

# Violence against Abortion Clinics: An Evangelical or Conservative Catholic Problem?

**Or: How to avoid a rational discussion by slandering one's opponent and throwing him in the same pot as criminals**

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## **Preface to second edition August 2009**

After a decade of quiet, the United States has again experienced the murder of a doctor who performed abortions. Scott Roeder shot and killed Dr. George Tiller, perhaps the best known abortion doctor, in Wichita, Kansas in front of his church congregation.

What does this new case do to change the assessment that I prepared in 2008?

Even though I only have access to media reports from the United States, and the public prosecution associated with the investigation has not been completed, for the moment the following can be said:

1. If after a decade a murder again occurs, that still means that millions of Evangelicals and Catholics in the USA and hundreds of millions of Evangelicals and Catholics worldwide who object to abortion advance their view absolutely peacefully! According to the most recent surveys, 51% of Americans oppose abortion. That is to say, 120 million peacefully oppose it, and one does not. Yet this is sufficient for the press to 'toss' them all into the same pot.

2. No authority has attempted to link the offender Scott P. Roeder with Evangelical or Catholic camps. Just as with the perpetrators in the 1990s, up until now no one has been able to establish any connection whatsoever with the large anti-abortion organizations. When the atheist blog <http://blasphemieblog.wordpress.com> wrote: "Assassination: Bible-believing Christian shoots and kills abortion doctor," this is pure slander.

To be sure, the offender left an entry on the Operation Rescue website. And while the newspapers *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* have used this information to go in the backdoor and establish a desired connection, this really says nothing since nowadays anyone can leave an entry in a public blog. Operation Rescue, which has all its staffers sign a declaration renouncing the use of violence, deleted the entry, and has strongly condemned the murder of Dr. Tiller.

3. By all accounts, the culprit, as in the case of earlier offenders from the Ku Klux Klan, is a member of the right-wing extremist scene. After a 16-month jail term, he was classified by a court as mentally ill ("symptoms of schizophrenia"). His ex-wife confirms both pieces of information. In the mid-1990s, Roeder belonged to the so-called Freeman Movement, which, in the place of the highest court in the USA, installed its own high court and fought the government and laws of the United States. According to the daily newspaper *Die Welt*,

in his life of paranoia, he “belonged to practically every vigilante group that America has to offer.”

Without in any way seeking to sugarcoat the murder, the victim George Tiller, was, by the way, a typical example (as was his opponent) of just how much more aggressive and culturally warlike such debates are that are conducted in the USA. As with his opponent, Dr Tiller used television not only to advertise his clinic for late term abortions. Rather, he used television as well to aggressively plead for late term abortions. He was, as *Die Welt* wrote, “obstinate like his opponents.”

It should not be kept secret that at the time of his murder, there were proceedings underway relating to the withdrawal of his license to practice medicine. For that reason, he was working under strict state supervision. One might offer the criticism that he was covered up with litigation, but this is not uncommon in the US. Throughout the country, Tiller was also a disputed figure among what are basically abortion proponents. This was due to his concentration on late-term abortions. He was one of three doctors in the USA who conducted abortions all the way up to the time of birth. For this reason, no successor was found for the clinic he managed (<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/jun/10/nation/na-tiller10>), and the clinic was subsequently closed.

I would like to bring in a quote from a fully unsuspecting critic of Evangelicals, the Munich Professor for North American Cultural History Michael Hochgeschwender: “Indeed one has to guard against setting the number of violent offenders from the neo-fundamentalist scene too high. When bomb attacks were at their peak in 1994, four people died. In total, seven people died as a result of attacks on abortion clinics in the 1990s. When compared with the overall level of violence found in American society, or even compared with the proneness to violence found in the extreme right wing in the USA, the neo-fundamentalists have hardly gotten out of line. Beyond that, most offenders were pathological. In this they did not vary from their sympathizers. The absolute majority of neo-fundamentalists, that is to say 95 %, behave in the face of all verbal militancy in conformity with the system. Furthermore, in spite of the tradition of extralegal, or illegal, violence committed by citizens in the USA, they do not resort to terrorist violence. Religious fanaticism alone does not necessarily lead to terrorism. To state it more succinctly: There have been violent fundamentalists, but there has not been violent fundamentalism”(Michael Hochgeschwender. *Amerikanische Religion: Evangelikalismus, Pfingstlertum und Fundamentalismus*. Frankfurt: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2007. p. 199).

