

Five Killed in YWAM, New Life Church

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Two Youth With a Mission (YWAM) staff members and two New Life Church attendees were killed Sunday when a gunman opened fire at their facilities in Denver and Colorado Springs, Colo.

The shootings began at 12:30 a.m. Sunday, when a man identified as a white male in his 20s opened fire in a YWAM dormitory housed on the campus of Faith Bible Chapel in the Denver suburb of Arvada, Colo. Four people were shot.

Tiffany Johnson, 26, from Minnesota, and Philip Crouse, 24, from Alaska were killed. Dan Griebenow, 24, and Charlie Blanch, 22, were taken to local hospitals with bullet wounds in their leg and neck, respectively.

Roughly 12 hours later, a gunman opened fire in the parking lot of New Life Church, where YWAM has an office.

Sisters Stephanie Works, 18, and Rachael Works, 16, were killed in the shooting, and their father, David Works, suffered two gunshot wounds to the abdomen and groin and is in fair condition, the *Denver Post* reported. "Please pray for that family this morning. They're going through a very difficult time," said New Life pastor Brady Boyd during a press conference at the church this morning.

Boyd said the gunman had no ties to the church and was carrying enough ammunition to do a lot of damage. "It was just absolutely random," Boyd said, the *Denver Post* reported. "A senseless random attack."

Nine people were shot before a security guard hired by New

Life Church shot and killed the gunman, the Associated Press reported.

"[My wife and I] were hiding behind my car, no one knowing what was happening," said New Life member Steven Todd, who is executive director of the missions organization Africa Ministries Network. "My son, Erick ... wasn't around anywhere. Once we were safely away at a distance I called him, then his wife. She answered, whispering that they were barricaded in the sanctuary hiding from the gunman. It was a terrifying, surreal experience that will, no doubt, shake our whole church."

Authorities are still investigating the shootings, but believe they are linked, Reuters reported. YWAM Denver director Peter Warren said the staff had just finished a Christmas banquet when the shooting suspect arrived and asked a female staffer if he could be housed for the night. When she told him they could not house him, the man opened fire with an automatic handgun, Warren said in a statement. The 80 YWAM staff living at the Arvada campus were transported to another facility near Golden, Colo.

"We feel a deep sense of loss today and we grieve with the families and those who were very close friends of the victims," YWAM International Chairman Lynn Green said in a statement. "Those who lost their lives had dedicated themselves to serve and we feel the sorrow of their absence. Yet we take comfort from the assurance of everlasting life for those who follow Christ in loving service to others. It is a great tragedy that our culture seems to produce so many deeply troubled people who express their frustration in violence. We forgive the assailant and we rededicate ourselves to serving young people in the hope that we might bring healing to other needy youth."

New Life Church was founded by Ted Haggard, who stepped down in November 2006 amid a sex and drug scandal. Brady Boyd became pastor in August.