower*.

My goal was to publish my entire well-documented book, so I tried again and received a few more rejections. The fact is, my conclusions were in direct contrast to those of most Eisenhower scholars. The academic consensus was that religion had little or nothing to do with the work and life of Eisenhower. I was confident of my conclusions, though, so I decided to send a copy of my manuscript to the Eisenhower Foundation. Several months later, I received a phone call from Andrew Goodpaster when at the college where I was then teaching.

General Goodpaster worked closely with Eisenhower during World War II. He commanded the 48th Combat Engineer Battalion in North Africa and Italy. He also became the NATO commander, beginning a close working relationship with Eisenhower that carried through Eisenhower's two presidential terms and beyond. He was the defense Liaison Officer to President Eisenhower from 1954 to 1961. He also was appointed Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy from 1977 to 1981 to clean up the 1976 West Point cheating scandal involving 151 cadets.

Goodpaster explained that he read my manuscript and concluded that my conclusions were correct. He then offered the following endorsement of my book:

Having known and worked closely with Dwight Eisenhower for several decades, I have reviewed this book with much interest. Dr. Bergman has done a masterful job in accurately chronicling Eisenhower's religious life and beliefs. This book fills in a very important, but often neglected, part of Ike's life—a part of his life that was critical in Eisenhower's military career and presidency. I commend him for his meticulous research and correctly arriving at a detailed picture of this important aspect of his life. Indeed, his spirituality, faith in God, and God's role for him on Earth were all central to what Eisenhower achieved, and he achieved a great deal in his life.

My long struggle to get it published finally paid off. *God in President Eisenhower's Life, Military Career, and Presidency* was published in 2019. The theme of my book on Eisenhower was that WWII was, at its core, a war between creation and evolution, and the creation side prevailed. A focus of the Bible student group that Ike was a member when growing up was apologetics, emphasizing the falsehood of human evolution, and promoting the view that God created the first man and woman from which we all descended. Thus there exists no inferior race.

Ike's large, well-trained, intelligence-gathering team helped him to understand that the ultimate Nazi war goals were rooted in Social Darwinian doctrine. He learned that the goal of Nazi rule was the genocide of the Jews, Slavs, and other persons that the Nazis deemed were inferior races. Eventually, the inferior races would all be annihilated, creating, or so they taught, a better world for all mankind.

One of the major reasons why Nazi Germany lost the war was this false belief that they could easily defeat the inferior Slavic race in Russia. Not long after the Nazis invaded Russia, the massive Nazi killing machine began its operation. The end Nazi

goal was to murder millions of Slavs and force the rest into Nazi subjection for the glory of the superior German race.

Professor Holl writes that God was for Ike “First and foremost, a creator God. The Countless stars in the heavens were perhaps the greatest manifestation of God’s presence in the universe.” As a creationist, Eisenhower also believed all men were descended from Adam, thus only one race existed, the human race. This realization drove Ike to defeat the Nazis no matter what the cost. He once said he hated war, but he hated the Nazi evolutionary/racist belief even more. When Germany was finally defeated, Ike feared that the Holocaust would be denied by many. So he launched the most extensive documentation program in history to document what happened in Nazi Germany and why.

Thousands of interviews were completed, and several large film crews labored to carefully document the Holocaust travesties. Eisenhower’s prediction that one day people would doubt the Nazi atrocities has been proven correct. His program to testify to the horror of eugenics has given us the means to remember this historical conflict between good and evil, a major goal of my book as well.

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