

Kingdom Ministries & Counseling Center

EQUIPPING

JUNE 2014

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What Can You Do In The Face Of Violence?

Keith Martens, M.Div.,

In an online report, Scott Jaschik wrote about the recent tragedy at the UCSB campus here in California:

"Six students at the University of California at Santa Barbara were killed by a man who went on a rampage Friday night. Authorities have identified the killer, who left various video and written manifestos saying that he was seeking to kill sorority women and others at the university as revenge for the way women had rejected him. The killer—who

subsequently shot himself—as been identified as a student who enrolled but frequently dropped out of classes at Santa Barbara City College."

Elliot Rodger has been identified as the assailant, a local resident who is now the center of public outrage and national media exposure. While this act of senseless violence has again raised public consciousness and debate about gun control and mental illness, I would like to address another issue that is often overlooked.

Over the past 20 or so years I've personally encountered and have spoken to others who have experienced similar acts of attempted violence by those who were likewise troubled and motivated to harm others. Certainly matters concerning mental illness and the availability of lethal weapons are factors in this and other cases like it. My concern has to do with spiritual forces that are at work in situations like this and how they can be prevented from occurring.

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A PARTY With A PURPOSE: Annual Vision & Fundraising Event September 28th



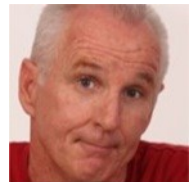
Sunday, September 28th at Wolf Lakes Park

Will You Please...

- ✓ Save the Date
- ✓ Sponsor and/or Host a Table
- ✓ Invite New Guests

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Special Guest...



Paul Aldrich
Comedy, Music, Inspiration

I would also like to address the resulting fear that is often the byproduct of these seemingly random and heinous tragedies. I want to make it clear, however, that what I'm proposing is not a guarantee or panacea of protection from any and all harm. I do not believe that we have such certainty as long as we live in a fallen world where people have freedom of choice. Still, I do believe God has given us many promises of protection in regard to both spiritual and physical harm as well as the power to avert the perpetration of evil in its various forms.

Situations like these cannot be simplified by strictly labeling them as either mental illness or spiritual in nature. It's usually a combination of both. Mental illness is real and must be treated medically. The problem with this, or any other vulnerability, is that it makes one more susceptible to the potential of being affected by the powers of darkness, which can cause atypical and extreme behavior. Things are further complicated when those who suffer are untreated, have the wrong type or dosage of medication, and suffer from side effects. Most articles circulating on social media that place the blame on SSRI's and other medications are unscientific and short-sighted to say the least. It's just more complicated than that. It's

highly unlikely that anyone on these types of medications would have such bizarre side effects after only 5 days since these usually require up to two weeks to reach their potential therapeutic effect. Such violent and bizarre behavior, thoughts, and feelings are far more typical when the individual suddenly and without medical supervision stops taking their medication.

A number of years ago a locally publicized report told the story of a married couple who sought the counseling services of a Christ-centered ministry here in the Central Valley of California. On what I suspect was their last visit, each party—both husband and wife—brought a concealed handgun to their counseling appointment. During the course of the session, each of them pulled their weapon out and began to fire at one another and some of the staff members at the offices of this particular ministry. I don't recall the details or the outcome of this frightening episode but I do recall my private conversation with one of the staff members who was present. In our conversation, she reported that the husband turned his gun toward her and pulled the trigger at point-blank range. Fortunately, the gun failed to discharge and she was spared. Privately she relayed to me how at that moment she saw what appeared to be a non-

human figure standing between her and the gunman with its finger shoved into the muzzle of the weapon. Her account and assessment led her to believe that God had miraculously intervened to prevent her from being shot and possibly killed. Her story and others I've heard firsthand from missionaries and those living under the constant threat of persecution in countries where danger is a reality are similar.

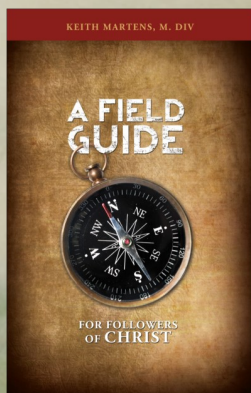
On more than one occasion, during times of personal ministry, individuals have charged at me with the look of intent to harm, grabbed me by the throat, and on two separate occurrences came at me with a knife in hand. Given the context, I fortunately responded with a verbal command to, "Stop, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ." And on each of these occasions, my would-be-attackers not only stopped, but came to their senses in a way that resulted in a safe outcome for me and a new sense of freedom for them.

I also recall two former college students of mine who were serving as staff members for YWAM reporting a similar experience with a knife-wielding man who was disarmed with an authoritative command given in Jesus' Name. Sadly, stories like these raise a number of questions and inspire a good deal of skepticism even among those in the Christian community. I too admit to such skepticism and am quite aware of the risk of even sharing stories like this and its potential impact on my or the ministry's credibility. But I'll get over it. It's more important to me to offer some insight that could be of potential use for you and others in either facing or anticipating situations like these. Hopefully, you'll get over it too.

In any event, what I'm proposing is far more likely to be of benefit than to try to defend yourself, carry a weapon, or spend a lot of time learning martial arts. Living in fear, closing your drapes, staying inside, or looking over your shoulder all the time is hardly living the abundant life. It's also

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counterproductive to being an agent of peace, salt and light, and an ambassador for Christ in a world that desperately needs to know and experience the love and power of the Risen Lord.

The bottom line is that Christ has given us His authority and power to bring about change, to overcome evil with good, and to avert, even destroy the works of evil. While many would affirm this basic truth, the fact is that the majority of Western Christians have little or no practical knowledge of how to use Jesus' authority, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the effective weapon of God's Word for this or any other purpose for which it was intended. In fact, the New Testament is quite clear

that this is God's only provision for carrying out His commission to the world by proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God, healing the sick, and freeing people from the powers of darkness. Or as King Arthur put it in Camelot, the authority Jesus has given to every believer is, "might for right." It is the ability or right to exercise God's power to ensure that God has His way in each and every possible situation. And, I dare say, that without it, not much will change. Either use it or lose.

So whether it's fear, danger, or both, Christ has not only given us His many promises (e.g., Psalm 91) but the power to overcome and bring freedom IF we utilize the power He's granted to

us. If you don't know how and would like to know, we can help. Who knows, maybe the life you save could be mine! Or, maybe it will be yours, someone you love, or somebody who needs to know the love and power of God. You're welcome to attend any one of our many seminars, check out our resources online, buy our most recent book, or watch the powerful video I filmed of Patrick, a missionary to America sent from Africa and a student at Fuller Seminary, give his perspective on what he sees as the difference between a spiritual and moral problem here in the U.S. Visit us online at www.kingdomministries-fresno.org and check it out.

—Keith Martens, M.Div

How To Connect and Partner With Us

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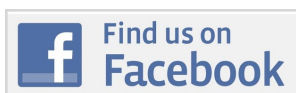
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