

# The Fall of the Bright Way

## (WIP)

So, more tossing stuff at the wall. I should really detail some of the other groups, but this idea's been in my head all day and I want to write it down.

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So, the Bright Way gets big, it has a monopoly on interplanetary travel, communication, and energy distribution, and maybe healthcare. All the while, there's still the religion going on in the background, but at this point it's a tiny fraction of what they do. It's all still run by clerics, and all the clerics have to have the same seminary formation, but most regard it as a bump on the road to personal gain, and a mere vestige of the past.

Most seminaries have like one or two courses relevant to actual theology, and acolytes who are actually devout must seek supplemental formation outside the official coursework. These traditionalists are the subject of ridicule by their fellow seminarians.

Interstellar mission work is the last bastion where these traditionalists hold sway. It's not terribly profitable, after all.

Eventually, some event catalyzes an armed uprising against the secular arm of the Bright Way, starting at the outer belt and working inward. But it's not as simple as non wayfarers fighting to divest the organization of its physical holdings while Wayfarers defend against them. You can divide the conflict into four factions on a two dimensional spectrum, with Devout-Secular as one axis and preserve-dissolve on the other axis.

The original instigators are secularists who want to break up the Bright Way's monopolies. The other major group are Wayfarers who fight to preserve them, either out of a desire to maintain their power or a sense of loyalty to their creed.

There are two smaller factions: The smallest of the four are non wayfarers who, for whatever reason, want the status quo to continue. The other, and most significant to the setting, are wayfarers who see the organization's monopolies as dead weight, a distraction from their divine mission to find other sophonts, and are glad to be rid of them. This latter group is most popular on Hearthside, as well as among the missionaries.

Since Hearthside ends up on the winning side of the war, they get to keep their clerical government while the Bright Way is completely expunged from everywhere else in the system. Some governments, such as those that would become the Allied Worlds, allow the Bright Way to maintain their lighthouses and charitable institutions, although they may expel the clerics who were in charge and install clerics from the Hearthside-aligned camp mentioned above. Other groups,

however, think the whole thing must be burned, root and branch. This camp is most popular among the original agitators from the Outer Belt. This group becomes the Partisans. They're responsible for a bloody persecution, the first the Bright Way has ever faced, as up til this point they've either been very popular or too powerful to oppose.

Still on the fence on proverbial match that lights this powder keg. I've already mentioned Cloudbarer the Heresiarch in the Commonthroat thread, but I see him as having been made out to be more important retroactively than he actually was, with many scholars opining that he never even existed, just a mascot of sorts for the secular dissolutionists.

The other option is that a mission that everyone thought would be the one to finally find other sophonts comes back empty, and that triggers the collapse, but I'm not sure how that fits into the missionaries being seen as vestigial by the ruling clergy.

So yeah, still lots of dots to connect.

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