



THE ARMOR *of* LIGHT

IMPACT REPORT

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PART I

Overview

*“The night is far gone; the day is at hand.
Let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.”*

–Romans 13:12

Background

The Problem: A Political Impasse & Growing Violence

The increasing rate of mass shootings¹ reached a catastrophic height when 6 adults and 20 children were murdered with an AR-15 assault rifle at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012. Lawmakers, survivors, advocates, the public, pundits, and editorial boards called for immediate and swift action. Despite this mobilization and other subsequent mass shootings, national gun safety legislation failed to pass in the U.S. Senate due to Republican opposition. This opposition was rooted in the ideology of a strong evangelical Republican base. Overwhelmingly pro-life, evangelicals represent 36% of registered voters² and 25% of the US population³—yet 57% live in homes with guns⁴ and 59% oppose gun restrictions.⁵ Given that Republicans controlled the U.S. Congress, 30 state legislatures, and 32 governorships, neither state or federal policy solution was possible in the short-term.

One of the primary roadblocks for bipartisan action was that there were no visible national champions of gun safety who had credibility with conservative policymakers and voters. Mobilizing a progressive choir and creating a narrative based on empirical evidence wasn't working to move Republicans who were vital to a policy solution. Further, it seems gun violence is an issue that is “out of sight, out of mind” until another mass killing happens. The long-term effects

are mainly felt among the victims and their immediate social circle. Also, two-thirds of all gun violence is from suicide, which is hidden from the headlines and a social stigma.⁶ Lastly, the field of interest groups is small, and the gun lobby has decades of funding, relationships, and organizing over gun safety groups. Therefore, an immediate solution to this daily, often invisible threat wasn't going to be found through the halls of Congress. It would be found in our hearts.

The Goal: Decouple Evangelicals from the NRA & Restore Morality to the Gun Debate

To address this leadership problem, filmmakers Abigail Disney and Kathleen Hughes looked beyond progressive, pro-choice allies to find a pro-life leader who would stand against this violence. To Disney, supporting easy access to assault weapons was inconsistent with preventing abortions, especially from a theological perspective. She asked, “How can someone be pro-life and pro-gun?”

After speaking to five pro-life leaders who all agreed gun violence was a crisis, Disney identified the ideal leader to spotlight in her film: Rev. Rob Schenck, evangelical Christian minister to the U.S. Congress and Christian activist. It became clear that Rev. Schenck's evangelical community needed a new space to discuss their true protector: God, not guns. Therefore, the film and outreach campaign sought to decouple evangelicals from the gun lobby as well as create a biblical discussion on gun violence. Pulling inspiration from Romans 13:12, the film was titled *The Armor of Light*.

1 Congressional Research Service

2 Pew Research Center

3 ibid

4 Public Religion Research Institute

5 ibid

6 U.S. Center for Disease Control



The Film

The Armor of Light profiles an evangelical minister and the mother of a teenage shooting victim who ask, is it possible to be both pro-gun and pro-life?

In a gripping portrait of courage, director Abigail E. Disney follows the journey of an evangelical minister trying to find the moral strength to preach about the growing toll of gun violence in America. *The Armor of Light* tracks Reverend Rob Schenck, anti-abortion activist and fixture on the political far right, who breaks with orthodoxy by questioning whether being pro-gun is consistent with being pro-life. Reverend Schenck is shocked and perplexed by the reactions of his long-time friends and colleagues who warn him away from this complex, politically explosive issue.

Along the way, Rev. Schenck meets Lucy McBath, the mother of Jordan Davis, an unarmed teenager who was murdered in Florida and whose story has cast a spotlight on “Stand Your Ground” laws. Also an evangelical

Christian, McBath’s personal testimony compels Rev. Schenck to reach out to pastors around the country to discuss the moral and ethical response to gun violence. Lucy is on a difficult journey of her own, trying to make sense of her devastating loss while using her grief to effect some kind of viable and effective political action—where so many before her have failed.

The Armor of Light follows these allies through their trials of conscience, heartbreak and rejection, as they bravely attempt to make others consider America’s gun culture through a moral lens. The film is also a courageous look at our fractured political culture and an assertion that it is, indeed, possible for people to come together across deep party lines to find common ground.

From 2015-2016, *The Armor of Light* served as the vehicle for a multi-year campaign consisting of a theatrical release, national broadcast, faith leader outreach, community screenings, and the rollout of an interactive digital platform called *Sword of the Spirit* to create a theological conversation on gun violence.

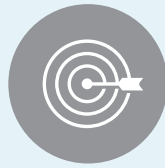
The Impact Campaign

IDEA

Work with a Pro-life, Conservative Leader to Reframe the Gun Debate & Break the Impasse



Follow a pro-life, evangelical leader who discusses the morality of the American gun culture with fellow clergy based on the Bible.



Question the pro-life, evangelical support of the gun lobby. Are guns a pro-life ethic?



Create a moral conversation on gun violence to break the political impasse.

WHO

Evangelical Influencers & Grassroots



Megachurch Pastors



Parachurch Leaders
& Christian Service Organizations



Christian University Students
& Academics



Megachurch Pastors



Woman Lay Leaders
and Congregants



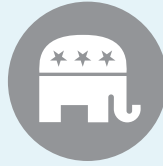
Pro-Life Activists

WHERE

Go Where Liberals Can't



Blue and swing states with high evangelical populations, divided state governments, mid-level gun safety ratings.



Republican House districts with high levels of evangelical churches and mass shootings.



Republican Congressional representatives who fit a variety of variables: evangelical or on the Prayer Caucus, have a mid-level gun lobby rating, on the Judiciary Committee, in a competitive district.

HOW

Full-Scale Issue Campaign



Film Distribution



Branding with a Second Christian Identity



Partners



Influencer Meetings & Events



Press & Op-Eds



Digital



Ads

Goals and Strategy

Creating a Moral Conversation with Broad Credibility

The problem of gun violence was well known, yet severely partisan and thus in gridlock. The film revealed those stark divisions within the evangelical community and sought to transform the gun debate from political to theological and moral. Unlike most films, however, *The Armor of Light* did not have an official “ending,” as Rev. Schenck and Lucy McBath’s transformed lives were just beginning. As a result, Peace is Loud designed the impact campaign to support their work and create an infrastructure for a broader coalition in the years, rather than months, to come.

1. Vision

Reframe gun violence from being a constitutional issue to a pro-life, Christian spiritual crisis. Change hearts and minds before attempting to create a bipartisan policy solution.

2. Champion

Propel a conservative leader from their own pro-life, faith community to be the messenger and mobilizer.

As a result, the film and campaign followed a narrative of Rev. Rob Schenck, a pro-life evangelical leader willing to speak out, and Lucy McBath, a congregant who paid the greatest price—losing her only child to senseless gun violence.

Campaign Plan for 2016 and Beyond

After the film’s release at the Tribeca Film Festival in April 2015 and the theatrical release in the fall of 2015, the following campaign plan was put into place as a Phase 2 (2016) and Phase 3 (2017 and beyond) to focus on organizing and additional distribution.

Goals

1. Phase 2 (2016):

Identify and recruit evangelical champions to join us in building a base of support to start changing hearts and minds.

2. Phase 3 (Post-2016 — The Future We Want to See):

Create an attitudinal shift that decouples the evangelical community from the NRA and results in a variety of behavioral changes, including but not

limited to: turning evangelicals away from a reliance on firearms; building a lasting movement where an evangelical base (church laity and leadership) uses their voices and votes to pressure their lawmakers to support gun safety legislation; and inspiring Republican politicians to champion gun violence prevention policies.

Objectives/Outcomes: What Does Success Look Like for 2016?

1. Create Faith Champions:

Obtain public endorsements from 25 faith leaders (national, regional, and megachurch-based) who will take on the issue and convey Rev. Schenck’s message to other faith leaders/pastors privately and then publicly. These leaders will create the seeds of change of hearts in politically-relevant areas on the ground or via their national influence.

2. Operate in Politically Relevant Areas:

Engage with targeted communities in areas that include high concentrations of large evangelical churches located in Republican districts in blue or swing states, with bonus points for elected officials with jurisdiction over gun policy. Blue and swing states were chosen to begin where Rev. Schenck had relationships and the ground was softer to create a visible and high-level consensus before entering conservative states.

3. Initiate a Grassroots Base:

Create deep engagement with congregants to catalyze a lay-led, grassroots base. Plans for this engagement may include a Bible study and sharing campaign content. Test the model in 2-3 congregations, to roll out more broadly in 2017 and beyond.

4. Plant Seeds for a Post-2016 Coalition:

As the faith leader relationships are solidified, conduct private one-on-one conversations about forming a branded coalition to roll out a post-2016 national campaign managed by Rev. Schenck’s newly-formed Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute (TDBI). The Institute is a faith-based nonprofit confronting ethical issues of the day from an evangelical perspective, starting with gun violence.

Audiences

Creating a New Audience for the Message

The largest American faith audience are evangelical Christians who are pro-life and, paradoxically, the biggest gun lobby supporters. It may seem only natural that a person who believes protecting life “from womb to tomb” would view gun violence as a related issue, but it simply was not on their radar, based on Rev. Schenck and his staff’s observations of both evangelical leadership and congregations.

While mass shootings—the most visible indicators of gun violence—occur across the country, gun violence is often concentrated in large cities in Democratic districts, and conservative evangelicals live in Republican-controlled exurbs and rural areas. That said, the greatest amount of gun violence per capita is in Republican states with looser gun regulations, but because these incidents are related to suicide, domestic or workplace violence, or accidents, they grab less headlines. The gun lobby’s well-funded messaging filled that gap, bolstering conservative evangelicals’ existing fears of government encroachment and an “other” threatening their property or family.

We met many evangelical pastors and spiritual leaders troubled by gun violence and their faith’s close association with the gun lobby. Publically, however, they had no cover or support (such as a film and champion like Rev. Schenck), and feared losing their conservative members if they preached on gun violence. As a result, we identified a new audience to develop: pro-life evangelicals who support gun safety from a moral perspective. We felt their pastors could be most influential if they revealed this theological blind spot to their congregants and ran ministry projects related to the human impact of gun violence. As a result, their congregants would eventually view gun safety as a ballot-box issue, like they do for abortion.

Primary Audiences

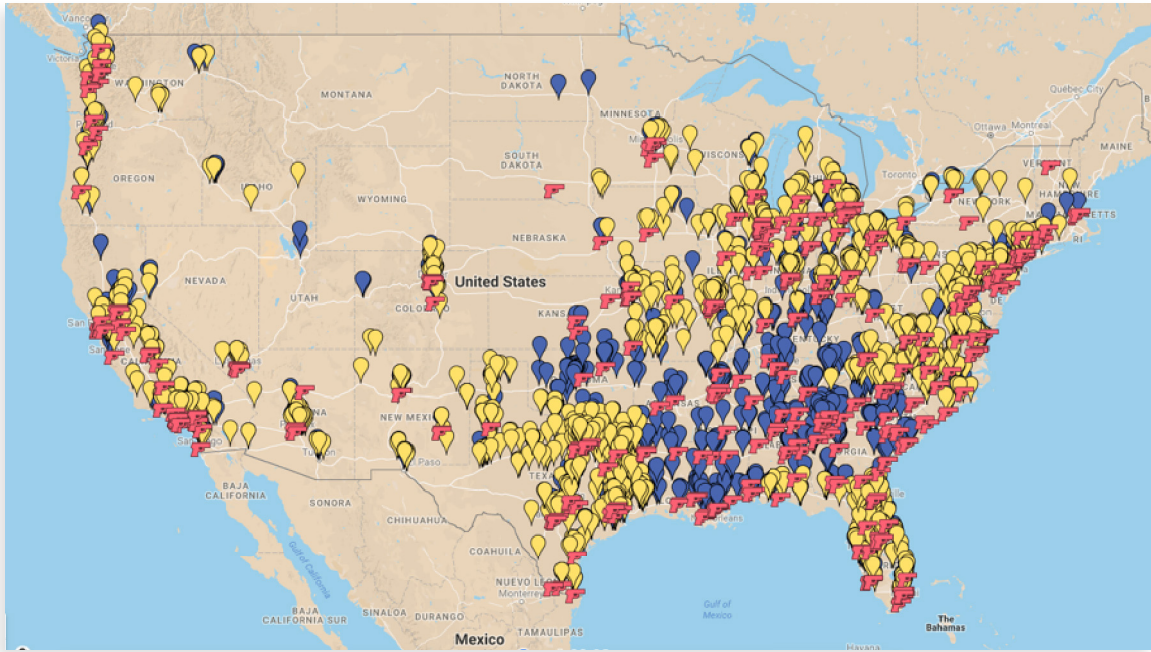
The primary audience and partners consisted of pro-life, conservative evangelicals. Rev. Schenck and faith organizer Melinda Ronn pursued one-on-one meetings, private dinners, conference participation, and film screenings (when appropriate) to build and strengthen a relationship with this audience.

