



Separatist by faith

Church of Israel's patriarch rebuts claims of racism

By Max McCoy
Joplin Globe Staff Writer

PROLOGUE

SCHELL CITY, Mo. — Dan Gayman was 7 years old — traditionally, the age of reason — when, in July of 1945, he witnessed a bolt of lightning strike his father dead.

"It was the middle of the afternoon, and a thunderstorm had appeared in the southwest," Gayman recalls more than half a century later. "He was driving a steel-wheeled tractor and I was with him, and we saw this big, black cloud forming. He said, 'It's too dangerous to be on this tractor so I want you to get off, and I've just got one more round to make. Then I'll be running home, too.'

Gayman pauses.

"It wasn't five minutes before lightning killed him."

Dan Gayman is now 63, a father himself several times over, and the pastor of a church that is just a stone's throw from the field where his father died. But there are no storm clouds this afternoon, and although it is December, the sun is bright and the weather is mild. Beneath the vault of the incredibly blue sky over the church colony, hundreds — perhaps thousands — of geese have queued up in V-shaped waves, descending on the nearby Schell-Osage Wildlife Area.

Folks across Vernon County are friendly and talkative in a small-town way, but start asking about the Church of Israel and they clam up in a hurry.

At the Quick Dine on Business 71 in the county seat of Nevada, for example, just about everyone has heard of the rural church, but no one is willing to comment for the record. "They leave us alone and we leave them alone — live and let live," a regular named Billy says, but refuses to give his last name.

At the courthouse, county officials say church leaders are prompt and civil when taking care of business, but the officials urge the curious to be careful. "They might not really be dangerous," says one cautiously, "but people have gotten hurt out there. Please don't use my name."

Others, like the white couples brought here on church sponsorships after apartheid ended in South Africa, have an insider's view — and still ask not to be quoted. One South African woman said her family members lived in a trailer at the church colony when they came here years ago, but they left because of the constant bickering. Now, nearly all of the dozen or so South African families that originally were sponsored are no longer with the church.

Some, like Gayman's 36-year-old estranged son and daughter-in-law, say the church is a dangerous cult and a breeding ground of hate.

Eric Rudolph, the fugitive accused of the 1996 Olympic Park bombing, learned to hate under Dan Gayman's wing, they claim; others have been taught to shun birth certificates, Social Security numbers and marriage licenses. The doctrine of paranoia, Tim and Sarah Gayman claim, even includes a taboo on antibiotics.



The Church of Israel, picturesque enough to make a postcard, is located in northeastern Vernon County, near the rural community of Schell City.

The Church of Israel, picturesque enough to make a postcard, is located on a county road that dead-ends at the Osage River in northeastern Vernon County, near the tiny community of Schell City. Visitors consistently recall the droves of mosquitoes during the summer and the stench of the water, which smells like rotten eggs year-round.

There's an unusual archaeological site on a bluff overlooking the river, and it may key into the church's unorthodox views on pre-Columbian white settlements in America. The area is largely flood plain and state-owned wetlands, but most of the 1,400 acres owned by the church and associated ministries sit on a wooded peninsula that becomes an island when the water is high.

Christian Identity

It's an apt metaphor for a church that seeks to isolate itself, both spiritually and geographically, from the modern world. And, for the past 25 years, the church has consistently been labeled by watch groups as one of the most racist in America.

Services are by invitation only. Church membership is exclusively white. Homosexuality and mixed marriages are condemned. Members of the congregation are taught that they are the true chosen people of the Bible, as descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, and that both Adam and Jesus Christ were white. They go to church on Saturday, don't celebrate Christmas or Easter because they consider them pagan festivals, and observe feast days based on the traditional Jewish lunar calendar.

Since 1976, the church has been intimately associated with a radical and sometimes violent right-wing movement known as Christian Identity. Although Gayman protests the label, the Church of Israel is one of the oldest and most influential institutions in the movement, and Gayman is widely regarded as a spiritual leader.

As described by Michael Barkun, a professor of political science at Syracuse University, Christian Identity holds three key beliefs:

- Whites are the descendants of the biblical tribes of Israel.
- The world is on the verge of an apocalyptic struggle between good and evil, in which whites must do battle with the worldwide Jewish conspiracy.
- Jews and non-whites are the biological children of Satan, through a sexual union between Satan and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

This last belief is bolstered by Gayman's "two seedline doctrine," which he says came to him while reading Milton's "Paradise Lost." While others had long suggested a sexual metaphor for Satan's corruption of Eve, Gayman offered a literal interpretation — and one that underscored the need for a woman to submit to the authority of her husband.

But Gayman denies being a racist.

The two seedline doctrine is just a small part of his theology, he says, and while he believes the children of Satan walk the Earth today, he doesn't really know who they are. The Church of Israel, he says, is simply trying to fulfill the vision that his father and a handful of other disaffected Mormons had when they came here in the early 1940s.

Gayman says he harbors no hatred for blacks and other non-whites, but that he and his congregation should have the right to live separately. Their beliefs, he says, are largely what most rural Americans believed in the 1950s. Why, he asks, is it now considered appropriate for blacks to talk proudly of their heritage, but racist for whites to do so?

The Church of Israel is the target of severe religious persecution, Gayman claims. He also is adamant that none of the 150 members of the church has ever been convicted of a felony, yet the church is consistently cited by the Southern Poverty Law Center — and the media — as being a violent, right-wing

extremist group. Although the church doesn't allow firearms on its grounds, rumors about armed guards, stockpiles of weapons and even armored vehicles continue to circulate in Vernon County. Why, asks Gayman, can't the Church of Israel be treated like any other church?

Far-right connections

The answer, of course, is that it's not like any other church. In many ways, the church is a religious anachronism, a remnant of the 19th century passion for religious utopias. In 1858, for example, there were at least 130 utopian settlements in America, ranging from Oneida in New York to Nauvoo, Ill. The church also is museum-like in its preservation of 19th century conspiracy theories and social mores. And, its tenets are undeniably attractive to the radical right.

When Gayman won control of the church after an acrimonious split in the 1970s and began leading the congregation deeper into Identity (and racist) practices, the church began to find favor with the far right. One of the church's officers during the '70s was Thomas Robb, now of Harrison, Ark., and a leader of the Ku Klux Klan. The church served as the spiritual inspiration for the Covenant, the Sword and Arm of the Lord, an organization that ended in the mid-1980s with a raid by federal authorities and when its leader was convicted of bombing and arson. And, for a short time, the compound was the boyhood home of Eric Robert Rudolph, currently wanted by the FBI for the 1996 Olympic Park bombing and other fatal blasts.

And although the Church of Israel itself may teach a nonviolent message, as Gayman claims, it is firmly entrenched in the subculture of the far right — a subculture where "deviant religion, spurious scholarship, and radical politics intersect," according to Barkun, the Syracuse professor.

It's a subculture where rumors of concentration camps for American citizens and attempts to clone Jesus Christ from blood found on religious relics are taken seriously; where the United Nations represents the military arm of a satanic New World Order that is expected to occupy the country at any moment; and where the ownership of a gun capable of killing a federal agent in body armor is touted as the responsibility of every Christian family. Such "patriots" keep in touch via short-wave radio; converts are recruited at gun shows; and the most virulent rhetoric is reserved for those who break ranks.

But despite the pressure the Church of Israel has experienced in years past because of its associations with outside elements of the far right subculture, the most recent challenge has come from within.

Internal crisis

Last month, the church faced a crisis: A junior pastor who wanted the church to take a more aggressive public stance was paid \$20,000 in cash, and the deed to his house, in exchange for his silence about church business. Publicly, the package was called severance pay, and the pastor, the congregation was told, was leaving with Gayman's blessing to start other churches in America's "hinterland."

But the secret deal fell apart when church leaders accused the departing pastor, Scott Stinson, of "felony theft" of church documents. The church's leading patron, a vocal Texas millionaire who isn't shy about his racist beliefs, sided with Stinson, and posted details of the secret meeting and other documents on the World Wide Web.

The crisis allowed a glimpse into the finances of the church, which have remained largely private since it gave up its not-for-profit status years ago. The millionaire, Jerry Gentry, says he gave the church a \$500,000 donation to buy land and build houses. Gentry was able to count the donation as tax-exempt because it was funneled through a nonprofit foundation using a strategy called "donor-advised funds."

The land purchase was part of an ongoing homestead project the church offers to young white families with children. Gentry, who believes that blacks and Asians are a "primate race" created before Adam, and that Jews are the biological offspring of Satan, says he bankrolled the church because he was sympathetic to its beliefs.

One of the houses built with Gentry's money was the parsonage the junior pastor, Stinson, was to receive as part of the severance package. Church leaders, however, have asked for the money and the house back; Gayman, they say, was blackmailed into handing Stinson the cash and signing over the deed.

The incident is typical of the cycle of controversy and denial that has dogged the Church of Israel in the last quarter of a century.

Although Gayman quickly disavowed Gentry by calling him the "fly in the ointment" and saying his racist views don't represent those of the church, he is hard pressed to explain why the church accepted \$600,000 from him in the course of a decade.

In much the same way, Gayman denies ever meeting James Ellison, the leader of the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord — but Ellison's former second in command, Kerry Noble, clearly remembers spending three days at the church in 1979, after Ellison was introduced to Christian Identity by Gayman. And, when asked about a shooting incident years ago for which his son-in-law was convicted of second-degree felony assault (which prosecutors described as an attempt to protect the perimeter of the church grounds from an intruder), Gayman tells a reporter it was a hunting accident that resulted in a misdemeanor conviction for the "imprudent handling of a firearm."

The question is increasingly one of accountability, and with the latest split some of the cries are coming from within the church as well. Some of the records that were burned during the secret meeting which secured Stinson's silence, according to Gentry, were records of church minutes that would reveal the sale price of much of the 1,400 acres owned by the church that had passed through the Gayman family.

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PART 1 OF 4

When Gayman's father was struck by lightning, a widow and seven children were left behind in a community struggling for its very survival. Dan Gayman was the oldest of the five boys, and the event left an indelible impression on him, but he recalls that he never asked God, "Why?"

"We just always assumed that there's a time and a purpose for every season and event under the heavens" Gayman said. "We left it in God's hands and tried to make the best of it."

He recalled the feeling, however, that it might be a fatal blow for the community as well.

"It was a very tragic day," Gayman said. "Not only had we been trying to manage through the years of the war, but we were trying to move forward with the vision of getting on the land, getting established, getting the farming operation going, and when my father was killed it brought all of that to a conclusive end."

The church colony had been hit hard by World War II. Most of the men had been called away. (Leo Gayman had stayed behind because of an enlarged heart.) The original vision that had brought the community to Missouri had begun to fray — because of the war, economics and harsh living conditions.

The 10 families originally had come together in the Colorado mountains in the 1930s, but their attempt to establish a self-sufficient colony there failed.



The Church of Israel's Holy Festival Ground, located near the church, is just one of the buildings that make up the central compound.

"These people were all urban dwellers, excepting the ones that lived in the mountains, and their dream was to settle in a rural area where agricultural products could be grown," Gayman said. "But the growing season in Colorado is much shorter, and the mountains do not provide good habitat. So their feeling was that if they could get into a better growing season and a more agricultural landscape, they would be able to fulfill their dream of getting on the soil."

Mormon roots

To understand the history of the Church of Israel, it is important to understand the tumultuous history of the Mormon Church. Many key beliefs — for example, that descendants of the Lost Tribes populated North America before Columbus — were popular during the 19th century, and play an important part in Mormon theology. The modern history of the Church of Israel also reflects a passion for strict interpretation of doctrine, and the readiness of followers to split in order to follow a charismatic leader.

Like Leo Gayman, many Church of Israel adherents were former members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the largest of the Mormon splinter groups. It formed after Mormon Church founder Joseph Smith died at the hands of an Illinois mob in 1844. Based in Independence, Mo., it has about 150,000 members.

The Mormon Church — formally known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — has about 10 million members worldwide, with headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Mormon Church and splinter groups are based on revelations that Smith said were brought in the 1820s by heavenly messengers.

Another smaller splinter group, the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), also is based in the Kansas City suburb of Independence. The group claims to represent the only true followers of Joseph Smith, and is named for the founder's instructions that a temple should be built on a plot of land adjacent to the Jackson County Courthouse. Smith also declared Independence the site of the original Garden of Eden and said that when Christ returned, the New Jerusalem would be centered there.

His 1831 instructions read:

"Hearken, O ye elders of my church saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments in this land which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints; wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion." Behold the place which is now called Independence, is the center place, and the spot for the temple is lying westward upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse."

The Mormons were driven out of Independence in 1831, and out of Missouri in 1839. Although the Temple Lot membership is small — it consists basically of one congregation in Independence and another in eastern Jackson County — it has played an important part in Mormon history and prophecy.

The Temple Lot split came, in the 1850s, when the Utah church under Brigham Young openly adopted polygamy, which had been secretly taught and practiced in other divisions. After a revelation, Granville Hedrick led the group back to Independence in 1867 and sought to acquire the original spot dedicated by Smith for the temple: the temple lot. The property had been abandoned decades earlier, when the Mormons had been driven from Missouri, and the members of this group eventually came to be known as Hedrickites.

Although the Temple Lot church says the property was purchased in the late 1860s for \$1,200, ownership of the 2.5-acre temple site was disputed for decades. Some sources describe the Temple Lot group as "squatters" on the location.

In the 1880s and 1890s, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the biggest splinter group, sued the Mormon Church and the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) for the property, which amounts to only a few acres geographically but which represents a huge theological terrain. The U.S. Supreme

Court found in favor of the reorganized church, but left the land in the possession of the Temple Lot group, citing the rule of "adverse possession" — meaning that since the group had occupied and paid taxes on the land for so long, it deserved to keep it.

Like the other Mormon groups, the Temple Lot church supplements the use of the King James Bible with the Book of Mormon, which purports to be the sacred story of the ancient inhabitants of America — some of the lost tribes of Israel. Joseph Smith claimed to have been led by an angel in 1823 to the books, inscribed in an unknown language on metal plates, buried in a hill near his home in central New York state. Later, the plates were translated through divine help with the devices called "Urim and Thummin" in the Bible.

The bulk of the story claims to be the history of a tribe of the family of Manesseh, the son of Joseph who was sold in Egypt, who reached America by ship 600 years before the birth of Christ. It also tells of the righteous Nephites and the dark-skinned Lamanites, a cursed tribe of wandering warriors who are now known as the American Indians.

It also says Christ appeared in North America and established a church with the Nephites in much the same way as he did in Jerusalem. The last survivor of the Nephites, Moroni, supposedly buried the records in about A.D. 400 for Smith to find.

Unlike the LDS and RLDS churches, the Temple Lot does not have a prophet at its head; it is ruled instead by 12 apostles. Members also believe that not all of Joseph Smith's revelations were divine, but only those that are in harmony with the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

In 1990, an excommunicated Temple Lot member burned the group's historic 88-year-old church to the ground. Jordan Smith, 25, claimed that God had ordered him to cleanse the church. He surrendered to police only after being allowed to dance on the front stoop of the burning church.

Jordan Smith, whose face was smeared with war paint, also said that communists using chemical warfare were about to invade Missouri. His wife told police that his actions were the result of tremendous amounts of research in an attempt to correlate world events with biblical prophecy.

Jordan Smith had been kicked out of the Temple Lot group for being baptized in the Mormon Church. He also had been attending the RLDS church.

Temple Lot has since replaced the burned church, and while the RLDS group has built a temple across the street from the actual spot dedicated by Joseph Smith, no temple has yet been constructed on the original temple lot site (although an attempt was made in the 1930s, then abandoned). Part of the reason, perhaps, is the conundrum presented by the founder's original prophecy, that the temple would be completed during the lifetimes of those active in the church in 1831.

'Community of families'

Other denominations were represented among the original families that came to Vernon County in 1941, Gayman said, but many were former members of the RLDS or the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). One of the leaders was James A. Hedrick, a descendant of Granville Hedrick who left the Temple Lot group in the 1930s.

"They could have settled in Illinois or some other place," Gayman said, "but they wanted to be fairly close to the Kansas City area because they were drawn there because of their religious connections."

While they shared some core beliefs with the Mormons and other groups, Gayman said, the original families were "totally disconnected" from the RLDS or Temple Lot by the time they came to Vernon County. They were disturbed, he said, by the trend in American culture away from the "moral and spiritual values of the Bible."

"They felt it was an opportune time for them to establish themselves as a community of Christian people living on independently owned farms," Gayman said. "This was not communal, but would be a community of families who would own their own property and who would trust each other and work together. It would

be a community of people that would become debt-free by raising their own food, and educating their own children, and integrating themselves in society to the extent that they needed jobs for those who were not going to be making a living directly from the land."

