

The Aquarians and the Evangelicals

How left-wing hippies and right-wing fundamentalists created a libertarian America.

Brink Lindsey

ON APRIL 5, 1967, representatives of the *San Francisco Oracle*, the Diggers, the Family Dog, the Straight Theater, and other parts of the Haight-Ashbury hippie scene held a press conference to announce the formation of the Council for a Summer of Love. The event scored friendly media notices: The next day's *San Francisco Chronicle* described the coalition as "a group of the good hippies," defined as the ones who "wear quaint and enchanting costumes, hold peaceful rock 'n' roll concerts, and draw pretty pictures (legally) on the sidewalk, their eyes aglow all the time with the poetry of love."

Three days earlier and 1,500 miles away, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a very different counterculture was holding its own coming-out party. About 18,000 people—far more than the 4,000 anticipated—gathered for the formal dedication ceremonies at Oral Roberts University. Oklahoma's governor, a U.S. senator, two members of Congress, and Tulsa's mayor were on hand. Delivering the dedication address, "Why I Believe in Christian Education," was Billy Graham, the dean of American evangelists.

The events in San Francisco and Tulsa that spring revealed an America in the throes of cultural and spiritual upheaval. The postwar liberal consensus had shattered. Vying to take its place were two sides of an enormous false dichotomy, both animated by outbursts of spiritual energy. Those two eruptions of millenarian enthusiasm, the hippies and the evangelical revival, would inspire a left/right division that persists to this day.

