

'Unbelievable Pain': Pastor Responds Live From Santa Fe Shooting Site

A Foursquare pastor was among the first to be allowed on the scene after a tragic attack on Santa Fe High School in Galveston County, Texas.

John Elliott, pastor of Gulf Coast Foursquare Church, texted *Charisma News* updates of what he was seeing as he ministered.

"With the victims' families," Elliott texts. "Pray!"

His next one says: "Unbelievable pain."

Elliott's latest text came Friday evening.

He writes:

I just wanted to update those of you that have been praying all day long for those that have been involved in the Santa Fe shooting. I have spent the day with law-enforcement faculty members and the families of the victims. We walked the last mother to her car at 6:30 and needless to say there are so many broken hearts that it's un-imaginable. Most of these victims families were numb from waiting all day long to find out whether their children were dead or alive.

I can't ask you enough to make intercession on behalf of these families that are going home to face their children and their relatives to give them the most horrible news that any parent would want to have to carry.

I don't think I have personally seen this much pain and anguish any time in my life. Thanks to all the other chaplains law-enforcement and counselors that work together all day long supporting all of those around us. For many of

you who have had great loss you know the battle for these families is just beginning!

PS don't believe every rumor that's on the Internet make sure they are verifiable facts instead of Internet gossip.

PSS thank all of you for praying for me personally on this very long day!

Psss FYI for those of you that are ministers in this area Aldersgate Methodist church in Santa Fe Texas is going to be open all day tomorrow starting at 9 AM for any of the victims families friends or relatives who need help and support please feel free to come.

Doug Stringer, CEO of Somebody Cares, says Elliott is in contact with local police who told him to be on standby for when they opened up the scene to ministers and counselors. Stringer himself says he is also prepared to send in CISM-trained counselors, pastors and associate pastors as needed. CISM means critical incident stress management.

CNN reports 10 people were killed in the rampage, and multiple explosive devices were found in and around the area.

Sophomore Leila Butler told the local ABC affiliate that fire alarms went off at about 7:45 a.m. local time and students left their classrooms. She said some students believe they heard shots fired, and that she was sheltering with other students and teachers near campus.

Another sophomore, named only as Nikki, told ABC13 that: "Someone had walked in with a shotgun and a girl got shot in her leg."

The Associated Press reports the suspect is 17-year-old Dimitrios Pagourtzis.

Santa Fe High School student Grace Johnson said, "There's a

hallway that is all glass that you can see outside, and the windows just started could hear gunshots and everybody just started running.”

Sam Rohrer, president of the American Pastors’ Network, offered the following response to the incident:

All Americans, specifically all Christians, should be moved by such events. We should be moved to pray absolutely for the families of the victims, and we should be moved to pray for our nation as a whole. These [shootings] are indications of increasingly undisciplined life and lives of our culture. When we walk away from God and we turn away God’s standards, and we deny the reality and the necessity to talk in terms of biblical matters, of sin and righteousness and good and evil, when our pulpits refuse to deal with it, when leaders refuse to deal with it, there is no answer. But on the other side, there is hope and healing of people’s hearts and their lives and actions and attitude, that only comes through Jesus Christ, who alone can heal broken lives and broken hearts. Until we start talking in those terms, these things will continue. That’s why we APN and personally, we do have problem, we don’t deny it, but there is hope in Jesus Christ only, not in laws, not in policy only, though some do change, it’s going to be when we turn back to God and say, “Life is sacred. God created it. I’m going to respect life because God deemed it so. And once that happens, things change.

Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference says:

Another day and tragically, another shooting at one of our nation’s schools, this time at Santa Fe, TX High School. Sadly, these tragedies are becoming so common, many have questioned the power of prayer. But we must keep praying as a first priority. Each and every time another tragedy like this occurs our prayers are an acknowledgment that God, and only

God, is our ever-present help in our time of need. Our collective prayers also reconnect us to each other and salve the wounds of this unthinkable violence. When an entire nation prays, those prayers have the power to reclaim the dignity of our shared humanity and proclaim again and again how our schools, our country, and our world should be, even when they look frightfully different.

As parents, Eva and I are heartbroken for the community of Santa Fe and for the parents and loved ones of those children who won't be coming home today. We ask God to be near to all those whose lives have been impacted by this terrible tragedy and we pray that His love and comfort would surpass our human ability to understand.

Please check back fore more updates as Elliot responds to Charisma.