The quoted article “Tod eines Überzeugungstäters“ dated June 2, 2009 in *Die Welt* can be found in a similar form at <http://www.welt.de/politik/article3841681/Dr-Tiller-Opfer-einesamerikanischen-Kulturkampfes.html>

Neue Zürcher Zeitung:  
[http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/zuerich/ein\\_mord\\_fuer\\_das\\_ungeborene\\_leben\\_1.2689085.html](http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/zuerich/ein_mord_fuer_das_ungeborene_leben_1.2689085.html)

Regarding George Tiller: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Tiller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Tiller)

Indictment against Scott P. Roeder: <http://news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/abortion/kansas-roeder60209murder.html>

## **1. Evangelical and Christian Self-criticism**

The task of the World Evangelical Alliance's Institute for Religious Freedom is not only to document the persecution of Evangelicals or general infringements against religious freedom, but rather to also self-critically keep a record of where and whether, from the side of Evangelicals, religious freedom and human rights of others have not been or are not being respected. For this reason, the Institute is in charge of the production of an ethical code for the World Evangelical Alliance and discussing this together with the World Council of Churches and the Vatican, in order to ethically assess, judge, and move against objectionable missionary methods or aggression against those from one's own ranks who are of a different opinion. Furthermore, the code is also meant to enable research to be collected.

In this connection, we have occupied ourselves extensively with cases in which – allegedly or actually – Evangelical Christians have attacked or slain abortion clinic employees or damaged clinics, especially since this is repeatedly presented by the media in sloganized form against the Evangelical faith. This is unfortunately not only done by atheists, but also by non-Evangelical church leaders, who use this as a scathing argument against their theological opponents.

In the process, it does not have first and foremost to do with whether the culprits were Evangelicals, since according to the biblical witness Evangelicals are sinners and are able to commit wrongful acts. These Christians, even according to Paul's explicit statements, should be punished by the state, which acts as „God's servant“ (Romans 13:4). For this reason a certain percentage of Evangelicals will be participants in all kinds of misdeeds. This is for sure an unpleasant thing, but it is reality. In itself it does not say anything about the position that Evangelicals or Evangelical churches or institutions take regarding such acts. Furthermore, in the face of the enormous spectrum within the 420 million Evangelicals worldwide, it could readily be the case that splinter groups or lone perpetrators call for violence, or practice violence, without their being able to be easily ascribed to the Evangelical movement. It is also the case that not every act by a Roman Catholic is attributed to the Vatican when things are done in opposition to the Vatican's will – at least one surely hopes this is not the case.

For this reason, it is, if anything, decisive for us whether an Evangelical's act is urged on by, promoted, or approved by some Evangelical organization or church.

## **2. Peaceful Protest**

Four things are to be noted beforehand:

a. I maintain that abortion is the killing of an innocent person and that the massive scale of abortion in Germany and globally, alone on the basis of the number of lives ended, is the largest current human rights problem. Most Christians have become too accustomed to

it. Perhaps it will be the case that our grandchildren will ask us how, in light of this catastrophe, we could have conformed so much to our society instead of pointing out the problem in a peaceful manner and on a daily basis, using our freedom of speech and freedom of the press in order to awaken people's consciences.

b. As much as Evangelical (and many other) Christians suffer under the daily abortions in Germany, which they see as an unspeakable violence against the unguilty, they may not and do not wish to take justice into their own hands and exercise violence against those participating in the acts. Fortunately, innumerable Christian (also Evangelical) right to life organizations, churches, and national associations have repeatedly affirmed this via official declarations. All peaceful and legal means should be used in order to keep awareness of the problem alive. Christians should also pray that our people again love life and children more strongly and receive a government and legislation supportive of that. In addition, they should repeatedly proclaim that God forgives every person, regardless of what he has done, if the individual calls upon the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in repentance and faith. *But as has been said, acts of violence against people, property, and things are not the means desired by God to bring about change in our society, and violence exercised against those who have been born is not a means to employ against the violence conducted on the unborn.*

c. I am astonished (and delighted!) that the protest by hundreds of millions of Evangelicals around the world against this blatant and heartfelt injustice of the killing of millions of unborn children, as well as the protest from what is surely a similarly large number of Catholics, occurs so peacefully. That really deserves a public word of praise! If 420 million Evangelicals and hundreds of millions of convinced Catholics had a secret bent towards violence on one or the other issue, we would hear about it every day in the news! Just like every other Evangelical leader, I suffer from many a deficiency in the Evangelical movement and in some of its offbeat and fringe groups, which, by the way, is unavoidable in such an enormously widespread movement that is not centrally managed. Fortunately, massive violence towards others on the part of Evangelicals is not a daily matter; if it were, the media would pounce on it.

