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Pastor Wants Montana to be “Tip of the Spear” in Fight with Feds: White Supremacists Hail Baldwin’s Arrival

Pastor Chuck Baldwin, formerly of Florida and a supporter of both anti-government “patriots” and neo-Confederate hate groups, recently gave a public presentation in Kalispell to over 200 people. He warned attendees to prepare for an upcoming battle with the federal government, and he confirmed he is contemplating a run for governor of Montana. While the media reported on the event, a significant point about Baldwin moving to Kila, MT, was missed. His relocation is drawing rave reviews from the Flathead Valley’s radical right wing.

“Both hardcore white supremacists and anti-government „patriots’ in the Flathead can hardly contain their enthusiasm when talking about Baldwin now living in Montana,” says the Human Rights Network’s Travis McAdam. “It almost feels like the worshipping of a teen idol.”

A failed presidential candidate, Chuck Baldwin is being promoted by local white supremacists as another reason for their allies to relocate to the Flathead Valley. For over two years, local racists have been promoting the creation of a “conscious white community” known as [Pioneer Little Europe in Kalispell](#). Similarly, Baldwin has written that he hopes his decision to move to Montana will create a “FREEDOM RUSH” and draw other people wanting to escape the “tyrannical tentacles of Washington D.C.” The chief advocate of the Pioneer Little Europe effort, [April Gaede](#), attended Baldwin’s January presentation and said it brought her to tears.

“Baldwin uses violent rhetoric and clearly believes that a war with the federal government is coming,” says McAdam. “White supremacists feel the same way, since they believe Jews control the federal government. This troubling overlap between the white supremacist and anti-government movements is happening all across the country. It’s just easier to track at the local level.”

The Human Rights Network has released a briefing paper about Chuck Baldwin, which includes background on him and a look at how local white supremacists view his arrival (see below).

“Chuck Baldwin is being treated like a savior by people promoting an Aryan Homeland and outright war with the federal government,” says McAdam. “He’s one of the last people our communities should be looking to for answers. He has nothing productive to offer the Flathead Valley or our state.”

Chuck Baldwin: Troubling Addition to the Flathead Valley

After 35 years as the pastor of Crossroad Baptist Church in Pensacola, FL, Chuck Baldwin decided to transplant his family of 17 to the Flathead Valley. He says God told him to make the move. In addition to his family, Baldwin brings a strident brand of Christian fundamentalism, support of the anti-government “patriot” movement, and neo-Confederate ideology to the Flathead Valley. The Southern Poverty Law Center [lists](#) Baldwin as one of the people “at the heart” of the resurgent “patriot” movement.¹

The “patriot” movement is a decentralized social movement made up of anti-government extremists. While not all “patriots” hold identical beliefs, there are common threads that bind them together. One central theme is an ardent distrust, or hatred, of the federal government. “Patriots” attempt to justify this antagonistic view through conspiracy theories which inevitably involve secret cabals planning to enslave the American people. The usual suspects behind these one-world government conspiracies include the federal government, the United Nations, the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, and many others. “Patriots” believe they will ultimately have to fight off an invasion by these “New World Order” forces. Therefore, strident gun rights are emphasized, because “patriots” view themselves as the last line of defense against a tyrannical government. The “patriot” movement has spawned a history of lawlessness and violence, including the Oklahoma City bombing by Timothy McVeigh.²

In writing about his decision to move to Montana, Baldwin infused his “patriot” and Christian beliefs with apocalyptic rhetoric. He prophesized that “America is headed for an almost certain cataclysm,” which he said, “will most certainly include a fight between Big-Government globalists and freedom-loving, independent-minded patriots.” Baldwin explained that this “fight” will play out in the mountain states, including Montana, and that he will find allies in his new home. “I would rather die fighting for freedom with liberty-loving patriots by my side than be shuttled off to some FEMA camp,” Baldwin has stated, referencing a common anti-government conspiracy theory. He claims Montana “will be the tip of the spear in the freedom fight.”³

Well-Rounded Right Winger

Born in 1952, Baldwin graduated from what would become Rev. Jerry Falwell’s Liberty University. During the 1980s, he was the state chairman for the Florida chapter of Falwell’s Moral Majority. His conservative views on social issues led Baldwin to leave the Republican Party in 2004, just in time to get nominated as vice president on the [Constitution Party’s](#) ticket that year. The Party combines many tenets of the anti-government movement with an extreme version of Christian fundamentalism. In joining the Constitution Party, Baldwin claimed there were no longer differences between Republicans and Democrats. He complained that neither major party had any “intention of outlawing abortion-on-demand” and both were committed to “granting legitimacy to homosexuality.” Baldwin said he joined the Constitution Party, because it shared his “pro-life, pro-liberty, and pro-constitution convictions.” Baldwin unsuccessfully ran for president on the Constitution Party’s 2008 ticket.⁴