1. Evangelical pastors of large churches (1000-2000 members) and megachurches (2000+ members)
2. Faith leaders & associations
3. Christian women / women lay leaders
4. Weekly Bible study groups
5. Youth: Under 30, college, high school (via congregational youth groups with surrogate leaders)
6. Seminary students

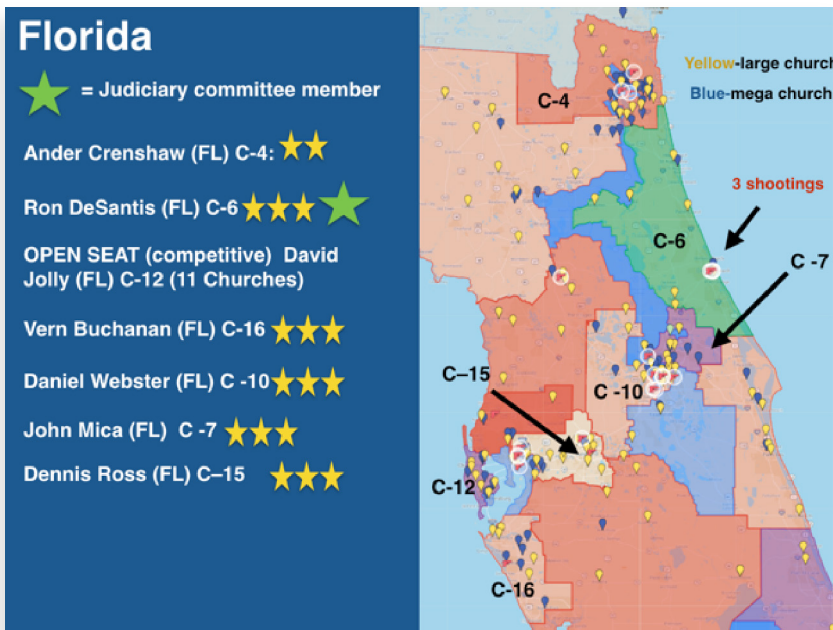
Secondary Audiences

The secondary audiences and partners included gun violence prevention organizations and progressive religious groups. We offered our targeting research, helped bolster their progressive faith leaders, and received digital outreach support for the film distribution. Screenings for these groups were by request only and did not typically receive public/online promotions, to avoid alienating evangelical groups.

1. PBS viewers
2. Gun safety/gun violence prevention groups
3. Members of progressive Christian and interfaith groups
4. Progressive groups within the Peace is Loud network



Yellow - Large Churches (1000-2000 members)
 Blue - Megachurches (2000+ members. Many are obscured by the yellow dots.)
 Gun - Mass shooting (minimum 4 people shot and injured or killed, January 2014 - present, using data from the Gun Violence Archive)



Example of targeting analysis for one state. Shades of red are Republican districts; shades of blue are Democratic; purple are competitive; and green includes a member of the Judiciary committee.

Primary Audience Targeting

While our goals weren't explicitly political, we determined target political districts where our outreach to evangelical leaders would yield the greatest long-term benefit. The bare-bones criteria included Republican Congressional districts with higher evangelical membership and rates of gun violence. These were the areas primed for conversation, where we could soften the ground for a sustained conversation. The scope of the outreach and long-term infrastructure-building to our primary audiences was directed toward 12 states and 58 congressional districts.

We first mapped evangelical churches and mass shootings. Upon zooming into this view, we saw that the churches cluster around medium to large cities that span a few congressional districts.

Target State Criteria

Using public, non-partisan datasets, we identified the following as key variables to select the states for our outreach. This was within the scope of going to conservative areas within blue and swing states per Rev. Schenck's knowledge and relationship with these communities.

1. **Target Audience:** High evangelical population
2. **Political Environment:** Swing state or blue state, divided state government, gun lobby donations, size of congressional delegation
3. **Issue Trends:** Higher rate of gun violence, higher rate of gun ownership
4. **Regulatory environment:** C-D rating from the Brady Campaign on state laws (2013)

Selecting the Republican Districts

The following were the key variables to select the Republican districts in consultation with Rev. Schenck and our faith organizer.

Required

1. At least 5 large or megachurches
2. Republican district

Additional Variables

Each member received a star/point for the following:

1. Judiciary Committee member
2. Competitive district in the 2016 election
3. Mid-level (B or C) rating from the conservative Gun Owners of America
4. Evangelical (or votes with them)
5. Prayer Caucus member
6. Mass shooting (2014-present)

Putting It All Together

We then prioritized the districts based on those with the most stars as well as our resources and Rev. Schenck’s relationships. (Some states span 2 categories.)

Level 1 Deep Engagement	Level 2 Double Dip/Send Surrogates	Level 3 Communications
<i>1:1 Meetings, private dinner events, targeted ads, digital outreach, Christian college screenings, press outreach</i>	<i>Visit when there is a dual purpose or send a surrogate, digital outreach, Christian college screenings, press outreach</i>	<i>Digital outreach, press outreach</i>
21 Districts Members with 3-5 stars	23 Districts Members with 2-3 stars	9 Districts Members with 1-3 stars
Florida California Ohio Virginia	California Oregon Washington Colorado Pennsylvania Illinois Iowa Michigan Texas Georgia	Pennsylvania Michigan Texas

The Strategic Messaging

The following are two strands of messaging used to achieve the vision of creating a new context for discussing gun policy. We convened a workshop with Rev. Schenck and Abigail Disney in February 2016 to confirm the voice, tone, and talking points.

- 1. Reframe the Debate:** Reframe the gun debate through a Biblical lens to restore a moral discourse on gun violence. Replace NRA talking points within the evangelical discourse with Christ-led calls for humility and love. For example, guns for protection are idolatrous because only God should be the source of one’s fear and salvation. If policy discussion was required in a specific instance, it would be centered in the context of information—not endorsing/opposing a specific rule/bill or candidate.
- 2. Maintain a Connection to the Impact of Gun Violence:** Create an experiential understanding of catastrophic gun violence without being heavy-handed or gratuitous.

Branding: Create Two Identities

- 1. Sword of the Spirit**
 Created a new property that presented an explicit religious focus with biblical themes addressing fear, violence, weapons, idolatry, love thy neighbor, human fallibility, transformation, and a Christ-led prevention of gun violence. The audience was exclusively evangelical, conservative Christian.
- 2. Armor Channels**
 Created a two-fold strategy leading up to and following the PBS broadcast and town hall. The content focused on the film themes (fear, transformation, human impact of gun violence) and narrative arcs of Rev. Schenck (theological) and Lucy McBath (human impact). There could be calls to action to go to the Campaign site, but not the other way around. This was oriented toward both our primary evangelical as well as secondary PBS and progressive audiences.

Tactics & Scope

In order to reframe the gun debate from a policy/constitutional impasse to a moral/spiritual crisis, our outreach consisted of a full-scale campaign to reach both influencer and grassroots audiences. The timeframe ran from April 2015 through November 8, 2016 with a plan to transition the work to Rev. Rob Schenck and his team to expand as a coalition.

- **Film Distribution**
Theatrical release, PBS broadcast, targeted screenings, on-demand
- **Branding**
Create two identities to maximize the depth of the messaging, especially for an insular audience with a unique language
- **Influencers**
One-on-one meetings, private events, conference sponsorship and speaking engagements, rapid response after mass shootings, digital toolkits, email campaigns, ads
- **Grassroots**
Through pastors and digital content (multimedia and multiplatform), including reframing content (social media, articles, short videos) and evergreen toolkits to empower them
- **PR & Marketing**
Press coverage, op-ed placements, advertising

How This Is Different from Other Documentary Impact Campaigns

Because there were no visible Republican policy maker champions for gun safety, we needed to create a new audience within their constituency to pressure them and reframe their understanding of how to solve gun violence. It required deviating from the traditional film impact campaign approach in three ways critical to setting up the strategy and organization.

1. Creating a New Audience:

Most documentary films reach out to existing audiences to mobilize their champions around a call to action (buy, vote, donate, call, etc) or to build awareness (inform around an existing worldview)

around a new problem. Our call to action was more subtle in asking people to overcome their bias (anti-government, fearing the other) and use their faith to reveal a blind spot: How can a pro-life person of faith support guns as a form of protection?

2. Creating a Long-Term Infrastructure:

We recognized that this type of coalition-building takes time (years, not months), so we designed our campaign with long-term sustainability in mind. To ensure that the relationships, conversations, materials, and infrastructure *Peace is Loud* created will continue, we structured our work to be easily transferrable to Rev. Schenck and The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute at the end of our campaign.

3. Create a Separate Brand & Voice:

Ordinarily, film campaigns focus on maximizing their own brand, which is the ideal case. It's hard enough to break through the media clutter with one brand, let alone two. However, because the filmmaker was an outsider to the evangelical audience, a separate identity was necessary to fulfill the objective of a long-term presence. Two learnings midway through the campaign informed this choice. First, the theatrical press coverage on how pro-choice activist Abigail Disney teamed up with pro-life Rev. Schenck received a negative response from both left and right leaders, and user comments in the press and social media. While abortion and a pro-life ethic are a part of the film, the film is fundamentally about the morality of guns. This line of discussion was an unneeded distraction for our target audience. Second, when planning for a Bible study, a progressive evangelical organizer recommended distributing it through a religious publisher—rather than the film website—because the audience would otherwise think it would come from a “liberal, Hollywood” filmmaker. Therefore, Rev. Schenck launched the digital channel *Sword of the Spirit* with the tagline “A Christian Conversation on Gun Violence.” Also, we had an internal assumption that because the reframing strategy focused on using explicit biblical text to decouple the gun lobby from evangelicals, we might risk alienating non-Christian/non-religious documentary viewers and partners brought on during the theatrical release.

Outcomes and Impact

Overview

Within a year and half of the film's release in April 2015, the film and campaign have led to concrete outcomes for each of the goals and objectives among the key audiences in our target states or districts.

Creating a Pro-Life, Evangelical Champion for Gun Violence Prevention

As the lead character in the film, Rev. Schenck represented the champion critically needed to begin to balance the gun violence prevention movement. The film distribution across theatrical (26 theaters, 17 cities), national broadcast (1.5 million PBS viewers), local communities (432 community screenings), and digital on-demand (reaching the top 50 documentaries on iTunes) platforms was rare for any documentary, let alone one about such a divisive topic.