d. Peaceful protest and, in certain cases, even 'civil disobedience' may not all be thrown into the same pot just because the goals of those who employ these measures are not found pleasing. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his movement, for instance, successfully fought racism with 'civil disobedience', much as Christians in the German Democratic Republic, via prayers for peace, successfully countered communism. This is, however, precisely the case in the USA, where peaceful demonstrations are immediately recorded in the statistics as relating to violence against abortion facilities.

### **3. A Concise Summary of the Results**

Now, however, to finally come to objectionable incidents. Given the extensive data we have regarding violent assaults on abortion clinics, we can say in summary that as far as real violence against abortion facilities is concerned, the following conclusion can be drawn:

**a. From a statistical point of view, real violence against abortion facilities is a very rare problem.**

**b. Real violence against abortion facilities is a problem that had primarily to do with the years 1991-1998 and not the present.**

**c. Real violence against abortion facilities is a United States problem with offshoots in Canada and is not, however, an international problem.**

**d. Real violence against abortion facilities is a problem that has to do with lone perpetrators, who never had the support of any type of church or larger religious institution.**

**e. Real violence against abortion facilities is not purely a Christian problem, since in the USA there are also many secular and non-Christian anti-abortion organizations (e.g., Mormons, Muslims). Many culprits can also be assigned to racist spheres of influence (e.g., Ku Klux Klan).**

**f. As far as there are religiously motivated acts, real violence against abortion facilities is not a question of either a purely Evangelical or a purely conservative Catholic problem. This is due to the fact that a number of culprits who belong to a church at all do not only belong to Evangelical churches, but rather also to other Protestant churches or the Catholic Church.**

In the USA the Catholic branch of the right to life movement is, for instance, very strong. This is not meant, however, to allege a cheap exoneration of the evangelical branch, because the Catholic Church or Catholic right to life organizations are just as little involved in violence against abortion clinics.

#### **4. The Results in Detail**

Now to our results in detail:

**a. Real violence against abortion facilities is for all practical purposes an exclusively United States problem, with some spillover to Canada and perhaps an isolated case in Australia.**

All known murders, etc., took place in the USA. In Canada there was a much smaller number of attempted murders, etc., which predominantly were committed by one of the principal offenders, a US American. All cases of arson, bomb threats, etc., took place in the USA or in Canada. In other countries there are no known cases of strong violence, or there are only isolated cases where a motive cannot be clearly attributed to the culprit and which did not occur over longer periods of time.

If it were to be a problem having to do with Evangelical (and even more narrow 'fundamentalists') or conservative Catholic Christians, why do we find no bombings or attempted murders at abortion clinics around the world? Why not in Europe, Africa, or Latin America? Why not in countries with the largest groups of Evangelicals, such as China or Korea, or in Catholic countries such as Italy or Brazil?

In the USA almost every societal debate is accompanied by violence from both sides – at least at the margins. And it is more often the case than in Europe that violent acts swash

over into the political realm. Additionally, it is a daily matter that societal groups endlessly fight each other in court and garner material against each other, for example, for the removal of tax advantages or state subsidies. This also occurs in the abortion debate, and it is pursued by both sides.

This is also the case with violence by *Abortion proponents*. The number of violent acts by abortion proponents is also nowhere as high as it is in the USA, and this is also not an international problem. The Catholic right to life organization Human Life International (HLI) keeps a corresponding list of violent acts against right to life organizations, which is not always very reliable. It also includes many acts by abortion proponents that are not directed against opponents of abortion but rather, for example, against pregnant women. This notwithstanding, at least blatant examples need to be included in the discussion. It is also common in the US to forcibly disturb pro-life demonstrations (films are found at [pro-life215.blogspot.com/2006/11/pro-abortion-violence-some-graphic.html](http://pro-life215.blogspot.com/2006/11/pro-abortion-violence-some-graphic.html)). This is something that is hardly known in other countries.

