

# **As Evil Inundates Society, Christians Must Not Lose Hope**

We have been inundated in recent days with news of random killings, racial killings and retributive killings by terrorists.

The saying once was popular, “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.” Never have we yearned for this to be so true since the recent random killings by a crazed gunman interrupted an outdoor concert. We only wish we could contain the evil in one spot. Leave it in Las Vegas, please.

But no, it has permeated the culture.

Sutherland Springs, a small and largely unknown Texas town, is now known around the world following a Sunday morning mass shooting that claimed the lives of 26 worshippers.

Charlottesville, once known as the home of the University of Virginia and Thomas Jefferson, became a death march for Nazi sympathizers and white supremacists.

Orlando, the nation’s play land with Disney World and Universal Studios, was a killing zone for those who hate gays.

Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, was converted into a cemetery as a young man ended a Bible study with cold-blooded murder.

Internationally, there are threats boiling over in North Korea and Iran. One wonders if we are on the precipice of some kind of apocalypse, raining down fire and brimstone on the global community.

In the midst of this strife, I’m reminded of a prophet who stood up in the sanctuary of Ardmore Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in early October.

The CenturyMen Singers gave voice to the power and glory of God in beautiful harmony that evening. An angelic sound flowed elegantly from the lips of an African-American female, singing “Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia,” which means “Praise Yahweh, Praise Yahweh, Praise Yahweh.”

Sonorous tenors and resonant bass voices of men from across the country lifted up the name of Jesus, the hope of heaven, and the call of the Christian community to spread the light of God’s love.

The prophets have always had the ability to see the world as it ought to be and paint a vision of the kingdom of God finding unlikely residence. It’s a mustard seed growing into a giant bush, a treasure hidden in a field.

It doesn’t blow you away with obviousness, but subtly seeps into your mind like a song playing again and again.

The CenturyMen proclaimed that vision for our congregation, and we were better equipped, by the end of the service, to carry the light of Jesus into the dark places of our world.

At the end of the service, I closed with these words, “In the current climate of discord and violence in our land, we not only enjoyed this evening of beautiful music, we needed it.”

Yes, we needed to hear a word from God via the mouthpiece of God’s prophets and prophetesses, announcing the kingdom of heaven infiltrating the kingdoms of this world.

And we grabbed hold of the hope that no matter how dark our days become, the kingdom of light will reign forever and ever.

I pray as our congregations gather to worship the Almighty, we might hear and respond to such prophetic witnesses “making straight in the desert, a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3).

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✘ [Don Gordon](#) is senior pastor of Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He is a board member of the Baptist Center for Ethics. A [version](#) of this article first appeared in the Oct. 23, 2017, edition of the Ardmore Announcer. It is used with permission.