After the film, Rev. Schenck took extraordinary steps to engage his evangelical community on this issue. He met with more than 28 pastors and an additional 11 nationally prominent faith leaders. He spoke at screenings at Christian colleges, churches, and seminaries, and among gun violence survivors. He also wrote op-eds to counter pro-gun evangelicals on issues related to guns at Christian college and churches, gun violence at abortion clinics, and mass shootings. His op-eds were all placed in national mainstream and Christian press, including: *Time*, *Washington Post*, *Daily Beast*, *Patheos*, and *The Christian Post*.

For the long term, Rev. Schenck's *Sword of the Spirit* digital platform was the first of its kind to provide an evangelical, theologically rich response to gun violence. This content is an evergreen, spiritual resource for pastors, lay leaders, students, and the press. Our campaign was designed to sustain beyond our involvement, and Rev. Schenck's platform will continue this work through The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute.

Creating a Coalition of Evangelical Leaders

As a first step, the film spurred other evangelical leaders to speak out on the issue including (but not limited to): Preston Sprinkle, Patheos blogger and gun owner; Lynne Hybels, co-founder of Willow Creek Community Church; and Christopher Hays, Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary.

We exceeded our goal of obtaining endorsements from 25 evangelical faith leaders, with a total of 28 endorsements that ranged from devotional writing, providing a testimonial, holding screenings, attending our events, preaching on the issue, and posting on social media. These evangelical leaders represent the potential for a combined reach of more than 3.5 million people in megachurches and on social media. Our partner Dr. Joel Hunter, Pastor of Northland Church in Orlando, publicly stood with the Pulse Night Club victims and interfaith leaders and wrote a prescient devotional. (This was particularly notable because a large number of evangelical leaders were silent after Orlando—presumably due to their view on LGBTQ people.)

Creating a New Audience in Politically Relevant Areas

As an anecdote to how our audience of pro-gun-safety, conservative evangelicals did not previously exist, our digital ad vendor had to create a new polling model to target them for our digital ad campaign. We planted the seeds of engaged groups of pastors, women congregants, and Christian college students in our targeted geographic areas.

It's often said that buying email lists is less effective than organic subscriptions. However, for this campaign, *Sword of the Spirit* built an engaged group of 1,160 evangelical pastors representing 521,000 congregants in our target states and districts with open rates double the industry average on a weekly basis. This shows they desire a moral discussion on gun violence and gun culture.

The *Sword of the Spirit* has created a 9,700-strong audience of predominantly evangelical women in our key states on Facebook through a targeting profile of pro-life affiliations, evangelical denominations, and Christian colleges. They regularly comment (amongst themselves, not just to the post) and share devotionals,

sharegraphics, and articles. The Sword of the Spirit then recruited nearly 500 newsletter subscribers from this Facebook audience and digital ads in Christian press. The result is a 30% average open rate among people who largely map to the targeted districts and conservative states, including Louisiana, Alabama, North Carolina, New Mexico, and Arizona.

Our college outreach to 800 Christian colleges and universities, campus ministries, and seminaries has resulted in screenings and discussions at 26 Christian schools, including Baylor University, ranked the fifth most conservative school in the country. We provided all partners with college toolkits to help students continue this biblical conversation on gun violence with peers on their campuses, as well as initiate dialogue in their home communities and churches. In addition, we partnered with the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), an association of 181 Christian colleges and universities which enroll more than 450,000 students each year and represent more than 1.8 million alumni and nearly 30,000 faculty. CCCU hosted a private screening of the film for their staff, as well as a public screening for more than 200 professors and administrators from 50 Christian educational institutions, followed by a discussion with Rev. Schenck, Lucy McBath, and Abigail Disney, facilitated by CCCU president Shirley Hoogstra. The CCCU expressed interest in continuing this partnership and plans to meet with Rev. Schenck in the future to explore additional ways to bring the theological conversation on guns to a young Christian audience.

Restoring a Moral Conversation to Gun Debate

In addition to the moral discussion on guns created among the primary audiences, one has also occurred among the press, across broader social media, and within progressive audiences.

During the highs of the campaign around the theatrical release and PBS broadcast, there was a spike in national and religious press coverage on the pro-life/pro-gun contradiction and faith/evangelicals and guns. Tragically, eight mass shootings occurred during the campaign. Our team mobilized rapid responses, including op-eds written by Rev. Schenck, which resulted in additional press coverage framed around

the Christian response to gun violence. Toward the end of the campaign, and even after it wrapped, the mainstream and religious press sought comment from Rev. Schenck as a leading voice on the Church and guns. For example, after the campaign ended, *Yahoo News* covered Christian college Liberty University's plans to build a gun range on campus and included Rev. Schenck's criticism in their story.

As secondary partners, PBS viewers, progressive faith audiences, and gun safety groups were also able to discuss this issue in a new way that both inspired and activated their audiences to continue the conversation. During the PBS broadcast of the film and subsequent town hall, conversations about the film on Twitter reached 11 million people, with approximately 80% positive comments, according to NUVI, a social media analytics tool. Lucy McBath initiated faith organizing for Everytown for Gun Safety and Moms Demand Action, and regularly addresses and trains congregations. Moms Demand Action also convened screenings in conservative communities, allowing them to build relationships with audiences previously unlikely to support gun safety policies. The film inspired the "God and Guns" faith leader training sponsored by Riverside Church, which included its own faith media coverage and pastor blog posts. This increased a progressive faith audience, which helps maintain pressure on their Democratic policy champions to keep up their work.

Creating an Attitudinal Shift Away from Gun Culture

Though we focused on initiating a conversation and not concrete action, after seeing the film, an evangelical woman congregant in South Carolina canceled her background check to buy her first gun, and a Christian male student in Florida decided against applying for a concealed carry permit. These are indicators of the film's broader effect of introducing a biblical perspective on gun violence to an audience that had not previously perceived the issue theologically. Community screening survey respondents indicated that 70% of hosts changed their perspective on the issue and 100% were likely to talk to a friend about the issue. The film inspired people to broaden the conversation beyond our own efforts and realize the importance of ending gun violence—the first step towards movement building and transformative change.

The Response

- **Target Audience - Woman Evangelical Congregant**

A viewer in South Carolina wrote to us that she had always “been a firm believer in the right to bear arms...Recently, I filled out paperwork to purchase a beauty of a gun. I was ready to purchase it, cash in hand. Paperwork filled out and processed for background check...After watching the movie, I chose not to move forward in my purchase.”

- **Target Audience - Megachurch Pastor**

“Not only is [*The Armor of Light*] moving, it stimulates productive conversation among Christians and non-Christians alike. I applaud Rev. Rob Schenck’s humility and his desire to look toward God’s Word when it comes to the increasing issue of gun violence in our nation. As a Christian leader, Pastor, and Chaplain, I welcome this conversation. It’s important—as is this film.”
—Pastor Mike MacIntosh

- **Target Audience - Christian College Student**

“I grew up in a household with a rifle, which never seemed like a big deal to me. [But after watching the film] I began to speculate if we invest in these guns so strongly because we’re afraid. I’m sure we’re all familiar with the NRA’s favorite phrase, ‘The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.’ Where I might have once seen this as a truthful statement, I can now only see it as destructive. As Christians, the only weapon we have is love. Thank you for your moving work. I am forever grateful to those who push me to think outside of my comfort zone and create platforms to have these critical conversations.”

- **Target Audience - Avid Second Amendment Supporter:**

“I am an avid 2nd amendment supporter but find these arguments and application of scripture to be compelling. Worthwhile talking points to start a conversation.”

- **Gun Safety Lobby**

The former chairman of the Brady Campaign wrote that the film was “the most important film ever made about gun ownership in the USA.”

- **Gun Rights Lobby**

“It’s like a baby step toward a better conversation on screen, so you know it may be worth seeing even if you disagree with it.”

—*NRA News*

- **Conservative Evangelical Press**

“Heart-wrenching... Compelling... Schenck sets out to get both sides of the argument, spanning across deep party lines to find common ground. The film emphasizes that many white evangelicals are members of the National Rifle Association... His journey to find the moral strength to preach about the growing toll of gun violence in America is nerve-racking and captivating as we see him argue with his own constituents in an effort to be true to his convictions. On the quest to get his peers to inform their political views of the Second Amendment with his understanding of biblical teaching, Schenck tastefully introduces a subject that, in all forms, needs delicate consideration. His difficult journey represents both sides of the coin and reveals that both sides believe wholeheartedly in what they stand for.”

—*The Christian Post*

- **Moderate Evangelical Press**

“*The Armor of Light* is, without a doubt, the most nuanced portrayal of evangelicals I’ve seen on screen... There’s so much about this film that is exemplary of a Christian view of how politics and social action ought to work.”

—*Christianity Today*

- **Progressive Evangelical Press**

“It’s hard to imagine a more prescient film than *The Armor of Light*.”

—*Sojourners*

- **Mainstream Media**

“The only time I’ve cried more during a movie than the first time I saw *The Armor of Light* was probably the second time I saw *The Armor of Light*.”

—*Vulture*

- **Thought Leader**

“This might be the most important Christian documentary made in America.”

—Evangelical author Benjamin Corey

PART II

Campaign Tactics and Activities: A Detailed View

Multimedia Content

Overview

Websites

The Armor of Light (armoroflightfilm.com) and *Sword of the Spirit* (swordofthespiritministry.org) websites serve as resource portals continuing the story of the film and providing additional materials on gun violence.

Launched in April 2015, *the Armor of Light* website includes video shorts from Rev. Schenck and Lucy McBath, a screenings toolkit, cast updates, and op-eds. The site had 75,400 unique visitors and 187,000 unique page views, with 26,000 views of the trailer.

Launched the following year, in April 2016, the *Sword of the Spirit* website provides related content approaching gun violence from a theological perspective, not directly tied to the film. Its features include weekly devotionals, articles, and pastor and college student toolkits. The site had 28,000 unique visitors and 51,000 unique page views, with 16,000 clicks to the devotional series from Facebook between May and November 2016.

Social Media

To engage with very different audience groups, *The Armor of Light* and *Sword of the Spirit* social media profiles operated as related entities with distinctly separate voices, content, and audiences.

The Armor of Light Facebook and Twitter accounts aimed to create visibility for a faith-based view of gun violence, with specific objectives of driving tune-in to

the film, continuing the characters' stories, responding to mass shootings, and promoting *Sword of the Spirit*. The Facebook profile had 6,194 followers of both genders in suburbs and cities, a total of 5.5 million post impressions, and 141,400 post engagements. The Twitter profile amassed 890 followers and 44,436 post impressions.

