

Advocates for Life Ministries

OREGON UPDATE — LOCAL EDITION



AFLM's Associate Director Cathy Ramey answers one of the many media calls received after the shooting of George "Killer" Tiller in Wichita.

AFLM In "Use of Force" Firestorm

Portland, OR — It didn't seem like such a big deal at the time, but on the morning of August 20 Advocates for Life Ministries (AFLM) sent out a press release supporting the attempt by an Alabama priest, Fr. David Trosch, to place an ad in his local paper asking if killing abortionists might be "justifiable homicide." The ad was rejected and the priest was censured by his bishop.

Coincidentally, later that day, infamous third-trimester abortionist George Tiller was shot and wounded in Wichita, Kansas.

Thus began the firestorm.

Suddenly, media from across the nation and, in some cases, around the world were in a feeding frenzy around the AFLM offices. The frenzy only increased after it was alleged that Shelley Shannon, a Grants Pass, Oregon housewife and frequent rescuer with AFLM, was the shooter.

"Do you condone violence against abortionists?" "Did you know Shannon was going to do this?" were some of the questions asked repeatedly.

AFLM was in the soup. Their defense of Trosch had said, "Advocates for Life Ministries affirms the reasonable use of force to save the lives of children."

To the media, this translated to an active campaign to recruit people to kill abortionists. The coincidence of the press release with the shooting and the fact that Shannon was from Oregon did little to dispel that notion.

At the time, AFLM was the only pro-life spokesmen taking the posi-

tion that the use of force was justifiable. Since that time a number of national leaders and one organization, the newly-formed Defensive Action, have released statements refusing to condemn Shannon or Mike Griffin, the man accused of shooting Florida abortionist, David Gunn, in March.

While AFLM was intending to officially release and clarify their position on the use of force several months later, the agenda was moved up by the sudden events. In the midst of the furor, abortionist George Patterson was killed in Mobile, Alabama and, though it later proved to be a robbery attempt, the press used the incident to stoke the fires hotter. Attempts to distinguish that AFLM was not calling for people to go out and shoot abortionists was lost on most of the press.

Andrew Burnett, AFLM's Executive Director noted that the organization was merely stating that the use of force to protect life was morally justifiable and that AFLM would not

issue "condemnations" of people who committed such acts.

"There is no middle ground in this issue," said AFLM's Cathy Ramey. "Either the child in the womb is a person who deserves the same protection afforded to 'born' people, or the pro-life movement has been lying to America for the past 20 years."

Such statements only enticed the media.

Over the course of several days, hundreds of interviews were con-



Burnett