

What Can Be Done About Violence
Watching for and Responding to Violence - A Perspective for Schools and Families
Dr. Matt Gibson

Sunday, March 10, 2013, 6:00pm
 Elmbrook Church Chapel

I acknowledge and comfort those who have been personally impacted by violence as you may have different perspectives based on your experiences.

I will attempt to be clear (as if I am being translated) with a huge topic in less than 15 minutes.

Violence has always been part of society from before Bible times and throughout the Bible. It continues now and will continue until Christ returns. The good news is that Christ equipped us to live in a violent world and be salt and light in it.

Is violence getting worse in the United States? Yes, it appears to be. For example, we used to assume safety in shopping malls, movie theatres, spas, schools, and even churches yet all of these have been recent venues for violence.

What are example causes of violence?

- Unaddressed mental health issues
- Cumulative inability/unwillingness to confess sin/shame, receive forgiveness, feel hope
- Cumulative, unresolved anger and rage with others, sometimes just related to put downs
- Compulsion for power and control seemingly unattainable any other way
- Desperate fear of living life manifested by instilling desperate fears of dying for others
- 24/7 media attention that unintentionally suggests, empowers, and reinforces incidents

How do we live with the threat of violence in schools? The people and the confidence-of-faith-over-fear preventions also apply to families.

Preventions	Threats from Outside Schools	Threats from Inside Schools
Physical and procedural protections	Secure supervised entrances, electronic door alarms, video cameras, employee and visitor badges Hallway presence Practiced plans with police department unique to threats from outside , e.g. concealed 911 duress signal, command center, pre-identified tactical team roles, lockdowns or evacuation plans, red/green cards, communication plans including families	Secure supervised entrances, electronic door alarms, video cameras, employee and visitor badges Hallway presence Practiced plans with police department unique to threats from inside , e.g. concealed 911 duress signal, command center, pre-identified tactical team roles, lockdowns and evacuation plans, red/green cards, communication plans including families

Preventions	Threats from Outside Schools	Threats from Inside Schools
People	<p>Culture of all staff watching, discerning, addressing, communicating</p> <p>Culture of open communication with parents while maintaining legal confidentiality regarding individual students</p>	<p>Culture of all staff watching, discerning, addressing, communicating</p> <p>Culture of open communication with parents while maintaining legal confidentiality regarding individual students</p> <p>Culture of students caring, reporting, and reaching out to include as appropriate</p> <p>Culture of student discipline that consequences students to get their attention as needed, limits illegal or unsafe behaviors, and then remains in touch to sustain expectations, address needs, restore students to build them up</p>
Confidence of faith over fear	<p><u>Selected References on Fear</u> Psalm 23:4 I will fear no evil for you are with me. Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Isaiah 41:13 Fear not, I am the one who helps you. Matthew 10:28 Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Mark 5:36 Do not fear, only believe. II Timothy 1:7 For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control.</p> <p><u>Selected References on Faith</u> Matthew 17:20 If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move and nothing will be impossible for you. Romans 1:17 The righteous shall live by faith. Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. I John 5:4 This is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.</p>	

What can be done about violence? While it cannot be completely prevented in a sinful world, its causes and impacts can be reduced by the physical, people, and faith preventions described.