The adjustment to the harsh conditions was probably easier for the children than for the adults. Gayman says he remembers his mother asking "why in the world" they had come to such a primitive environment.

"The road was so muddy the spring we arrived that we rode in with horses and wagons," he said. "We came from an urban area, so we were very much accustomed to electricity, and here there was no electricity — no plumbing and no running water. We were thrust into an environment where we heated our homes with wood and used kerosene lanterns to light the house by. For us, it was a real step down into primitive living."

Unable to establish their own church or school that first year, the colony members sent their children to a one-room public schoolhouse and attended services at a log church called the Christian Union Church. Later, they built their own church at the top of the hill and established a private school for the children.

They also found a curious archaeological site at the base of Halley's Bluff, overlooking the Osage River: a series of bell-shaped cache pits dug into the soft sandstone.

"They are larger at the bottom than at the top, being three feet across the top, and five and a half feet in diameter at the bottom," said an eyewitness in 1874. "They are only from one to three feet apart and follow the course of the outcrop of sandstone, which is north and south. They appear to have been made by some such instrument as a pick, faint marks of such a tool still being visible."

By 1941, only eight of the pits remained, because local treasure hunters using dynamite had destroyed the rest. All of the pits were found empty, though there were unconfirmed reports of burial sites nearby. Artifacts included a mixture of American Indian and European cultures: triangular flint points, large flint scrapers, iron axes, pieces of a flintlock rifle, and bits of copper and brass. In all, it appeared to have been an important location to the Osage Indians. A stone foundation and a possible stockade on top of the bluff also led archaeologists to believe it may have been the location of Auguste Chouteau's early 1795 trading post, Fort Carondelet.

In 1974, Halley's Bluff was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its exact location, however, is suppressed in an effort to save it from further destruction by treasure seekers, although the Church of Israel at times has allowed Scout troops and other interested parties to tour the site. Only four of the original pits remain, according to the Department of Natural Resources.

Whatever the founding families of the church colony thought of the strange site, it probably was interpreted as evidence of the historical truth of the Book of Mormon. Missouri, after all, was full of places with biblical connections, and Joseph Smith himself had declared Spring Hill, in Daviess County in northwestern Missouri, the site of the first human settlement after Adam and Eve had been ejected from the nearby Garden of Eden.

The month before Leo Gayman's death, he and four other men, including James A. Hedrick, were named officers of a charitable trust holding 441 acres of land. This, along with another tract that brought the total to 511 acres, made up the original colony site.

But after the blows dealt by the war years, the community languished. Some men did not return from the war, Gayman said, and those who did found it difficult to provide for their families. The community struggled to survive until the 1960s, when the children of the original families reached adulthood.

Gayman received a bachelor's degree in 1964 at what is now Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, where he majored in history and minored in speech and theater. His favorite period remains colonial American history, from the Pilgrims to the Revolution. Later, with the help of some postgraduate classes, he took a job as a teacher at nearby Walker. He stayed there a decade, and while he eventually was made principal, he never stopped working for the church.

At night, Gayman published a church publication called Zion's Restorer. As a pastor, he also began to refine his own belief system. At the same time, Gayman said, the congregation began to "rekindle the original spirit and vision" of the church.

Who is Israel?

By 1968, it was apparent a split was coming.

Said Gayman: "I would say the disagreement was essentially centered on three points of difference: number one, how the management of the church should unfold; two, doctrinal differences; and number three, over whether or not the church should observe the festivals of the Bible holy days."

Dan Gayman was the main proponent of observing the traditional Jewish calendar based on the phases of the moon, while his younger brother Duane was the pastor of the existing congregation.

"It was a gradual evolution of ideas that had actually come into the church through my grandfather, Jess Cruse, as early as 1948 or 1950," Dan Gayman said. "He was an avid reader, and he was the first to plant the seeds that perhaps we have not really come into much Bible truth at all."

The grandfather also was a regular radio listener of Herbert W. Armstrong. Although Cruise died in 1961, his ideas stayed with Dan Gayman until he could put them into practice in the early 1970s.

"The Mormon Church historically always endeavored to identify the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Gayman said. "Now, they had not articulated their position nearly so crystal clear as Herbert Billy Armstrong. But the idea of the importance of who is Israel was always latent in the Mormon doctrine."

His brother felt the church facilities should not be used to observe the traditional holy days, Gayman said. And although the church had always discouraged mixed marriages, some of the implications about identifying who is Israel? brought the race issue into sharper focus.

"Duane felt these changes were not in the best interest of the church, and that we should stay oriented to the original theological menu," Dan Gayman said. "He would also say, yes, racial issues had a lot to do with it as well. They (Duane's congregation) are so mainstream now they would say it doesn't make any difference, but back in 1971 they were just as adamant against interracial marriage as we are today."

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While other files from a quarter of a century ago have long since been reduced to microfilm, the thick, blue-jacketed file labeled the Church of Christ at Zion's Retreat v. Dan Gayman and the Church of Christ at Halley's Bluff, No. 32872 is available in mostly original form at the Vernon County Courthouse in Nevada.

Vickie Erwin, the clerk of the circuit court, says she keeps the file handy because there are one or two requests each year from reporters or scholars for it. Although parts of the file are missing, it still contains most of the several hundred pages of evidence and arguments accumulated since the original suit was filed in September 1972.

It would drag on, in various forms, until 1979.

"The lawsuit was filed by my brother in an effort to place me under censure and actually have me and the congregation removed from the premises," Dan Gayman said.



But most of the congregation's 15 families sided with him, Gayman said, on three main points: church management, doctrinal differences, and whether the church should observe the traditional Jewish feast days.

What Gayman doesn't say now, but which is evident in the court record, is that much of the rift was over control of church money.

From 1954 to 1969, according to court records, no audit was made of church assets. The church was under the control of Gerald Hall, one of the two surviving members of the original 1945 charitable trust. At one point, Dan Gayman's lawyer wrote a letter to the Missouri attorney general urging an investigation into Hall's stewardship of the trust, and he accused Hall of using church money for automobiles and other personal purchases.

In 1972, the new group incorporated as a Missouri not-for-profit organization, the Church of Christ at Halley's Bluff, named for the archaeological site on church property. The church's first board of directors included Dan Gayman, two of his brothers and Thomas Robb. Robb, of Harrison, Ark., is no longer associated with the church, but he is the leader of the largest Ku Klux Klan faction operating today.

In 1973, the court agreed to a stipulation favoring Duane Gayman and the original congregation. The opposition families were given only 20 of the original 511 acres, and they regrouped in two small buildings on the land the court had given them. The court also ordered that the name of the rival church be changed to avoid confusion with the original congregation, so the new group was reorganized as the Church of Our Christian Heritage.

Confrontation

Things continued in this fashion until 1976, when the rift boiled over so dramatically that it made national headlines.

On the night of April 2, Dan Gayman was host for an interstate "youth conference." At 7:30 p.m., according to court records, Gayman and about 35 members of the splinter church and some out-of-state guests walked across the road to the former church building and attempted a takeover.

After locking the doors, they unfurled banners urging "The National Emancipation of Our White Seed" and placed racist literature on the bulletin board. Earlier, alleges one account, members of the splinter church had accosted Duane Gayman on his way to work, and called him a "white nigger" and a "Jew lover."

The takeover ended at midnight, when sheriff's deputies and highway patrolmen arrested the rebels after a brief but well-publicized scuffle. Nine people, including Dan Gayman, were charged with trespass. Two others were charged with assaulting an officer.

Gayman says things were blown out of proportion. There was no takeover, he says.

"We're in that tiny little building up there and we're having a youth conference, and we could not adequately take care of our congregation," Gayman said. "We assumed we had the verbal approval of my brother Duane to use the big building. We had used it on the previous night and there had been no problem, so we were totally relaxed when all at once we were visited with an entourage of state troopers and sheriff's deputies. In fact, the road in, all the way up to 71 Highway, was lined with police. And there were several attorneys who came as well, and they even had their own professional photographer from Nevada."

The only violence, Gayman said, was on the part of law enforcement, which the photographs showed.

"In the case of Dale Gordon (one of the men charged with assault)," he said, "the photos showed him standing motionless with his hands cuffed, and it showed a Missouri Highway Patrol officer bringing a billy club down on his head and blood squirting out and running down his clothes and onto the wooden floor."

Neither Gordon nor any of the others resisted arrest, Gayman said.

"There was absolutely no physical activity (on his group's part) that evening," he said. "Not a single person had any kind of an arm on them, not even a pocketknife. There wasn't a single person that offered any type of resistance. There was absolutely no fight."

But former Vernon County Sheriff Mickey Mason, who was one of the two state troopers on the scene that night, recalls it differently. The demonstrators violently resisted attempts to remove them from the church, he said, and the use of force was necessary.

Later, Mason was one of dozens of officers and county officials named in a federal lawsuit filed by Gayman that sought millions of dollars for alleged civil rights violations stemming from the participants' arrest and brief stay in the Vernon County Jail.

The federal lawsuit eventually was dismissed, as were the trespass charges against the nine arrested the night of the incident. Of the pair charged with assault, only one, Ronald Dean Sheets, was convicted. But the episode only resulted in energizing the civil suit that was filed in 1972.

"You have to remember that when this happened, I was still an employee of the Walker public high school," Gayman said, "and there were these incessant headlines in the Nevada Daily Mail that made it appear as if we were a real notorious bunch of wild-eyed racists of the worst kind."

In a letter to the director of the Missouri Bar Association, Gayman asked for free legal counsel and posed the following question: "I wonder, Mr. Baker, if I were not (1) fighting Regional Government (2) Standing for the White Race (3) An outspoken Patriot on all issues now before the American people, would you refuse to provide me legal counsel?"

Gayman was desperate. He had left the Walker school, and the bills were mounting. He was the victim, he said time and again, of religious persecution that authorities would not have tolerated had his skin been any color but white.

In a request to the court to appoint counsel, Gayman said he was the unemployed father of five children and that his wife, Deloris, had been unable to work because of illness. The slanderous publicity surrounding the case made it impossible, he said, for him to find another teaching job. He owed Farmers Bank of Walker \$1,800, Montgomery Ward \$400, and additional amounts to Nevada City Hospital and several doctors.

"The defendant owns furniture that was purchased in 1967 and is in very shabby condition," the request continues. "One living room easy chair was purchased in 1961 and is ready to be junked. Both the refrigerator and deep freeze are several years old and in poor condition. In addition, the defendant owns a 1966 Oldsmobile with 125,000 miles and a mechanical problem in the transmission, a 1964 Ford pickup with 103,000 miles, bed rusted out and using oil badly. The defendant owns one milk cow that produces milk in three quarters and is going dry."

The lawsuit eventually was settled out of court and voluntarily dismissed on Nov. 15, 1979. Whether the combatants reached an amicable agreement, or simply grew tired and agreed to disagree, is impossible to discern from the aging court file. Duane Gayman now is pastor of the Living Hope Fellowship, housed in the old Thriftway building at the county seat of Nevada, about 20 miles southwest of Schell City. He declined comment for this story.

What is clear is that the new church had emerged from this period of tribulation intact, with Dan Gayman at the helm. It already had adopted the beliefs that would guide the church for the next quarter of a century, even if some of those beliefs put it at odds with mainstream America. But in Vernon County, church members were unlikely to have personal contact with anyone who might be offended; in 1980, Vernon County — a former Confederate enclave that had been decimated during the Civil War — was virtually all white. By 1990, according to the U.S. Census, minorities would account for less than 2 percent of the county's 18,700 residents.

'No guns allowed'

Already, however, the church had a growing reputation as an armed compound. Those rumors were fueled by news reports in 1980 that a man wanted for questioning in the shooting of civil rights leader Vernon Jordan at Fort Wayne, Ind., was connected to the colony. Gayman denied the connection. The man, who had been arrested with Gayman on the trespass charges in 1976, was never considered a leading suspect, the FBI said at the time, and another man eventually was charged.

Jordan, a friend and adviser of President Clinton's, was wounded when he returned about 2 a.m. to his motel room with a white woman. Eighteen years later, in 1998, convicted serial killer Joseph Paul Franklin confessed to the shooting. Franklin earlier had been tried in the case, but acquitted.

Franklin, 47, was serving four life sentences at the federal maximum-security prison in Marion, Ill., when he confessed to the Jordan shooting. Franklin also admitted to the 1978 shooting of Hustler publisher Larry Flynt and his attorney, both of whom survived. Franklin, who targeted mostly Jews, blacks and interracial couples, is believed to have killed 17 people. He currently faces the death penalty in Missouri for shooting to death Gerald C. Gordon as he left a bar mitzvah at a St. Louis synagogue in 1977.

Dan Gayman recalls that while he was still the principal of the Walker school, Susan Ford — an aspiring photojournalist and daughter of President Ford — came to Vernon County on a student assignment.

"They scattered these students all over the United States to do special feature photography," Gayman said. "She had been told by the country club set in Nevada that this would be an interesting place because there might be tanks and all kinds of military hardware up here. So I invited Susan Ford up, told nobody about it, and she found just what you're finding today — nothing."

Critics fail to note, Gayman says, that the church doesn't even allow guns on its property. A sign at the entrance to the church complex warns against weapons, and prohibits alcohol and profanity as well. In fact, the church is so sensitive on the weapons issue that it advises participants in its National Youth Conference, held each June for the past 13 years, that no "firecrackers, explosives or firearms" will be allowed.

Violent hate groups

During the 1980s, the Church of Israel also was associated with two of the country's most violent right-wing hate groups: The Order, and the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord.

Bob Mathews, leader of The Order, sought to create a tightly knit group to overthrow the "Zionist Occupation Government" and financed the effort with a \$3.8 million armored car heist in California in 1984. Large donations went to right-wing causes, including \$10,000 to the Church of Israel. Mathews was killed in a shootout with federal agents. Gayman turned the money over to authorities, denounced The Order, and later testified against right-wing figures at a federal sedition trial in 1987.

The CSA started out as a survivalist community on the Missouri-Arkansas border, but soon became a militarized Christian Identity compound. The camp fell after a federal raid and standoff in 1985.

The CSA's former second in command, Kerry Noble, recalls that leader James Ellison was introduced to Christian Identity by Dan Gayman. Ellison came to the Schell City area in 1979 to work under contract on some of the nuclear missile silos that dotted the landscape before SALT II, and he later sent Noble to the Church of Israel to share in the racist message.

"The aspect of Identity that we really got a hold of was the seedline teaching," Noble said recently in a telephone interview from his Texas home. "I had his books, such as 'Genesis 3:15,' and there was no question that the children of Satan were the Jews. In those days, there were only two leaders of the movement: Gayman and Sheldon Emory. Gayman was the stronger of the two, as far as charisma and leadership capabilities and followers."

Noble, however, says that Gayman was opposed to violence and the stockpiling of weapons. Also, Noble found the services were boring compared to those at the CSA's Zarephath-Horeb compound.

"I didn't like the area," Noble said, "because they had that horrible sulfur water. We spent three days there. I didn't see how anybody could live in the area."

Noble said his heart began to turn against Christian Identity in 1983, after the polygamy issue had split the CSA compound. "We were doing a Bible study," he said, "and we were on Matthew 24."

The passage, Noble said, warned of "wars and rumors of war," and that many would be led astray in Christ's name.

"It sort of hit me that my understanding of what the latter days was going to be like was wrong. If that was true, then everything that we were doing was based on false theology."

Noble was sentenced to five years in prison for his participation in the CSA, and is the author of a memoir called "Tabernacle of Hate." The book is described by the publisher as the only account written by a former cult leader who has abandoned Christian Identity.

Gayman, however, says he never had any contact with anyone from the CSA.

"Now, those people tried to make contact with us," Gayman said, "but we knew they were a wild, off-the-wall bunch from the get-go. We knew that just from what we were hearing that they were not our kind of people. They tried to entice me to come down to talk to them, but I never would go."

Gayman also claims he has never met Ellison.

"What's surprising to me after all of this negative publicity is that the people of Nevada love to do business with the people in this church, because we pay our bills and we pay them on time," Gayman said. "In fact, when one of our boys back in 1986 accidentally shot another individual in a hunting accident, there were businesses in Nevada that contributed to his defense." His \$20,000 defense bill was essentially paid for by Vernon County people who felt like the church was being singled out for special prosecution."

John H. Coleman, Gayman's son-in-law, was charged with assault after he shot Jerry Epperson of Independence, who was bow hunting for deer and apparently strayed on or near church property. Epperson survived, but Gayman blames articles in The Kansas City Star for encouraging authorities to file felony charges and to allege that Coleman was attempting to protect the church boundary from intruders.

