

WAS KABUL HOSPITAL SHOOTING TRIGGERED BY PROSELYTIZING?

Yesterday, Dr. Jerry Umanos and two still unidentified US visitors whom he was greeting were killed outside the Cure International Hospital in Kabul, Dr. Umanos has spent most of each of the last nine years working at Cure International in Kabul while going back to the Chicago area for a few months each year to maintain his clinical practice there as well. The New York Times agonizes over the shooting this morning, noting that there is a "grim trend" in Afghanistan of "a new wave of so-called green-on-blue shootings spurred by deepening Afghan resentment". And yet, despite a recitation of the recent attacks on civilians both by the Taliban and Afghan security personnel, the Times ignores what could be a very large clue on just what might have provided the resentment for this particular gunman.

Here are the details of the shooting as recounted by the Times:

The shooting took place at Cure International Hospital, which specializes in the treatment of disabled children and women's health issues. Afghan police officials said that one of the doctors there was hosting visitors from the United States who, after taking pictures together in front of the hospital, were headed inside when they were attacked.

Among the dead was a pediatrician from Chicago, Dr. Jerry Umanos, who had volunteered at the Cure hospital for almost nine years, treating children and helping train Afghan doctors. There were few details about the other victims on Thursday night.

Afghan officials identified the gunman,

who was wounded, as a two-year veteran of the Kabul police force named Ainuddin, who had only recently been assigned to guard the hospital. Witnesses and officials said he fired on the Americans as they approached his security post at the building's entrance, killing three and wounding a female doctor before entering the interior courtyard and seeking new targets.

The Times provides this description of Cure International:

[Cure International](#), a Christian organization, was started in 1998 in Kenya and now operates hospitals and programs in 29 countries. The organization focuses on health issues for which treatment is difficult to obtain in the developing world, including club foot, cleft palate and untreated burns, according to its website.

A look at the Cure International website shows that the "Christian" part of the organization appears to be particularly strong. From a 2011 blog post by Cure founder Scott Harrison (original links within post retained):

CURE's mission statement is:
CURE International, healing the sick and proclaiming the kingdom of God.

Those words come directly from Jesus' own instructions to his disciples – first to the twelve and then to the seventy. The partnership of healing the sick and sharing the good news of "God with us" was linked in almost every facet of His life and work, and CURE strives to be a 21st century expression of Jesus' 1st century healing ministry.

But what is the "kingdom of God", how do

we recognize it when we see it, and how can we partner with God to proclaim it? Fortunately, Jesus addressed many of these questions, and it's the aim of this series of posts to humbly shed light on those answers through His own words.

Oh my. So just how enthusiastic is Cure International about its mission to proclaim the kingdom of God? Well, one clue comes from word about a new hospital that Cure will be opening later this year in the Philippines. Here is a snippet from their announcement of a search for medical director for the hospital:

CURE International has begun the search for the first Medical Director for the Tebow CURE Hospital in Davao City, Philippines. The hospital, built in partnership with the Tim Tebow Foundation, will open later this year. CURE is seeking an orthopedic surgeon with experience in a management role and a heart to heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Although we have no information about how aggressive Cure International is in "proclaiming the kingdom of God", their chosen partner for the hospital in the Philippines, Tim Tebow, has a clear history of such proclamations in a very out-front style that often made other players uneasy.

But recall that Umanos had maintained a practice in the Chicago area as well. It was at Lawndale Christian Health Center:

Our mission is to show and share the love of Jesus by promoting wellness and providing quality, affordable health care for Lawndale and the neighboring communities.

Clearly, Umanos saw Christianity as an integral

part of his medical practice. And yet the Times compares this latest spate of civilian killings to the green on blue killings aimed at Western trainers of Afghan security personnel without admitting to the cultural insensitivities that most often spawned the attacks (pdf). Ranking very high on the list of cultural incompatibilities that provoke these sorts of attacks are religious differences. And yet somehow, the Times never gets around to asking whether the Christian orientation at Cure International played any role in the shooting.

The Washington Post does at least hint at this as an issue:

Thursday's shooting marks the second time in less than a month that a Christian charity has come under attack in this overwhelmingly Muslim country.

In late March, the Taliban assaulted a heavily guarded guesthouse in Kabul for employees of [Roots of Peace](#), a San Francisco-based organization that focuses on agricultural projects. The hours-long standoff ended after Afghan forces intervened.

That guesthouse was next to a Christian charity and day-care center, which may have been the intended target.

If we go back to the opening of the Times article, this paragraph immediately precedes the first quoted passage:

After a campaign of Taliban violence aimed at foreigners raised apprehensions before the presidential election this month, the latest attack seemed to have nothing to do with the insurgency. Rather, officials said the gunman appeared to be a police officer who reacted in the moment when he saw a small group of American visitors outside his guard post, raising fears of a new wave of so-called green-on-blue

shootings spurred by deepening Afghan resentment.

So the guard who shot Umanos and his visitors “reacted in the moment”. That is a very common theme in green on blue killings, and often comes in response to an action to which the shooter takes offense. We have no information on what they were doing in addition to taking photographs. We learn from the Washington Post that the visitors were a father and son who also were medical professionals. I can’t help wondering whether some sort of overt religious action may have prompted the guard. Was it a loud public prayer, calling on God’s blessing of the hospital, its patients and workers? Surely they weren’t handing out religious tracts, but was the group “witnessing” to Afghans as they entered or left the hospital?

Near the end of the Times article, we get this recounting of an incident in front of the hospital after the shooting:

A car pulled up a short while later, and the driver was told by the police to leave the area. When they explained that an officer had shot and killed three foreigners, the driver replied, “Good for him that he killed the infidels.”

To many Afghans, all Americans are infidels. And proselytizing infidels simply can’t be tolerated.