Column by Matt Neilmak

Violence Against Abortion Clinics Uncivil

In the past, the public viewed protesters of abortion clinics, aside from the occasional bombings and arson attacks, as aggressive believers who defended their convictions in bold, yet justifiable manners. The fact that they would block the entrances to the clinics was purely symbolic and never really kept women seeking abortions from entering anyway since everyone knew that the protesters could be armed quickly. Thus, it was easy to disagree with their beliefs, but it was extremely difficult to deny their right to protest because people on the other side were not really hurt.

Lately, however, there has been a much-talked-about trend of violent protests by the pro-life movement. Attention focused on the violence with the murder of Dr. James E. Garretson Gunn, a Florida abortion doctor. Probably more shocking than the murder is the defense tactics and their families, and patients of the clinics. After Gunn was shot, some protesters barricaded Windle's house and yelled, "One down . . . How many more to go?" Some of her employees have been given death threats. One of the clinic's doctors was even barricaded in his own house. The militancy began when Operation Goliah, a wing of Operation Rescue, set up a bomb in Houston in 1989.