During the 1990s, Baldwin used his radio show on the Christian Patriot Network to promote the militia movement.⁵ He has also been involved with white supremacist neo-Confederate groups, including the [Council of Conservative Citizens](#). Categorized as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Council is the modern-day incarnation of the White Citizens’ Council that supported segregation and

opposed the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s.⁶ Baldwin has been a contributing writer to the group's main publication.⁷ He has also claimed that the "leaders of the Old Confederacy" were not racist, and that the "South was right in the War Between the States."⁸

Baldwin's move to Montana is not his first time in the state. Over the past few years, Celebrating Conservatism, a "patriot" group based in Ravalli County, has brought him to Montana on multiple occasions.⁹ At Celebrating Conservatism's poorly attended "[Liberty Convention](#)" in May 2010, Baldwin shared the podium with: [Red Beckman](#), an anti-Semitic tax protester; [Richard Mack](#), a former Arizona sheriff and militia hero; and Schaeffer Cox, a volatile young militia activist from Alaska.¹⁰

At the "Liberty Convention," Baldwin urged attendees to elect leaders who will push the idea of state sovereignty. He shared with the audience that he fantasizes about Montanans drawing a line in the sand and telling the federal government, "Montana will live free. Montana will bow to the knee of Caesar no more!" Convention attendees and emcee Rick Jore, who served one term in the Montana House as a [Constitution Party of Montana](#) representative, urged Baldwin to move to the state. Baldwin said he would pray about it. Jore then commented that he wanted to form a committee to elect Baldwin as governor of Montana and asked any interested people to come talk to him.¹¹

Jore's warm overtures toward Baldwin are a stark contrast to how Baldwin was treated during the 2008 election cycle. The national Constitution Party nominated Baldwin as its presidential candidate. However, the Constitution Party of Montana, of which Jore was the chairman, shunned Baldwin as their presidential candidate on the Montana ballot. Instead, the Montana party listed US Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX), who had failed to win the nomination of the national Republican Party. Neither Paul nor Baldwin did well on election night. Baldwin received 0.15% of the national vote and Paul garnered approximately 2% in Montana.¹²

Governor Baldwin? Anxious to Take on the Feds

In late October 2010, Baldwin and his family finished their move to Montana and settled in Kila.¹³ He has started a new ministry, the Liberty Fellowship, which meets at the Kalispell Red Lion.¹⁴ His family didn't wait long to make their presence known. In November 2010, his son, Tim, presented on the topics of state sovereignty and nationalism versus federalism in both Kalispell and Ronan. The events were sponsored by two local "patriot" groups, the Freedom Action Rally and Citizens Acting for Liberty.¹⁵

Chuck Baldwin's first major public event since moving to the Flathead was a mid-January 2011 presentation he gave in Kalispell to approximately 200 people. He announced he was thinking of running for governor, saying Montana needed a governor who would be "willing to put his life on the line to defend the Constitution."¹⁶ He told the crowd he'd woken up in the middle of the night after dreaming that, as governor, he had told the federal government that the state would be taking control of national forests, national parks, and wilderness areas.¹⁷ He said these current land designations were policies that "enslave the citizenry."¹⁸ He said states needed to unite to fight the "terrorists of Washington D.C."¹⁹ At the event, an invitation and a form to join the Patriot Business Network was distributed, as well as information on how to avoid searches by law enforcement when stopped by the authorities.²⁰

A month before his public presentation in Kalispell, Baldwin was a featured speaker at an event held in Helena by the [Oath Keepers](#).²¹ The Oath Keepers is a "patriot" group which urges military and law enforcement personnel to sign an oath encapsulating the one-world government conspiracy theories of

the anti-government movement. Materials for the Helena event said it sought to explore solutions to protect “sovereignty” and to “preserve our heritage and legacy as Montanans and Americans.”²² Those in attendance included Tea Party leaders, Republican legislators, candidates running for office, and militia activists.²³

Baldwin’s remarks at both events were filled with violent rhetoric and statements alluding to an upcoming second American Revolution. In addition to the remarks mentioned above, a couple more examples include:

