

## News and Current Events :: Shootings at YWAM Missionary Training Center & MegaChurch...

**Shootings at YWAM Missionary Training Center & MegaChurch... - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2007/12/9 12:57**

### **Gunman kills 2 in missionary center**

By GEORGE MERRITT  
Associated Press Writer  
December 9, 2007

ARVADA, Colo. - A gunman walked into a training center dormitory for young Christian missionaries early Sunday and opened fire, killing two of the center's staff members and wounding two others.

No arrests had been made by late morning.

The shooting happened at about 12:30 a.m. at the Youth With a Mission center, police spokeswoman Susan Medina said. About 45 people were evacuated from the dormitory in this Denver suburb and moved to an undisclosed location.

A man and a woman in their mid-20s died, and two men ages 22 and 23 were wounded, Medina said. One of the injured men was in critical condition, said Paul Filidis, a Colorado Springs-based spokesman with Youth With a Mission.

All four of the victims were staff members, Filidis said.

Brady White, who attends Faith Bible Chapel, where the center is located, said he had spoken to some students there. They are unhurt but called the experience "terrifying," he said.

"They're just wonderful people," White said of the center's students. "Their mission is to know God and to make him known."

Cheril Morrison, wife of chapel pastor George Morrison, said the man who was killed had just hung up Christmas lights at her home and described the young woman who was killed as "an amazingly beautiful person."

She declined to name either victim.

Witnesses told police that the gunman was a 20-year-old white male, wearing a dark jacket and skull cap. He may have glasses or a beard.

"There's no blueprint for this, we're just going to be honest and pray for one another, cry with one another," center director Peter Warren told KUSA-TV. "Who knows what was going on in this young man's life."

Police with several dogs searched the area through the night, and residents of nearby homes were notified by reverse 911 to be on the lookout. Medina said residents were asked to look out their windows to see if the snow had been disturbed during the night. About 4 inches of snow had fallen in the area in the past day.

Mimi Martin, who lives near the center, said she received the warning call at about 9 a.m. warning neighbors to keep their doors and windows locked.

"Why would anybody want to hurt those kids?" Martin said. "I just pray for their families."

People bundled up against freezing cold attended Sunday services at the sanctuary, about 300 yards from the dormitory on the campus of the Faith Bible Chapel. Police kept tight security on the chapel grounds.

"We never doubted that we would have a service," said Cheril Morrison. "We felt like our church faithful all needed to be together."

Darv Smith, director of a Youth With a Mission center in Boulder, said people ranging from their late teens to their 70s undergo a 12-week discipleship course that prepares them to be missionaries.

He said the center trains about 300 people a year.

Filidis said staffers are usually former missionaries themselves and that the "mercy ministries" performed by trainees include orphanage work. He said he didn't know where the group being trained in Arvada was going to be sent.

Youth With a Mission was started in 1960 and now has 1,100 locations with 16,000 full-time staff, Smith said. The Arvada center was founded in 1984.

*Please remember this situation in your prayers.*

([http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071209/ap\\_on\\_re\\_us/missionary\\_shooting](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071209/ap_on_re_us/missionary_shooting)) CLICK HERE to read the full article.

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**Colorado police seek clues to 2 attacks at Christian organizations... - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2007/12/10 9:54**

### **Colorado police seek clues to 2 attacks**

By JUDITH KOHLER

Associated Press Writer

December 10, 2007

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. - Authorities searched a home in suburban Englewood early Monday, seeking any link between two deadly shooting sprees at Christian religious centers that left both communities baffled and stunned.

Five people, including a gunman, died in the attacks Sunday at a megachurch in Colorado Springs and at the Youth With a Mission missionary center in the Denver suburb of Arvada. Five others were wounded.

"Violent crimes of any sort are tragic enough, but when innocent people are killed in a religious facility or a place of worship, we must voice a collective sense of outrage and demonstrate a renewed commitment to keeping our communities safe," said Gov. Bill Ritter.

Police in Arvada said they believed the shootings — which occurred 12 hours and about 65 miles apart — were probably linked, though they had nothing conclusive to back up the theory.

"Given the circumstances, I think it is a good possibility that the two are linked," Arvada Deputy Police Chief Gary Creagor told The Associated Press early Monday. "But we have to prove that they are."

At a news conference Sunday, Police Chief Don Wick said that there was "reason to believe" the shootings were connected, though he declined to elaborate.

Early Monday, authorities were searching a home in suburban Englewood, about 15 miles south of Denver, that they said could be related to the Colorado Springs shooting case. Authorities could be seen coming and going from the home, and at one point searching the bushes in front.

The violence began about 12:30 a.m. Sunday, when a man opened fire at the Youth With a Mission office after he had been denied a request to spend the night there. Witnesses told police that the gunman was a 20-year-old white male, wearing a dark jacket and skull cap, who had a handgun.