Gayman claims Coleman was turkey hunting and mistook Epperson for a bird in the dim early morning light. The charges were reduced, Gayman said, and Coleman eventually was found guilty of a misdemeanor, "imprudent handling of a firearm."

But the circuit clerk's office at the Polk County Courthouse in Bolivar, where the trial was held in December 1987 on a change of venue, has a different version of events. Coleman was convicted of second-degree assault, a Class D felony, according to court records. Although Coleman was sentenced to no jail time, he was fined \$500.

In a four-page advertisement placed in the Nevada News shortly after the shooting, the Church of Israel said it was the victim of attempted genocide at the hands of the news media. It also suggested there was a conspiracy to destroy the church, and that church members had been made to live like "goldfish in a bowl, under the constant eyes of newspaper reporters, television cameras and 'national watchdog' groups."

The scrutiny, however, was far from over.

PART 3 OF 4

Patricia Rudolph arrived at the Church of Israel one afternoon in late November 1984, in a broken-down station wagon with two sons in tow and her husband's death certificate in her hand. She came at the suggestion of Nord Davis, the longtime anti-government and Christian Identity director of the 130-acre North Point Team compound in Tipton, N.C.

Davis thought the Schell City church might be in a position to offer the widow some assistance, and she carried the death certificate as proof of her need.

"Since we knew Nord casually, we didn't turn them away," Gayman said. "But we wouldn't have turned any widow away. In fact, if she would have been colored, we would have helped her."

Rudolph, a craft artist who sold her work at flea markets, said she needed money to continue her journey. Gayman said the church had no money to give, but it did put the family up in a mobile home not far from the church offices, and it took up a food collection. Rudolph and her children were welcome to stay until they sold enough crafts to resume their journey, Gayman said. "I asked if she wanted to enroll those two boys in school, and she said no, she was home-schooling them," he said.

The boys were Eric Robert Rudolph, then 18, and his younger brother, Jamie. Their father, an airline pilot and prison minister, had died of cancer five years before. Since then, their Christian Identity mother had led them through a maze of southern trailer parks and right-wing subculture (although the family was ostensibly Catholic) and she consistently refused to provide their Social Security numbers to the schools where they were briefly enrolled.

"They stayed very much to themselves while they were here," Gayman recalls. "When they did attend services, they attended very sporadically and sat on the very far back pew and hardly talked to anybody."

The boys shunned invitations by the other young people of the church to join in activities, he said, and only one family — whom Gayman did not identify — "took them under their wing" and became more than casually acquainted with them.

"They arrived here in late November of 1984," Gayman said. "It was after Thanksgiving, and they stayed until about the last of February or early March of the next year." When they left here, Mrs. Rudolph said they were headed to Florida to their daughter's place, and that's the last we heard of them until"

Gayman searches for the words to describe the news that would come 13 years later. He settles on "those horrendous events" in the southeastern United States, and muses: "Little did we know the awesome consequences that would come out of what we perceived as a Christian duty."

Bombings and manhunt

On Oct. 14, 1998, Eric Robert Rudolph was charged with the fatal bombing two years earlier at Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park. He also was charged with the double bombings of an Atlanta area health clinic and a nightclub in 1997. Later, he was accused of the 1998 bombing of a Birmingham, Ala., abortion clinic that claimed the life of a police officer.



Bo Gritz (left), leader of the Christian Patriot movement, poses with Scott Stinson, a former pastor of the church of Israel, Gritz was in Schell City last year when he spoke to the church's Boy Scout troop.

The Olympic Park bombing, on July 27, 1996, injured more than 100 people who had gathered to watch the ninth day of the Summer Olympics, according to the FBI, and killed Atlanta mother Alice Hawthorne. The bomb was placed near the main stage in the park.

At the Sandy Springs Professional Building in January 1997, a bomb exploded at Northside Family Planning Service. A second exploded in the parking lot an hour later, as authorities attempted to evacuate people from the building. No one was killed, but shrapnel injured four people.

A month later, a similar bombing occurred at the Otherside Lounge, a lesbian nightclub in Atlanta. Five people were injured in the initial blast, and authorities discovered a second device before it exploded.

In January 1998, the New Woman All Women Health Care Clinic in Birmingham was bombed. The bomb killed Birmingham police officer Robert Sanderson, who was moonlighting as a guard at the clinic, and severely injured the clinic's head nurse, Emily Lyons.

"The fatal bombing in Atlanta was a terrorist attack aimed at thousands of innocent persons gathered at the Olympic Park," said FBI Director Louis Freeh at the time. "Within the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Program, there is no higher priority than the capture of Eric Rudolph."

One of the biggest manhunts in federal history ensued for the 32-year-old Rudolph, who had been living in Murphy, N.C. The day the hunt began, Rudolph had been seen in Murphy, where he bought 75 pounds of food and rented a video. By the time federal agents reached his trailer in the mountains, the door was open and Rudolph was gone. The VCR was still playing the video he had rented, a B-grade sword and sorcery adventure titled "Kull the Conqueror."

Three years and \$25 million later, Rudolph remains at large — or dead, perhaps, of accident or starvation or disease, his body rotting in the rugged North Carolina mountains where hundreds of federal agents with the latest high-tech gadgetry have failed to find him. The FBI has since called Rudolph a "lone wolf" who acted on his own, but has upped the reward for information leading to his capture to \$1 million.

Also, Gayman's portrayal of the Rudolph family as loners who stayed on the fringes of church activities has been called into question by a couple who should know: Dan Gayman's son and daughter-in-law.

Tim and Sarah Gayman constituted the family that took the Rudolphs under their wing, under orders from the elder Gayman, they said recently.

The couple left the church in 1991, estranged themselves from the Gayman family, and are now in hiding in the western United States. They consider the Church of Israel a cult, and charge that Dan Gayman is lying about his relationship with Eric Rudolph.

"I promise you that the Rudolphs were invited," Sarah Gayman said. "After living in the trailer for a while, they moved into our house. We went on double dates together. Eric was dating Tim's sister, and Dan Gayman was grooming him as a son-in-law."

Eric Rudolph, they said, always seemed to be in a great deal of pain because of his father's death and the family's loss of the American dream. Eric Rudolph idolized Dan Gayman, Sarah Gayman said, and soon came to regard the charismatic minister as a foster father.

"Regardless of what he says now," Sarah Gayman said, "I'll bet that Dan Gayman was jumping up and down with joy when he heard about the bombing."

After Eric Rudolph was charged, the eldest Rudolph sibling, Daniel, then a carpenter living in South Carolina, made news with a gruesome and bizarre protest: He videotaped himself lopping off his right hand. He sent the tape to the FBI and went to a local hospital, where the hand was reattached.

Nord Davis, the right-wing activist who sent Patricia Rudolph to Schell City, was designated by Populist Party candidate Bo Gritz in 1992 as his choice for "secretary of defense." Davis died of colon cancer in 1997.

Jamie Rudolph — the younger brother who accompanied Eric Rudolph and their mother to the Church of Israel complex in the winter of 1984 — is now a recording artist living in Manhattan.

He's also gay.

In an interview last year with Salon magazine, Jamie Rudolph said Eric had visited him shortly before going into hiding in 1998. He said his brother appeared comfortable with his homosexuality, and that he gave no indication that he was about to make the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list, other than renting a movie for them to watch about Irish terrorists.

Also, Jamie Rudolph said his brother had formulated his political philosophy during the time he spent at the Church of Israel.

Wherever Eric Robert Rudolph is today, alive or dead, the legacy of having once served as host to the Rudolph family remains with the Church of Israel. Although Eric Rudolph has become a folk hero to the extreme right — the Posse Comitatus Web site has a page devoted to Rudolph titled "True American Hero" — merely mentioning the fugitive's name is enough to cause Dan Gayman to bristle.

"You know, the church has been here since 1941, and there has never been in our history a person arrested from this congregation on a racial incident," he said. "There has never been anyone who has actually been prosecuted and found guilty, convicted and sent to prison on a felony charge."

As Gayman was saying this, however, a letter from the church's attorney had recently been delivered to Scott Stinson, one of the church's junior pastors.

The letter accused him of "felony theft."

PART 4 OF 4

On the morning of Nov. 13, 2000, Gayman and Jerry Gentry, the Texas millionaire who had given the church a total of \$600,000 in the past decade, went together to the Wilderness Sanctuary on church property. On the spot where the first rough-hewn church had been erected by the colony in the 1940s, the patriarch of the church and its most generous patron knelt to pray.

"I thanked him for his blessings and prayers," recalls the 57-year-old Gentry, "then told him that I needed to discuss something with him privately. He obliged, at which time I explained that Pastor Scott Stinson wished to make a separation, and had asked me to represent him."



www.dangayman.com

Stinson, Gentry said, wanted three things: \$20,000 in severance pay, a clear deed to his house, and the blessing of Dan Gayman, bishop of the Diocese of Manesseh of the Church of Israel.

Stinson had considered Gayman a spiritual mentor and came to Church of Israel as a pastor in 1993, after receiving degrees from the University of South Florida and Regents University at Virginia Beach, Va. Stinson was the author of a privately published Christian Identity book called "The Exodus to Come." He and his wife, Lori, eventually would have seven children, and in 1995 they moved into one of the two parsonages built with money donated by Gentry.

Gentry was able to control the donation, and take it as a tax write-off as well, because he funneled it through a nonprofit organization called the National Foundation, using a strategy called "donor-advised funds." The Church of Israel, however, hadn't been a nonprofit group since 1982.

In addition to the parsonages, which cost \$100,000 each, a music and video production operation was added to the church annex.

Gentry, of Big Sandy, Texas, had made his fortune through publishing craft and needlepoint books. He once was the largest contributor to Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God before being "disfellowshipped" in the early 1980s. A part-time preacher himself, Gentry became enthusiastic about Gayman's work and considered himself a "seedliner" after reading "The Two Seedlines of Genesis 3:15." He began attending the Schell City church after it switched to Saturday worship in 1987, a move that Gayman considered a natural progression in restoring the authentic nature of the church.

"The transfer from Sunday to the biblical Sabbath has been one of the most important spiritual events in the life of the church," Gayman told a Sabbatarian meeting in 1998. "It has wrought powerful transformation in the lives of all the church members. The church has doubled in size and increased its evangelistic outreach to every state in the United States."

By the late 1990s, Gentry had become an insider in the church. Not only was he the church's most generous patron, according to his own account, but he had become one of Dan Gayman's most trusted advisers and friends. When Gayman was fretting about the heat the Church of Israel was taking from the news media after the Eric Rudolph story broke in 1998, for example, Gentry — a former newspaper reporter, aspiring screenwriter and Web master — advised Gayman to speak openly with the media.

Gayman tried, but he considered the results to be the same libelous trash that had been broadcast about the church for years. Later, Gayman would tell the Globe that reporters were often well-meaning, but that a negative "spin" was always placed on the stories by editors and owners. Now, Gayman won't even permit cameras on church property.

"There's never yet been one favorable exposé of the church," he said. "It has resulted in people losing their jobs, and life is hard enough in this austere economic environment."

Patriarch vs. benefactor

By 1999, things had begun to sour between Gayman and Gentry. There were squabbles over doctrine, and Gentry was "disinvited" from services for a few months. Gentry also urged the church to take a more aggressive stance on doctrinal matters of race, conspiracy and sexual orientation, but Gayman balked. The lower the profile the church kept, Gentry recalls, the better Gayman felt.

Meanwhile, the Stinsons were discovering that life inside the Church of Israel was not quite what they had expected. Gayman kept secret "dirt files" on his junior pastors to keep them in line, according to Lori Stinson.

"In how many churches will the ministerial staff plot and scheme against their own to set them up for public slander and disgrace?" she asked in an open letter to Gayman, posted later on the Internet by Gentry. "How many churches practice and support hatred to the extent that the destruction of one's life and their family is the goal? Scott has been the recipient of that kind of hatred. The emotional pressure and spiritual duress that you have inflicted upon and allowed against Scott and our family is beyond words to describe."

Gayman was unhappy with the time Scott Stinson was spending with the church's scouting group (Boys Scouts of America Troop 777, called "God's troop" in church literature) and had become increasingly uncomfortable with Stinson's relationship with Bo Gritz, a former Army special forces officer who is now considered the leader of the Christian Patriot movement. Chief among Gritz's beliefs are that America is on the verge of an apocalyptic battle between good and evil, and that every American family should own a .50-caliber Barrett or Maadi-Griffin rifle, the only legal weapons capable of penetrating the body armor of a federal agent.

Gritz attended Passover at the church last April — uninvited, Gayman says, but he was allowed in because his wife, Judy, was well-known at the church colony. Gritz was attracted to the church because of its observance of traditional feast days, according to an article intended for his newsletter, and because of the Confederate flag in the upper left corner of the church standard. It was identical, Gritz said, to his great-grandfather Ethma Cauthen's square battle flag, in which the St. Andrews cross divided the blue field into four equal parts, representing the tribes of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan.

A former Scoutmaster, Gritz planned to help start an adventure program at the church, and made plans to return with his twin-engine Cessna and help the troop qualify for aviation merit badges. He was preparing for the return flight, according to Gritz, when a friend told him that the FBI had visited the church to interview Gayman.

Soon after, he received a fax "disinviting" him.

"The ministry and general life vision which God has called you to and that which He has called this Church to are not compatible," the fax said. "The (militant) program you are essentially calling for was one which the Church here endeavored to follow through the '70s and '80s." The church, however, had adopted a nonviolent stance in 1986, the fax pointed out.

A second fax likened Gritz's paramilitary Fellowship of Eternal Warriors to the defunct white supremacist group The Order. Gayman, according to Gritz, had been badly frightened by his association with the anti-government group.

The Church of Israel, Gayman pleaded, was too vulnerable to scrutiny by federal authorities and the news media to continue a relationship with Gritz.

"Reconsider making a marriage between what is commonly called 'Identity' and your ministry of 'Protection and Preparedness,' Gayman asked. "It is absolutely unrealistic to try and mix guns and Identity. Moreover you will bring nothing but reproach upon the gospel of the kingdom as you seek to mix the Maadi-Griffin or the Barrett with the words of Jesus Christ and His apostles."

Gritz bristled. His response:

"Gayman would do well to consider my response before the U.S. Senate Judiciary in answering Chairman Arlen Specter's question: 'In 25 words or less, what is wrong in America and what does the patriot movement want?' My obedient answer was: 'Fair treatment with everyone equal under the law and no one above the law, not even those wearing badges and carrying guns.' I have chosen Christ and our Constitution. My right to own firearms, including large-bore scoped weapons does not mean I advocate their illegal use."

Scott Stinson, who had had his photo taken in front of a Church of Israel flag with Gritz the previous April, refused to sign the fax.

'Dirt' files and records

It was the last straw for Gayman.

Stinson was chairman of the board of trustees, and on the board of the Christian Heritage Academy, which ran the 35-student private school on church property, but Gayman apparently found his support of Gritz dangerous. Also, Stinson had gained the favor of Gentry, the millionaire patron, for delivering a couple of sermons that accused the church leadership of hypocrisy.

And also, according to Gentry, Stinson had become uncomfortable with the way in which Gayman ran the church as if it were a family business. To protect himself, Gentry says, Stinson took some of the "dirt" files from the church office, the minutes from board meetings during which real-estate purchases were approved, and copies of real-estate deeds.

When Gentry met with Gayman at the Wilderness Sanctuary and delivered the terms of Stinson's separation from the church, the terms included the return of the records in Stinson's possession. The principals then met in the church office with Reed Benson, Gayman's son-in-law and replacement on the board of trustees, and Gray Clark, an assistant pastor.

A confidential agreement was drawn up: Stinson would receive the deed to the parsonage, and \$20,000 in cash, and would announce to the congregation that he was leaving with Gayman's blessing to raise up a church in the American "hinterland." He also would remain an ordained minister. In return, Stinson would turn over all board minutes, business papers, church records and associated material — and agree not to "discuss or disclose any incriminating information about the Church of Israel."

Gayman would have a one-year exclusive contract to sell the parsonage on Stinson's behalf; the true ownership of the home would be kept secret; and Gayman was to personally receive a \$20,000 commission from the sale. Gayman would refrain from speaking negatively about Stinson and would write a one-page article in the church magazine "praising Scott Stinson's contributions to the Church of Israel from past and present and projecting his future success in the ministry."

"Dan Gayman will get the peace of mind that comes from knowing that he has finally gotten rid of Scott Stinson and his family without having a major crisis," the agreement said. Curiously, it also noted that Gayman had successfully "avoided one of the biggest internal conflicts that could ever threaten the Church of Israel."

