

'You Are in Our Prayers': Major Faith Leaders Respond to Santa Fe Shooting

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Police say a suspect is in custody after opening fire at Santa Fe High School outside Houston, Texas. At least eight to 10 students have been killed, according to recent reports. Multiple explosive devices were also found in the high school and surrounding areas.

Doug Stringer, a Houston-area pastor and founder of Somebody Cares Ministries, says police have requested pastors and associate pastors be on standby to minister to the community as information is released.

"I think all of us can have different opinions or viewpoints or spiritual perspectives, and the political issue will come up again, but as ministers of the gospel, we need to be sensitive and careful," Stringer tells *Charisma News*. "Our job is to be a plumbline of healing and hope, just be the balm of healing during this time."

Stringer says he is working directly with Pastor John Elliot of Gulf Coast Foursquare Church, which is outside Hitchcock in Galveston County, where the shooting occurred. Stringer says Elliott is waiting on police to release ministers to head to the scene. Stringer says his organization has CISM-trained counselors at the ready when the police give the word. Elliot confirms he is with the victims' families. CISM means critical incident stress management.

In a time of crisis, Americans turn to prayer, including the highest-ranking politicians, call on God to intervene.

Here's what some of them are saying:

School shooting in Texas. Early reports not looking good. God bless all!

– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) May 18, 2018

To the students, families, teachers of Santa Fe High School, all of those affected and the entire community: We are with you, you are in our prayers, and you're in the prayers of the American people.

– Vice President Mike Pence (@VP) May 18, 2018

Pray for all those affected by the tragic shooting that took place this morning in a high school in Santa Fe, Texas.

– Franklin Graham (@Franklin_Graham) May 18, 2018

Join us in praying for all involved. #SantaFe

– FRC (@FRCdc) May 18, 2018

Prayers today for our neighbors in Santa Fe. All students, staff, and parents of Santa Fe High School are in our prayers. @LeagueCityPD officers and deputies from our City's Fire Marshal's Office have been mobilized and are assisting at Santa Fe High School.

– LeagueCityTX (@LeagueCityTX) May 18, 2018

Ronnie Floyd, president of the National Day of Prayer and pastor of Cross Church

Please stop whatever you are doing and pray right now for #SantaFeHighSchool. Pray for the injured, first responders and everyone involved. Pray for God to intervene miraculously and for his supernatural grace and mercy to reach all affected by this terrible shooting."

Kenny Luck is the CEO of Every Man Ministries and host of The Every Man Show. His latest book, *Dangerous Good: The Coming Revolution of Men Who Care* will be released this summer

When we see "senseless" acts of murder like this we have to remember that a process of thought actually made "sense" of this to the one doing the murdering. That is where evil begins – in the mind. A lie regarding how to best resolve an inner dilemma is considered, accepted, internalized and acted upon.

In this case, the lie that was believed led to the behavior murder of innocents God created and loved. Beliefs drive behaviors which is why troubled, uncomforted and deeply distressed minds are vulnerable to evil suggestion. Jesus Christ told us who is behind this mental process and product of human behavior when he called the Dark One a "liar" and "murderer from the beginning." As a former mental health professional and pastor who has interviewed thousands of deeply troubled individuals in the verge of both suicide and homicide, there is no escaping the reality that a baseline of relentless negative emotions create an inner vulnerability to homicidal suggestion.

Aggressive gun control cannot address this true dilemma at the root of incidents like today's shooting. The problem seldom exists at the level at which we finally see it and this is the case every time murder is thrust into the spotlight. Unfortunately, the predictable cycle of reactions by politicians, pundits and activists will not address the root cause which is the presence and reality of evil. All

faith-filled believers should see the reality, pray for the families, and increase their spiritual ministries to the un comforted and vulnerable among us. Christ's pervasive love and purpose in the midst of (not in the absence of) adversity redeems people from being hopeless, helpless and vulnerable to the lie that murdering another human being is their last best option.

Alex McFarland, speaker, writer and apologist

There are several spiritual implications related to this tragedy: first, in a world of sin and sinners some people, sadly, perpetrate moral evil against their fellow man. Tragedies like this do not mean that there is no God, but this underscores how deeply all people need the heart change that comes about through a relationship with Jesus Christ. But further, it illustrates that we are not in heaven- yet. This world with all of its problems and sufferings, is in the process of God's great plan of restoration. Skeptics look at this world, or a shooting like this, and cry, " The world shouldn't be this way!" God agrees. The world shouldn't be this way. That's why Jesus came, first to pay for sin and to make our entry to heaven possible Through believing in him, and Jesus will return to finally a Schurian his eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace. This return of Christ may be very soon. In the meantime- we help usher in His peaceable Kingdom, one life at a time, One day at a time, as we share God's truth with a needy world.

The strength of youth is physical. How unspeakably tragic it is that in the classroom many of our youth or being injured and killed. The classroom should be a sacred space, Where are gods truth is presented to expand the mind and save the soul.

Mini youth are being wounded in classrooms through false teaching, and there is a high body count in terms of our raging war of worldviews (secularism Versus God, hedonism

versus self control, narcissism versus selflessness, And in promotion of unspeakable immorality versus virtue)

The strength of older ages is mental, spiritual, and ethical. As we grow older (hopefully) we grow in terms of the intellect, the soul, and in depth of character. Satan is attacking our youth- and militantly secular educators and hedonistic media are helping the devil do this.

School shooters, horrible as they are, are only one example of how warfare is being waged on the souls and lives of our youth.

Our hearts break and we mourn with those families who have lost loved ones in this shooting in Santa Fe, the “The God of all Comfort be with them”.

– Greg Laurie (@greglaurie) May 18, 2018

Our prayers go out to all of those affected by the high school shooting this morning in Santa Fe, Texas.

– Family Talk (@DrJamesDobsonFT) May 18, 2018

Mia K. Wright, author of *Unthinkable* and co-pastor of The Fountain of Praise in Houston:

Today’s deadly shooting at Santa Fe high school in Texas reminds us once again how pervasive evil forces are, and that evil is always lurking. In a time that children should be looking towards the end of the school year, and summer break, this tragic and heartbreaking act has now changed the trajectory of the lives of this community.

When we see the attack on our nations youth, we should realize that it is an attack, not only in one community, in one state, or one area, but ultimately upon all of us. The

goal of the enemy is to kill, steal and destroy. By killing our youth, many dreams of the future are destroyed. No one knows the potential that these children who lost their lives held. They could have been the one to discover a cure to a terminal illness, future leaders or perhaps even teachers of the next generation, but sadly, their lives were ended at the hands of another student. Again we are reminded how precious life is, and we are outraged that this has happened.

We should pray. We should pray a lot. We should encourage prayer. And we should encourage action. In times like these, some people lose hope, some people become apathetic, and other people become out raged enough to make a change. As we pray, let's remember the families of these victims, and all of the students who experienced this traumatic unfolding of events, that they will be able to cope with their loss loss and even face the fears they had in that moment. Let's remember the whole community as many members reach out to those families. Let's remember the teachers and administrators who will not only deal with their own issues surrounding this, but will have to recognize and identify their students who are struggling through all of this. Let's pray for at the youth of our nation, that they find ways of releasing their pain and hurts without victimizing their colleagues. Let's pray that peace, love and hope will prevail. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians's 13 concerning the spiritual gifts, and concludes it by saying "Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love."(1 Corinthians 13:13 NLT) Let's pray it, believe it and live it.

This story will be updated throughout the day. Please check back for the latest details.