

Couple's Antiabortion Stand Unyielding

BRAYS, From D1

antiabortion activists in the Washington area. Yet friends and neighbors say the virulence they bring to that struggle is not much evident in their daily lives.

Michael Bray, 39, is the affable neighbor who happens to have spent 46 months in a federal penitentiary for 10 bombings that occurred from February 1984 to January 1985 at abortion clinics and the offices of abortion rights organizations. Jayne Bray, 36, is a devoted and deeply traditional wife and mother who also is the lead plaintiff in an abortion-protest case—*Jayne Bray v. Alexandria Women's Health Clinic*—that will be decided this term by the Supreme Court.

"I'm pretty sure that everybody knows what they are about," said Pat Fridlend, the Brays's friend and neighbor for 11 years. "But in the neighborhood they live a pretty normal life. We don't always talk about abortion. We talk about everyday things."

"They're fun people," said Pam Palumbo, executive director of the Bowie Crisis Pregnancy Center, which Michael Bray helped found and where Jayne works as a part-time counselor. "We can get together and play cards and have a theological discussion as we are playing."

It is precisely their theology that frightens many people. "These people want to enact certain religious dogma they have into civil law," said the Rev. John Swomley, professor emeritus of Christian ethics at the St. Paul School, a Methodist theological school in Kansas City. "It is not a moral regeneration movement; it is a power movement."

The Brays do not draw a distinction between the two. They believe that writing fundamentalist Christian teachings into law is the only way to save the country from a "disintegration" engendered by "religious freedom." They would prohibit not only abortion, but fornication and sodomy as well.

"We can't compel people to be Christians," Michael Bray said. "We can say we are under Christian law . . . these are the laws you must abide by."

The Brays were immersed in their version of Christianity at Rockmont (now Colorado Christian) College, where they met in the early 1970s. He was her student instructor in a diving class. If their public lives today seem the raw material for an angry documentary, the story of their

When he met his future wife, Michael Bray had a part-time job at Casa Bonita, an enormous Mexican restaurant in Denver. He dove off a replica of the cliffs of Acapulco. After he met Jayne, they put together a new act. He played an escaped gorilla and she was the restaurant administrator he terrorized.

In their off hours, the couple tried to convert young members of cults and Michael Bray finished his studies at Baptist-run Denver Seminary. They were married in 1976 and moved to Bowie four years later when he was offered a job as a pastoral assistant at Grace Lutheran Church in Bowie, the congregation he had grown up in.

In his new job, Michael Bray worked with young people, taught Sunday school and increasingly felt the call to put his beliefs into action. In 1982, he heard the emotional Sunday school testimony of a woman who had had four abortions and began soliciting funds from local churches for a "crisis pregnancy center," a place where pregnant women could hear the antiabortion gospel. Today that center is supported by more than a dozen churches and counsels about 600 women each year, according to Palumbo, its executive director.

One of those women was Chris Santos, who came to the clinic considering an abortion and facing a cocaine-related stint in federal prison. She met Jayne Bray, who persuaded her to have the baby, welcomed her into the family and the church and remains, with Michael, one of Santos's closest friends.

"They never showed any kind of judgmental attitude toward me because I was unmarried and pregnant," said Santos, now office manager for Maryland Right to Life Inc. in Annapolis. "They took the situation as it was and tried to help me."

The Brays were popular at Grace Lutheran, but they also were controversial. In 1984, they and at least a dozen other families broke with the church because it had agreed to merge with other Lutheran congregations that they believed were insufficiently literal in their interpretation of Scripture. Today, the Rev. Alan Erickson, who hired Michael Bray, will not speak about him for publication.

After the break, Michael Bray and co-pastor Michael Colvin established the Reformation Lutheran

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"If their public lives today seem the raw material for an angry documentary, the story of their courtship has the loopy feeling of a Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello movie."