When the cash had been paid out of a church safe containing more than \$40,000, Gentry returned from his vehicle with a locked box containing the church documents. Gentry spread the documents out on a table, and Gayman inspected them while Clark went to type up the deed. After a mistake in the dimensions of the property was corrected, a notary was called in and the exchange was officially witnessed.

Gentry also was given \$1,000 as a down payment on the work he had done as Web master of the Church of Israel's Web site. Gayman promised to deliver an additional \$19,000 during the course of a year, at which point Gentry would surrender the Web site.

"I then learned there were additional files Scott wanted to have preserved in a lock box in the hands of two (other) parties," Gentry says. "He felt he needed those documents preserved outside his own immediate control, as an 'insurance policy' to hold Pastor Dan and those around him to their signed agreement, which he feared they would break."

Shortly after this, Stinson and Gentry received letters from the church's attorney, Kendall Vickers of Nevada, accusing them of blackmailing church leaders into the separation agreement. The letter accused Stinson of misappropriating church records, said the Nov. 13 agreement was coerced, and said their actions amounted to "felony theft." Neither Gayman nor the two members of the board of trustees had the authority, without the full board, to agree to the terms of the separation agreement, Vickers argued.

Although Stinson refused to comment on the split, on Dec. 17 Gentry posted a Web site — www.dangayman.com — where he made public most of the documents cited here. Church leaders were given the opportunity to respond, but said the letter from their attorney says everything they have to say.

Gentry claims he persuaded Stinson to destroy the remaining documents in his possession in a "burn barrel" just a few days after the November meeting. Gayman, Gentry said, had already carted boxes of church documents to the burn barrel for several night previously.

Gentry said last month that he was prepared to contact IRS officials with tax information the church would consider sensitive if the original agreement was not honored. Now, he says he would reveal such information only "if subpoenaed."

But the Gayman Web site, Gentry says, will remain up until the church agrees to follow the original Nov. 13 agreement.

As the weeks pass, a prolific amount of church documents have accumulated on the World Wide Web; on Jan. 13, for example, Gentry posted minutes of an April 1999 meeting during which trustees discussed the "danger" of having a for-profit business located on exempt church property. The business, which is owned by church member Bob Burney and produces a water purification device called Aqua Rain, was a major contributor to the church treasury.

Other documents reported the disappearance of \$9,700 in church money; the perceived sexual misconduct of some younger church members; and oblique references to a lie detector test failed by an accused child molester within the congregation. The letter alleging the child molestation was written by Stinson, but the accused was not named.

Also, the National Heritage Foundation — the Falls Church, Va., nonprofit organization that now administers the Gentry fund — has dropped the Church of Israel as a designated charity. The group, which acquired the Gentry fund from a predecessor called the National Foundation, feared that keeping the church would anger the foundation's Jewish charities. And, according to federal regulations, nonprofit groups that contribute to organizations that practice racial discrimination are at risk of losing their tax-exempt status.

The foundation came under fire earlier from more traditional charities who accused the nonprofit group of exploiting "donor-advised funds" to help clients help themselves to tax breaks.

EPILOGUE

Behind his desk at the Church of Israel on this mild December afternoon, however, Gayman smiles. The church colony is washed in sunlight, and children bicycle their way up and down the paved drive that loops through the church complex.

He is still 24 hours from learning that Gentry has declared a holy war. Sounding more like a preacher now, he is describing part of the church's 50-year plan. The hundreds of acres the church owns sounds like a lot, he says, but it is really minimal when you take into account what is needed by the church.

"God is not making more land, and the very future of this congregation is dependent upon our ability to get people on the land," he says.

The church has about 150 core members, Gayman says, and is recruiting new members through a homestead program. A house and a few acres are being offered to young white families with children who are willing to join the church.

"Yes, this is an all-white congregation," Gayman says. "But I can't take you to any country church in Vernon County where we are going to find black people. So, I think it would only be reasonable for me to say that first of all, this is an all-white congregation, but this is a very, very Caucasian part of settled middle America."

The homestead program fulfills the original vision of getting people back to the land, Gayman says, and away from the wickedness of the cities.

"If my father and the original parties were all here right now, they would say 'Praise God!'" Gayman says. "This is the vision of the church as it was scheduled to unfold."

He opens a King James Bible and cites Jeremiah 29, a chapter that urges historical Jews to multiply and prosper — while still in captivity.

"This is the mandate that we have followed here at the Church of Israel throughout our history," he says. "It says here to build houses, dwell in them, plant gardens, eat the fruit of them, take wives, beget sons and daughters, take wives for your sons, give your daughters to husbands that they may bear sons and daughters, that you may be increased there and not diminished."

He pauses.

"In other words," Gayman says, "that's the No. 1 goal of this church, is to increase the physical size and spiritual strength of the Christian nuclear family: mother, father, children."

Is it church or family business? **Church dropped status as nonprofit, but it pays no taxes on part of property**

By Max McCoy
Joplin Globe Staff Writer

SCHELL CITY, Mo. — The Church of Israel owns nearly 1,400 acres in northeastern Vernon County, and most of it passed through the hands of patriarch Dan Gayman or his immediate family before becoming church property.

Although sale prices aren't listed on the deeds recorded at the Vernon County Courthouse in Nevada, the transactions reveal the intimate relationship between the church and the Gaymans. The Church of Israel, critics charge, is little more than a family business.

And while the church pays taxes on most of its property, it pays nothing on a \$100,000 parsonage built in 1995 or the 20-acre complex that contains the church offices, dormitories, and the church annex and video production studio — despite dropping its nonprofit status nearly 20 years ago.

"The question is one of accountability," said Jerry Gentry, a Texas businessman who once was the church's leading patron — and now has become its most vocal opponent. Gentry contributed more than \$600,000 to the church over the past decade, but he says his relationship with the church soured because of the cavalier way in which Gayman ran the church.

Gayman denies any impropriety.

"I'm an evangelist and have always traveled by faith," he said. "Insofar as any salary, I have none, and I live totally by faith donations. And the Gayman family has never made a dime of profit from the Church of Israel."

Most of the land passed through the family before being acquired by the church, Gayman said, because many landowners wouldn't sell directly to the church because of its racist reputation.

The Gayman family members merely acted as agents, he said, and the money came from third parties who had pledged the funds for land acquisitions. Gayman refused, however, to reveal sale prices or contracts for any of the land in question.

At a secret meeting last November, according to Gentry, church documents relating to land purchases and other matters were destroyed in a "burn barrel." The documents were surrendered by a departing minister, Gentry said, after Gayman handed over \$20,000 in cash and the deed to one of the church parsonages in exchange for mutual silence.

The 1,400 acres are needed for a homestead program to attract young, white families to the rural church, Gayman said. According to the financial advice Gayman offers on the Church of Israel's Web site, Israelites (descendants of white northern Europeans) should sell all urban property and reinvest in rural areas; convert all bank deposits into "tangible" wealth such as farmland, tools or precious metals; establish a business that provides expendable goods such as food, clothing, or shelter; and learn to live debt-free.

Gayman said he "suspected" about 10 families are already on church land through the program.

Definition of 'church' vague

The Church of Israel isn't the biggest private landholder in Vernon County — a handful of farms top 4,000 acres — but it's easily the most controversial.

Dogged by decades of associations with violent right-wing factions, the church in recent years has attempted to drop below media radar by toning down its separatist rhetoric and denying connections to the Christian Identity movement. But despite such denials, the church remains among the oldest and largest of the Identity institutions in America.

Established in 1941 as a self-reliant and exclusively white religious community, the invitation-only church is consistently cited by watch groups as one of the most racist in America. Since 1976, it has been ruled by Dan Gayman, who deposed his brother Duane for control of a majority of the congregation.

Previously known as the Church of Christ at Halley's Bluff and then the Church of Our Christian Heritage, the church was dissolved as a Missouri not-for-profit corporation in 1982 and reformed under its present name as an independent "free association religious body."

Although Dan Gayman denies being a part of the unregistered-church movement, Gentry says the Church of Israel has a vital interest.

As with other anti-government facets of the Identity subculture, such as the resistance to Social Security numbers and civil marriage licenses, the unregistered-church movement holds that by registering as not-for-profit, churches effectively are "owned" by the state and federal governments. The movement has resulted in the recent standoff between the Indianapolis Baptist Temple and the IRS over back taxes.

Because the Church of Israel is no longer a nonprofit organization, it is not required to file public annual reports, and any dealings it has with the IRS in connection with income taxes are confidential.

Church property used for worship is exempt from taxes in Missouri, but the state leaves the determination of what constitutes a "church" to the county assessor, according to the State Tax Commission.

"The burden is on the taxpayer to prove the (church) exemption," said Lori Maddox, the commission's assistant counsel. But, she said, the only requirements are that the property is used exclusively for valid religious worship (as evidenced by a belief in a "supreme being") and that the church can demonstrate that no profit is made.

Federal or state nonprofit status is not required, Maddox said, and services do not have to be open to the public. Although the state can deny charitable exemptions based on racial discrimination, there is no such penalty for churches that discriminate.

Holdings and taxes

Vernon County Assessor Cherie Koshko said the 20-acre church complex (also called the compound by some) and one of the two parsonages were considered tax-exempt, as allowed by state law. But, Koshko said, she was unaware the church had neither state or federal nonprofit status, which often supports exemption requests.

The church pays \$4,444 annually on the taxed portion of the 1,397 acres it owns, which includes mostly agricultural and residential properties. The total market value of the taxed properties ranges from \$540,000 to about \$1.2 million, depending on estimates.

The tax amount from the Vernon County assessor's office is based on an assessed valuation of \$107,860, which represents 12 percent to 19 percent of the appraised market value, depending on classification. Using that formula, the market value of the taxed property held by the Church of Israel is roughly between \$540,000 and \$860,000, or about \$386 to \$615 an acre.

But, the average selling price for land and buildings in Vernon County is \$883 an acre, according to the latest figures from the Missouri Department of Agriculture. Using that estimate, the church's holdings could be worth twice as much, or about \$1.2 million, on the open market. Much of the land in northeastern Vernon County is isolated and subject to flooding, however, which tends to reduce market value; its actual worth may be lower than the countywide average.

In addition to the office complex and parsonage, the church pays no property taxes on six vehicles, including a pair of Lincoln passenger cars and a Ford pickup truck.

While Gayman was attempting to illustrate his austere lifestyle by describing how he used an aging church van for transportation, he was reminded of the 1989 and 1993 Lincolns the church owns.

"Yes, we can use them as well," he agreed, but said both are older cars with high mileage and that they are for the use of the church's other pastors as well.

Koshko, a native of Schell City, said she would have to investigate state guidelines to determine whether the Church of Israel's tax-exempt status should be changed or modified. Currently, she said, churches are not required to file any forms or other documentation with her office in support of their exempt status.

"I just took over the duties of assessor in August," she said, "and I have not researched in depth about churches and religious organizations."

In addition to the Church of Israel, six other ministries associated with the Gayman family are listed on deeds recorded at the Vernon County Courthouse. None of these associated churches is currently nonprofit.

They include the "Church of Jesus Christ at Whispering Oaks," which was incorporated by Dan Gayman and his immediate family as a Missouri nonprofit organization in 1976. Its authority to do business was forfeited by the secretary of state's office in 1992 for failing to file annual reports. The church is still in existence, however, and owns 123 acres adjoining the church colony, although the church's original bylaws provide for only officers, and no members.

Another entity, the "Anglican Orthodox Christian Communion Church," owns property and gives a Church of Israel address on deeds, but lists no officers.

Some of the property transactions appear unusual for a church. In 1989, for example, the church assumed a \$35,000 loan with the Bank of Harwood on property owned by Dale and Lena Gayman, a brother and sister-in-law of Dan Gayman's. Eight years later, the church bought the building the defunct rural bank owned in Harwood, near Schell City, from the Tri-County State Bank of El Dorado Springs. The sale price for the bank was listed at \$10.

Dan Gayman said the bank building was donated to the church by the Tri-County State Bank because it was such an important landmark to the residents of Harwood, a community of a few dozen families a few miles south of the church colony. The building is used for storage, he said.

Thomas H. Kifer, president of Tri-County State Bank, said he wasn't with the bank at the time, but he confirmed the 1997 donation.

"In an effort to support the community of Harwood, the decision was made to find a recipient that would receive and use the building," Kifer said. "The Church of Israel responded."

Also, Gayman said, the \$35,000 loan was assumed from his brother Dale because the family that originally pledged to buy the property for the church had suffered a misfortune that did not allow it to fulfill its pledge. Dale Gayman, he said, was simply acting as an agent for the church, and although borrowing money is against church tenets, an exception was made.

Falling out

Gentry — who openly believes blacks and Asians are "primate species" created before Adam — says he was drawn to the Church of Israel after reading Gayman's treatise on Genesis 3:15, and he attended church at Schell City after the church adopted Saturday services in 1987. Gayman is considered a leader in the Christian Identity movement, which holds that Anglo-Saxons, and not modern Jews, are the true chosen people of the Bible. But Gentry broke with Gayman in November by taking the opposing side in a church split.

The 57-year-old millionaire championed a departing minister, Scott Stinson, who thought the church was keeping too low of a public profile. Gentry negotiated a severance package for Stinson that included a \$20,000 cash payment from a church safe and the deed to a \$100,000 parsonage.

The documents, which Stinson had taken as "insurance," were burned after the severance package was executed, Gentry said.

Later, the church board of trustees reneged on the deal, claiming that Gayman did not have the authority to negotiate the package without the approval of the full board. While the board sent letters demanding the return of the cash and the deed, Gentry — the church Web master — began posting confidential church documents on the Internet.

Complaints about Gayman's administration have persisted within the church for years, Gentry says, and he cites a letter written by church member Mike Corlett to Gayman in 1996:

"The church is represented as one of unity, loving concern for each other in Christ, and total dedication to the advancement of the Kingdom of God. In actual fact, the local church is divided between the 'Gayman clan' and its interests and desires, and the 'outsiders.'" The church appears to be a private resource operated by the Gayman family, and the balance of the congregation is expected to either support that effort or stand by quietly and not interfere."

The Kingdom of God, Corlett said, was secondary to the financial support and continued security of the Gayman family. Although there was much good in the sermons that Dan Gayman delivered, Corlett charged, Gayman himself had turned a blind eye to his own conduct and that of those close to him.

"It is simply understood that the family, and its inner circle of friends, directs the course of the church, decides what and who receive the money, and what uses are made of the facilities; in fact, every facet of the church's life and growth," Corlett wrote.

Corlett, who suffered from diabetes, died last year.

Tim Gayman, the 36-year-old estranged son of Dan Gayman, says his father is motivated by greed and power. The Church of Israel, he says, is a cult-like organization that practices spiritual abuse which destroys most families it comes into contact with.

"The 'playing church' and pretending to be great Christians has gone on for far too long," Tim Gayman and his wife, Sarah, said in a recent letter to Gentry. "It's our hope and prayer that God will supernaturally break the cycle of lies and deceit before more families and marriages are destroyed by him." The 'Gayman Family, Inc.' is all Dan is concerned about. Continuing to amass a fortune and maintain control of his assets, including the Church of Israel and the people who worship and tithe there, are his main goals in life."

A house divided **Bogus deed filed after court issued ruling on disputed church land**

By Max McCoy
Joplin Globe Staff Writer

NEVADA, Mo. — A decades-old dispute over a few hundred acres of church land in northeastern Vernon County continues to smolder, according to courthouse records.

The feud, between rival congregations led by Dan Gayman and his brother Duane Gayman, is over a 411-acre tract of land near Schell City where their father and others founded a separatist church colony in the 1940s.

A deed filed 22 years ago at the recorder of deeds' office purports to give ownership to the Church of Israel, but in fact the document is bogus.

The "warranty deed" claims to transfer ownership to the Church of Our Christian Heritage (now the Church of Israel), and was witnessed by notary Margie H. Goble on Aug. 1, 1979. It is signed by Dan Gayman's mother, Lucy E. Gayman Ijams, and by Mary B. Smith, another widow of an original church colony member.

The problem is: The 411 acres already had been given to Duane Gayman's congregation by the court during a court battle in 1973. Neither Ijams nor Smith legally had any interest in the property.

"These two ladies, being so disappointed in the court's decision, took it upon themselves to file this cloud," said 63-year-old Dan Gayman. "You know, I hadn't seen this before today, and I really didn't know what it meant."

Doug Shupe, Vernon County recorder of deeds, said it is not illegal to file such deeds, although Missouri made it a felony to file bogus liens a few years ago in response to the "common law court" movement. The document has no legal weight, he said, but it would pose a question for abstract companies attempting to trace ownership of the property.

