

Pastor Gunned Down After Prayer Rally Regains Consciousness

An Idaho pastor who was shot six times outside his church a day after leading a prayer at a rally for U.S. Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz is on the mend, another pastor at his church told Reuters on Tuesday.

Police say 30-year-old Kyle Odom shot Tim Remington, senior pastor for the Altar Church in the city of Coeur d'Alene, on Sunday afternoon in what they have called a preplanned attack.

The attack is the latest in a spate of highly publicized shootings in the United States that have made gun control an issue in the presidential race.

Remington lost consciousness after being shot a total of six times, including in the skull, in the church parking lot after Sunday service, John Padula, outreach pastor at the church told Reuters.

Remington regained consciousness on Monday evening as a candlelight and prayer vigil for his recovery was under way, Padula said.

"He opened one eye and gave me a thumbs up," Padula said, adding that Remington does not have feeling in his right arm but appears to be improving.

"It's absolutely unbelievable," Padula said. "Without God, there is no way he'd be here."

There is no apparent connection between the shooting in the church parking lot and Remington's appearance at the Cruz rally, Padula noted. Surveillance video at the church appeared

to show the suspect scoping out the church days before that event.

Cruz, an outspoken supporter of gun rights, could not be reached for comment on Tuesday, but a campaign spokeswoman told NBC News on Monday that they were praying for Remington's recovery.

A manhunt for Odom entered its third day on Tuesday. Authorities told local broadcaster KREM that Odom, who is an ex-Marine with a history of mental illness, should be considered armed and dangerous.

The suspect fled the scene of the shooting in a silver sedan before police arrived. Padula said he was not aware of any evidence that Odom and Remington knew each other. {eoa}