

New River Pastor Found Murdered in His Home

The murder of a beloved Arizona pastor has rocked a tight-knit community—and for Christians across the country, it serves as a sobering reminder of the dark spiritual battle we face.

Bill Schonemann, the 76-year-old pastor of New River Bible Chapel, was found dead in his home on Monday, Apr. 28. According to the Maricopa County Medical Examiner's Office, his death was officially ruled a homicide.



Multiple sources confirmed to FOX 10 Phoenix the disturbing nature of the scene: Schonemann was found on his bed, arms spread out, with his hands pinned to the wall. He had “significant injuries.”

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Authorities with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office have remained tight-lipped. They've refused to confirm whether a suspect is in custody, the official cause of death or a possible motive. “It only says there are unique, specific circumstances to the case,” FOX 10 reported.

Still, they insist there is “no threat to the community.” That offers little comfort to those who knew Pastor Bill—not just as a man of God but as a neighbor and friend.

Mike Anders, who lived next door for 12 years, said, “Everybody is just, until we know what's going on, we don't know if it was a family member, or, we don't know what, who could do this to him.”

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What makes this more heartbreaking is the testimony of Bill's character. Anders described him as someone who was "friendly, always waving at others, wanting to talk, and had a passion for building trucks."

As the investigation continues and the community waits for answers—including results from an autopsy performed on May 2—the people of New River are left mourning a pastor who lived to serve.

And yet, for believers, this tragedy carries a deeper weight. As time goes on, Christians must come to terms with a difficult truth: there is a target on our backs. Jesus Himself warned, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first" (John 15:18).

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The brutal nature of this homicide cannot be ignored—and neither can the spiritual implications. Scripture tells us plainly that all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). The world is becoming more hostile toward the truth, and those who carry it must be prepared to stand firm.

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This is not a call to fear—but to faith. Because even in the face of hatred, death and evil, we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us. Pastor Bill Schonemann may be gone, but his legacy of faithfulness speaks louder than the violence meant to silence it.

Let the church be awake, not afraid.

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