

# Pastor Whose Daughter Survived Shooting: 'This Was a Work of the Devil'

A pastor whose 16-year-old daughter works at a shoe store at the Allen, Texas outlet mall where a deadly shooting occurred on May 6 is struggling to deal with the incident, the pastor told The Christian Post in a recent email.

Only 100 yards separated the pastor's daughter from the shooter during the incident in which 15 people were wounded and eight of them were killed.

Keon Byrd, a pastor at Church Eleven32 in Allen, says his daughter is still very shaken from the event.

"This was very traumatic for our daughter, as she saw and witnessed a lot in those two hours or so of an active crime scene," the pastor said. "Physically, she is doing fine, which we are very blessed and grateful for, as many weren't as fortunate. The mental and emotional recovery will be a process."

Byrd says his daughter has visited with a family counselor but is still struggling with fear and anxiety from the shooting.

Byrd says he and his daughter were able to communicate via cell phone during the shooting and until the time they were reunited some 90 minutes after it started. Byrd said those 90 minutes were extremely difficult.

"As parents, the wait seemed much longer and we just had a sense of helplessness because there wasn't much we could do," Byrd said in the email to The Christian Post. "I don't know that we worried about her immediate safety. We told her to follow the direction of her managers and stay away from the

front of the store.”

Authorities reported that gunman, Mauricio Garcia, was fatally wounded by an on-duty police officer who was at the mall on an unrelated call. The Allen outlet mall has over 120 stores, and on a Saturday, the place was filled with shoppers.

Byrd was grateful that his daughter was blessed enough to survive. But, he said, the ordeal could haunt her for quite some time to come.

Byrd is also one of eight chaplains with the Allen Police Department, and said he was “fortunate” to serve alongside those officers and support staff who responded to the scene.

“They did, and are doing, what they were trained to do,” he told The Christian Post. “Many went days without any meaningful rest, all to support the city they swore oaths to.”

Despite the unspeakable evil of the shooting, Byrd said that he continues to point his congregation to God’s Word and God’s goodness.

“We have pointed our people to [the] truth that the devil comes to kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10) and so, this was a work of the devil,” he said. “We have taken the stance that there are many things in this life that we don’t understand, but [the] Bible is clear that God is a good and just God.”  
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