Acts of violence against abortion opponents by abortion proponents also come from the heyday of violence in the period 1993-1998. This began with the first case from the fall of 1993, when the pro-life activist and radio host Pastor Jerry Simon in Huntsville, Alabama, was shot through the window of his house by an abortion proponent. The culprit, who came from a background with satanic influences, was sentenced to jail for life (New American, January 1, 2000). (The oft cited later cases are admittedly difficult to research, because they received only limited attention and, in part, their connection to the abortion issue is also difficult to establish.)

The nationwide murder rate in the USA is roughly six times that of Germany. In the USA there are 35 murders committed per year by firearms per 1 million inhabitants, and in Germany the number is 2.5 (in Great Britain the number is, for example, only 0.5). California is most directly affected by violence against abortion facilities and has a significantly higher murder rate than the US average. Additionally, 41% of all households in the USA possess at least one firearm, so it is no accident that practically all murders and attempted murders are perpetrated with firearms.

This is appalling, and it is also a great challenge for America's Christians. However, it is, for all intents and purposes, an insult to the hundreds of millions of Christians living peacefully to make a global danger out of 'fundamentalist' Christians.

Incidentally it is striking that in the face of the spread of violence in the USA no one has taken the trouble to check whether the violence that occurs against abortion clinics is above or below average, in particular in light of the fact that many perpetrators of minor acts of violence, such as threatening phone calls, are not known and for that reason cannot be assigned to any particular background.

**b. Even according to the statistics of the National Abortion Federation (NAF) and the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF), brutal violence is primarily a phenomenon of times past.**

From 1993 to 1998 all 7 murders, which were committed by 6 different perpetrators, also took place during the same time as the known attempted murders. Four of the offend-

ers were given lifelong jail sentences, one was put to death in 2003, and one committed suicide. To derive an increasing threat from this is to completely overlook the facts.

If one were to imagine that the last murders committed by the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) in Turkey or by Al Qaeda lay 10 years in the past, many would by this time already emphasize the peaceful character of the movements that have developed in the meantime and say that such a thing should be honored. Evangelicals and conservative, however, have to watch the isolated acts of violence that they detest and that occurred 10 years ago be ascribed as if they were happening every day in the present.

(In Australia there was a first and sole case of murder of an Abortion clinic security guard in 2001. However, it is unclear upon which motives the armed perpetrator shot the security guard. As far as I know, this is the sole murder of this type outside of the USA.)

Even if there are enough cases of hate emails or defacings or forbidden trespassings with respect to a clinic, which are all morally objectionable, it is easy to recognize that murders and bomb attacks were problems of the 1980s and 1990s. For instance, the NAF no longer had listings of arrests in connection with clinic blockades, but it nonetheless names the total number of 37,715 (including repeat arrests of the same person) from times when the legal situation was still unclear. In this connection the largest number arose in the time prior to 1991. A new and tough law drawn up in 1994 that provided clarity (The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act) made an impact. Up to that time it was legally unclear in the USA just how far demonstrators were allowed to go in front of clinics. Incidentally, it is to be pointed out that practically all the demonstrators were let go. Why is this never mentioned?

**c. The statistical tables on violence committed against abortion facilities in the USA have to be taken with a grain of salt, since they do not come from an authority that is even halfway neutral.**

No available tables and statistics originate from neutral authorities, for instance, from police statistics or scientific studies. Rather, they are based on the same sources of two larger pro-abortion associations in the USA, the National Abortion Federation (NAF) and the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF). The results are derived by evaluating questionnaires returned by abortion clinics. These questionnaires are neither reviewed nor do they represent all clinics. The information contained therein is mostly only able to be reviewed (and considered reliable) if the perpetrators were finally convicted.

Furthermore, the tables contain *all* acts against abortion clinics and their personnel which were considered to be objectionable. In this way every demonstration against an abortion clinic is recorded as violence, including the distribution of brochures outside of the buffer zone around the clinics. Information is not collected about whether the violence committed has to do with normal break-ins, homicidal maniacs, male partners exercising revenge, competitors, or actual opponents of abortion. This also means that it is not recorded whether the culprit was at all an opponent of abortion and directed his actions towards abortion clinics.

