

# White separatist insists his sect is not violent

ELOHIM CITY, Okla. (AP) — A young man with a crewcut, black fatigues, combat boots and a rifle strapped to his shoulder directed a visitor to a parking area at Elohim City.

The leader of a "white separatist" sect in the isolated, rugged terrain of eastern Oklahoma talks of small "fiefdoms" within the U.S. government his people may have to resist if the agencies overstep their bounds.

But Rev. Robert Millar, 70, said Elohim City is not about hate or violence and has never been involved with Oklahoma City bombing suspect Timothy McVeigh.

"I am not in favor of terrorist acts or acts of violence against the government," said Millar, speaking in front of a gazebo to about three-dozen reporters.

"I would never encourage or assist in this type of operation."

Elohim City, a 40.5-hectare complex nestled among black oaks and pines and located about 10 kilometres down a winding dirt road, has largely kept to itself since Millar started the church in the early 1970s. A Canadian citizen, Millar was born in Kitchener, Ont., and moved to the United States in

1951.

"We have been called by several news agencies to see if we've had any problems with Rex. Millar or anyone from Elohim City and I have to say we have not," said Adair County District Attorney Diane Barker Harrold.

"There's no reason to foresee any problems. They've been here 22 years."

The community of houses, a one-room stone schoolhouse and a cathedral with a domed roof was inundated with reporters Wednesday, following news reports McVeigh had placed two phone calls to Elohim City in the two weeks prior to the April 19 bombing that killed 167 people.

"He may have gotten our phone number from someone," Millar said.

"If he phoned here, no one has any knowledge of talking to him."

McVeigh was stopped in 1993 for a traffic violation in western Arkansas, about 30 kilometres from Elohim City. Asked whether McVeigh was headed for Elohim City, Millar said he has never seen him in person and doesn't recall McVeigh being in the audience at any of the church's daily services.

He later suggested the government arranged for McVeigh to be arrested near Elohim City to "disparage us."

Further drawing attention to Millar, whom the people refer to as "Grandpa," is his past association with white supremacists who have a history of violence against the government.

Millar helped negotiate a peaceful surrender in 1985 for James Ellison, who along with four other men held nearly 400 armed officers at bay at a survivalist camp in Arkansas. On Friday, Ellison married Millar's granddaughter.

"It does not delight me to know that the man my beloved granddaughter has chosen has a prison experience," Millar said.

"I invite his friends, his enemies and the press to let bygones be bygones."

Millar also testified on behalf of Richard Wayne Snell, who was executed April 19 for killing a Texarkana, Ark., pawn-shop operator. Millar visited Snell, who also received a life sentence for killing an Arkansas state trooper, just before the execution — which took place about 12 hours after the Oklahoma City bombing. Snell's body is buried on the grounds of Elohim City.

"I heard about the bombing while en route to the prison," Millar said.

"He had heard about it, seen it on TV before I arrived. He was as appalled as I was."

When asked about prison reports that Snell was delighted to hear of the bombing, Millar replied: "I can only respond to what his attitude to me was the last three hours of his life."

While Snell and Ellison have roots in white supremacy, Millar said his beliefs and theirs differ. Millar said he respects all people from all races, although he doesn't believe races should mix.

"Blacks are better served by living separately," he said.

Millar believes firmly in the right to bear arms, although he said Elohim City has only a limited number of weapons. But he believes government has become too intrusive, naming the FBI, CIA and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

"Mr. Snell and I agree that agencies of the federal government, or small departments of agencies, do behave in an illegal and extreme manner at times," Millar said.

He said it is the responsibility of "patriots and Christians" to "resist and stand out against" illegal actions.

Still, he said Elohim City would defend itself if the government came onto the land to commit criminal acts. But he said he would cooperate if investigators wanted to look around — provided they had a search warrant.

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