The result, Shupe said, is that it might be impossible to sell the property or obtain a loan on it until the "cloud" is removed.

The 1973 court decree was never recorded, he said, although that is only a formality; the decree would carry the same weight today as when it was issued 28 years ago.

Ijams, now in her 80s, agreed with Dan Gayman's explanation. Smith, the other woman who signed the deed, is still living, but she is ill and was unavailable to answer questions.

When asked whether he would agree that Duane Gayman's Church of Christ is legally the owner of the property, Dan Gayman hedged.

"Now that this cloud is in, I couldn't say," he said. "I have my mother's feelings to consider."
Duane Gayman could not be reached for comment.

Warriors & watchers

Militant subculture teems as ideas, guns hawked

By Max McCoy
Joplin Globe Staff Writer

TULSA, Okla. — It's the first Saturday in December, and at the Grand National Gun and Knife Show in the cavernous Tulsa Expo Center, Bo Gritz has tied the familiar blue flag of the United Nations to the barrel of a Mossberg 12-gauge riot gun.

Gritz douses the flag with lighter fluid.

"I don't see a single person sitting here that won't get a chance in their lifetime to say 'no' to this New World Order — this Antichrist," he says.

Gritz lights the flag.

The synthetic material burns with a fierce orange flame. Malodorous black smoke billows upward while what is left of the flag drips to the floor in a seething puddle that turns brittle as it cools.

The stinking residue, Gritz says, is what will become of people who fail to fight. Those who cooperate, according to his interpretation of Revelation 14:9, will become living "crispy critters."

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," Gritz recites from memory, "and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

The burning of the U.N. flag has become Gritz's trademark, and he's done it hundreds of times, mostly at gun shows like this one. This show, however, is special. Not only is it not far from his hometown of Enid, but it's sponsored by his childhood friend, R.D. Diener.

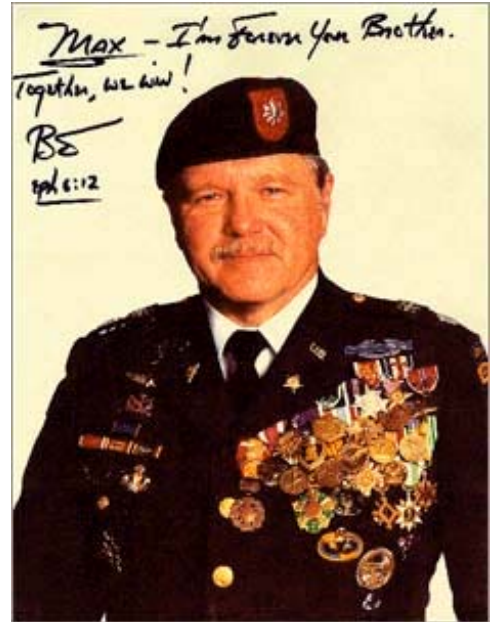
Events like this are where mainstream America and the radical right intersect, and they offer militant groups the perfect opportunity for recruiting new members, says Kerry Noble, formerly the second in command of the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord, a militarized Christian Identity compound in northern Arkansas that was ended by a federal raid in 1985.

Recruits

Noble, who is now reformed and is an ex-con for his participation in the group, says such groups seek young white men looking for someone else to blame for their problems.

"There are two ways people are recruited into the movement," Noble said in a telephone interview from his home in Texas. "One is at the gun shows, and the other is through tax seminars. The majority of people have gripes with the IRS or are Second Amendment activists.

"Also, you're looking for somebody who is not happy with their life. So you try to push hot buttons, like political things that are going on in the country, and you see how people react to particular phrases " that you're tired of paying taxes, that you're barely making a living the way it is."



Retired Green Beret Col. Bo Gritz, leader of the Christian Patriot movement, often finds recruits at gun shows. During a recent show in Tulsa, OK, he was autographing photos. Globe reporter Max McCoy, who attended as a spectator, received a photo with the inscription: "Max, I'm forever your brother. Together we win!"

The next step, Noble said, is to tell the potential recruits that the government doesn't want them to get ahead because there's a Jewish conspiracy against the white working class. Or, if the trouble is in their marriage, the recruiters would bemoan the fact that women just aren't as obedient any more as the Bible says they should be. Then, Noble said, the marks are invited to attend a meeting.

"You tell them it's just not like it used to be in this country when things were founded on God's laws," Noble said. "You tell them that back then, white people really had rights, and we weren't so concerned about minority rights and welfare and all that stuff. Then you can guide them wherever you want to go."

Noble said that when he joined the CSA in 1977, it was just a church group. But as it turned militant two years later, he said, Christian Identity (also called "remnant" and "covenant") provided the core beliefs — especially the two seedline doctrine, which holds that just as the children of Adam are walking the Earth today, so are the children of Satan.

"We were looking at the world as good vs. evil," he said. "In those days, it made sense to us that if Christians were supposedly manifesting the nature of Christ, then perhaps there were some people manifesting the nature of Satan — which we would interpret as the Jews."

A bear of a man

Many of the issues that attract recruits to the militant right have been around for decades, and even today the rhetoric sounds familiar to anyone with even a passing knowledge of Hitler's rise to power: A Jewish financial and media conspiracy, for example, is to blame for much of what is wrong with the country. Even an old book called "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," which is a centuries-old hoax about a Jewish world conspiracy, is still considered essential reading.

Gritz (pronounced "Grites") is a retired Green Beret colonel, and is the leader of the Christian Patriot movement. He helped negotiate an end to the Randy Weaver family standoff at Ruby Ridge in 1992, which began when a deputy U.S. marshal and Weaver's wife and son were killed; ran unsuccessfully for president on the Populist ticket, which four years earlier had chosen David Duke as its candidate; and now is host of a right-wing talk radio program — on short-wave, Internet, dish satellite and a growing number of commercial AM-FM stations.

He sells shares in a "constitutional covenant community" in Idaho called "Almost Heaven." At the Tulsa gun show, he is the featured guest, and Gritz and his wife, Judy — he calls her "Sparky" — have a booth at the main entrance.

Gritz looks the part of a former Special Forces officer gone radically right: He wears jeans, a black leather vest and an impressive-looking array of medals. The vest is covered with patches, including one that urges us to remember POW-MIAs from a war that ended a quarter of a century ago. He often peppers his talks with anecdotes from his combat experiences in the jungles of Vietnam, and he tells them as convincingly as if they happened just the day before yesterday.

He is also a bear of a man.

His 250 pounds appear to be mostly muscle, and although his hair and mustache have turned gray, his manner seems to indicate plenty of vigor. He speaks in a clear and commanding voice, and if he has doubts, he keeps them to himself.

And while Gritz speaks, out on the main floor, beneath the great suspended roof of the Tulsa Expo Center, the subculture is thriving.

Do-it-yourself books

Most of the patrons who have paid the \$8 admission are sportsmen or hobbyists, and they are here to look at the acres of guns. These are legal guns, to be sure, and even the fully automatic weapons on display, such as the ubiquitous AK-47 assault rifle, are owned by federally licensed Class III dealers. They are not for sale to the general public.

Those things that are for sale include brass knuckles and throwing knives, and even 2½-ton Swiss army trucks (for \$8,000). There are ready-to-eat meals, field surgical kits and just about any type of telescopic sight or breakaway holster you can think of. And, if you are looking for them, there are plenty of things that stretch the limit of what can be considered socially acceptable behavior.

You can, for example, buy a \$5 booklet called "The Anarchist's Handbook" that tells you how to make pipe bombs, nitroglycerin and napalm in your kitchen sink. The book lists no author or publisher, and a disclaimer warns that the information is "for study purposes" only. There is a directory, however, of where you can purchase the chemicals needed for most of the 40 formulas in the book; three of the addresses — with telephone numbers — are in Tulsa.

Another anonymous booklet, "Homebrew Dynamite," gives schematics for rigging detonators and trip wires.

But the handbook with the most personality is one appropriately titled "Boom," and the first sentence reads: "The explosion for which I was arrested was definitely impressive." Instead of promoting violent subversion, the author says, the text is simply meant for hobbyists with a fondness for high explosives.

There are also plenty of copies of "Hit Man," an infamous Paladin Press how-to book on murder for hire, and the red-jacketed "The Turner Diaries."

The novel was written by William Pierce, under the pseudonym of Andrew MacDonald, and has become a field manual of sorts for the extreme right. Pierce is the leader of a white-power group called the National Alliance. The book describes a brutal race war and the violent overthrow of the federal government by white supremacists.

Timothy McVeigh, the man convicted of the Oklahoma City bombing, had the book in his possession when he was arrested. The novel describes how a fictional terrorist group blows up FBI headquarters.

The book also influenced a 1980s terrorist group called The Order, which murdered Jewish talk show host Alan Berg and engaged in other acts — including counterfeiting and bank robbery — to hasten the race war described in the book, according to the FBI.

Bob Mathews, leader of The Order, sought to create a tightly knit group to overthrow the "Zionist Occupation Government" after tax protester Gordon Kahl was shot by the FBI in Arkansas in 1983. Kahl himself was a Christian Identity believer who had killed two federal marshals after attempting to set up a shadow government in North Dakota.

In 1984, The Order netted \$3.8 million from an armored car heist in California, and gave large sums to right-wing causes, including \$10,000 to the Church of Israel at Schell City, Mo. The money later was turned over to authorities, and church patriarch Dan Gayman publicly denounced The Order and testified against it. By that time, however, Mathews had burned to death in an armed standoff with federal authorities in Washington state.

A falling out

During the 90-minute talk that culminates in the flag burning — it is billed as an update on First and Second amendment rights — Gritz addresses about 40 patrons who wander in from among the hundreds on the main floor of the gun show. Scattered among the rows of folding chairs in a corner of the expo center, his listeners are predominantly male and exclusively white.

One baby boomer on the front row has a .45-caliber automatic in a breakaway holster strapped to his hip. Across the aisle, an elderly farmer in bib overalls and a baseball cap sits patiently with an old M-1 rifle between his knees. Not far from him there's a young man in a long trench coat; while he waits for Gritz to speak, a bayonet falls from his pocket and clatters to the floor.

There are nervous smiles all around as the young man retrieves the weapon.

"You know, R.D. Diener is the only fellow I know who sponsors these Second Amendment gun shows that has any perception about people coming in and being able to learn more and ask questions," Gritz says when he takes the podium. "You can go to other shows, but the only one where you're going to learn more than when you came in is R.D. Diener productions."

He also introduces 82-year-old Pastor Fred Gabler of the Rose Hill Covenant Church in Tulsa. Gabler married Gritz and his wife, Gritz says, after they met at a Diener gun show in Oklahoma City.

For some time, Gritz had been enamored with the Church of Israel at Schell City. He even suggested in his October 2000 newsletter that those who wanted to know more about "how to do as God has commanded" should contact Pastor Gayman.

But now there's been a falling out.

After Gritz attended Passover in April at Schell City, Gayman "uninvited" him because he felt Gritz was bringing too much unwanted attention to the church. Gritz vented his anger on his short-wave radio show, and he now considers Rose Hill in Tulsa as "his" church. His RV, in fact, is parked this weekend on the church parking lot.

Gritz has kept ties with some members of the Church of Israel, however. One of the devices he's hawking is a water-purification device called Aqua Rain, manufactured by Bob Burney, a church trustee who lives at the Schell City colony. The device looks like a large coffee pot, but Gritz says it can produce 30 gallons of potable water a day. Every family needs one, Gritz says, and although the usual price is \$275, he has a supply that he'll let go this weekend for only \$160 apiece.

Burney also prints Gritz's newsletter.

Gritz touches on a range of subjects during the talk: his recent participation in the "unregistered church" struggle at the Indianapolis Baptist Temple; a blasphemous (and unbelievable) plan by the enemy to clone Jesus Christ by scouring Roman Catholic churches for traces of his DNA-laced blood; the need for every family to own a special .50-caliber rifle capable of firing armor-piercing rounds that will penetrate any kind of protection available to a federal SWAT agent.

His talk is peppered with more sales pitches:

With its pistol-grip stock and eight-round magazine, Gritz says the black Mossberg shotgun that will be used in the flag burning is the perfect home defense weapon, but the vendor has only six left.

"This thing is cheaper than dirt. It is two hundred bucks plus change," Gritz says. "Now, remember the lady, she was on television just a couple of months ago, her and her husband got kidnapped by a couple of black kids? They didn't have any kind of weapon at all."

"Well, this would have been perfect. Load this turkey up with No. 6 shot, and this is exactly what you need. It's new in the box, and it's from Green Country Gun and Pawn."

There's a new "hyper velocity" ammunition for home defense, he says, that sends slugs out of the barrel at two to three times the normal velocity — turning any pistol into the equivalent of a .44 Magnum — and another vendor has a limited supply.

"A guy named Roscoe Stoker invented it, and it's new," Gritz says. "Roscoe worked for NASA, and he found that a grain of sand at hyper velocity can go through five inches of steel. Why don't we make an ammunition that is hyper velocity that would have the same kinds of characteristics?"

One of the advantages of this ammunition, Gritz says, is that it transfers all of its energy to the target, which not only inflicts massive trauma, but also leaves very little of the bullet — and forensic evidence — behind.

In his newsletter, Gritz offers the following advice:

"Look upon Amerika as if was an enemy occupied country — have your 'papers' ready, but continue your resistance to tyranny and duty to God. " My entire effort is now directed toward preparing a few Americans to win against the many."

Infiltration

After hearing Gritz speak, Rosemary Stewart-Stafford purchases a box of the high-velocity ammunition, in .38-caliber special.

The 54-year-old Springfield, Mo., woman later concedes the irony of the purchase. She's actually a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People who infiltrates gun shows and other right-wing venues and reports her findings to an Internet watch group. But her investigation of the subculture has led her down some strange paths, she says, including being a registered handgun owner.

The gun, she says, is for her own protection.

Although Stewart-Stafford's skin is white, she is the child of a mixed marriage. She says she was conceived on the night the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and she was born to be a peacemaker. Her father was black and American Indian, her mother was white, and she describes them as "original hippies."

But her great-grandfather was part of the mob that lynched three young black men over Easter weekend in 1906 on the Springfield square. Wrongly suspected of raping a white woman, the three were hanged from a tower topped by a statue of the Goddess of Liberty.

Stewart-Stafford's call for reparations has been called "absurd" by at least one member of the Springfield City Council. But that hasn't stopped her from pressing the issue and insisting that the city owes the black community money — and an apology.

But Stewart-Stafford wasn't always an activist.

The turning point, she says, came in October 1990, when the Ku Klux Klan staged a rally in a park near her home in Springfield. Her daughter, who was eight months' pregnant, was taking photos of the rally, and was threatened with violence by one of the Klan women. But the threat wasn't treated seriously by authorities, she says.

Her daughter wasn't hurt, and she declines to identify her now for fear of making her a target of a hate crime. But Stewart-Stafford decided to do what she could to combat racism, and she became one of the NAACP's most vocal activists. She also decided to gain as much information as possible about the radical right, and she discovered the most reliable way of doing that was to become an infiltrator.

She has become a regular at gun shows and militia rallies, and many of those in the subculture who know the light-skinned woman as "Shelley" or "Katherine" would be shocked to learn that she is passing along the information she gleans to the very human-rights groups they consider the enemy.

One of the stickers she received after making a token donation to Kingdom Identity Ministries at Harrison, Ark., carries the following message: "Only inferior white women date outside of their race. Be proud of your heritage, don't be a race-mixing Slut!"

Women are victimized by the Christian Identity and militia movements, Stewart-Stafford says, because they're considered "breeders" and valued mostly for their ability to have children. Those who grew up in abusive households are particularly prone to falling into the subculture, she says, because they are used to keeping secrets.

The subculture also discourages women from thinking for themselves, Stewart-Stafford says. For children, she says, the oppression can be even worse, because not only are they discouraged from thinking for themselves, but contact with outside ideas is severed at an early age.

"They exist in such isolation and they are nearly always home-schooled, or schooled in a compound, and they grow up without normal socialization," she says. "When they get a little older, and get out in the wide world, it's a recipe for disaster. They have so much anger, and it ends up being channeled somewhere."

Eric Robert Rudolph, the fugitive wanted in the fatal bombing at Olympic Park in Atlanta in 1996, and bombings at abortion clinics and a lesbian bar elsewhere in the South, is an example of a child raised in such an environment, she says. Rudolph grew up in the right-wing Identity subculture, and he spent a few months at the Church of Israel in Schell City in 1984. Since Rudolph was charged with the bombings in 1998, the FBI has come up with a profile that describes terrorists such as Rudolph as "lone wolves."