Such was the case when, for instance, a man in Michigan entered a clinic in Michigan with the intention of killing a doctor who practiced abortions. He was overpowered by security personnel. He declared that he wanted revenge because the doctor had conducted

an abortion on his girlfriend. A connection to abortion opponents was never found. Nevertheless, this act is found everywhere among the misdeeds of abortion opponents.

The counts are themselves partially misleading, even if the numbers are correct. For example, in 2001 Clayton Waagner supposedly sent 555 anthrax letters to 250 clinics. This act appears in the statistic as 250 acts, since it was recorded by individual clinics. It also goes into the overall clinic statistics for clinics that were on the receiving end of a violent act, whereby one-third of all abortion clinics experienced a violent act in 2001. In this way an abominable, yet minor, criminal act on the part of a lone perpetrator is artificially made into a significant danger. It is assumed that the alleged anthrax letters, which actually contained a harmless white powder, were sent by a very small number of offenders who were obviously mainly copycats. For all practical purposes, these actions came to a standstill in 2001. Incidentally, it should be reminded at this point that the feigned anthrax letters were a widespread problem in the USA but not an international one.

If one takes as an example the newest report by the Feminist Majority Foundation (2005 National Clinic Violence Survey, [feminist.org/research/cvsurveys/clinic\\_survey2005.pdf](http://feminist.org/research/cvsurveys/clinic_survey2005.pdf)) dated May 2006, it begins with the fact that in 2005 18.4% of all clinics reported having experienced violent acts against them (in 1994 it was still 52%). At the same time, demonstrations in front of clinics and graphic statements on flyers are also included in the count. Out of 739 clinics, 337 sent back the questionnaire. It is not discussed whether the rest of the clinics did not answer because they had no experience of violence to report. The 18.4% translates into 62 clinics. Strangely enough, only 13 clinics filed charges or made legal appeals, including most often the request that a buffer zone be installed against demonstrators. The request for a buffer zone does not presuppose violence on the part of demonstrators as a justification. Two clinics requested restraining orders, three clinics requested small compensation for damages, two received favorable judgments and one did not. This occurred, although 75%-80% of the clinics indicated that they had good contact with the various law enforcement authorities and found support there. Only 4%-7% had complaints about law enforcement authorities.

What this means in plain language is that *no clinic filed a charge in 2005 claiming that anyone was injured. No clinic filed a charge or claim on account of any larger property damage.* Two clinics received compensation for smaller amounts of property damage. However, there is a yawning gap between the enormous number of violent acts that have been reported in questionnaires but are unverified, and the acts of violence that were adequately conclusive and thereby engaged favorably disposed police.

In addition it should be pointed out again that if a person really wants to seriously work with statistics, the correct thing to do would be to place next to this data how many corresponding acts of violence against clinics of all sorts are experienced on average in the USA.

**d. It is exclusively a matter of sole perpetrators coming from various camps.**

On the basis of their investigations, the 'Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance' came to the correct conclusion: "Then as today most violence can be traced back to religiously motivated criminals who act alone." Proponents of abortion also indicate that all organizations which advocate violence against abortion facilities are one man organiza-



tions or are very small groups. The United States Department of Justice has investigated the issue and has not been able to anywhere find a group steering sole perpetrators.

There is a list of around one dozen websites on which such acts of violence are held to be permissible. However, behind none of these is there any sort of palpable organization, much less a Christian one. Even the offensive web page maintained by the 'Army of God,' which is populated with Bible verses and which group exalts the offenders as martyrs, has not been found to have a connection to a Christian group or any connection at all to a proper organization. The 'Army of God,' despite all Bible verses, is counted as a racist, neo-Nazi group (see below), whereby right wing groups fighting in favor of white supremacy, such as the Ku Klux Klan, gladly quote the Bible and nevertheless have no Christian orientation.

Whoever watches legal cases relating to murder or attempted murder can only conclude that among the perpetrators there is no common pattern relating to motivation, religious orientation, or modus operandi. As early as with the perpetrator of the first case of murder in March 1993, Michael Griffin, motivation was discussed in court. It was assumed that the perpetrator was mentally disturbed, although he was nonetheless sentenced to a lifelong prison term. In Germany there surely would have been a different decision.