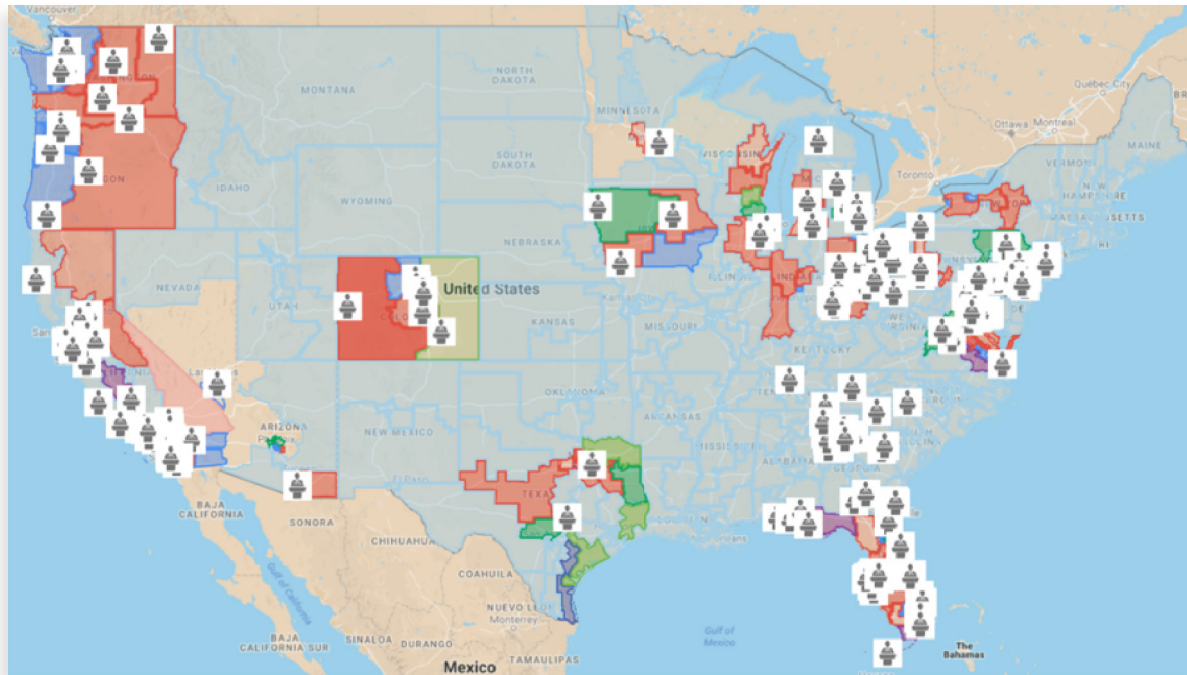
The *Sword of the Spirit* Facebook and Twitter accounts aimed to create visibility for a Christ-led view of gun violence and to counter gun lobby talking points, specifically through coverage of biblical themes related to gun violence, news items related to the church and guns, and mass shootings. The Facebook account amassed 9,783 followers, largely rural women in target states. There were a total of 2.2 million post impressions and 113,000 post engagements. The Twitter profile had 623 followers and 50,439 post impressions.

Devotionals

Weekly devotionals were a popular feature of the *Sword of the Spirit* website and on the social media platforms for both accounts. On a weekly basis, the devotional posts attracted an average of 2,700 post engagements and 24,000 impressions, with similar number through *The Armor of Light's* channel (targeted to the same profile). For 27 weeks, the grand total included: 1.3 million impressions reaching conservative Christian women, with 101,000 post engagements, 16,000 link clicks, and 3,000 new page followers.

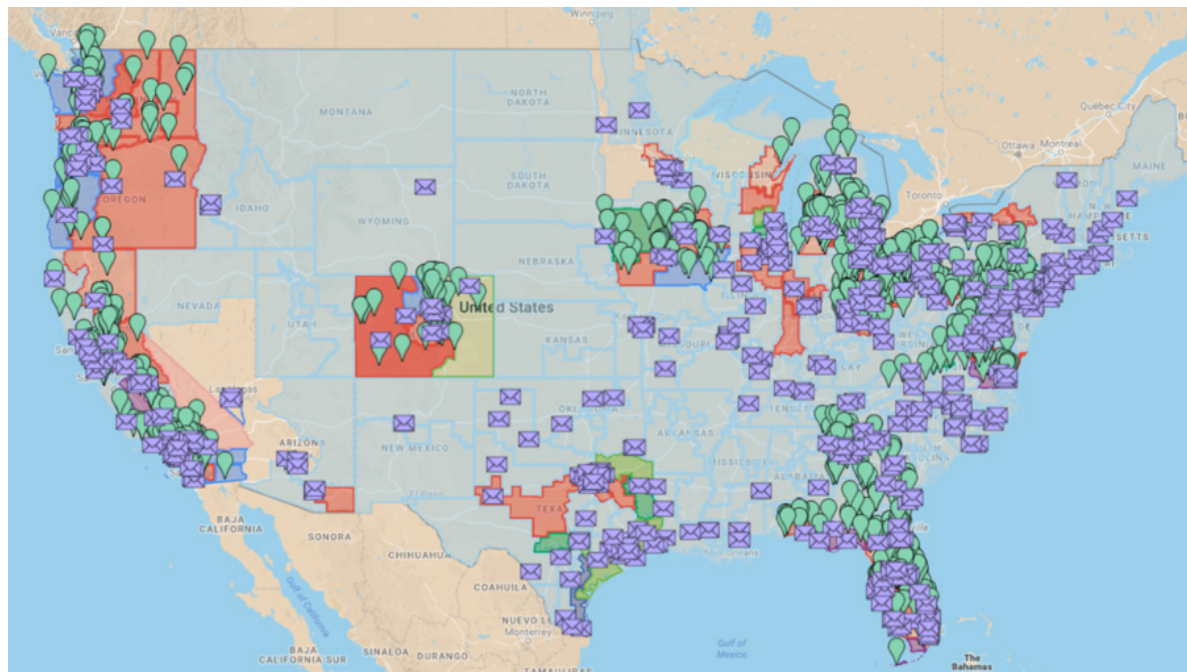
For additional details on multimedia content and sample posts, please see page 57.

Map of Engaged Pastor Email List



The pastor icons are 232 pastors whose congregations total 129,000 members. Of the analytics queries available in MailChimp, we determined they opened all of the last 5 emails of our weekly devotionals covering the themes related to gun violence. The top 30 churches have a combined total of 81,000 members, including one church with 18,000 members alone. Aside from the New York city area and Northern Ohio, these pastors are in our target districts. (We did not include Texas with this list, and those two members are unintentional.)

Map of Pastor & Newsletter Email Lists



Purple Envelops - Newsletter subscribers
 Green dots - 1,160 pastors

The amount of emails obscure our target congressional districts in Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Florida. The red and green areas are Republican districts—the green are those on the House Judiciary Committee.

Email Campaigns

We created two core email audiences of evangelical pastors and pro-life Christians. They are primarily located in our target states and audiences, with some outside those areas in both liberal and conservative states.

Pastors

It's often said that buying email lists is less effective than organic subscriptions. The thirst for a moral discussion on guns among evangelical pastors, however, was clearly indicated in our bought email list of 8,400 pastors from our targeted 12 states. We have built an engaged audience of evangelical pastors in conservative areas who desire a moral discussion on gun violence and gun culture.

- **Campaigns**

We created an email campaign of weekly devotionals, rapid response to mass shootings, a survey on gun violence, and releases of the new Sword features, such as the bible study and college toolkit. We segmented the list after tracking which people opened our first email appeal from Rev. Schenck asking pastors to view the film online in May 2016.

- **Results - Engaged Pastors**

The "Pastor 1" group (1,160) are those who opened the email and represent 521,000 congregants. They have an average open rate of 42% for our weekly devotionals, and up to 50% and 60% for emails regarding gun violence and mass shootings, well above the industry average of 25%. A subset of this group (232), representing 129,000 congregants, opened every one of our last 5 emails. These open rates and the below map clearly show an engaged audience who also represent a conservative constituency in Republican districts. The "Pastor 2" group (4,900) did not open the first email appeal and have average open rate of 8.3%. A third group of church administrators (900) have an open rate of 11%. Of the entire bought list, the unsubscribe rate was 18% from May-November 2016.

Congregant Email List

The Sword of the Spirit recruited nearly 500 newsletter subscribers from Facebook and Twitter audiences as well as digital ads in Christian press. The result is a 30% average open rate among people who largely map to the targeted districts and some conservative areas, including Louisiana, Alabama, North Carolina, New Mexico, and Arizona.

Digital Advertising

We aimed to create brand awareness in targeted districts and audiences through paid digital advertising. As an anecdote to how our audience of pro-gun-safety, pro-life evangelicals did not previously exist, our digital ad vendor had to create a new polling model to target them.

The Armor Of Light

Advertisements for theatrical, iTunes, PBS, and Netflix releases. Nearly half of the impressions were targeted to six Republican districts in Ohio, Florida, and Virginia, to people who fit a profile of pro-life, conservative Christian who vote in general elections.

7.6 million Impressions*

23,600 Clicks

46,000 Emails Opened

900,000 Video Pre-roll

Grand total ad reach: 8.6 million

Christian-specific Audiences = 6.9 million Impressions

Sword of the Spirit

Nearly two-thirds of the impressions were targeted to six Republican districts in Ohio, Florida, and Virginia, to people who fit a profile of pro-life, conservative Christian who vote in general elections.

2.16 million Impressions*

8,800 Clicks

19,000 Emails Opened

Grand total ad reach: 2.18 million

**Our largest source of ad web traffic referrals were from the sub-properties of Christianity Today; however, they do not report on impressions.*

Pastor and Faith Leader Outreach

National Pastor Outreach

In order to engage pastors with national influence, we hired a faith outreach coordinator from a conservative evangelical background who had existing relationships with many of these leaders. She reached out to over 100 pastors and leaders and booked more than 45 face-to-face meetings for Rev. Schenck and Abigail Disney, resulting in relationships with 28 evangelical leaders (primarily pastors) who supported our efforts in a variety of ways.

This group of pastors and faith leaders reaches more than 188,000 congregants, nearly 1.5 million Twitter followers, and over 2.75 million Facebook fans.

Pastors and Faith Leaders

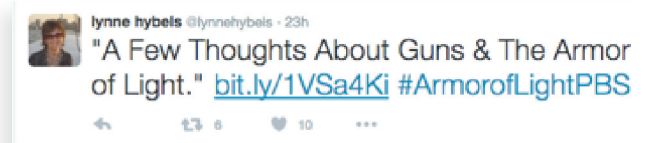
The faith leaders who supported our campaign fall into four primary levels of engagement:

- Level 1: Agreed that this is an important issue meriting discussion
- Level 2: Read or shared Sword of the Spirit content
- Level 3: Gave us a written or filmed endorsement
- Level 4: Hosted a screening, wrote for Sword of the Spirit, or gave a sermon at their church

Out of our 28 supporters, nearly 40% worked with our campaign at level 4, the highest form of engagement. Additionally, these pastors introduced us to other pastors, spoke to other leaders about the issue, reviewed our small group study, or participated in other meaningful ways.

Our most fruitful partnerships include:

- Lynne Hybels, Co-founder and Advocate for Global Engagement at Willow Creek Community Church (and wife of Pastor Bill Hybels), met with Abigail and Rev. Schenck, expressed ardent support for our work, wrote a blog post about the film, and tweeted about it several times to her 12,000+ followers. Willow Creek is the fourth largest megachurch in America, with more than 22,000 members.



Lynne Hybels' tweets



Dr. Hunter (far left) at the Armed in America town hall taping

- Dr. Joel Hunter, senior pastor to a congregation of 20,000 at Orlando's Northland: A Church Divided, is internationally known as a pastor, author, and conservative spokesperson, although he is also a spiritual advisor to President Obama and advocate for peace. In his book *A New Kind of Conservative*, he remains true to biblical principles and conservative ideals but offers an open-minded approach to social and political issues, in contrast with the traditional Religious Right. Dr. Hunter wrote devotionals for the Sword site, reviewed and offered feedback on our small group study, and even hosted the PBS *Armed in America* town hall taping at his church. He also introduced us to the White House Office of Faith and Neighborhood Partnerships and remained in close contact with us over the duration of our campaign.
- Pastor Garry Ansdell from Hosanna Chapel in Bellflower, CA attended a dinner our campaign hosted at Disneyland's Club 33, where he articulated a conflicted opinion on the topic of guns and appreciation for the chance to have this dialogue in a safe space. In the following weeks, he discussed gun violence with his staff, sent us a letter saying he was "provoked to do more research from a biblical perspective," and presented a statement and sermon to his church. In June, he hosted a dinner with Abigail, Rev. Schenck, and a small group of pastors, followed by a screening in the place of his church's worship service, attended by more than 100 congregants.
- Dan Ruppel, CEO of Christian entertainment company Mastermedia, and his wife Peggy Ruppel, Associate Producer of the spiritually-oriented Windrider Film Forum at Sundance, also met Rev. Schenck and Abigail at Club 33 and remained in communication as reliable supporters. Peggy screened *the Armor of Light* trailer at a Windrider event, followed by a Q&A with Abigail, where we reached a young, Christian audience and connected with representatives from Fuller Theological Seminary, where we are now planning a screening. Dan provided feedback regarding our iTunes artwork and met with Abigail another three times throughout the year, offering support on a variety of issues and introducing us to additional contacts.
- Professor, Vice President of Eternity Bible College's Boise extension, and *New York Times* bestselling author Preston Sprinkle wrote devotionals for *Sword of the Spirit* throughout the year and reviewed our small group study. He also reprinted his devotionals on his website, exposing our content to a larger audience.