The center had been having a Christmas party when the gunman attacked.

More than 12 hours later, at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, a gunman with a high-powered rifle entered the church's main foyer and opened fire, Colorado Springs Police Chief Richard Myers said.

One church member was killed, and another who was badly wounded died later Sunday at Penrose Community Hospital in Colorado Springs, said hospital spokeswoman Amy Sufak. Their identities were not released.

The gunman was killed by a member of the church's armed security staff before police arrived, Myers said. Officers also found several smoke-generating devices on the church campus; their intended purpose wasn't clear.

Jessie Gingrich, who had left New Life and was in the parking lot getting into her car, saw the gunman get a rifle from his trunk and open fire on a van with people inside. She cowered in her car, fumbling with the ignition key.

"I was just expecting for the next gunshot to be coming through my car. Miraculously Â— by the grace of God Â— it did not," she told ABC's "Good Morning America" on Monday.

About 7,000 people were on the church campus at the time of the shooting, said Senior Pastor Brady Boyd said. Security had been beefed up after the shootings hours earlier in Arvada, he said.

Ashley Gibbs was getting into a car with David Harris when they heard the gunshots Â— a sound like someone kicking ice from the side of a car, she said. Harris said he saw the gunman, and it looked like he knew how to handle a weapon.

"I was in the military for about three years, and the way he was holding the rifle looked just like the way we were taught to do when I was in the military," he told NBC's "Today" show on Monday.

They stayed in the vehicle and prayed for the gunman.

"It was obvious that he was in some sort of pain and going through a lot," Gibbs told NBC's "Today" show. "I just prayed God would bring him peace."

New Life, with about 10,000 members, was founded by the Rev. Ted Haggard, who was dismissed last year after a former male prostitute alleged he had a three-year cash-for-sex relationship with him. Haggard, then the president of the National Association of Evangelicals, admitted committing undisclosed "sexual immorality."

The two dead victims at the missionary center were identified as Tiffany Johnson, 26, and Philip Crouse, 24.

Johnson, who grew up in Chisholm, Minn., loved working with children and wanted to see the world, said family friend Carla Macynski.

"Tiffany was a well-liked, easygoing 26-year-old. She was friendly, adventurous and a definite leader. She wanted to see the world," Macynski said as she choked back tears. Johnson had traveled to Egypt, Libya and South Africa with the missionary group.

Crouse, of Alaska, had helped build a foster home at a Crow reservation in Montana, said Ronny Morris, who works with a Denver chapter of the mission.

Staffer Dan Griebenow, 24, of South Dakota, was shot in the neck, according to Youth With a Mission. Staffer Charlie Blanch, 22, suffered gunshot wounds to his legs, according to ministry officials. His hometown wasn't immediately known.

The missionary center is on the grounds of the Faith Bible Chapel. Cheril Morrison, wife of chapel pastor George Morris, said Crouse had just hung up Christmas lights at her home and that Johnson was "an amazingly beautiful person."

Mimi Martin, who lives near the center, said she received a warning call at about 9 a.m. telling neighbors to keep their doors and windows locked.

"Why would anybody want to hurt those kids?" Martin said.

Darv Smith, director of a Youth With a Mission center in Boulder, said people ranging from their late teens to their 70s undergo a 12-week course that prepares them to be missionaries. He said the center trains about 300 people a year.

Paul Filidis, a Colorado Springs-based spokesman with Youth With a Mission, said staffers are usually former missionaries themselves and that the "mercy ministries" performed by trainees include orphanage work.

Youth With a Mission was started in 1960 and now has 1,100 locations with 16,000 full-time staff, Smith said. The Arvada center was founded in 1984.

The Colorado shootings came only days after a 19-year-old gunman opened fire at a popular mall in Omaha, Neb., killin

g eight people and himself.

([http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071210/ap\\_on\\_re\\_us/church\\_shootings](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071210/ap_on_re_us/church_shootings)) CLICK HERE to read full article.

**Re: Colorado police seek clues to 2 attacks at Christian organizations... - posted by iansmith (), on: 2007/12/10 10:57**

I was praying about this last night. Let's pray that God can use the lives of His Children to make an impact on the youth of this country. I believe that YWAM is one of the best places to get practical training as a missionary and that of the YWAMers that I've met, I've never been disappointed with their zeal to share the Gospel.

Let's remember all these folks in our prayers, especially for their families and friends who are now grieving, that they would experience peace, and rest well knowing their loved ones are now at Home in the Kingdom.

**Re: Colorado police seek clues to 2 attacks at Christian organizations... - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2007/12/10 13:36**

In times of random violence and senseless tragedy, we are often left to wonder why.