**e. It is not a purely 'Christian' phenomenon, and within Christianity it is by no means a purely 'Evangelical' phenomenon.**

I know of no organization, literature, or website among proponents of abortion who see the problem as a purely Christian or Evangelical or Catholic problem. If at all one speaks more generally of a 'religious' problem. This is astonishing in the face of the caustic nature of the debate in the USA, but it is no wonder and justified.

Among the abortion opponents in the USA, all religions and non-religious groups are represented, such that the problem is not able to be specifically attributed to a particular religious orientation. While in Germany there is a tacit consensus among the large societal powers that the topic of abortion is one that is not to be publicly discussed, in America it is a point of everyday discussion and is continually present in all the areas of the media. Everyone who is a candidate for political office has to make a statement on the topic. Different from, for instance, in Germany, the nonviolent protest against allowing abortion comes from all societal camps and parties, from right to left, from top to bottom, from all religions, from all Christian denominations, and from non-religious people. In the process millions protest peacefully and legally against abortion, and occasionally what occurs is that against their declared will there are people somehow in connection with them who commit illegal acts or utilize violence.

There are naturally instances that are clearly attributed to the Christian camp. The pastor of an independent Lutheran church, Michael Bray, called for violence as a way to prevent abortions in the 1980s in a book entitled *A Time to Kill*. He laid bombs in several abortion clinics before he was arrested and sentenced to do time in jail. Also in the 1980s, Randall Terry, the founder and first director (1986-1989) of Operation Rescue, who did not want direct violence, did have clinics blocked with crowds of people and practiced civil disobedience. Over the years an estimated 50,000 demonstrators were arrested, although everyone was thereafter released and not a single one of the demonstrators was charged with violence. The first murder of an abortion clinic employee occurred in March 1993,

when Michael F. Giffin shot and killed Dr. David Gunn in Pensacola, Florida during a demonstration held by the 'Operation Rescue' organization (with its broad Evangelical and Catholic support, for instance by Bishop Austin Vaughan), although the position on violence had just been clarified. Since that time all demonstrators sign a declaration renouncing the use of violence. Paul Hill, who shot and killed a doctor and his bodyguard in front of an abortion clinic in July 1994, had earlier been a Presbyterian pastor and would likely have designated himself an Evangelical. In October 2000 a *Catholic* priest drove his car into the 'Northern Illinois Health Clinic,' drew an axe, and was, however, shot and killed by a watchman.

The aforementioned should not be sugarcoated. However, what should be demonstrated is that these events cannot be taken as either representative or as indicating a present day problem.

Alongside this there are also other murders, however, which are attributable to right wing radicalism.

The bomb maker and planter David Hull, who also threatened abortion clinics, was convicted for these actions. He belonged to the Ku Klux Klan and directed his actions only towards 'white' women.

In January 1998 Eric Rudolph detonated a bomb in a clinic in Birmingham, Alabama and in the process killed a guard. Eric Rudolph is known for his bomb attack at the Olympic Park in Atlanta in 1996, which no one attributes to the Evangelical movement or to a particular church. He is a 'white supremacist racist' and anti-Semite (see details at [www.cnn.com/2003/US/05/31/rudolph.profile/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/05/31/rudolph.profile/index.html)). He was arrested in 2003 and sentenced to a lifelong prison term.

Stephen Jordi, who allegedly conducted poisonous attacks on abortion clinics, also belongs to the 'Army of God,' which may well be responsible for the large portion of attacks on clinics. The official terror database in the United States numbers the 'Army of God' among right wing racist groups ([www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=28](http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=28)).

In addition to this, there are cases in which murders cannot be attributed to any particular camp, not to mention those cases that have not even been cleared up.

In December 1997 the clearly mentally disturbed haircutter, John Salvi, fired shots wildly in an abortion clinic in Brookline, Massachusetts, killing two receptionists. After being arrested, he hanged himself in prison. His actions were taken to be in association with the Christian camp because he had brochures from the Catholic Organization HLI (Human Life International). Salvi himself gave no Christian justification for his actions.

