

Security Stops Potential Church Shooter in His Tracks

A Virginia pastor says God's power saved lives when an armed man's plot to kill church members was thwarted by church security and an off-duty police officer.

Rui Jiang, 35, was arrested moments before tragedy was able to strike at Park Valley Church on Sept. 24. While officers credit the church security team for saving more than a thousand worshipers, the lead pastor is pointing to a higher power.

"God did a victory, right in front of our very eyes," said Pastor Barry White. "We give 100% of the glory to God because God did something absolutely miraculous to help avoid a tragedy."

Police in Maryland first heard about Jiang when a woman called to report frightening images and vague threats of violence posted by Jiang on social media. Posts included a Bible-burning video, a picture of a gun pointed at a church and photos of Park Valley Church with the quote, "Blood will be on your hands."

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Officers connected the post to Jiang who lives in Fairfax County, Virginia, where officers were dispatched to make contact with him. However, Jiang had already left and was believed to be in the process of executing a violent plan.

"As far as mental health concerns, there may be concern there," said First Sgt. Jonathan Perok with the Prince William County Police Department.

After surveying Park Valley Church by taking pictures and posting them on social media, police say the suspect came back to a Sunday morning service. He entered through the building's north doors, armed with a gun and two folding knives, prepared to allegedly carry out America's next deadly mass shooting.

With thousands of members spread across three campuses, White knows firsthand how crucial security teams are to gospel ministries in today's culture.

"I've got to tell you, our security team was absolutely amazing," White said. {eoa}

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