For that reason, Stewart-Stafford says, there needs to be some regulation in Missouri of home and private schools. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education neither regulates nor monitors home schooling in Missouri. State law says parents "may" notify the superintendent of schools or the local recorder of deeds of their intent to home-school, but notification is not mandatory.

"It makes this state a haven for these kinds of people," Stewart-Stafford says. "Other states do a better job of regulating home-schooling."

The subculture survives, Stewart-Stafford says, because much of what the followers embrace looks quite harmless at first glance, such as Christianity and traditional American values such as patriotism. But a closer examination of their racist and militant views, she says, would shock most Americans.

Driven by Y2K fears, she says, the extreme right was braced for the collapse of the government Jan. 1, 2000, but was disappointed when 1999 ended with a whimper instead of a bang. Now, Stewart-Stafford says, the militants have done the math and come to the conclusion that the millennium didn't really start until this month — and are preparing for a tribulation period based in part on their interpretation of biblical prophecy.

Pastor's beliefs helped to shape Christian Identity

By Max McCoy
Joplin Globe Staff Writer

SHELL CITY, Mo. — The setting is nostalgic enough to be used as the backdrop for a movie set in the 1950s: a trim rural church, children on bicycles gliding by on the country lane, the unspoiled woods on each side.

Only the neatly lettered sign in front betrays any hint that things are out of kilter: "Church of Israel, Diocese of Manasseh."

Manasseh, the Thirteenth Tribe.

This is one of the oldest churches in the grass-roots Christian Identity movement, a movement barely 50 years old that has emerged as the glue in the fractious and often violent politics of the far right.

Identity holds that Anglo-Saxons are the true chosen people of the Bible, that Jews are the biological children of Satan, and that a cataclysmic war between the forces of good and evil is imminent.

The movement and its biblical history have been largely ignored by mainstream America, deemed as too far-out to be taken seriously. But Michael Barkun, a professor of political science at Syracuse University in New York, says we do so at our own risk.

"A movement whose beliefs are both strange and repugnant is difficult for many observers to take seriously," he said, "and because they cannot take it seriously, they conclude that it is unimportant. Unfortunately, odd and repellent belief systems can be important" if their believers take them seriously and act upon them."

Identity has three main beliefs, according to Barkun: White "Aryans" are descendants of the biblical tribes of Israel and thus are on Earth to do God's work; Jews are wholly unconnected to the Israelites and are the very children of Satan, from a sexual dalliance with Eve in the Garden of Eden; and the world is on the verge of the final struggle between good and evil in which Aryans (and variously, Anglo-Saxons) must do battle with the Jewish conspiracy and its allies so the world can be redeemed.

Dan Gayman, pastor of the Church of Israel in Schell City and "bishop" of the Diocese of Manasseh, is considered a spiritual leader in the movement for his contribution to the "two seedline" doctrine of Eve's indiscretion, based on Genesis 3:15. Gayman said his inspiration came while studying Milton's "Paradise Lost."

And even though Gayman is considered such an influential figure that he was called upon to help negotiate an end to the Freeman standoff in Montana in 1996, he objects to his church being labeled as "Christian Identity." He says the church isn't built on hate, doesn't condone violence, and is simply adhering to values that most Americans once held.

"The spiritual vision of the Church of Israel lines up with what most of rural America was doing as late as 1950," the church Web site states. "At midpoint in the 20th Century, most Americans in the rural areas and small towns of our nation were practicing ethnic separatism in marriage, in worship and in all social settings."

The Identity movement is rooted in a curious 19th century movement called British-Israelism, which holds that the British are the lineal descendants of the 10 lost tribes of Israel. The 12 tribes of Israel were divided into two kingdoms after the death of King Solomon: the northern kingdom of 10 tribes, called Israel, and the two southern tribes, called Judah. The northern tribes were lost by history after they were conquered around 722 by the Assyrians. The 13th tribe is considered by Identity as Britain and the United States.

In the 1920s, however, Identity became a purely American movement with the addition of racist and fascist overtones. Early leaders included Wesley Swift and retired U.S. Army Col. William Potter Gale, who died in 1970 and 1988, respectively. More recently, the movement has been associated with Richard G. Butler, head of the Aryan Nations at Hayden Lake, Idaho, and with the anti-tax and anti-government group called Posse Comitatus — Latin for "power of the country."

A call to action

Scott Stroud, a visiting lecturer at San Jose State University in California, delivered a paper on Gayman's work at the National Communication Association's recent meeting in Seattle. He concluded that Gayman's booklet, "The Book of Adam," offers a seductive and familiar-sounding story.

"I was intrigued because it was so short, direct and simple," Stroud said, "yet espoused a version of the Christian story I had never heard of before — a version that privileges the 'white race' over all other races under the sanction of God."

Stroud said he was particularly surprised by the two seedline doctrine, which is rarely studied by academics and is virtually unknown outside the Identity subculture.

"Jews are (portrayed as) the literal children of Satan through his copulation with Eve," he said. "Other races are portrayed as the non-earthly legions of Satan sent to conquer the white race. This message of intolerance and racial separation surprised me because it is antithetical to the message of love in the Bible and the story recounted in Genesis."

Also, Stroud said, a call to action is implied: The reader must separate himself from the "ordinary world" and re-examine the true meaning of the Bible, as interpreted by Christian Identity doctrine, then return to the world with a new attitude of white supremacy.

"In traditional myth, the hero improves the community and the world," Stroud said. "In Christian Identity myth, the hero takes part in the cleansing of other 'impure' races. This is a hero that most people would not want in modern America."

Although Gayman now says the two seedline doctrine represents a small part of his theology, its impact on the Identity movement has been profound. It also was part of the reason that Texas businessman Jerry Gentry became the Church of Israel's most generous patron.

Gentry, a proponent of racial separation who says blacks and Asians are a "primate species" created before Adam, says he was drawn to the Church of Israel after reading Gayman's treatise on Genesis 3:15.

But Gentry says he doesn't consider himself an anti-Semite because that would be "oxymoronic"; the Semites are descendants of Noah's son Shem and are the "covenant people" of the Bible — white Anglo-Saxons, including the British royal family. Modern Jews, Gentry claims, flow from the pagan kingdom of Khazaria in southern Russian, which converted to Judaism in the eighth century.

Gentry has recently broken with Gayman and the Church of Israel, however; he now backs Scott Stinson, a minister who departed the Schell City church because he thought Gayman was not outspoken enough.

Lawmen on lookout

A spokesman for the Missouri State Highway Patrol said the Identity movement is particularly difficult to track, because law enforcement must walk a fine line between protecting the public and protecting an individual's right to free speech.

"By law, we have to have some kind of criminal complaint before we can collect intelligence or disseminate intelligence on a particular group," said Capt. Jim Keathley, who tracks right-wing groups from patrol headquarters in Jefferson City.

"But in general, in our state, we kind of go through peaks and valleys, it seems. For instance, right after the Oklahoma City bombing we saw a dramatic increase in the number of militia groups within the state. That movement has dwindled off, and the same thing with the Christian Identity movement."

In 1999, the FBI said that assessing Identity's potential for violence was difficult because of the unstructured and fluid nature of the movement. Only a small percentage of Identity believers actually thought the new millennium would bring about a race war, the bureau said, but those who did had a high propensity for violence.

And, the FBI said, there were other troubling signs.

"A relatively new tenet gaining popularity among Christian Identity believers justifies the use of violence if it is perpetrated in order to punish violators of God's law," it said. "This includes killing interracial couples, abortionists, prostitutes and homosexuals, burning pornography stores, and robbing banks and perpetrating frauds to undermine the 'usury system.'"

Hate finds a home in the Ozarks

By Andy Ostmeyer
Joplin Globe Staff Writer

The Ozarks has been tagged as one of three centers of radical right extremism in the United States.

Part of the reason for that is an accident of geography: The rural, thinly populated rhythm of hill and hollow provides natural cover.

Part of the reason is historic: There are few blacks.

That is no accident.

A series of turn-of-the-century lynchings in the region prompted a black diaspora. Hundreds of blacks fled the Ozarks for larger cities. That was followed by a period of intense Ku Klux Klan activism. The result is a homogenized area that one person described as "whitewashed."

The people of the region also have deep religious convictions, a "don't-tread-on-me-and-I-won't-tread-on-you" attitude, and a wariness of government that borders on distrust and dates to the Civil War.

The latter characteristics provide another type of cover for radical right hate groups: cultural cover.

Into this mix came a preacher described as the greatest orator of his age. Gerald L.K. Smith, who made his home in the Ozarks, once was described as "the most prominent anti-Semite in America." Smith, a father of tourism in the region, also had ties to the first generation of Christian Identity leaders.

And, it was in the Ozarks that a survivalist Christian sect evolved into a racist, anti-Semitic organization that first proposed a violent act "with a large body count to make the government sit up and take notice."

The target was to be the federal building in Oklahoma City.

Arm of the Lord

President of his high school's Future Farmers of America, Kerry Noble said there is little in his middle-class, Baptist background to set him up as a key player in a violent hate group.

A charismatic minister, Noble was 25 in 1977 when he and his wife joined a group of Christian seekers led by James Ellison.

Noble said he and his wife were looking for a more authentic Christian experience, believing that other churches had become too secular, too hypocritical.

But in less than a decade, that group evolved into something the federal government described as the "No. 2 domestic terrorist organization in the country." Noble was its No. 2 man, behind Ellison.

Noble said part of that group's beliefs — that Jews were not the children of God but the seed of Satan, and that white people were the supreme race — came after Ellison went to the Church of Israel, in Vernon County, and met its pastor, Dan Gayman.

The Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord, as Ellison's group eventually called itself, would be responsible for a church arson in Springfield and for bombing a Jewish Community Center in Indiana. As early as 1983, it talked of blowing up the federal building in Oklahoma City. Ellison and other members of the group even went to Oklahoma City at one point in the early 1980s to case the federal building, which Timothy McVeigh destroyed on April 19, 1995, killing 168 people.

An accident at the Covenant compound, and then a raid by local, state and federal officers, broke up the group before it carried out any more violent plans, according to Noble, who served more than two years behind bars for possession of unregistered weapons.

That raid began April 19, 1985 — 10 years to the day before McVeigh's attack.

Silhouette City

According to Noble, who now lives in Fort Worth, Texas, church members expected economic and social collapse, rioting, war, and even the possibility of nuclear war, and began preparing for those calamities.

Noble, who has since renounced his earlier views, said Ellison believed he was told by God to move away from heavily populated areas, believing there were not enough righteous people left in the cities to spare them. The group thought its only hope was a refuge in isolation.

"It had to be a certain distance from cities," Noble said.

Ellison drew a circle around cities with more than 100,000 people and eliminated everything within a hundred miles as a potential location.

"There were six or seven places in the country where those circles don't overlap," Noble explained. That includes the Ozarks.

Eventually, Ellison and his group moved what they called the Zarephath-Horeb community to 224 acres of peninsula that spilled into Bull Shoals Lake. It was located between Oakland, Ark., and Gainesville, Mo.

Noble said the nearest town of any size was 40 miles away, and the nearest paved highway was nine miles away. One, maybe two, unfamiliar cars passed down that road in a month.

Most of the world, the group believed, was going to perish during a tribulation, and the members of the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord were going to be among the elect chosen by God to rebuild society. People who arrived at the compound needing help would be given help, but those who arrived with hostile intentions would be resisted with force.

To prepare for that, the group began stockpiling weapons — later converting some to automatic, and adding hand grenades and poison gas — as well as survival gear and food.

The CSA offered a course called "Endtime Overcomer Survival Training School," providing hands-on training in urban warfare, guns, wilderness survival and martial arts.

A mock village for military-style training also was erected. It was called Silhouette City, and eventually would feature pop-up, cut-out caricatures of blacks, Jews and law officers to use for target practice.

Center of extremism

Although the CSA was broken up in 1985, the Southern Poverty Law Center says 32 similar groups exist in the Ozarks today, some with connections to Ellison. These groups espouse the same anti-Semitic, separatist, racist message as the CSA.

"The Ozarks is one of the three big centers of radical right extremism in the country," said Mark Potok, spokesman for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala.

The other two hot spots are the Pacific Northwest and the heavily wooded North Carolina and Tennessee borderland.

According to Potok, these three areas have an anti-federalist tradition that in the case of the Ozarks dates to the Civil War. That anti-federalist tradition, Potok said, includes everything from rebellious moonshiners to gangsters such as Bonnie and Clyde who hid out in, and occasionally shot up, the Ozarks.

Anti-government views are not the only common strain.

Christian Identity groups, as they are known, have more luck recruiting in areas where there are fundamentalist churches with strong apocalyptic beliefs than in areas where there are strong mainline Protestant and Catholic populations, Potok said.

"It's a shorter journey (theologically)," he said.

Noble said good candidates for the CSA included people who felt their churches were not Christian enough, who were looking for a more radical Christian experience.

Rex Campbell, rural sociologist at the University of Missouri, also said the Ozarks is populated with people who have a strong independent streak, a result of their Scottish-Irish heritage. They like to be left alone; in turn, they leave others alone.

"There is a real sense in the Ozarks of people minding their own business," Noble said. "Nobody asked any questions of us."

Living in an isolated area, having little contact with neighbors, played into the group members' hands, Noble said. It protected them but also resulted in increasing radicalization.

"Initially, we thought the isolation was our best friend," Noble explained. "It ended up being our worst enemy. That is part of what enabled us to become deceived."

'Whitewash'

There is something else that groups with racist and separatist beliefs are seeking: areas that Potok characterized as "very white."

Noble agreed, but noted that for members of his group, the anti-Semitic and racist beliefs came after they moved to the compound to prepare for the end.

But he said the Ozarks is a natural for groups with like-minded views.

"People who do want to get out of the cities, part of what they are looking for is more whiteness," he said. Today, the Ozarks is an "exceedingly 'white' place," in the words of Jeffrey Nash, head of the department of sociology and anthropology at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield.

Springfield, the Ozarks' largest city, is 3 percent black today; other cities are less so. However, at the end of the 19th century, some parts of the region had a much larger black population. Many historians think the black population was around 10 percent, although one census estimate put it as high as 25 percent in 1878.

In Joplin, blacks were among those attracted by the mining boom, and some blacks rose to own mine property. According to Joplin historian Gail Renner, "Some amassed considerable wealth." In Springfield, according to Nash, blacks owned the largest grocery store and held a seat on the school board.

Despite that, racial prejudice simmering just below the surface bubbled up in blood at the turn of the century with lynchings in Pierce City, Joplin and Springfield.

In 1903 in Joplin, a black man accused of shooting a police officer was dragged from his cell and hanged from a telephone pole at Second Street and Wall Avenue. That night, a mob burned the homes of other black residents. When firefighters arrived, their hoses were slashed.

According to Renner, "The next morning, many blacks packed their belongings and left by train. About 100 black families fled."

A similar episode erupted on Easter Sunday in 1906, when three innocent blacks accused of assaulting a white woman were lynched on Springfield's public square. A mob of 5,000 people threatened further violence and destruction, but the governor sent in troops to stop the mob.

Several hundred blacks in Springfield fled for St. Louis, Kansas City, Memphis, Tenn., and Tulsa, Okla., according to historian and Springfield resident Mary Newland Clary. She has heard the term "whitewash" used to describe what happened.

"Springfield experienced, along with the rest of the region, a diaspora of African-Americans," Nash said.

The following decades witnessed an outburst of Klan activity, including a rally attended by 1,500 hooded Klansmen in 1921 at Schifferdecker Park in Joplin.

Freeman Hospital was built, in part, with a donation of \$10,086 made by the Klan, whose robed members received a standing ovation.

And Joplin's Connor Hotel, the city's symbol of cultural elegance, displayed a rooftop KKK sign during a rally in 1923 that attracted 1,300 marchers.

In Springfield, Klan members gathered at a cave that later became known as Fantastic Caverns, which is a popular tourist attraction today.

At the same time, industrializing cities were looking for cheap labor, providing other reasons for blacks to move to larger cities. The result was a decline in numbers and in clout for the black community, which at one time had one-third of the registered voters in Greene County.

Although many whites in the Ozarks organized to defend minorities and combat the Klan, the ultimate effect was "race homogenization," according to Nash, resulting in that "exceedingly white place."

Therein lies part of the region's appeal.

"I feel certain that the absence of African-Americans and Jews would be a major predisposing factor" in picking locations, said Michael Barkun, a professor of political science at Syracuse University and an expert on the Christian Identity movement.