Highlighted Meetings and Events

- Our most successful meeting was a dinner at Club 33, a private restaurant in Disneyland. We invited ten pastors and their wives to join Rev. Schenck, Lucy McBath, and Abigail Disney for dinner and to share their thoughts and concerns about gun violence in a safe, judgment-free space. We asked them to sign NDAs before arriving—not because we wanted to keep our activities private, but because we wanted to ensure them that this was not a trap. Given Abigail's openness about her progressive political leanings, establishing their trust was key—we were there to hear them and respect their opinions, even if we disagreed. We believe inviting their spouses, breaking bread, and ensuring that their concerns would be kept confidential enabled them to fully participate and develop stronger relationships with our team. This conversation about gun violence resonated deeply with the pastors who attended, including one of the most conservative pastors we invited, who decided in later months to speak to senior members of his church, give a sermon about gun violence, and host an *Armor of Light* screening for his congregants. The Club 33 dinner also led to ongoing relationships with several other pastors who met again with Rev. Schenck and Abigail Disney five months later, and expressed interest in continuing to support our efforts.
- Abigail, Rev. Schenck, and Lucy McBath traveled on a week-long tour across the country, branded as the Faith Over Fear tour. They met with pastors including Gil Trusty and Joe Focht from Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, Kirbyjon Caldwell from Windsor Village Baptist Church, and Joel Hunter from Northland, and screened the film for evangelical college students at Eastern University and for pastors and congregants at Windsor Village. *Armor of Light* editor Andy Fredericks filmed behind the scenes videos from the tour, which we posted to social media, reaching more than 56,000 people.
- Before the film was released theatrically, Rev. Schenck met privately with several conservative and religious leaders (including Grover Norquist and Andrea Lafferty) to explain the film and clarify his position and evolution on guns. The purpose was to ensure these leaders heard directly from him and not from the media, who might sensationalize or misrepresent his perspective, and the meetings were successful.

Testimonials

“ I’ve watched the documentary, *The Armor of Light*, and I’ve spoken personally with Rev. Rob Schenck. I commend Rev. Schenck for looking at America’s gun culture through the eyes of deep Biblical faith and for bravely countering the fear and violence that too often mark that culture. I join him in seeking a more consistent ethic of life and a more earnest commitment to the fearless and loving way of Jesus. ”

—**Lynne Hybels**

Advocate for Global Engagement and wife of Pastor Bill Hybels at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, IL (approx. 22,500 member congregation)

“ I am hosting *the Armor of Light* pre-screening because Abigail Disney, the director and executive producer, is one of the most interesting and intriguing persons in America. This film is worth viewing simply because it is the product of Abigail’s head, heart, and soul. ”

—**Pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell**

Pastor and spiritual advisor to George W. Bush, Windsor Village United Methodist, Houston, Texas (approx. 17,000 member congregation)

“ Not only is [*The Armor of Light*] moving, it stimulates productive conversation among Christians and non-Christians alike. I applaud Rev. Rob Schenck’s humility and his desire to look toward God’s Word when it comes to the increasing issue of gun violence in our nation. As a Christian leader, Pastor, and Chaplain, I welcome this conversation. It’s important—as is this film. ”

—**Pastor Mike MacIntosh**

Horizon Christian Fellowship, San Diego, CA (approx. 12,000 member congregation)

“ I applaud Abby Disney and Rev. Rob Schenck for wanting to start a conversation within Christian leadership about the tragedy of gun violence and how to approach it from a spiritual and moral perspective. This is a must-see film. ”

—**Dr. Garland Hunt**

Pastor at The Father’s House Church and former President of Chuck Colson’s Prison Fellowship Ministries, Atlanta, GA

Feedback

More than 70% of the email sent to Sword of the Spirit expressed support for the campaign, and 12% of people who wrote to us offered to help.

- A reverend in Rincon, GA complimented the small group study as “clear and easy to use... As for content, I am also very happy with that as well, and I separated that specifically, because I am a pacifist who serves a very gun-friendly congregation, so I worried that the materials might be either too anti- or too pro-gun. Instead this is a study that I as a pacifist could offer in good conscience, knowing it was well-grounded in the Bible and offered people a chance to think long and hard, but at the same time, my congregation would not immediately give up on it as anti-gun and therefore irrelevant to their ‘real’ world experience. My congregation listens to me even though many think I’m a nut for being a pacifist, but they do so because we have developed trust that I am authentic to Biblical truth as I read it, but also am willing to listen to them as we explore together. This study feels like the positive relationship we have developed.”
- A retired pastor and minister who spent 60 years in ministry in Meadowdale, Washington wrote that the small group study was “interesting, stimulating, useable and a fine resource. God bless you in your desire to help others.”
- A church member in White Salmon, WA used Sword of the Spirit resources, including selected Scripture, to write a reflection on faith and guns, which she presented to her congregation. She recommended *The Armor of Light* in the speech and said the material we provided her was “very helpful” and that she was “grateful beyond words.” She also purchased several DVDs and distributed them to nearby churches.
- A woman emailed the campaign, explaining that “in addition to being a gun violence survivor, I am a Republican, pro-life conservative Christian. Many times I have felt unwelcome in both the gun violence prevention movement and the faith community. Your ministry is no less than an answer to my prayers.” We also heard from several people who felt alienated at their pro-gun churches and were grateful to have their views validated.

College Outreach

We emailed approximately 800 Christian colleges, campus ministries, and seminaries—including every Cru and InterVarsity chapter leader in America—a personal letter from a Christian college student about the way her faith helped her heal after a shooting at her school, and offered them the opportunity to host Armor screenings on their campuses as well as Sword of the Spirit’s college toolkit and other resources. We secured screenings at many schools, as noted in the Screenings section below, and received encouraging responses:

- “Your courage inspires me and makes me think about how God might want me to speak up about issues. Thanks for using your gifts to surface issues that really need to be confronted.”
—Cru leader, Cambridge, MA
- “The film seems to offer a promising authentic Christian voice into this too often politicized discussion. Thank you for your efforts in this.”
—Professor, Lincoln Christian University, Lincoln, IL
- “There are few topics within evangelicalism as divisive as gun control and [in the film] it is handled with such a gentle, but firm hand. I was unbelievably inspired, so much so that I am featuring it in my class this semester on Media Literacy.”
—Professor, Biola University, La Mirada, CA
- I’m definitely interested in screening it at Oklahoma Christian University. We’re a very socially and theologically conservative group. I think this film is perfect for our constituency.”
—Professor, Oklahoma Christian University
- “I really like the resources for a post-shooting ministry. That seems like a growing need all over our country, and I know many campus ministers who have struggled to be a life-giving presence after such a tragedy (including here in Orlando).”
—Cru leader, Orlando, FL
- “The issue of gun violence, of course, is an important one for a current national climate. For a state like Idaho where the Second Amendment is staunchly defended by many, a conversation regarding thinking as Christians about this issue is particularly relevant.”
—Professor, Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa, ID
- “Of all the things that come into my inbox, this is one of the few definite “yes” things I’ve seen.”
—Professor, Corban University, Salem, OR

Secondary Partners

While we focused on building relationships with our primary audience of conservative evangelicals, we also initiated and maintained ties to our secondary audience of progressive groups. We offered them the opportunity to use *The Armor of Light* as a tool to engage their existing members and build new audiences, and they helped us expand the reach and impact of the film by promoting it to their networks.

We reached out to about 250 organizations with one-pagers about the film, as well as sample e-blast and social media content to distribute to their members in the lead-up to the theatrical release. We forged partnerships with more than 40 organizations, who shared our content to a combined reach of more than 2.3 million people on social media and email lists.

We also contacted more than 1,200 previous screening hosts, outreach partners, and contacts from Peace is Loud's network to share information about the film's digital release and PBS broadcast, and about 40% of our closest partners posted on social media.

Highlights include:

- **Everytown for Gun Safety** sent SMS messages about the theatrical release to all members in New York, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Phoenix, and Houston; asked leaders across the country to share with their chapters; and promoted it on social media.
- We partnered with **Liberty United**, an organization that transforms illegal guns into jewelry and donates a percentage of the sales to programs that protect at-risk youth from gun violence. Anyone who tweeted a photo of their *Armor of Light* ticket stub, or later promoted the PBS broadcast, received a discount on Liberty United's merchandise.
- Groundswell, a division of **Auburn Seminary**, sent a dedicated e-blast, including a personal letter from Lucy and theatre listings, to their 80,000 member mailing list.
- **Joshua DuBois**, former head of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, tweeted about the film and engaged in discussions with other faith influencers on Twitter.
- **Search for Common Ground** sent an e-blast asking their members to host viewing parties.
- Former **Brady Campaign** chairman Michael Wolkowitz recommended the film in an email to more than 300 influencers, including politicians, filmmakers, and advocacy group leaders, and wrote the following public statement: "I spent roughly fifteen years of my life most heavily invested in and devoted to the fight to prevent gun violence. During the majority of that time I was a Trustee of the Brady Campaign and Center to Prevent Gun Violence, for nearly five of those years as its Chairman; I worked closely with both Jim and Sarah Brady. I co-founded Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence, a coalition of over 50 different national faith-based groups. I was for several years a member of the London-based Board IANSA, the International Action Network on Small Arms... I have seen every substantial film, television special, video and web-based media segment created in the 21st Century that I could find and I looked very hard. I have discussed, developed and dreamed of even more. *The Armor of Light* by Abigail Disney is by far the most powerful, thought-provoking, moving, and constructive true story ever told about the issue of gun violence in America. It is a thorough examination of what the results of gun violence and gun ownership mean on a very personal and therefore universal level. Rather than debating statistics or the meaning of laws and regulations it plumbs the depths of the morality of what does or does not justify the taking of a life. *The Armor of Light* directly confronts the broad and lasting results of what happens when someone is killed by a gun... My overall wish is that as many people as possible see this film. My narrower, nearer-term wish is that as many members of the clergy, of every kind, see this film. Whatever point of view you may have about guns and gun violence in America, after seeing *The Armor of Light* you will understand it in a deeper more profound way."
- Politicians including NYC Mayor **Bill De Blasio** and then-California Attorney General / now-Senator **Kamala Harris** tweeted encouraging people to see the film in theatres.
- **Joan Blades**, co-founder of Move On, Moms Rising, and Living Room Conversations, blogged about the film on Daily Kos and promoted it through social media.
- Influencers including **Melissa Joan Hart**, **Van Jones**, Dana Delany, **Gloria Steinem**, Kathy Najimy, Nick Kristof, and **Mariska Hargitay** shared information about the film on social media.

Other organizations who promoted the film include **Witness**, **Code Pink**, **VH1**, **Newtown Action Alliance**, **Evolve**, **Evangelicals for Social Action**, NYU's Global Spiritual Life, Northstar Fund, Agenda Project, Patriotic Millionaires, Man Up, Baylor University, **IDA**, Heartland Film Festival, Women Moving Millions, Women Donors Network, Women Against Gun Violence, **Sojourners**, Public Conversations Project, Women's Impact Network, Breakthrough, Outcry Georgia, **National Council of Churches**, popular Christian blog Mom Does Reviews, Global Peace Film Festival, Faith in Public Life, Embrey Family Foundation, Rabbis Against Gun Violence, Faiths United Against Gun Violence, **Tribeca Film Festival**, New Yorkers Against Gun violence, and many more.

