



Heeding God's Call

Inspiring Hope, Raising Voices, Taking Action to End Gun Violence

PRESS RELEASE

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Contacts: Rev James McIntire (267) 257-9541
Bryan Miller (856) 371-3038

MORE HANDGUN CAUSED LOSS AND SADNESS AT VIRGINIA TECH

Latest Va Tech Shooting Demonstrates Futility of Arming for Self-Defense

Philadelphia: On the very day that families who suffered losses in the infamous Virginia Tech massacre of 2007, when 33 were killed by a deranged gunman who should not have been able to acquire a gun, were testifying in Washington about the mass shooting, another gunman shot and killed a university policeman at the beleaguered institution and the killed himself, according to news reports.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with both the latest sufferers at Va Tech and those who are reliving that horrific day almost five years ago,” said the Reverend James F. McIntire, Board Chair of *Heeding God's Call*, the faith-based and grassroots movement to prevent gun violence. “But, thoughts and prayers are not enough. It is time for America's faith community to step up and actively, visibly and loudly take on its duty to save lives from the scourge of gun violence.”

Heeding God Call's Vice Chair Rabbi Linda Holzman continued: “We can only imagine how those who lost loved ones yesterday and those who were tragically reminded of their earlier loss feel. We grieve with them, as we do daily with the dozens who lose loved ones each day in America's cities, suburbs and countryside due to the proliferation of handguns and other firearms made to kill people.”

Bryan Miller, Executive Director of *Heeding God's Call* said: “The gun lobby, the industry it protects and pro-gun zealots constantly push the dangerous contention that arming oneself is protective to self and those nearby, and they use events like the 2007 Va Tech massacre falsely to ‘prove’ their point. Yesterday's shooting at Va Tech contradicts the pro-gun contention, as a trained and armed police officer was overwhelmed by a determined shooter. The gun lobby will nonetheless, somehow, claim this shooting makes its case.”

McIntire emphasized the point: “The simple truth is that arming oneself endangers oneself. Research and analysis by University of Pennsylvania researchers clearly demonstrated this.” He referred to an October 2009 article in the prestigious *American Journal of Public Health*, ‘Investigating the link between gun possession and gun assault,’ which found that handgun possessors were almost five times more likely to be shot in an assault than those who did not possess.

Holtzman closed with: “*Heeding God's Call* will use the grief and sadness we feel for those affected by this latest Va Tech shooting and put it to good and faithful use. We will rededicate ourselves both to seeking ways to stop the flow of guns from legal sale at gun shops to illegal street sale and to energize the faith community to ‘live its faith on its feet’ in our righteous cause.”

8812 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19118-2719
www.heedinggodscall.org · info@heedinggodscall.org · 267-519-5302