



"For general public welfare, I fail to see how a group that will disqualify me on sight as well as view my daughter as someone that is an aberration or something that is not to be celebrated, I fail to see how that will promote the general public safety," said

Christian Duruji. He and his wife, Catheryn (formerly Rosemeier) and daughter live in Pennock now, but Catheryn grew up in rural Murdock and her family still resides there.

--photo by Naomi Baker

It takes a village (Continued from page 1)

tions, starting with whether the AFA has ordained ministers. Turnage said yes, within their organization they have a 12-month educational program during which preachers are instructed in their way of teaching about their gods.

Murdock resident, and member of the Murdock Area Alliance Against Hate, Victoria Guillemard asked, "Can you please explain why other Asatru communities denounce your specific Asatru Folk Assembly for racist ideology in your declaration 127 and why you have not responded to such declarations?"

"Those people don't know us, they don't understand us," said Turnage. "Just like any other faith, there are certainly divisions within the Catholic church that are more stringent than others. We happen to believe that Asatru is specifically a Northern European religion, and that's it. Others believe that we are incorrect about that, and we disagree with them, they disagree with us. The biggest thing with that is we are not trying not to restrict their access to practice their faith as they choose to, like

they try to restrict our practice."

Peter Kennedy, another Murdock resident, asked, "Why won't you let black people in your faith?"

"They are not of European decent," Turnage replied simply.

"Where is that dividing line?" asked Kennedy. "Italian? Spanish? Do they make it?"

"In some cases it can be a case by case basis," said Turnage. "You know, there are ethnic faiths and there are universalist faiths. We practice an ethnic faith."

Catheryn Duruji, who grew up in rural Murdock and now lives in Pennock, asked, "Do you think your line of decent is superior to people of color?"

Turnage replied, "No, we are parallel. We think that we are, that our faith and our ways are worthy of respect just like everybody else, so there's not a ranking, there is just mutual respect, and I wouldn't interfere with anyone else's right to practice their faith."

Laura Thomas, from Benson, said, "I'm glad you're here, because my attention

was caught by a comment that you had in a Star Tribune article. You said that it seems like many communities have made it their avocation to keep your group out of their community. I would like to hear a little more on that, why do you think that is?"

"The real underlying reason I think is that they haven't met us," Turnage replied. "They believe what outside troublemakers say about us, but without limitation the people in Brownsville like us, the people who we've actually been neighbors with like us, and so you know the short answer to your question is that people tell lies about us, and that's not unusual and there's nothing we can do about that." Brownsville is the town in California where the AFA has a hoff.

"Why do you think people want to make up lies about you and your group?" Thomas pushed.

"That's a good question," Turnage replied, "I don't know."

Celeste Voorhees, of Murdock, asked, "Where do all of your parishioners live that they

can congregate at the church?"

"There is sort of a, I think it's about a two-hour radius around here," Turnage said. "There some in North Dakota, South Dakota, north of Minneapolis, you know in that region. That's why Murdock was in sort of that central spot of where we were searching for a place."

Elizabeth Hatfield, of rural Murdock spoke next, "You just stated that your group was oppressed by some communities, I would like you to elaborate on what you mean that you are oppressed and demonstrate how that would be different from how people of color in Murdock would feel by members of your community who would not include them."

"The oppression that we get is on the internet," said Turnage. "There is a group out there called the Asatru Community who disagrees with our stance about Asatru being a universalist faith. The discomfort that anyone would feel is much like any other faith that would not allow someone to take communion because you're not baptized or participate in the inner-most rituals of a denominated faith because you're not a member of that faith. Again, you can do that, somewhere else. We're not oppressing anybody, we're just asking for the same respect."

An unidentified man asked, "Is there a reason your faith doesn't allow people of color like nearly any other religion in the United States outside of the fact that it's because of the color of their skin?"

"It's not the color of their skin, it's ethnicity, which I realize is a related concept," said Turnage, "but at the same time

the...Think of it this way. We think of religion, and particularly this religion is an ethnic religion, so it's like a family reunion. Odin is the all-father. He is the progenitor of our faith, so he is the beginning of that family, so that family is to the family of everyone, it is the family of Northern Europe. And I realize that depending on where we are, somewhere between 1500 and 2000 years, a universalist religion, Christianity, has been the primary religion in the West. And we have no qualms with that, we don't want to interfere with anyone's practice of their faith. We just have a different idea of what religion is and about what faith is."

Tammy Corwall, who had traveled from Alexandria, said, "First of all, my comment is that you're bastardizing the word religion. Because you really aren't about what a lot of the religious tenants, what we think of as religion. You're a cultural group who's about promoting a very specific agenda at this time when we have got so much conflict going on in this country. You're going to come here and be able to somehow quietly set up your religion, your house of worship, whatever you want to call it, but you're really about white supremacy and the fact that you will be in extinction if you don't form groups like this. Do you believe this, you'll be in extinction?"

"No I don't believe that." "Ok because that's the tenants. I'm reading it right off of a person who spoke for your religion, that's exactly what he said. So are you not being truthful or are you carefully picking your words?"

"I'm not sure where you're reading that from, but we're certainly not white supremacists," Turnage said. "So, um."