Joshua DuBois @joshuadubois

.@RevRobSchenck1, conservative, asks "pro-gun, pro-2nd amendment - is that a pro-life ethic?" Worth a conversation:

'Would Jesus Wear a Sidearm?'
In this short documentary, a prominent leader of the Christian right explains why he left the Republican Party over guns.
nytimes.com

RETWEETS: 6 LIKES: 3

11:17 AM - 30 Oct 2015

Reply to @joshuadubois @RevRobSchenck1

Branden Harvey @BrandenHarvey · 30 Oct 2015
@joshuadubois @RevRobSchenck1 Loved this.

Mr. Schenck, by any measure, is still a very conservative thinker. And as two liberal-leaning filmmakers, we have deep reservations about some of his positions. But by concentrating on the common values that unite us, we have developed a deep respect for him, and an unlikely friendship. His willingness to put his reputation and career on the line to speak his conscience is brave and should inspire us all, no matter our politics.

Joshua DuBois and top Christian Instagram influencer Branden Harvey discuss the film

Kamala Harris @KamalaHarris

Can't wait to see @abigaildisney's new doc @ArmorTheFilm. It's adding a powerful voice to the convo on faith & guns: bit.ly/1LEGOup

Tweet from Senator Kamala Harris promoting the film

Bill de Blasio @NYCMayor

We know too well gun violence doesn't discriminate. @ArmorTheFilm shows bipartisan issue we all must work to solve.

NEW YORK
AT THE LANDMARK SUNSHINE AT THE AMC EMPIRE 25
THE ARMOR of LIGHT
IN THEATERS OCT. 30
armoroflightfilm.com

RETWEETS: 21 LIKES: 21

Tweet from Mayor de Blasio promoting the film

Joan Blades Follow RSS
Daily Kos member - Give a gift subscription to this user
Diaries (list) - Stream - Groups - Following - Comments - Profile

FRI OCT 30, 2015 AT 12:00 PM PDT
Armor of Light -Go see this!
by Joan Blades

Share 12 Tweet 1 8 Comments / 8 New

This Friday *The Armor of Light* is going to open in 20 cities across the nation. <http://www.armoroflightfilm.com/>... This documentary is asking us have a thoughtful conversation about guns and reducing gun violence with all kinds of Americans.

The Armor of Light, follows Evangelical minister Reverend Rob Schenck, anti-abortion activist and fixture on the political far right, who ultimately asks whether being pro-gun is consistent with being pro-life. This is not easy. Reverend Schenck is troubled by the reactions of his long-time friends and colleagues who warn him away from this issue.

PERMALINK 8 COMMENTS / 8 NEW

Joan Blades on Daily Kos: "Go see this!"

Grassroots Distribution

Overview

In April 2015, we began coordinating *Armor of Light* screenings at film festivals, screening series, and special events, and in December 2015, we broadened our scope to include screenings at churches, colleges, and community organizations. Our campaign screenings reached our primary audience of conservative evangelicals, while we also facilitated screenings for our secondary audience of gun violence prevention or progressive faith groups.

Highlights

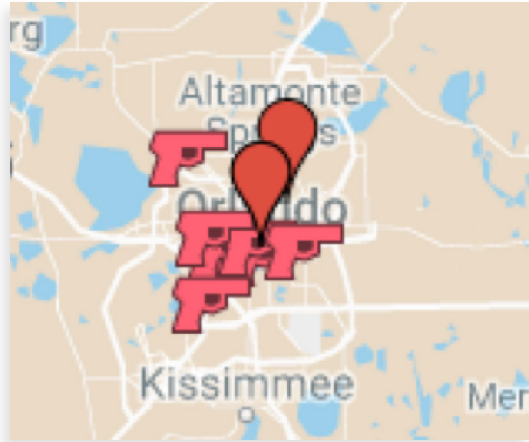
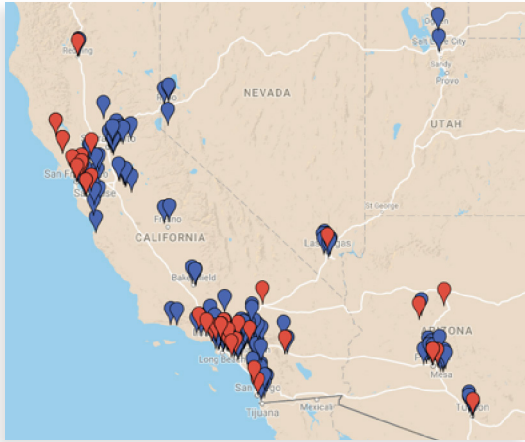
Over the course of 20 months, we collaborated with 323 partners and facilitated 432 screenings, as well as redirected more than 200 additional requests to our educational distributor, ro*co Films.

Through the screenings we facilitated, we estimate that the film reached 21,600 people in 46 states plus Washington, DC. More than 60% of these screenings were hosted by communities of faith, and most audiences were comprised of an even distribution of men and women between the ages of 36 and 65.

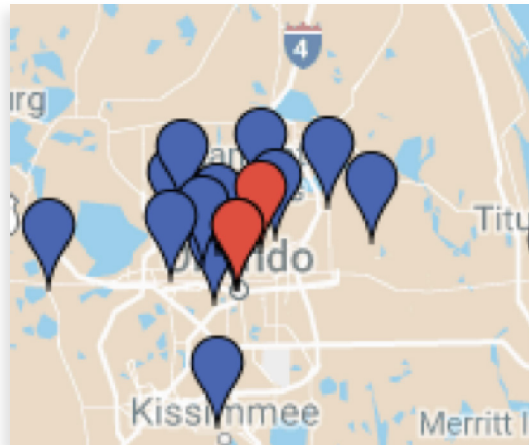
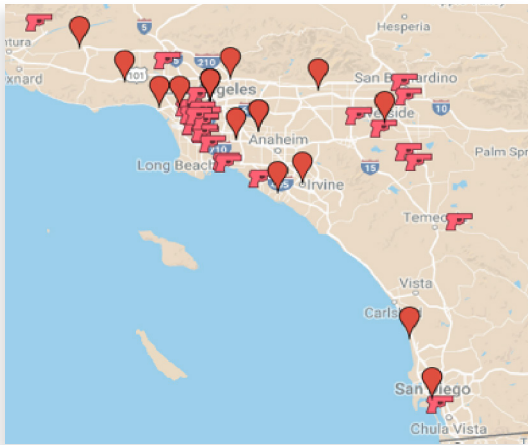
We focused many of our screenings in three strategic areas: locations with a high concentration of megachurches, a large number of mass shootings in the past two years, or one of our target congressional districts.



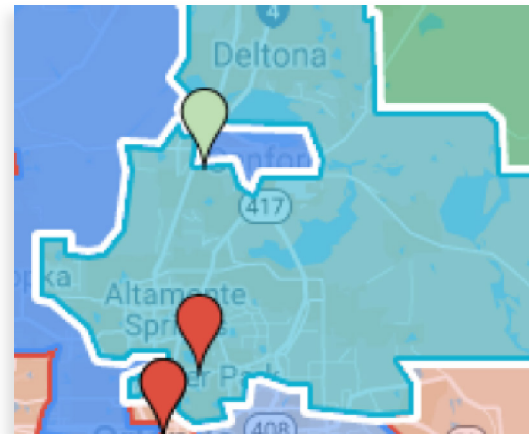
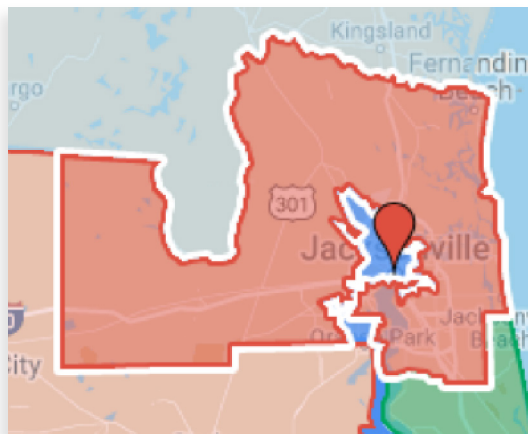
This map illustrates the location of 400+ *Armor of Light* screenings between April 2015 and November 2016.



Maps of screenings (represented in red) and megachurches (represented in blue). From left, California; Orlando, FL.



Maps of screenings (represented in red pins) and mass shootings (represented in red guns). From left, California; Orlando, FL.



Maps of screenings (represented in red pins) overlaid with two of our target congressional districts, FL-4 and FL-7.

Abigail Disney, Rob Schenck, and Lucy McBath attended 78 screenings, including the following events:

- **God and Guns**, a gun violence prevention training for faith leaders directly inspired by the film, hosted by Riverside Church and co-sponsored by Everytown for Gun Safety and Union Theological Seminary, among others. 100 faith leaders traveled from across the country to attend the two-day event, featuring an *Armor of Light* screening and discussion, keynote speeches from Lucy McBath and Congressional gun safety leader Rep. Jim Himes (D-CT), and plenary sessions to help attendees approach this issue through a theological lens and to offer concrete ways they can mobilize congregations to take action against gun violence. The event was covered in the press, including articles in the *New York Daily News* and *Religious News Service*. All attendees received resources from Sword of the Spirit, including the guide to ministering after a shooting, and one participant hosted a subsequent *Armor of Light* screening at her North Carolina church. Riverside continues to engage the group of attendees, most recently with a call to deliver sermons on gun violence.

In the words of one attendee, “At the God and Guns training I rubbed shoulders with fellow clergy and religious leaders. We spanned the spectrum, representing people who strongly support the 2nd amendment, people who want it amended, and people who want it reduced to an unrecognizable form of itself. We worshipped together, ate together, cried together, and left vowing to do something if it meant making a dent in the gun violence problem we have in this country.”

- **The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities Diversity Conference (CCCU)**, a gathering of more than 200 professors and administrators from 50 educational institutions, including Wheaton College and Moody Bible Institute, across 23 states. CCCU president Shirley Hoogstra moderated a lively and engaging post-film conversation, and all attendees received the Sword of the Spirit college toolkit. Educators from 13 schools signed up to learn more about hosting a screening and receive Sword of the Spirit devotionals. Attendees called the film “transformative” and the “highlight of my experience at the conference.”

The CCCU is an association of 181 Christian colleges and universities around the world, which enroll more 450,000 students each year and

represent more than 1.8 million alumni and nearly 30,000 faculty. They also hosted a private *Armor of Light* screening for colleagues in their Washington, DC office in October 2015, attended an additional screening in May 2016, and plan to meet with Rev. Schenck to continue this dialogue and partnership.

- **A bi-partisan screening in Washington, DC hosted by Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-CT)**, who represents Newtown, CT, and attended by 200 guests, including Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ) and Gun Violence Prevention Task Force Chairman Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA); staffers from the offices of Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT), Sen. Manchin (D-WV), and Rep. David Price (D-NC); State Department representatives; and NY State Assemblyman and chair of American Legislators for Gun Violence Prevention Brian Kavanagh. PBS reporter Deborah Potter from *Religion and Ethics NewsWeekly* moderated a post-film discussion.
- **A screening co-hosted by the Christian Cultural Center (CCC)**, New York City’s largest evangelical megachurch, followed by a panel discussion with the CCC’s Rev. AR Bernard and former NYC Deputy Mayor Rudy Washington, moderated by Peabody Award-winning journalist Jack Ford. The presence of Rev. Bernard, who served on Donald Trump’s evangelical advisory board, and former Deputy Mayor Washington, who worked in the Giuliani administration, helped us better reach our primary audience of conservative evangelicals, and Rev. Bernard told us that his “heart was changed” and the film “challenged us and the audience to think about this issue in new ways.”

