

How can Christians defend themselves against today's random violence?

As the news is filled with attacks on shopping malls, schools and churches, how can you and I be safe? Do we pray? Buy guns? Both?

So, a crazed gunman opens fire and you're caught in the middle. How can you survive? Heroes come in all sorts of packages. And they wield all sorts of defensive weapons.

Such as guns and Jesus. Sometimes both at the same time.



(<http://blog.beliefnet.com/news/files/2013/09/antoinette-tuff.jpg>)

Antoinette Tuff

When a disturbed young man marched into a Georgia grade school with an AK-47 and about 500 rounds of ammo, the quick thinking and warmth of school secretary Antoinette Tuff helped ensure his surrender before anyone got hurt. She says she prayed the entire time, shared her faith with the disturbed young man, then encouraged him to do the right thing.

At one point, the highly agitated gunman asked Tuff to call a local TV station. According to WSB-TV in Atlanta, the gunman demanded the station send a TV crew to film him killing police.

"Then the gunman began to break down," reports the *Los Angeles Times*. (<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/aug/22/nation/la-na-nn-georgia-school-911-20130822>) And as he began to waver in the school's office, Tuff started counseling — and consoling — the young man, who began lamenting that whether he lived or died did not matter.

"No, it does matter!" she told him, as a 911 dispatcher recorded her pleas. "I can let them know you have not tried to harm me or do anything with me or anything — but that doesn't make any difference, you didn't hit anybody. ... Don't feel bad, baby. My husband just left me after 33 years... Yes you do! I'm sitting here with you and talking to you about it! I got a son that's multiple-disabled. We're not going to hate you, baby, it's a good thing you're giving up."

As he wavered, "It's going to be all right, sweetheart," she counseled him. "I just want you to know I love you and I'm proud of you," Tuff told him with 911 listening in on the phone. "That's a good thing that you're giving up, and don't worry about it. We all go through something in life. I tried to commit suicide last year after my husband left me, but look at me now, I'm still working, and everything is going to be OK."

"Tuff told a local news station that she was able to stay calm because of what she had been learning from her pastor at church," reported Nicola Menzie for the *Christian Post*. (<http://www.christianpost.com/news/antoinette-tuff-hailed-as-a-hero-hostage-credits-grace-of-god-after-talking-down-georgia-school-gunman-102838/>)



(<http://blog.beliefnet.com/news/files/2013/09/antoinette-tuff-obama-call.jpg>)

Antoinette takes a call from Barack Obama

"My pastor, he just started this teaching on anchoring, and how you anchor yourself in the Lord," Tuff told the *Post*. "I just sat there and started praying. I just remembered the teaching and how he taught us how to consult people when they're bereaving and all that."

"I realized at that time that it was bigger than me," she added. "He was really a hurting young man so I just started praying for him. I just started talking to him and allowing him to know some of my life stories and what was going on with me, and that it was going to be OK and he could just give himself up."

When asked for her thoughts on why Hill was so compliant, Tuff told a local news station, "I have no idea. That was nobody but God. I can't even put that on myself. I was praying hard."

"I give it all to God," she repeated when a reporter suggested that she was a hero. Tuff insisted that she was no hero, and that it was "through God's grace and mercy" that she was able to maintain her composure.