

## **Missionaries to the Preborn Combining Anti-Choice Rhetoric and the Militia Movement**

Matthew Trehwella founded Missionaries to the Preborn in 1990. Based in Wisconsin, the organization has gained notoriety for its anti-choice methods, which include picket signs of alleged aborted fetuses. However, there's a side to Trehwella and Missionaries to the Preborn that focuses on more than graphic signs and rhetoric. They have aligned themselves with the militia movement and most violent fringe of anti-choice activists. A quick look at a few of its activists makes this clear.

### **Matthew Trehwella**

In 1993, Trehwella signed a declaration stating that murdering abortion providers was legitimate. The document said Michel Griffin use of "lethal force" was "justifiable" when he murdered Florida doctor David Gunn.

*Newsweek* reported in 1994 that Trehwella was one of a half-dozen anti-choice activists being investigated as conspirators in the death of Florida doctor John Britton. The article sites an FBI document it obtained.

In 1994, Trehwella was a featured speaker at the radical right-wing U.S. Taxpayers Party's Convention. He advocated forming church-based militias, and said, "This Christmas I want you to do the most loving thing, and I want you to buy each of your children an SKS rifle and 500 rounds of ammunition." He also recommended that parents teach their children how to assemble a rifle while blindfolded.

In 1995, *Rolling Stone* reported that he is a convicted arsonist. It also reaffirmed Trehwella's affinity for church-based militias. It said that he encourages churches to hold "militia days" where the church would train its members on how to fight.

In 1998, Toronto's *NOW* magazine quoted Trehwella as saying, "I don't condemn people who use force to try to protect babies, because they are human beings." The article also stated that he has served 14 months in jail for blockading Milwaukee clinics.

### **Drew Heiss**

Montana media reports have included comments by Drew Heiss, a spokesperson for Missionaries to the Preborn. The *Shepherd Metro Express* reported in 2000 that Heiss has been cited 72 times for protesting in front of clinics. A Planned Parenthood (PP) coordinator in Milwaukee said that Heiss and his followers have assaulted the PP coordinator three different

times. The article said all the charges were dropped.

### **Cal Zastrow**

Cal Zastrow was a featured speaker at the Constitution Party of Montana's first annual convention in Sept. 2001. On the fliers for the event, he was listed as a Missionary to the Preborn. The Constitution Party, previously known as the U.S. Taxpayers Party, combines much of the Christian Right's ideology with the militia movement. The Constitution Party of Montana's founder has praised John Trochmann, founder of the Militia of Montana, for his dedication to "patriot" causes. The party's platform also stated that it opposed abortion in all cases, saying, "As to matters of rape and incest, it is unconscionable to take the life of an innocent child for the crimes of the his father."

In his speech at the Montana convention, Zastrow said political parties were not the problem. Instead, he said it is "demons from hell manifested as lies," because a "law that lets women murder unborn children is hell." He encouraged people to sponsor youth in the anti-choice movement, because they have less to lose by getting arrested. He also relayed a story about getting arrested in Billings for praying in front of Planned Parenthood in 2000. Billings police confirmed he was arrested, but the charges were dropped.