The anti-Semitic link

Blacks are not the only ones targeted by the extremist right. Another theme of many of these groups is anti-Semitism, and here, too, the Ozarks has a connection.

A minister named Gerald L.K. Smith began publishing an anti-Semitic newspaper in 1942 called *The Cross and the Flag*. He published it with the help of a Kansas preacher, the Rev. Gerald Winrod, another anti-Semite, who believed Jews started World War II.

Approaching retirement in the early 1960s, Smith fell in love with the city that calls itself America's Victorian Village — Eureka Springs, Ark. — and soon moved there. Although he left his publishing empire in California, he continued to run it from his home in Eureka Springs.

Barkun said Smith "was by the 1940s, and remained until his death in 1976, the most prominent anti-Semite in America."

Barkun also has linked Smith to the birth of something else, the Christian Identity movement, which views Jews not as children of God but as children of Satan.

In the words of the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord's propaganda: "We believe the Scandinavian-German-Teutonic-British-American people to be the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel which Jesus was sent for." Jews of today are not God's chosen people but are in fact an anti-Christ race, whose purpose is to destroy God's people and Christianity."

That destruction would come about in part because of "inter-racial mixing and perversions," and the fact that, according to the CSA, "Jews are financing the training of blacks to take over most of our major cities."

There is some disagreement among scholars about whether Smith was simply a straightforward anti-Semite or a Christian Identity believer himself. Arguments can be made either way, said Barkun.

But what is clear, according to Barkun, is that the Christian Identity movement in the United States developed with "a cadre of West Coast preachers, most in Southern California, and all in the orbit of the leading ultra right-wing figure of the 1940s and 1950s, Gerald L.K. Smith."

"He was kind of a connecting link."

Barkun said Smith had contact with the seminal Christian Identity figures in the country, including Wesley Swift and William Potter Gale, the latter of whom founded Posse Comitatus in the 1970s.

Smith's biographer, Glen Jeansonne of the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, said Smith himself never participated in or urged violence, even though his "extremist rhetoric" may have incited others to violence.

And, in fact, it would be the death of a Posse Comitatus member in an Ozarks shootout that led other extremist radicals, including the CSA, to plot revenge with a large body count.

Fated day

On Feb. 13, 1983, two federal marshals arrived at the North Dakota home of Gordon Kahl to arrest him because of a parole violation in connection with an earlier conviction for nonpayment of taxes. Kahl shot and killed both marshals. Federal officials caught up with him that summer in a farmhouse in the Arkansas Ozarks, and Kahl was killed in a shootout.

His death became a rallying point at the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord.

"It got the whole movement riled up," Noble said.

He said it was an honorary member of the group, Richard Wayne Snell, who first talked about blowing up the Oklahoma City federal building in retaliation for Kahl's death.

Snell was angry with the Internal Revenue Service, which had raided his home, and even took Ellison to Oklahoma City to case the federal building, Noble said. They were going to blast it apart with a rocket bomb.

But the two never were able to carry out their plans.

They were attempting to build a rocket when it exploded in one of the CSA member's hands, injuring him. The group saw that as a sign from God that the plan was not viewed favorably, Noble said. Instead, CSA members began conceiving a plot to kill a federal judge, a federal prosecutor and an FBI agent, but those plans, too, collapsed.

Eventually, the raid by officers ended any CSA plans, and Ellison, Noble and others went to jail.

After his release from prison, Ellison went to Elohim City, another Christian Identity compound near Muldrow, Okla., according to Noble. Ellison even married a relative of Richard Millar, the founder of that community.

Elohim City, which has ties to the CSA that go back nearly 20 years, is the place McVeigh called just weeks before the bombing.

Snell eventually would be convicted of murdering a black patrolman in Arkansas. Before that, he killed a pawnshop owner in Texarkana, Ark., whom he mistakenly believed to be Jewish.

He was sentenced to death and was executed at 9 p.m. on April 19, 1995 — 12 hours after McVeigh's truck bomb destroyed the federal building.

Snell is buried at Elohim City.

'Minister of Hate' **Eureka Springs luminary labeled 'most prominent anti-Semite in America'**

By Andy Ostmeyer
Joplin Globe Staff Writer

EUREKA SPRINGS, Ark. — The giant, white concrete and steel Christ of the Ozarks statue towers 70 feet over the surrounding countryside.

Fingertip to fingertip, the arms stretch 65 feet.

Nearby are the Bible Museum, a Memorial Chapel, and the New Holy Land with re-created Old Testament brick pits and costumed tour guides. The area also contains "The Great Passion Play," where the passion of Christ is re-enacted during the tourist season.

Gerald L.K. Smith and his wife, Elna, are buried here.

Smith founded the religious theme park and is considered a father of tourism in the Ozarks, having fallen in love with Eureka Springs' Victorian mountain charm at a time when Carroll County was one of the most impoverished counties in one of the country's more impoverished states.

Millions of people have come to see Smith's religious play and tour the grounds in the past 35 years, but few know the full story about the creator's past.

Smith began his rise to fame in the 1930s and within a decade was "the most prominent American spokesman of anti-Semitism," according to historian Leonard Dinnerstein.

Another scholar, Syracuse University political science professor Michael Barkun, has written that "Smith was, by the 1940s, and remained until his death in 1976, the most prominent anti-Semite in America."

According to Barkun and others, Smith also had direct connections to the seminal figures who gave birth to the Christian Identity movement in the latter half of the 20th century.

'Rodents'

Smith was born in Wisconsin. His work as a minister took him to Shreveport, La. There, he met Huey Long, Louisiana's powerful politician. Smith banged the drum for Long's political bids and his "Share the Wealth" campaign until an assassin killed the Kingfish.

Smith would continue his preaching and political career with what The New York Times described as a "bewildering succession of unusual organizations — The Committee of One Million, the America First Party, the Christian Nationalist Party — whose common denominator has been protest and incessant churning of the nation's small but perpetual stratum of extremist discontent."

Journalist H.L. Mencken described Smith as "the greatest orator of them all, not the greatest by an inch or a foot or a yard or a mile, but the greatest by at least two light years" the Aristotle and Johann Sebastian Bach of all known ear-splitters, dead or alive."

Thomas Dewey, the Republican contender for president, used a far less stirring comparison.

Worried that Smith and others like him would "pollute" the Republican Party, he described the preacher and his followers as "rodents."

Seeking respect

Around 1964, Smith moved to Eureka Springs, living here during the summers, and soon began his projects, which were well-received.

Local judges, the mayor, the president of the ministerial association and even a retired congressman were present for the dedication of the Christ of the Ozarks statue, which was completed in 1966.

Two historians, Arnold Forster and Benjamin Epstein, concluded that the people of Eureka Springs were willingly seduced by Smith's projects and the economic potential they promised.

High school girls handed out literature about the "Passion Play." Smith's right-hand man and the editor of his anti-Semitic newspaper, Charles Robertson, sat on the board of the Eureka Springs Chamber of Commerce and would later become the town's mayor.

Restaurants and gift shops proliferated after Smith's work began, followed by new hotels and the renovation of turn-of-the-century buildings.

Smith's biographer, Glen Jeansonne, a history professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, said Smith tried to distance himself from his anti-Semitic newspaper, The Cross and the Flag, after moving to Eureka Springs. He wouldn't allow the paper to be delivered here, for example.

Jeansonne titled his book "Gerald L.K. Smith, Minister of Hate."

Although Smith wouldn't allow his paper to be delivered in Eureka Springs, he continued to record his messages on tapes at his home in Arkansas and then mail those tapes to California, where the newspaper was published.

"He wanted to be respectable," Jeansonne said of Smith. "He didn't want to taint his sacred projects in Eureka Springs.

"Most people who go up there have no idea about it."

A new way to hate

Former member of group cites influence of Schell City pastor

By Andy Ostmeyer
Joplin Globe Staff Writer

Although Dan Gayman denies ever meeting James Ellison — the head of a violent, domestic terrorist organization called the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord — a former CSA member says the two not only met, but that it was Gayman who taught Ellison a new way to hate.

Former CSA member Kerry Noble said Gayman should not be blamed for any of the group's violent acts, including the bombing of a Jewish community center in Indiana and plans more than a decade ago to blow up the Oklahoma City federal building.

But, Noble said it was Gayman who helped turn Ellison — and, through him, other CSA members — into white supremacists who blamed blacks and Jews for many of the nation's social and economic problems.

Noble, now of Fort Worth, Texas, said Ellison and his followers originally were something of a religious community, a group of seekers unhappy with mainstream churches who were looking for a more authentic Christian experience.

They evolved over time into a group of Christian survivalists who believed that the collapse of society was imminent. With that in mind, CSA members purchased \$52,000 worth of military hardware in 1978 and 1979, and began military-style training: The weapons included 9 mm and .38- and .45-caliber pistols, assault rifles and other rifles, and 12-gauge shotguns.

About that time, CSA leader Ellison, an iron worker, took a temporary job working on government missile silos in Missouri.

It was during Ellison's absence, Noble said, that some CSA members converted those weapons from legal semiautomatics into illegal automatics — essentially machine guns — and manufactured silencers for their pistols and hand grenades.

Ellison decided to keep the illegal weapons, and then, after returning to the CSA compound from another work trip, played a tape combining patriotic music with Gayman's preaching.

It would be another step in the group's transformation.

According to Noble, Ellison went to work on Minuteman missile silos — then the biggest guns in America's nuclear holster. At the time, Missouri had 150 of the missiles, some located in northeast Vernon County.

While in that area, Ellison met Gayman, pastor of the Church of Israel near Schell City.

It was Gayman, said Noble, who taught and converted Ellison — and, through him, the CSA — into a Christian Identity sect, which believed that Jews were not the chosen race of God, but usurpers descended from Satan, and that white Europeans and their Anglo-Saxon descendants in America were in fact the true chosen children of God.

Noble said the CSA members had earlier come into contact with neo-Nazis and Ku Klux Klan members at meetings and conferences, "but weren't much interested in their message, or in their propaganda."

But, Noble said, after listening to Gayman's tapes, he and others were "energized" by the message and especially its patriotic themes.

"I loved what Dan Gayman had taught us," Noble said.

He and other CSA members began to adopt the Christian Identity message with its racist and anti-Semitic themes, although Noble said that for him, that conversion came slowly, and only after he read Gayman's writings and other similar literature.

By the following spring, after accepting the Identity message, CSA members sold their hogs, believing them to be unclean. In 1980, they celebrated their first Passover complete with a slaughtered lamb and blood sprinkled on the door posts of Ellison's house.

"A second step had been taken," Noble writes in his book, "Tabernacle of Hate."

"Now we were no longer just Christian survivalists but we were white supremacists!" As white supremacists, we now believed that other races and those who would betray the white cause in America were destined to be destroyed in the future chaos. We were now not only the elect spiritually, but racially as well."

Blacks, Jews discount beliefs, threats of church

By Roger McKinney
Joplin Globe Staff Writer

Some leaders of Joplin's black and Jewish communities say they don't feel threatened by the Church of Israel, as long as the members and their ideas remain isolated in Vernon County.

At least one, however, said the church's seclusion doesn't eliminate the threat.

The Rev. Harry Givens, pastor of Joplin's Unity Baptist Church and a leader of the black community, said his interpretation of Scripture disagrees with that of the Church of Israel.

"As far as my understanding of the Scripture, the Jews were originally God's chosen people," Givens said. "When Christ died, he died for all. There's no race involved in it."

Givens said he doesn't think the Church of Israel represents a direct threat.

"I don't have anything against what people want to believe, but in my opinion, it's no threat," he said.

The Rev. Jerry Hodges, pastor of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Joplin, said the Church of Israel could be described as a cult.

"I'm concerned that, yes, they are present in the area, but not as a physical threat," Hodges said. "Cults are not very active in reaching other people. They build a place where they can be isolated, and they stay away from other people."

Hodges said he doesn't understand how members of the Church of Israel can call themselves Christians when they exclude people.

"I am more concerned about their mind-set," Hodges said. "I would have a problem in how they identify themselves as being Christian. Christ makes salvation available to all."

He said when church leaders are not willing to discuss their beliefs in a public setting, that gives him further indication that the organization is a cult.

Paul Teverow, president of Joplin's United Hebrew Congregation, said he is concerned, but he does not feel threatened by the Church of Israel operating in Vernon County.

"Obviously it raises some concern," Teverow said.

"I can't say I've seen those sort of ideas reflected around here. I don't devote my time to being worried about that kind of nonsense."

Teverow said he may be naive, but he doesn't feel any direct threat from the group.

"Clearly, one has to be concerned when people who are well-financed are propagating such ideas," he said. "It doesn't seem many people in this area give much credence to that kind of nonsense."

James Fleischaker, a former president of the United Hebrew Congregation, said though the Church of Israel may be isolated, it is not necessarily harmless.

"There's always a concern that these people may put their beliefs into effect," Fleischaker said. "If people have these beliefs, then you have to worry about what they might do in response to their beliefs. When you get people that have these kind of beliefs, you really don't know what they might be inclined to do."

Fleischaker said the "lone wolf" types who may not be church members, but who subscribe to the same beliefs, may carry out violent acts that they think the church might support.

He said groups like the Church of Israel often use the Internet or publications to spread their message of hate.

Fleischaker said the fact that people hold such beliefs at all, not simply that they are nearby, is troubling.

"It's disturbing that anybody has such views anywhere," Fleischaker said. "These people are not what we would consider sane and rational. I wouldn't wish them on anybody."

Professor: Heaven a mixed multitude

EDITOR'S NOTE: Woody Wilkinson, a professor of theology at Ozark Christian College in Joplin, provided the following viewpoint on ethnic origin and the beliefs of mainline Christians.

Throughout the history of the church, many men have strayed from the biblical, as well as the orthodox position of mainstream Christianity.

Although some of these movements were sincere in their attempts, many were a direct contradiction to the clear teachings of the Word of God.

Needless to say, such movements should not surprise us, since the Bible clearly warns us that such distortions would arise. In fact, the Bible tells us that some religious leaders would openly twist the Scriptures in order to support their illegal agenda, their immoral lifestyles or their abuse or mistreatment of others.

One way that religious groups have clearly deviated from the biblical pattern is in the area of ethnic origin. To use the Bible as a resource, or to promote the position that God has a superior race of people that he loves more than others, is clearly a distortion of the God that is revealed in the biblical text.

To confirm such a conclusion, please consider the following principles from the revealed Word of God. First, from creation it is clear that all mankind bears the "image" of God. This unique feature does make man different from the animal kingdom, but it is not limited to a select group with a particular ethnic background.

Furthermore, the creation emphasis in the Bible always traces mankind back to the first man, Adam.

Secondly, as God was setting the plans for the coming Messiah, he made it perfectly clear to Abraham and to others that the blessing was intended for the "whole" world.

Another illustration in the Old Testament that serves to illustrate this point is when God saves the city of Nineveh. Jonah was looking forward to its annihilation. However, the people had a change of heart and God spared the city. Clearly, God moved beyond Jonah's racism and spared a city doomed for judgment. Jesus' ministry clearly addresses the issue of racism. He not only dealt with all types of people, but he made it perfectly clear that faith, not race, was the basis for his acceptance of that individual.

The classic model for this is seen in Jesus' interview with the Samaritan woman at the well in Chapter 4 of John's Gospel. In addition to Jesus' personal involvement with people is His Great Commission to the church. The commission was directed to the whole world and it was to involve all the different ethnic races in the world. No particular race was to be held superior to another.

Along with the recorded references in the Bible regarding God's interest and love for all mankind, nothing could summarize it better than God's portrayal of heaven.

The community of heaven is made up of a mixed multitude. They will come out of every tribe and tongue and nation (Revelation 4:9).

There is no clearer statement found in the Bible that supports the fact that the ultimate gathering of heaven is a multitude of different races.

Estranged family members describe . . . Life in the church

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tim Gayman is the 36-year-old estranged son of Dan Gayman, the patriarch of the Church of Israel. Tim Gayman and his wife, Sarah, left the church in 1991 and are now in hiding in the western United States. They agreed to an e-mail interview about what it's like to live inside the church colony. Dan Gayman has denied allegations that he preaches a message of hate and that he manipulates members of his congregation.

Q. Tim, could you describe how you came to be "estranged" from your father and the Church of Israel?

Tim Gayman: A little history first. Sarah was brought out to the Church of Israel in autumn of 1982 by her parents. She was 16. Her parents allowed her to stay and attend the church school. My father spent a lot of time with her. In 1984, after Sarah and I had been dating for a year, my dad said, "this is the fork in the road of your life, Sarah, you can either marry Tim and be a part of this family and great church forever, or you can leave with your parents and never see Tim or any of us again."