- “We know there’s a fight coming. We know there is a line being drawn in the sand, and we want to be in the right place. The good ground is right here in Montana, and we want to be in the right place.”²⁴
- “Real Montanans will fight and die for the principles of truth, honor and freedom.”²⁵
- “I’m not discouraged about Montana, because they will not let DC take their freedom. I am a refugee escaped from Florida. I came to fight and die in the state of Montana!”²⁶
- “States created the federal government with parameters and they forgot. States must draw the line and only those [states] out West are ready to.”²⁷

Baldwin’s rhetoric is all too common today. The rise of the Tea Parties, and a more general resurgence of the “patriot” movement, has created an environment where passionate policy debates have been replaced by threats of violence, harassment, and intimidation. “We need to recognize that combining violent rhetoric and the public debate is not an indicator of a healthy democratic process,” says the Human Rights Network’s Travis McAdam. “The public square must be a safe environment where ideas can be debated without threats of violence. Chuck Baldwin does not help create meaningful public dialogue or a safe environment.”

Montana Dreaming: Baldwin, White Supremacists Call on Allies to Relocate

Baldwin’s relocation to Montana has Flathead-based white supremacist [April Gaede](#) excited. Gaede started a [Pioneer Little Europe \(PLE\)](#) in Kalispell with the intent of getting more white supremacists to Montana. She has stated that one of her goals is to start reaching out to people who aren’t a part of the PLE, such as “white patriots,” to hopefully draw them into the fold. She has commented that Baldwin moving to Montana is a reason why her racist cohorts across the country should consider moving here.²⁸

Likewise, Baldwin hopes to draw his fellow believers to the area. He believes his move to Montana is part of a “FREEDOM RUSH” whereby people wanting to escape the “tyrannical tentacles of Washington D.C.” will move to western states. He claims other “Christian patriots” have already followed him to Montana and he hopes more will follow suit.²⁹

These two visions collided when it came to Baldwin’s January 2011 presentation. Starting in December 2010, Brian Gray, one of Gaede’s fellow promoters of the Kalispell PLE, began advertising Baldwin’s upcoming event on a white supremacist forum.³⁰ The crowd attending Baldwin’s presentation included local white supremacists, and Gaede couldn’t stop gushing about it online.³¹ She said it was a “really moving event” that caused her to tear up several times.³² She also stated that Montana needed a leader, and “Chuck seems to be the man to do the leading.”³³ When fellow online white supremacists went after Baldwin’s credibility, Gaede defended him and said “several members of Kalispell’s growing” white supremacist community attended Baldwin’s presentation.³⁴ Brian Gray, Kaitlyn Bolliger, and [Karl Gharst](#) did attend the event.³⁵ Gaede passed out fliers for an event featuring Canadian white supremacist [Paul Fromm](#).³⁶

Overlap between the anti-government and white supremacist movements has a long history. Many of the pioneers of the 1990's militia movement got their start in the hardcore white supremacist movement. For example, John Trochmann, founder of the Militia of Montana, attended Aryan Nations events.³⁷ [Bo Gritz](#), another militia icon, followed Christian Identity, which teaches that people of color are sub-human "mud people" and Jews are the literal children of Satan. Much of the impetus for the formation of the militia movement resulted from a meeting featuring noteworthy white supremacists following 1993's Ruby Ridge standoff.³⁸ They saw a chance to tap into the political mainstream by playing up one-world government conspiracy theories (minus the blatant anti-Semitism) and focusing on issues like guns and taxes (instead of race).

The same dynamic is currently playing out regarding the resurgent right. Gaede says she has attended local Tea Party rallies where she claims to be greeted warmly. She said local Tea Partiers know she is a white supremacist, and "the vast majority of them share those beliefs..."³⁹ She's not alone. Watchdog groups across the country, including the [Institute for Education and Research on Human Rights](#) and the [Anti-Defamation League](#), have reported on white supremacists trying to capitalize on the anger and resentment of the Tea Parties.

While Baldwin may not be explicitly working with local white supremacists, the Human Rights Network finds it very troubling that even informal linkages are forming. "With hardcore white supremacists and 'patriots' increasing their presence in the Flathead," McAdam says, "the last thing our state needs is Baldwin added to the mix."

¹ Chuck Baldwin, "The Hardest Decision of My Life," Sept. 1, 2010; Chuck Baldwin, "Why We are Moving to Montana," Sept. 15, 2010.