The screening was attended by nearly 300 guests, who gave two standing ovations. Attendees wrote to us that this was a “very important event to the community” and that it “moved me to become more involved.” Others noted that “it was an awakening that we trust guns more than God,” “[the film] changed my perception of gun violence,” and “[I] never thought of the religious connection.” One guest felt the film made them better “better able to express my opinion” and another commented that they “only knew general info” before seeing it, but the film gave them “more of a perspective surrounding the NRA.” Many attendees reported that they plan to become more involved in gun violence prevention in their communities, by further educating themselves on the issue, starting dialogues with their families and friends, and volunteering their time with local groups.



Rev. Schenck, Lucy McBath, and Abigail Disney on a post-film panel

- **An event in Newtown, CT** including an *Armor of Light* screening and discussion attended by 100 people, including Rep. Elizabeth Esty and Sandy Hook school shooting survivors and first responders; a prayer service at the firehouse near the site of the shooting; a private dinner at the Newtown Congregational Church; and a Living Room Conversation with participants representing a variety of perspectives on gun violence. The post-film Q&A lasted for two hours, substantially longer than other similar discussions, and community members shared their personal stories about recovering from the trauma of the shooting. Sarah Clements, daughter of survivor Abby Clements, requested to bring the film to her college campus, and she hosted a screening several months later.
- Our partner Elmon Krupnik, Arizona National Guard's Chief of Chaplains, screened the film for **military chaplains at Scorpion Chapel in Arizona** and for **naval officers on the USS Fort McHenry LSD-43**.
- As noted above, we co-hosted a screening with the **Christian Cultural Center**, the largest evangelical megachurch in New York City with 37,000 members, and as part of our commitment to reaching across the aisle, we included Rudy Washington, the Republican former Deputy Mayor of NYC, on the panel discussion after the film.
- Pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell, spiritual advisor to former President George W. Bush, screened the film and hosted a Q&A at **Windsor Village United Methodist Chapel** in Houston, TX, with the Houston bishop in the audience. Pastor Caldwell later brought Abigail Disney, Rev. Schenck, and Lucy McBath on stage at the 19th Annual Prayer Explosion Conference, which more than 5,000 clergy attend annually.
- In order to reach a younger generation of evangelicals, we had both public and in-class screenings at **26 Christian colleges, universities, seminaries, or campus ministries**, including **Baylor University** (ranked the 5th most conservative school in the country), Emmanuel College, **Northern Seminary**, Carson Newman University, Simpson University, Northwest Nazarene University, Judson University, Vanguard University, and Gordon College.

Campaign Screenings

While screening the film was not the primary focus of our campaign, many evangelical or conservative partners did host *Armor of Light* screenings as a result of our relationship-building efforts, including the following examples:

- Pastors held several screenings at churches, including a screening at **Hosanna Chapel hosted by Pastor Garry Ansdell**, who drew an audience of more than 100 people when he included the film and discussion in his weekly worship service.

Some schools, like Biola University and Trinity Bible College, held multiple screenings over the past 18 months, and additional screenings are pending at several Christian schools, including **Fuller Theological Seminary**.

- **Hillside Missions Organization**, a group that trains young evangelical leaders to travel on Christian missions around the world, also screened the film, followed by a thorough discussion about its themes with Abigail Disney and Rev. Schenck. Two participants subsequently requested to bring the film to their college campuses.
- *The Armor of Light* won Best Documentary at **The Attic Film Festival**, a popular Christian film fest in Texas.

Screening hosts and audiences reported that the film profoundly impacted them and sent us the comments below:

- After our **bipartisan screening in Washington, DC**, attended by both Democratic and Republican members of Congress, guests told us:
 - “I was very pro-gun rights before this film. Now I am questioning it.”
 - “Gun violence is no longer just a political issue. It is a moral and Christian issue as well.”
 - “I had never considered the issue of guns, violence and life through the eyes of religion/ the clergy.”
 - “I am energized to come together with communities of faith to discuss/mobilize around gun violence.”
- A campus ministry leader at the **University of Texas** initially had concerns about discussing a controversial topic like gun safety with students but ultimately decided to move forward based on our inclusive approach to dialogue. After his screening, he reported to us that “People were open...Students were really wrestling to decide what they believed. Providing a space for students to really talk through this issue was very worthwhile.” He has set a date to host a second screening on campus in the spring and plans to work with other organizations to draw in more students.

The film inspired one student who attended this screening to create three works of art in response, including an installation with a golden gun above a

prayer kneeler, referencing Rev. Schenck and Lucy McBath’s question of whether some Christians worship guns instead of God.

- A screening host at **Church of the Resurrection** in Washington, DC told us, “Most conversations I have had about gun violence have been focused on political agendas, statistics, and history. While politics and history are of course relevant to the discussion, as Christians we should allow God’s Word and what we believe about Him to lead this conversation. Unfortunately, having that happen was a unique and new experience for me, thought-provoking, powerful, and important.”
- A professor at **Trinity Bible College** showed the film to her classes in advance of a larger, campus-wide screening. In her words, the students “thoroughly enjoyed watching the movie [and] recognized the connection between NRA and corruption due to association with the gun manufacturers and financial gain of all involved to push this agenda... There was very lively conversation and discussion in classes and around the campus as a whole; I suspect there are many who didn’t see it who are anxiously awaiting the previewing that is open to the whole campus.”
- A reverend from a **conservative church in Asheville, North Carolina** wrote about his screening, “I am on the side of stronger gun control and 99.99% of those in attendance were on the opposite side. I believe the film allowed for discussion as to why each of us believe what we do.” He plans to continue to use the film in the future.

Additional Screenings

While we focused on outreach to our primary audience of conservative evangelicals, we found that the film resonated profoundly with our secondary audience, which includes gun violence prevention advocacy groups and progressive Christian or interfaith groups. We received hundreds of screening requests from these organizations and partnered with these groups to enable them to use the film as a tool to advance their advocacy work, meet their goals with their own progressive supporters, and build bridges with conservatives or faith communities. We also created a 28-page discussion guide, as well as an event-planning guide, to help screening hosts successfully plan, promote, and execute their screenings and discussions, and we approved a special Moms Demand Action toolkit specifically for their members.

These screenings include events from the following categories:

Gun Safety Groups

- We partnered with **Faiths United Against Gun Violence** to offer free screenings to groups participating in their annual Sabbath Weekend, resulting in more than 180 events across the country. The organizer told us that they saw a “significant improvement” in Sabbath Weekend participation compared to previous years and that offering Armor screenings “was a huge help,” making them “the go-to organization to get access, which helped us make new friends and introduce us to the Sabbath Weekend.” When he saw the number of groups that signed up to participate, he said he “nearly cried.” As part of this partnership, the film was assigned to a class at **Hartford Seminary**, used by a group of 14 faith communities as a “key component” of their gun violence prevention work in the Northeast, and the inspiration behind a new gun violence study and action group in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Many organizations screened the film multiple times in a commitment to this dialogue, and one quarter of those who reported their anticipated attendance size expected more than 100 people at their events.

Faiths United and the **Newtown Alliance** also co-presented an *Armor of Light* screening at the **3rd Annual National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence** in Washington, DC, where we played the film to a “very sympathetic” audience of 175 people, primarily families impacted by gun violence.

- **Moms Demand Action** screened the film for more than 300 chapter leaders at their **Gun Sense University** training in New Mexico. The event featured an introduction from Lucy McBath, a panel discussion on the film, and a breakout session about the role of documentaries like *The Armor of Light* in gun violence prevention work, and attendees received an *Armor of Light* toolkit to help Moms leaders use the film to achieve their legislative and organizing goals.

In addition, 15 local Moms Demand Action chapters hosted screenings, as did Everytown initiatives like **Safe Nevada**. A Moms organizing manager hosted a screening in West Virginia in advance of an important primary and wrote to us that using the film “is a strategic way to make inroads into a variety of communities... West Virginia is a big gun state, so we knew the movie would serve as a

bridge into additional communities. It was helpful to have another voice—a conservative voice—talking about the need to think differently about guns in our midst.” Another Moms chapter plans to follow this lead and use the film as an outreach tool in conservative Delaware districts.

After our campaign ended, we learned that Moms Demand Action continues to use the *The Armor of Light* to support their lobbying efforts. In February 2017, a local Moms group in Florida screened the film at the University of South Florida in advance of a vote on a series of bills which would expand gun rights, including Stand Your Ground laws. Tampa Congresswoman Kathy Castor introduced the film, and it was followed by a panel discussion featuring a former assistant police chief, a local reverend, and community leaders. The next day, volunteers traveled with Moms leader to lobby legislators in Tallahassee. Additional Moms chapters in Alabama and Massachusetts have continued to screen the film as well.

- **Connecticut Against Gun Violence (CAGV)** hosted two screenings and post-film panels with **Rep. Jim Himes** and reverends from local churches. Lucy McBath attended one screening, and the host said her attendance was “instrumental in helping us achieve our goal, which was to continue to build our relationship with inner city communities.” 200 people attended, and the organizer noted that “it was good to see an audience that isn’t always that well represented in the gun violence prevention movement. They responded so well to the film and Lucy.” Rev. Schenck attended the other screening, which the host said was a “huge success—great turnout and a very engaging and thoughtful discussion... Most gratifying to me was the discussion afterwards among audience members and CAGV members about how to bring the film to other audiences.”

CAGV is currently in the process of organizing a third screening, for the CT state legislature, sponsored by State Rep. Robyn Porter, a gun violence prevention advocate who attended an earlier screening and asked to bring the film to her colleagues.

- In addition, the idea of forging partnerships with unlikely allies inspired one of the CAGV hosts to launch a bi-partisan forum about voting rights in Greenwich, CT, in advance of 2016 election. These screenings also strengthened our relationship with Rep. Himes, who championed the film’s message and Rev. Schenck’s work in the press.

- The University United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas held a screening to commemorate the **50th anniversary weekend of the University of Texas Tower shooting**.
- A screening host at **Aldersgate United Methodist Church** in Nixa, Missouri reported that the response was “overwhelmingly (and surprisingly) positive” and that attendees went through “the same type of ‘awakening’ as Rev. Schenck” after watching the film. The group was inspired to create a First Friday Film Fest for their community.
- Additional screenings were held by gun violence prevention groups including North Carolinians Against Gun Violence, Faith Coalition on Gun Violence in South Carolina, and Georgetown Against Gun Violence, among others.

Special Events

- We hosted special screenings for press, filmmakers, and other influencers in New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC in advance of the film’s theatrical premiere in October 2015. Film and television notables in attendance included Chris Hegedus and D.A. Pennebaker, Kathy Najimy, Mo Rocca, Kirby Dick, Amy Ziering, Diane Warren, Agnes Gund, Katja Herbers, Ash Zukerman, Cara Buono and Peter Thum, David France, and Tom Yellin.
- The Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington hosted a screening at the **National Cathedral** in Washington, DC and invited Rev. Schenck to give a sermon at their pulpit. National Cathedral leadership said that *The Armor of Light* was a “game-changer” for their congregation.
- *The Armor of Light* played at the influential **Aspen Ideas Festival**, followed by a panel discussion with Abigail Disney, Rev. Rob Schenck, and Lucy McBath. Rev. Schenck also gave a “Big Idea” speech about his suggestion for a micromovement called “My Neighbor, Myself,” which would help initiate meaningful connections between people who have differing beliefs.
- The **National Council of Churches Christian Unity Gathering**, attended annually by 350 top-level denomination officials, screened the film to a responsive crowd with “a lot of interest in denominations that would like to incorporate the film into their educational work.”
- **Soka Gakkai International USA** hosted a screening for more than 300 guests, who gave Abigail Disney

three standing ovations after the film. The screening host told us, “*The Armor of Light* documents a courageous journey of self-reflection, inner reformation, dialogue and sustained engagement, all rooted in our shared humanity... Witnessing the influence of dialogue, profound listening, and how a single individual’s experience can ignite the flame of justice and courage in the heart of another person, reconfirmed to me that we can bravely open our hearts, engage in productive conversations and make a conscious decision to discover common ground... This film shows that we can overcome, or at least aim to minimize, the polarization that dominates our national conversations while still addressing these important and complex issues that Americans and America must face and deal with... I honestly thought that we would have some push back and actively searched for it, but there was nothing but appreciation.”