Sarah chose to stay and marry me. On April 7, 1984, we were married at 6 a.m. without Sarah's parents knowledge. My dad was preaching against having a marriage license at the time, and we would have been unable to get Sarah's parents' permission anyhow, so my dad married us without a marriage license. The way we were married caused a lot of hurt in both our families. Dad could never control Sarah the way he could my sisters and brothers and me. She eventually began to resent his constant manipulation.

Sarah Gayman: I did resent it and couldn't believe how everyone in Tim's family lived in constant fear of rejection or condemnation from my mother-in-law and father-in-law. There were several things that led to our exit, and I felt there were things that were very wrong in the way Dan operated the Church of Israel. For instance, my (in-laws) insisted that I give birth to our second child at home. I didn't feel comfortable with that since we were about 30 minutes from the nearest hospital and my mother-in-law (who had no professional training) wanted to act as my midwife.

But the biggest reason for my departure was an attack of conscience. I was never completely comfortable with their theology which stated that black people don't have spirits and cannot be saved and that only "white-Israelites" can go to heaven. They also believe that Jewish people are the "Seed of Satan." I felt an intense feeling of isolation there. I missed my family, whom I was discouraged from associating with. I had no friends outside of Tim's family and COI members. Tim was constantly being told to "get Sarah under your authority" because it was obvious that I was unhappy and it was an embarrassment to Dan and the family. I felt badly for Tim, but he lived in a constant state of working to please his father. I decided I could not rear my children in that environment. I left Tim in April of 1991 and went to stay with my parents in South Carolina. Tim called me 6 weeks later and we agreed to reconcile.

Tim Gayman: Sarah and I took our kids to a local church in Springfield, and I began to realize that what my Dad was preaching was works-based. It was all religion, it was not Christianity. There were no fruits of the Holy Spirit in their lives, they were condemning and controlling, not loving and kind the way Christ taught us to be.

Q. Is the Church of Israel a cult?

Tim Gayman: Yes, in that my father uses manipulation to control the people in his church. He uses the Bible to fit his current agenda.

Sarah Gayman: I think it's definitely a cult. According to cult exiting counselors like Rick Ross, the fact that Dan Gayman is the central controlling figure of this group and controls his family with guilt, the promise of spiritual blessings and the threat of damnation makes the COI very cult-like in its psychological makeup. Dan also has a keen way of controlling the "rumor mill" and effectively "spins" the story the way he wants it perceived, and is usually very successful at it. The man is completely void of conscience, or he could not tell the falsehoods he tells on a regular basis.

Tim Gayman: My Dad does engage in spiritual abuse. If you don't agree with him, he will try to destroy you. I don't really know about physical abuse. I was harshly disciplined as a child, but obviously survived.

Q. Dan Gayman protests that the Church of Israel has taken a bad rap from the media on its associations with the violent fringe. Does the COI court potentially violent members of the far right?

Tim Gayman: During the 1970s and 1980s, my Dad was more closely associated with what you call the "violent fringe." I know there was some sort of link to "The Order" back then. He was at least sympathetic toward them and talked to some of them on the phone. During the late 1980s he changed and decided it wasn't worth the risk. He began to teach obedience to civil authorities, although he still harbors a deep distrust of the federal government. And, the Church of Israel is a racist church. Their beliefs are based on two things: Jews are the "Seed of Satan," and blacks are an inferior race, have no spirit and cannot be "saved."

Q. Are the rumors about armed guards and a stockpile of firearms true? Does the church complex deserve the label "compound"?

Tim Gayman: Like most rural communities, there are firearms out there. I know there are no armed guards.

Sarah Gayman: I feel it is a compound, in that it is a closed community. A mixed couple would never be allowed to settle down out there (Not that they would want to.) Dan owns several hundreds of acres and most of the parishioners live on that land within a 3- to 5-mile radius of the church.

Q. Sarah, how are women treated at the COI?

Sarah Gayman: Women are not regarded very highly. In my experience, I was expected to shut up and be barefoot and pregnant all the time. If you are a woman with a strong personality who disagrees with Dan, you are in the worst possible position. The only women who have any power out there are Dan Gayman's wife and two eldest daughters, who work tirelessly to please their father by having as many children (at home) as they can and being an example of a "proper Christian-Israelite woman of God."

Q. Anything you'd like to add?

Tim Gayman: We just want to say again that we don't hate anyone out there; hate is not a family value, and that is the main reason we've stayed away from there.

Separatism and tolerance

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dan Gayman, pastor of the Church of Israel, sent this letter to The Joplin Globe after two news stories appeared.

Dear Mr. Simpson:

Thank you for allowing me to respond to the series of articles appearing in recent days on The Church of Israel in The Joplin Globe. I am trusting that in the interest of a free press this letter will be published without changes.

Your interest in sharing information about The Church of Israel comes as no surprise. What does come as a surprise is that the views expressed about this church in your newspaper attempts to prejudice your readers against this church and the very fine people who make up this congregation.

I find it quite interesting that while tolerance for religious diversity is something that The Joplin Globe seeks to emulate in all other faiths, this tolerance does not extend to the doctrines espoused by The Church of Israel. Your definition of tolerance does not extend to the several hundred people who share the religious views of this church.

Moreover, while your newspaper would be ready to give credence and support to the great diversity that exists within the American population, that definition of diversity apparently does not include the Separatist views espoused by the congregation of The Church of Israel. The practice of Separatism is fairly widespread in American society. Apparently there is no room in this great American diversity for the Separatist views of this congregation. The fact that we seek to maintain God's original design respecting God's ownership and mark upon every race does not conform to your definition of inclusion. We practice Separatism in marriage and worship because we believe that is what God and scripture teach.

In all truth the congregation of The Church of Israel have great love and tolerance for all races and people that combine together to make up a national population of more than 281,000,000 people. The fact that we do not believe in nor practice interracial dating, marriage and socialization makes us unacceptable by your standards. We want nothing for ourselves that we would not want for every other group within the American populous.

It is very difficult for the congregation to understand why the word diversity cannot be inclusive of The Church of Israel. Recall that the Pilgrims and Puritans who first arrived on American soil in the early 1600s were all Separatists. Why is it suddenly wrong to be Separatist in terms of dating, marriage and worship? Why is it good for other racial groups to practice Separatism while being bad for this congregation? There is a lot of Separatism practiced in America and some of it is blatant and open. This Separatism is fully acceptable unless it happens to be practiced by Caucasians? Why is Separatism good for some but bad if it happens to be practiced by Caucasians?

Why does a country that seeks to practice inclusion seek the exclusion of this congregation? This is a congregation of hard working, honest and God-fearing people. They bother no one! They work hard to pay their bills and see that their children become responsible and productive citizens of this great country. They work along side races of every kind and stand shoulder to shoulder with them in the defense and protection of America whenever the need arises.

The congregation shows great tolerance for the great diversity within the borders of this American fatherland. We fully realize that inclusion means that America has a very broad mixture of people from every race, religion, and culture. Why within this great diversity is there not room for the people of The Church of Israel? Why must they be talked about on the front page of The Joplin Globe to the utter exclusion of all other groups who practice Separatism without any concern of this newspaper?

Does the Civil Rights legislation of 1964 and amendments added thereto not apply to the U.S. Citizens who attend The Church of Israel? Are the members of this congregation being denied basic civil rights in pursuit of their religious preferences? Is The Joplin Globe contributing to the denial of the basic human rights to worship God according to the dictates of religious conscience? Must the people of The Church of Israel continue to suffer persecution in the pursuit of their religious conscience?

The Church of Israel is very mainstream in many ways. Our people work at jobs throughout Southwest Missouri. They work along side other races and they serve in the Armed Services when called upon to do so. They vote and take an active interest in civil affairs. Why must they be persecuted in pursuit of their religious conscience? Where is the tolerance for this church and its Separatist doctrine in this great land of racial, religious and cultural diversity? Will someone please assist us with answers?

Pastor Dan Gayman
Schell City, Mo.

The story behind the story

"Ordained by Hate" is the result of an intensive investigation during which the Globe scrutinized thousands of pages of public records, and conducted dozens of in-person and telephone interviews.

Many of the interviews were in-depth, and they often were adversarial in nature. The interview with Dan Gayman, the 63-year-old patriarch of the Church of Israel in Schell City, for example, took place after weeks of negotiation (no question was eventually deemed off-limits, but no cameras were allowed inside the church complex) and lasted nearly three hours. The transcript of that interview alone runs 52 typed pages.

The investigation started Nov. 14 with a probe into records at the Vernon County Courthouse in Nevada, where lead reporter Max McCoy began seeking property and court records associated with the Church of Israel. The Globe had learned that this Christian Identity group owned at least 700 acres in Vernon County, and that the site was considered one of the largest compounds in the United States. The search would show that the church and its associates owned nearly 1,400 acres.

McCoy's record search did not go unnoticed. A friend of the church inside the courthouse tipped the church leadership about the search. Two days into the investigation, pastor Gray Clark called Managing Editor Gloria Turner and demanded to know what had prompted the Globe's inquiry.

The answer was that an investigation into the Christian Identity movement and the subculture of the extreme right had been contemplated by the Globe for months, with the Church of Israel as the focus. The church already had been listed among the most racist in America by watch groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, and Gayman and the church have long been associated with shaping the belief systems of violent extremists such as members of the Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord in Arkansas and accused Olympic Park and abortion clinic bomber Eric Rudolph, who remains at large.

The day before the Globe's records probe began, there had been a secret meeting to resolve a bitter split within the Church of Israel.

The meeting involved Gayman; a Texas millionaire by the name of Jerry Gentry, the church's leading patron; and Scott Stinson, a junior pastor who had become increasingly uncomfortable with Gayman's leadership. Stinson also had in his possession "misappropriated" and potentially damning church records. Stinson was given \$20,000 in cash and the deed to the parsonage in exchange for the records, which were burned a few days later.

Some of the documents, according to Stinson supporter Gentry, involved the financial details of the acquisition of several pieces of church property. The agreement that all three signed included a promise to reveal nothing, especially to the press.

The church board of trustees, however, would later say that the agreement was "coerced," and would ask for return of the cash and property.

When news reached the church leadership that a reporter had arrived in Vernon County asking for property records, it was assumed that one of the principals of the secret meeting had leaked the details of the pact. Clark did not mention the split in his initial call to the Globe, but he did say the church was in "crisis."

Shortly after, the Globe learned of the split from one of the hate watch groups.

Although Gayman first refused all requests, citing a bad track record with the media, he eventually relented and granted an interview Dec. 7. After the interview, Gayman sent Gentry a message: "I do not know where the reporter gained his information. He knows all about Scott Stinson leaving the Church and was well-informed." In any event, I believe that I have it under control at this point in time."

The next day, Gentry called the Globe newsroom. Convinced that Gayman had put an unfair "spin" on the separation story, Gentry gave his own account over the course of several dozen telephone interviews — and backed it up with a copy of the original secret agreement and other documents.

The following members of the Globe staff contributed to "Ordained by Hate": Max McCoy, Andy Ostmeyer and Roger McKinney, staff writers; T. Rob Brown and Vince Rosati, photographers; Bill Caldwell, research assistant; Tricia Courtney, graphic artist; Carol Stark, content editor; Jim Moss, copy editor; and Gary Castor, design chief.

Related links

White Supremacy and Hate Sites

The Church of Israel

www.churchofisrael.com

Home page of the oldest and largest Christian Identity church, headquartered in Schell City, Missouri.

www.dangayman.com

www.dangayman.com

Named for the 63-year-old patriarch of the Church of Israel, this site is actually critical of Gayman and is run by the church's most outspoken critic, Texas millionaire and Identity activist Jerry Gentry.

Voice of Citizens Together/American Patrol

www.americanpatrol.org

A virulently anti-Hispanic website, especially against Mexican-Americans.

Kingdom Identity Ministries

www.kingidentity.com

An Arkansas-based Christian Identity group.

The Jubilee Newspaper

www.jubilee-newspaper.com

One of the most prominent Christian Identity periodicals.

GOAL Reference Library

www.melvig.org

The God's Order Affirmed in Love reference library. Apparently God's love has to do with white supremacy, which is what this unpleasant site is all about.

Scriptures for America Worldwide

www.christianidentity.org/home.htm

Website for Christian Identity leader Pete Peters.

Fourteen Words Press

www.14words.com

Website of the white supremacist "Fourteen Words" press. Focus on the Silent Brotherhood.

Posse Comitatus

www.posse-comitatus.org

New website for former Posse Comitatus and Christian Identity James Wickstrom. Prison did not dull the sharp edge of his hate.

Stormfront

www.stormfront.org

A white supremacist page. Actually, the first white supremacist web page, created in March 1995. It still possesses one of the most extensive collections of hate material.

The Nationalist Observer Webpage

www.whiteracist.com

Kicked off of AOL for its white supremacist stance, the website for the nazi-leaning newsletter has bounced around. This new site is apparently under construction.

Christian Separatist Church Society

www.christianseparatist.org

Web page of a Tennessee racist group that believes, among other things, Hitler was a good Christian.

Aryan Nations

www.christian-aryannations.com

Website for the nation's most notorious racist group. Content level not very high.

New Order Knights of the KKK

www.neworderknights.com

A Missouri-based Klan group with chapters in several other states. This site has annoying music and large print, but relatively little content. However, it does have a number of links to other sites.

American Front

www.thirdposition@americanfront.com/index2.htm

Website for a bizarre extremist group, mostly skinhead or ex-skinhead in composition, which mixes unabashed racism with "social justice." If you are an environmentally-conscious, wealth-redistributing white supremacist, then this is the site for you. How many sites out there praise Khaddafi, anyway?

Heritage Lost Ministries

heritagelost.org/frame

A white supremacist site from Hilliard, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus. A group that wants to separate the races, end abortion, end the use of fossil fuels, and promote motherhood, among other goals.

Christian Bible Study Home Page

www.christianbiblestudy.org

A Florida-based Christian Identity site hosted by the Neo-Nazi Stormfront. Links to various Identity resources.

White Aryan Resistance

www.resist.com

The "hate page" for White Aryan Resistance, the California-based white supremacist organization headed by Tom Metzger. Metzger was at one time one of the leading figures in the movement. His webpage is full of the worst sort of racist cartoons and diatribes.

I Love White Folks

www.ilovewhitefolks.com

Says the author, who is apparently entirely immune to irony, "Would you believe that a year and a half ago I didn't have a clue?" Among other things, home of the "rights for whites" webring.

MOTM

www.sigdrifa.com/motm

Website for "Mothers of the Movement," a women's white supremacist group. Focuses on parenting because it wants lots of white, Aryan kids.

World Church of the Creator

www.wcotc.com

One of the main websites for this violent, racist group.

Resistance Records

www.resistance.com

The main white power record label. An instrumental tool in recruiting teens into the white supremacy movement. Now owned by William Pierce and the National Alliance.

Aryan Video Page

video.whiterace.com/video

A site dedicated to providing racist video clips.

The Anti-Demonization League

www.adl-ci.org

A website mostly protesting Project Megiddo, an FBI analytical report on potential dangers by extremists on Y2K. Apparently created by or linked to Christian Identity leader Pete Peters.

Educational Web Sites on Extremist Groups**The Floodlight**

www.floodlight.org

Educational resource on conspiracy theories, extremist groups and the American far right.

The Nizkor Project

www1.ca.nizkor.org

Monitoring hate with an emphasis on holocaust revisionism.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

www.adl.org

Excellent material on right wing hate, extremism.

Political Research Associates

www.publiceye.org/ora

Liberal challenge to right wing extremism; excellent material.

Center for New Community

www.newcomm.org

Monitoring extremist activity in the midwest.

HateWatch

www.hatewatch.org

Monitoring hate on the internet; both liberal and conservative.

One Man's Mind

www.geocities.com/onemansmind

Good stuff on extremist groups, etc.

Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment

www.members.aol.com/~ncamh

Anti-hate coalition from 6 northwestern states.

The American Jewish Committee

www.ajc.org

Jewish organization against racial bigotry.

Floyd Cochran's Home Page

www.geocities.com/Capitolhill/7701

Home page of former Aryan Nations leader.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center Online

www.wiesenthal.com

Home page of famous anti-hate organization.

Public Good Project

www.nwcitizen.com/publicgood

Good archive of anti-government analysis.

The Militia Watchdog

www.militia-watchdog.org

Monitoring militia and other extremist groups; highly recommended.

Southern Poverty Law Center

www.splcenter.org/splc.html

Well-known organization monitoring hate, extremist groups.

Intelligence Report

www.splcenter.org/intelligenceproject/ip-index.html

Quarterly intelligence report on hate, extremism.