² For a longer definition of the "patriot" movement, see: Montana Human Rights Network, [Shooting for Respectability](#) (2003), p. 8. For some examples of "patriot" problems with the law, see: Militia Watchdog Archives, ["Calendars of Conspiracy;"](#) Southern Poverty Law Center, ["The 'Patriot' Movement Timeline."](#)

³ Chuck Baldwin, "The Hardest Decision of My Life," Sept. 1, 2010; Chuck Baldwin, "Why We are Moving to Montana," Sept. 15, 2010.

⁴ *Flathead Beacon*, "'Freedom-Minded Spirit' Draws Baldwin to Flathead," Sept. 15, 2010; *Sierra Times*, "Why I Joined the Constitution Party," July 28, 2004.

⁵ Anti-Defamation League, "Beyond the Bombing," 1995.

⁶ Southern Poverty Law Center, map of hate groups, <http://splcenter.org/get-informed/hate-map>.

⁷ Center for New Community, *Party Crashers: White Nationalists and Election 2000* (2000), p. 13-14.

⁸ *Flathead Beacon*, "'Freedom-Minded Spirit' Draws Baldwin to Flathead," Sept. 15, 2010.

⁹ For more on Celebrating Conservatism, see: Montana Human Rights Network, *Network News*, [December 2009](#), p. 8.

¹⁰ Montana Human Rights Network, ["Liberty Convention"](#) briefing paper, May 14, 2010.

¹¹ Montana Human Rights Network, archives, notes from the Liberty Convention, May 21-22, 2010.

¹² Ballot Access News, "Montana Constitution Party Submits Presidential Electors Pledged to Ron Paul and Michael Peroutka," Sept. 5, 2008; Montana News Station, "Ron Paul to be on Montana Ballot," Sept. 9, 2008; Montana Secretary of State, 2008 General Election Results; Atlas of US Presidential Elections, 2008 General Election Results.

¹³ Chuck Baldwin, "Montana Update," Dec. 9, 2010.

¹⁴ *Daily Interlake*, "Speaker rallies packed house: 'We know there's a fight coming,'" Jan. 13, 2011.

¹⁵ Brushfires of Freedom, Calendar of Events, <http://www.brushfiresmt.com>, Nov. 9, 2010; Flathead Events, Citizens Acting for Liberty Community Event, Nov. 9, 2010.

¹⁶ *Flathead Beacon*, "Baldwin: 'There's a Fight Coming,'" Nov. 17, 2011

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Montana Human Rights Network, archives, material handed out during Chuck Baldwin presentation, January 11, 2011.

²¹ Montana Oath Keepers, flier for "Statewide Liberty Leadership Forum/Conference," Dec. 18, 2010.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*; Montana Human Rights Network, archives, notes from Oath Keepers conference, Dec. 18, 2010.

²⁴ *Flathead Beacon*, "Baldwin: 'There's a Fight Coming,'" Nov. 17, 2011.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Montana Human Rights Network, archives, notes from Oath Keepers conference, Dec. 18, 2010.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ April Gaede, Stormfront posting, "Re: How best to grow your PLE?" Nov. 18, 2010; April Gaede, Stormfront posting, "Re: Looking for a Place to Move..." Sept. 23, 2010.

²⁹ Chuck Baldwin, "We Hit a Nerve," Sept. 8, 2010; Chuck Baldwin, "Montana Update," Dec. 9, 2010.

³⁰ Brian Gray, Stormfront posting, "Re: Kalispell, Montana PLE," Dec. 9, 2010; For more on Brian Gray, see: Montana Human Rights Network, *Network News*, [November 2009](#), p. 4.

³¹ *Flathead Beacon*, "Baldwin: 'There's a Fight Coming,'" Nov. 17, 2011.

³² April Gaede, Stormfront posting, "Chuck Baldwin speaks to huge crowd in Kalispell Montana," Jan. 14, 2011.

³³ April Gaede, Stormfront posting, "Re: Chuck Baldwin speaks to huge crowd in Kalispell Montana," Jan. 17, 2011.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Montana Human Rights Network, archives, notes from Chuck Baldwin presentation, January 11, 2011. For more on Gray and Bolliger, see: Montana Human Rights Network, *Network News*, [November 2009](#), p. 4.

³⁶ Montana Human Rights Network, archives, material handed out during Chuck Baldwin presentation, January 11, 2011.

³⁷ Montana Human Rights Network, [Shooting for Respectability](#) (2003), p. 11.

³⁸ Montana Human Rights Network, [Shooting for Respectability](#) (2003), pp. 9-10.

³⁹ April Gaede, Stormfront posting, "Re: Open Letter to Stormfront from William Gheen, ALIPAC," Nov. 15, 2009.