As we struggle to reason with what seems unreasonable and accept what is just not acceptable; we understand something of how Job must have felt.

What are we to learn from this ?? Just ask the Amish people who lost school-children. They did not question the goodness of God or His purpose. They were assured of His everlasting love. They found comfort in His Spirit and the strength to forgive. They gave witness to the world that God is truly merciful and His love is unfailing!! ;-)

**Re:, on: 2007/12/10 14:01**

The other church has surely been thru a lot with this, and the Ted Haggard scandal earlier this year... those folks are going thru some rough stuff. But God is still in control.

Thank the Lord they had armed security that was able to neutralize this individual before he could do even more damage. I think they were very wise in that area when you're talking about thousands of people coming and going.

It's all so tragic, but it's the world we live in. Everyone is in shock, but we really shouldn't be.

Krispy

**Re: - posted by MSeaman (), on: 2007/12/10 15:52**

Quote:

-----Everyone is in shock, but we really shouldn't be.

-----

I had the same thought.

**Church shooter was "haunted by demons..." - posted by ccchhrrriiss (), on: 2007/12/12 22:51**

*I found this particular article concerning the recent shootings extremely sad. This young man's life was a tragedy. It raises many questions, including, "Where did this life go wrong?" - Chris*

**Colorado Church Gunman Left Twisted Trail**

By ERIC GORSKI

Associated Press

December 12, 2007

DENVER - Matthew Murray's world was haunted by demons.

Somehow, a child of a prominent doctor, someone who was home schooled in a comfortable Denver suburb, evolved from a would-be Christian missionary to a killer trying to rain Columbine down on the Christian world.

A family spokesman said Murray grew up in a loving home. But other interviews and what appear to be Murray's own online ramblings portray a disturbed individual who resented his sheltered upbringing, had problems with his mother, heard voices in his head, felt rejected and abused — and yet appeared to be searching for a place to belong.

He sought refuge in everything from an online forum for recovering Pentecostals to an occult group.

Those volatile ingredients combined Sunday morning when the 24-year-old Murray killed five people, including himself, and injured several others in a rampage that spanned 70 miles, from a missionary training center that expelled Murray to Colorado Springs' New Life Church, a symbol of the Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity he so despised.

Murray, as promised on the Web, came "armed to the teeth" with an assault rifle, handguns and 1,000 rounds of ammunition. An armed church security guard, a new Christian believer, cut him down in a spray of bullets before he could carry out even more violence. An autopsy showed Murray delivered the final, fatal shot to himself.

By all accounts, Matthew Murray grew up in a deeply Christian home. His father, Ronald, is a well-known neurologist who helped develop a tissue bank used by researchers fighting multiple sclerosis. His mother, Loretta, worked as a physical therapist before devoting herself to raising and home-schooling her two boys, Matthew and his brother, Chris.

"Matthew Murray was surrounded by love and support," Casey Nikoloric, a family friend and patient of Ronald Murray's, told The Associated Press on Wednesday. "His family is heartbroken, devastated and simply lost in grief."

Most information about Murray has become known in recent days through ranting Internet posts that appear to be the shooter's words. On one, a poster called Chrstnghtmr complained of not being able to "socialize normally" after being home schooled and described being an outcast who was always left out of everything.

One posting obtained by the AP was to a site called Independent Spirits, a gathering place for those affected by a strict Christian home schooling curriculum.

The author, again going by the handle Chrstnghtmr, describes going with his mother to a conference at New Life. The poster said he "got into a debate" with two prayer team staff members, who monitored him, then tracked down his mother and "told her a story that went something along the lines of I 'wasn't walking with the lord and could be planning violence."

The September 2006 post includes biographical information that matches Murray's background — including details consistent with his involvement in Youth With a Mission, which ran the training center he targeted in last weekend's rampage.

Murray's mother, Loretta Murray, said through a spokeswoman that there was no such incident involving two church staff members.

New Life Church pastor Brady Boyd said Wednesday his staff has no record of an incident with Murray.

"We've had hundreds of thousands of people come through here for conferences, and we've had to confront some people," said Boyd, who warned against putting credence in the postings. "We have no recollection of this, and this seems like a minor incident."

Chrstnghtmr writes that at age 17, after an attempt at going "all out for Jesus," he plunged into a "dark suicidal depression" because he somehow couldn't live up to the rules. He wrote he felt he was "failing God." Chrstnghtmr describes his parents putting him on two antidepressants after he shared his feelings.

None of it helped, he wrote. "Everyone prayed, they laid hands on me, spoke in tongues over me, I sought out every kind of spiritual help I knew of in charismatic christianity," the post said.

Nikoloric said Murray's family is not commenting on the many Internet postings linked to him, but said they plan to comment in the future.