On October 23, 1998 an unknown sniper shot and killed Barnett Slepian in his apartment in Buffalo, New York. Whether the attack had anything to do with Slepian's employment in an abortion clinic remains open.

**f. No church, whether Evangelical, fundamentalist or belonging to any other confession, and none of the large Christian right to life organizations have ever approved of using violence against doctors performing abortions or abortion clinics or have ever stood behind an offender.**

No pro-abortion organization has ever brought an accusation against any church that said a perpetrator of violence acted with their approval or support. Since lists are maintained of all websites and organizations which have ever advocated violence against abortion clinics, something of this sort would have come to light a long time ago.

All leading right to life organizations in the USA, whether they are Christian or non-Christian, have spoken out against the use of violence, for instance in the 1999 'Pro-life Proclamation (renewed in 2006). Right to life organizations have repeatedly offered - and paid - sums of up to \$50,000 for the capture of offenders.

## **5. Conclusion: Stop slandering Evangelicals and conservative Catholics!**

Whoever thinks differently from Evangelicals or conservative Catholics from a theological standpoint should please say it clearly and soberly, and he or she should offer their reasons. However, the cheap way should not be chosen. The cheap way is to spare oneself a discussion by exploiting widespread anti-Americanism or by placing Evangelicals or conservative Catholics in the category of 'fundamentalists,' putting them close to violence-prone Islamists. That only serves to exploit the instinctive emotional disapproval of Islamic violence.

To name only one example: A significant number of Russian-German free churches in Germany, with its almost 300,000 members, are 'fundamentalist' and surely, in the eyes of other, Evangelical and Catholic Christians in Germany also very 'strict.' But is there a danger of violence that emanates from them? Is there a concrete case known in which they would have used violence against those who think differently? The concern that they might set abortion clinics on fire or have an abortion doctor shot and killed would be absurd. Additionally, most of them are Mennonite and for this reason oriented towards pacifism.

In the German Humanistic Press Service (*Humanistischen Pressedienst*), Michael Shermer writes, for instance: "Evangelical Christians who believe so strongly in the sanctity of life that they blow up abortion clinics and murder doctors? Not good." ([hpd-online.de/node/3125](http://hpd-online.de/node/3125)). I know of no example where anyone ever blew up an abortion clinic, and for sure not by an Evangelical. (The few successful bomb attacks all caused only minor property damage.) And in the cases of the three abortion doctors who were murdered, the law enforcement authorities and the large pro-abortion organizations never came with the accusation that the perpetrators were Evangelicals or could be placed in this category.

If a very small percentage of Muslims in numerous countries were to commit murders and manslaughter around the world daily, and a further, somewhat larger percentage approved of and supported this, politicians and church leaders would correctly never tire of warning against throwing all Muslims into the same category. And in actual fact: I may not simply hold my Muslim neighbor responsible with a form of liability that says all members of a group are accountable for the misdeeds of one. *If this applies to many deaths everyday on a worldwide scale, then Evangelicals and conservative Catholics should be able to ex-*

pect that on the basis of fewer cases, and in part unresolved cases dating back ten years and limited to one single country on earth, they will not be held responsible on the basis of kin liability!

Even if Muslim mothers are glad to see that their children have become martyrs of Allah as suicide bombers or, as was reported today, one hears about a ten year old in Iraq who blew up ten Muslim sheiks wanting peace, there are still, and rightly so, calls to differentiate. Why do the same media and politicians not rally to the side of Evangelicals, where it must be much easier to differentiate between a dozen possible perpetrators of violence and 420 million other people who object such actions?

### **General Information:**

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion-related\\_violence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion-related_violence)

[www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/faceweb.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/faceweb.htm)

### **Abortion Proponents:**

[www.prochoice.org/about\\_abortion/violence/index.html](http://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/violence/index.html)

[www.feminist.org/rrights/clinicsurvey.html](http://www.feminist.org/rrights/clinicsurvey.html)

### **Abortion Opponents:**

[abortionviolence.com/summary.htm](http://abortionviolence.com/summary.htm)

[www.all.org/article.php?id=10357](http://www.all.org/article.php?id=10357)

[www.pregnantpause.org/abort/hostet.htm#f4](http://www.pregnantpause.org/abort/hostet.htm#f4) (Kongressabgeordneter John Hostettler)

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