"What distinguishes you from them?" Corwall pushed. "White supremacists, well, first of all that's a term that's a little hard to define, and depending on exactly how you would define it, but the way I understand it, white supremacy means people who want the white people to be the only people or the upper people or who believe that is the fact of things, but that's not who we are, that's not what we do. We don't have it in our power to be over anybody else."

"Why are you listed with the Southern Poverty (Law) Center as a hate group? They don't understand you either?" Corwall continued.

"That's right." "Ok, you have a lot of people who misunderstand you. Are you just not clear with what you're really about? Because why is it so confusing to define you?"

"Well the Southern Poverty Law Center has had its own problems," Turnage said, "with its own racism and sex-

ism...If you search SPLC discredited they have broadened the scope of what they define as a hate group where they find just about everything that they don't like is a hate group. So that's just not the fact of things."

Patti Cain, of rural Murdock, asked, "How many members do you have in this group right now and what are your plans for increasing, say in the next year?"

"When we talk about his group, the AFA, we're about 500 nationally," said Turnage. "In this region that would be regularly attending the services here we would be 20, I would think, or fewer. One thing with the AFA, we don't proselytize. We are available for people to find their way home to our faith, but we don't go out and search for members."

"So you don't plan on increasing that number more than about 20?" Cain clarified.

"Not in the foreseeable future. The AFA was founded 25 years ago and it's taken us this long to get to 500, it's a slow creep."

Karen Falk, also of rural Murdock, asked, "Does everyone take a genetics test, and if they find a minute part that's not Northern European are you automatically out or if you marry someone that is not, how does that work?"

"There's no set way," said Turnage, "and we certainly don't do any genetic testing."

"So it's just on your honor, that you're a part of that group," said Falk. "Anybody that does a genetics test, they find what a mixture, what an amazing mixture the human race is, and I think that your members would probably find that out also."

Chuck Stellmach, of Murdock, then asked, "So if your religion is restricted to Northern European people, there are a lot of people of color living in Northern Europe, can they join your group?"

"There are a lot of people of color living in Northern Europe now, but just like living in Minnesota doesn't make you a Lakota Sioux," Turnage said. "If they are not Northern European decent, from the Germanic tribal period, because again, just because you move to a place doesn't mean you're of that place."

Duruji then asked, "So you say you're not white supremacist group, so why is it so important for you to protect the white family, that people have white children?"

Turnage hesitated for some time and said, "Because 100,000 years from now I want there to be blond hair and blue eyes, because my family has blond hair and blue eyes. It's like any other tradition, I want it preserved. Our heritage and our people are worthy

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Anna Funk, an Asatru Folk Assembly minister, and AFA attorney Allan Turnage at right, listened during the conditional use permit hearing held at the Murdock Village Hall last Wednesday.

--photo by Naomi Baker

The biggest threats to American democracy?

White nationalists

by Sophie Bjork-James
Los Angeles Times
(submitted)

The plot by militia members to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is only the latest example of the threat posed by far-right extremists. Social media posts of the accused showed that they drew from multiple far-right movements, including the Boogaloo Boys.

Their intention of starting a civil war "leading to societal collapse" has long been a goal of white supremacists and terrorists. Just as in the Whitmer plot, white nationalists and far-right actors have one primary aim: undermining multi-racial democracy.

These groups seek to maintain white power by any means, and American democracy is now seen as a barrier to this goal. This has translated into two broad strategies. The first is to advocate for an all-white ethno-state that would serve as a nonviolent solution to the problem of racial integration. For proponents of such a state, whiteness as an inherently moral essence in an

individual, and, collectively, the basis for a political utopia.

The other strategy in the white nationalist playbook is more direct: the overthrow of the democratic state or its destabilization through increasing acts of violence.

"The Turner Diaries," a novel broadly known as the bible of the racist right, articulates this hatred of the American government. Published serially in the 1970s in the racist magazine Attack!, the novel frames the U.S. government as controlled by Jews waging a race war against white people. Overthrowing the government is the central goal of the protagonists, and the novel often shows up on domestic terrorist reading lists. One such terrorist, Timothy J. McVeigh, had photocopies of the novel in his truck when he bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, imitating a bombing in the novel.

These ideas, along with the growth of a conspiracy theory claiming that elites are systematically enacting an anti-white strategy called the "Great Replacement," have been the ideological trigger

behind domestic terrorism in recent years.

Mass shootings in Charleston, South Carolina; Pittsburgh; El Paso, Texas; and Christchurch, New Zealand, were carried out by men radicalized online by these fears. Although they are often called "lone wolf" attacks, individual acts of terrorism are part of a white nationalist strategy called leaderless resistance that encourages individuals to commit acts of violence against Jews, people of color or the state.

Former Department of Homeland Security analyst Daryl Johnson, an expert on domestic terrorism, has warned for over a decade that these iterations of violence are only likely to grow. His team was disbanded after publishing a report on the threats posed by right-wing extremism, which led to a broad outcry by conservative politicians.

These trends make white nationalists the most significant terror threat in the United States. Beyond that, the influence of their antidemocratic ideology has spread to other

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MILLER VOTED NO on Bonding Bill. **WHY?**

The Bonding Bill contains much needed infrastructure projects statewide at historically low interest rates. THE BIG ITEM in this bill is the 179 tax conformity with Federal Tax. Every farm group, commodity group, and small business owner, is praising this bill!!! Even the Republican leadership is praising this bill! **Miller is not representing us!**

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