Other posts also complain of an overbearing mother. At one point, the author said his mother patted him down for CDs, video games and DVDs whenever he returned from an electronics store. In another post, the author lambasts Bill Gothard, a Christian evangelist who developed a strict Bible-based home school curriculum.

Kevin Swanson, executive director of the Christian Home Educators of Colorado, of which the Murrays were members, said just 1 percent or 2 percent of the group's 16,000 families use the curriculum described in the posts.

Swanson said home schooling should not be considered the cause of Murray's downward spiral, just as public schools shouldn't be blamed for a recent shooting rampage at an Omaha mall.

On another Web posting, a person believed to be Murray said that his post-graduation options were limited to missionary work or attending Oral Roberts University, the flagship university of charismatic Christianity. A fast-growing subset of evangelical Christians, charismatics and Pentecostals believe the Holy Spirit continues to show signs and wonders in the world, including speaking in tongues, prophesy and miraculous healings.

Murray ended up enrolled in "disciple training school," a sort of Missionary 101 program run by Youth With a Mission, one of the world's largest evangelical Christian mission groups.

But warning signs soon emerged at the residential program in Arvada, a Denver suburb.

A former YWAM staff member, Michael Werner, told the Rocky Mountain News that Murray was painfully shy and had trouble socializing after growing up sheltered. Later, he exhibited extreme mood swings, spreading rumors about homosexuality at the center and performing dark rock songs by Marilyn Manson and Linkin Park at a 2002 Christmas celebration.

One night, Werner said Murray was chattering to himself and explained he was "just talking to my voices."

Murray was to take a mission trip to Bosnia, but YWAM officials said he was kicked out of the program for unspecified "health reasons."

On the posting on Independent Spirits, Chrstnghtmr described returning home after being ejected from YWAM, where he wrote it was "back to the good old restriction and that is when I started having serious doubts about christianity."

After Murray rejected religion, he became fixated on people and groups that explore the dark side of spirituality, obsessing over the satanic lyrics of Swedish metal bands, for instance.

Murray attended events held by the Denver-based occult group Ad Astra Oasis during the last two years, but was turned down when he sought to become a member of the group. His involvement with them apparently ended in October.

Ultimately, Murray's rage took him to the front steps of his former YWAM dormitory and New Life Church.

In an Internet post about four hours before the shootings at New Life, a poster going by "DyingChild\_65" said he searched for spiritual answers. All the poster found in Christianity was "hate, abuse (sexual, physical, psychological, and emotional), hypocrisy, and lies."

The rant ended: "I'm going out to make a stand for the weak and the defenseless this is for all those young people still caught in the Nightmare of Christianity for all those people who've been abused and mistreated and taken advantage of by this evil sick religion Christian America this is YOUR Columbine."

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Associated Press writers Judith Kohler, Jacques Billeaud, George Merritt and Dan Elliott in Denver, and Allen Breed in Raleigh, N.C., contributed to this report.

([http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071213/ap\\_on\\_re\\_us/church\\_shooting\\_profile](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071213/ap_on_re_us/church_shooting_profile)) **CLICK HERE** to read full article.

**Re: Church shooter was "haunted by demons..." - posted by intrcssr83 (), on: 2007/12/13 1:36**

Quote:  
-----by ccchhrrriiisss on 2007/12/13 13:51:37  
  
I found this particular article concerning the recent shootings extremely sad. This young man's life was a tragedy. It raises many questions, including, "Where did this life go wrong?" - Chris  
-----

Hey Chris,

I'd hate to open up a can of worms, but don't you think the Gorski article just seems to scream of being a false-conversion testimony?

Secondly, does anyone know about YWAM's gospel presentation? I ask because with due respect towards YWAM, doesn't it come across as odd that if YWAM were genuinely instructing their missionaries in how to preach a genuine gospel presentation, then someone who joins their program should at least once hear a full gospel presentation?

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2007/12/13 11:33**

Hi intrcssr83...  
Quote:  
-----I'd hate to open up a can of worms, but don't you think the Gorski article just seems to scream of being a false-conversion testimony?  
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Yes, I do think that this raises an issue as to whether this young man ever was truly converted in the first place. It appears that the great tragedy might be that people ASSUMED that he was a believer when he was not.

Quote:  
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I'm not fully aware of YWAM's doctrinal views. I know that David Wilkerson respected them enough to give his entire *Twain Oaks Ranch* headquarters for their missionary efforts. In addition, I believe that Keith Green's former headquarters outside of Lindale are now a part of YWAM (correct me if I am wrong). Keith Green actually participated in various YWAM functions.

It does raise questions about how a young man as disturbed as this one could have been attending a missionary school. Then again, I've heard about students kicked out of Bible School because of gross sexual sin. I suppose that it is difficult to truly assess the lives of applicants by mere resumes and letters of recommendation.

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