

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Upsurge In Homicides At The Fore, Young Pastor Asks Youth To Seek God's Plan For Their Lives

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ST. CROIX -- The church building was not full. In fact, it was mostly empty as about 28 teenagers sat on the floor at Speak the Word Ministries on Friday night, listening to the words of Enoch King, a young pastor that is respected by many, who was encouraging the teens to seek out God's plan for their lives.

To use a term made popular in Christendom, the message was an "on-time" utterance. It is no secret that the territory continues to reel from gun violence, most of which have affected the upcoming generation. In the span of weeks, St. Croix has lost four young men through gun crimes; most of whom had not arrived at age of 21.

On July 9, a young man named Timothy Urgent was [gunned down while with friends on the outside of a house](#) by assailants who drove by. He was only 20. Two days later, two 18-year-olds [were mowed down by a gunman](#) during a birthday party at the Altona Lagoon. Then, on July 26, a brother of one of the young men killed at the Lagoon [was shot dead in Concordia](#). He too, in his early 20s.

And in the wee hours of Saturday morning -- bringing the territory's homicide toll to 40 for this year -- [an innocent bystander's life was cut short](#) in St. Thomas, being hit by a stray bullet that was meant for someone else. She was only 20, with big dreams and a promising future ahead, according to multiple social media postings from family and friends.

Mr. King spoke of the importance of listening to what God has to say about one's destiny, pointing out that since God created all humans, He knows best what route one should take to enjoy a holistic life.

"Many are called, the Bible says, but only few are chosen. So in other words, God has rang everyone of your cellphones, but only a few of you will pick up that cellphone and say, 'God, what do you want to do with my life?'" said Mr. King.

He spoke of the Apostle Paul, who was on a mission to persecute Christians, convinced that they were following the wrong path. Paul, however, had an encounter with God that left him temporarily blind, after which Paul became completely enthralled in the works of Jesus Christ, who had appeared to him during the encounter.

Following the encounter, "Paul simply said, 'what do you want me to do, God? What is your plan for my life?'" Mr. King went on. He quoted Jeremiah 29:11 that says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Even so, God would not force anyone to receive his gift of salvation; it is something that must be received through one's own determination, Mr. King said. He said parents, teachers and even the teenagers themselves might have great plans for their lives that do not lineup with God's plan.

"How many of you have ever stopped to say, 'God, what do you want me to do with my life?' Because remember this, to everyone of us, we are given a purpose; to everyone of us, there is a plan. And God has single-handily reached out to us -- the entire world, in fact -- and He says, 'I'm calling you,' but only a few will say, 'God, take my hand, I'm willing to follow you.'"

Mr. King spoke of the Altona Lagoon double homicide, conveying sadness and displeasure with the occurrence. "But you know what that tells me: St. Croix is getting worse. And these were two young men in their teens -- your age -- and they're dying because of violence. And in the time of Ezekiel, the same thing was happening. The Bible says blood was being spilled; the people had turned their backs against God and they were doing their own works, and God was simply saying, 'Hey, can't you see what's going on?' God is calling for some young people that will say no longer will we settle for being the same way."

Friday's event is part of a three-day youth outreach that culminates today at Speak the Word Ministries, with Minister Gloria Small at 8:00 a.m. Pastor Jermaine Mulley [ministered](#) on Saturday.

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