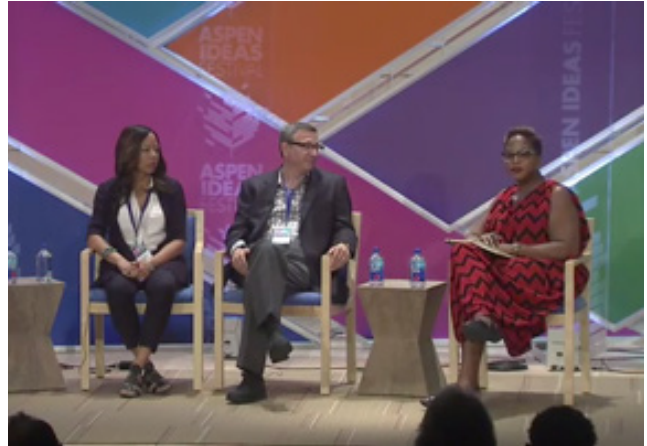
- Additional special event screenings were hosted by The Sheen Center, **New America, National Center for Civil and Human Rights**, The International Women’s Media Foundation, and **Mountaintop Auburn Gathering**.

Colleges

- **Yale University** hosted a screening attended by 150 people, and the host was moved by “how deeply our students were affected by the film. We had a small round table discussion the following Sunday, and the event really got our students thinking about the gun culture and gun violence in America, as well as the role that racism plays in systemic gun violence and fear. The students felt empowered by the film to go out and talk with their peers and their families about guns, which is something none of them had really done before.”
- After a screening at **Florida State University**, the site of a school shooting in 2014, one student told the host that he had been planned to get a concealed carry permit, but after watching the film, he decided not to get one. In his words, “One of the biggest things I am processing is the timing of everything—I was thinking about carrying and my personal feelings and the fear within our own culture just a week ago. I’m actually eager to talk to my father about this to see where he stands as a carrier.”
- Other school screening partners included **Harvard University, NYU, New School, and Santa Monica College**, where a shooter killed seven people in 2013.



Abigail Disney, Diane Warren, and Amy Ziering



Abigail Disney, Lucy McBath, and Rev. Schenck speak on a post-film panel moderated by PBS Vice President, News & Public Affairs, Marie Nelson

Indie Lens Pop-up Series

In the weeks leading up to the film's PBS broadcast, we partnered with Independent Television Service (ITVS) to facilitate 42 screenings across the country attended by approximately 1,644 people as part of their Indie Lens Pop-Up screening series. Events were hosted by libraries, PBS affiliates, colleges, and community groups, and we introduced these organizations to our outreach partners, who built new relationships with these groups and helped promote the events. These screenings included:

- **Carson Newman University** in Jefferson City, TN: The film played at a Christian college, where many students in the audience were in the ROTC program and came from homes with guns. The host reported a large attendance and good dialogue, and a student was inspired to write an article about how profoundly the film moved her.
- **KTTZ** in Lubbock, TX: Three local pastors who attended were moved to create a dialogue group to continue this conversation in their communities.
- **KCPT** in Kansas City, MO: The host convened an interfaith panel from representing four diverse faiths and backgrounds for discussion.

Feedback

We sent a feedback form to screening hosts, where we learned the following information about our audiences. Since we only received responses from a small percentage of hosts, please note that this is only a snapshot into the larger screenings campaign.

- 70% reported that the film changed their perspective on gun violence, and 20% of those respondents said they had never considered this issue through a biblical lens until seeing the film.
- After seeing the film, 92.86% said it was very likely that they would talk to a friend about this topic, and 7.14% said it was somewhat likely. No one responded that they would be unlikely to speak about it.
- Similarly, 100% of respondents said they would recommend the film to others, and 80% plan to screen it again in the future.
- 67% found the resource materials extremely or somewhat effective, while the remaining respondents did not use them. No one found the materials ineffective.
- 96% said the screening was able to help them reach their organization's goals.

Screening hosts and guests were highly engaged with the film, and sent us the following feedback:

- “In an age of escalating polarization and divisive rhetoric, it was heartening to witness people of different views engage in thoughtful dialogue, informed by civility, faith, charity and a mutual respect for our common humanity.” *Screening host, Sheen Center, New York, NY*
- “A gentleman who came to our screening shared with the group that, just like Rev. Rob Schenck in the film, if he were to bring up his feelings about questioning guns to his church community he would be ostracized. He could not tell us enough how much it meant to him to have a space to sit and talk about these issues as a community. He was visibly emotional at being able to share openly.” *Screening host, KLRU, Austin, TX*
- “I am a witness to a shooting, at New River Community College, and this town, home to Virginia Tech, has seen far more than its share of gun violence. I think, culturally, we’re good at talking about rights and logistics, but we’re not very adept at discussing the spiritual and moral costs of violence. For me, living through a school shooting has been such a deep, shattering spiritual crisis—and there’s just been no public way to talk about it. I think this movie could spark valuable conversations.” *Screening host, Blacksburg, VA*
- “This may have been the most impactful, compelling conversation we have ever had surrounding an Indie Lens Pop-Up screening. Our audience was blown away by the film’s production values, the unpredictable perspectives, and the new vocabulary it offers up for change. Our discussion was as long as the film.” *Screening host, Bud Werner Memorial Library, Steamboat Springs, CO*
- “This film was an excellent tool to engage with rural Americans. It created a forum for discussion that normally is not available to our station or rural East Tennesseans.” *Screening host, East Tennessee PBS, Knoxville, TN*
- “I grew up in a household with a rifle, which never seemed like a big deal to me. [But after watching the film] I began to speculate if we invest in these guns so strongly because we’re afraid. I’m sure we’re all familiar with the NRA’s favorite phrase, ‘The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.’ Where I might have once seen this as a truthful statement, I can now only see it as destructive. As Christians, the only weapon we have is love. Thank you for your moving work. I am forever grateful to those who push me to think outside of my comfort zone and create platforms to have these critical conversations.” *Student at Carson Newman University, Jefferson City, TN*
- “The movie clarified that this is an issue for people on both sides of the political world and for people of faith. I have never before experienced a film containing such depth, [including] profound insight into the culture of folks who never really think about guns as a potential problem—that was jaw-dropping for folks not in that culture. The audience was so impressed that they immediately started planning to share the film among other local churches.” *Screening host, Interfaith Center for Peace and Justice, Gettysburg, PA*
- “We need to relate to and listen with compassion to those we strongly disagree with.” *Screening guest, Troy, NY*
- “I wish every church in town would show this to their congregations.” *Screening guest, Steamboat Springs, CO*
- “I think the NRA rally scene was very thought-provoking for our participants—some people were surprised about the influence the NRA has in religion. This event was worthwhile because of all the recent stories about gun violence in America, and the possibilities that as a church we have in helping our congregation understand the relationship between faith and gun violence.” *Screening host, Madison Avenue Baptist Church, New York, NY*
- “[The film] helped solidify the need to take some action to reduce gun violence.” *Screening host, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Herndon, VA*
- “I had feared liberal screed and think the evening leaned, instead, in the direction of listening and trying to understand.” *Screening guest, Gloucester, MA*
- “We believe the film can be a useful resource for increasing awareness and expanding community involvement on issues related to gun violence. We envision using the film to generate local interfaith discussion groups as an important complement to our current work on gun violence prevention. Of the various films on gun violence that are readily available, this is one of the very few that has theology as a central focus. Thus it provides an excellent basis for looking at the issue from a perspective that is often ignored. Several clergy who



Abigail Disney, Lucy McBath, and Rev. Schenck greet the crowd after a *New America* screening

saw the film remarked that it should be shown to all clergy.” Screening host, *Wilmington Faiths Against Gun Violence, Wilmington, NC*

- “We had a great discussion on the role that guns have in your lives. That dialogue would never have happened if not for this screening and this discussion.” Screening host, *Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, MD, where the 44 attendees were K-12 students*
- “The materials inspired [our pastor] to preach. Even though at one level we were singing to the choir, there was a new energy raised, a focus, toward action. It is a beautiful and whole presentation of the difficult truths in which we find ourselves.” Screening host, *Fort Street Presbyterian Church, Detroit, MI*
- “The film’s even-handed and very human presentation of the inner struggles of the protagonist opened our eyes and softened our hearts. In our group, we acknowledge that most of our bias is against folks like Rob Schenck. His willingness to share the intimate details of his changing views helped us understand more deeply. We all admire Lucy tremendously and aspire to her level of dedication to helping others. We deeply appreciate the filmmaker(s) for a sensitive, balanced presentation that evoked a wish for genuine dialogue. Also appreciate the clear presentation of the “gun issue” as a spiritual/moral dilemma, not a political issue. We had a terrific discussion and will spread the word amongst our far-flung constituents to see this film and discuss it. Personally, I think every American of ANY faith should see it! Thanks to all of you for presenting the story with such grace, equanimity, and elegance.” Screening host, *Sravasti Abbey, Newport, WA*
- “We accompany Rev. Schenck on his pilgrimage through the complexities of this issue to arrive at a place that demands a reaction from each and every one of us. Every person in our group was more resolved than ever to approach the issue of gun violence in America with a renewed sense of vigor in opposition to it and a commitment to creative solutions underlying the associated societal issues.” Screening host, *Community of Sant’Egidio, Washington, DC*
- “The general consensus was that it was a challenging and excellent film. One woman summed up what I think a lot of people were feeling: ‘What can we do about this as a church?’” Screening host, *First Baptist Church, Lawrence, KS*
- “I opened our meeting last week with Rev. Schenck’s reflection on fear and we had a very good discussion afterwards. This film is unique in that it argues against the presence of guns in our society on a theological basis. This different perspective and [Rev. Schenck’s] unwavering commitment to fight for common sense interpretations of the 2nd Amendment makes the film unparalleled among gun violence prevention films. We are struggling on how to respond to gun violence in our immediate area, and the film helped us with our reflection. We tend to be left-leaning, activist Catholics but are not satisfied with the usual protesting. Whereas we still do all that, we felt the need for a spiritual and faith base to our actions. Thank you so much for helping us reflect on the issue of gun violence from a faith perspective.” Screening host, *Parishes Committed to Peace, Oak Park, IL*
- “Rev. Schenck’s documentary inspired me to take action in our churches and our communities.” Screening host, *West Chester, PA*

Materials Produced

We developed a **28-page discussion guide** designed to facilitate dialogue on a sensitive topic. With input from the Public Conversations Project (now Essential Partners), an organization that brings together opposing communities in productive dialogues about controversial issues, we produced a guide which helps people communicate respectfully, bridge divides, and find common ground. We included de-escalation strategies in case emotions ran high, as well as questions specifically crafted for different types of audiences. In addition, we created an **event-planning guide** to help hosts plan and promote their screenings, and identify logistical needs in advance of their events.

We also produced a **Sword of the Spirit college toolkit** specifically for students and faculty at Christian colleges, which included a guide to writing an op-ed in school newspapers; tips on how to bring this conversation to their friends, family, and church community; and essays to help people reconsider gun violence through a biblical lens.

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Finally, we produced **Fully Protected, an 89-page, six-week small group Bible study**, with additional **student resources for home study**. (Dr. Joel Hunter and Preston Sprinkle served as expert advisors.) This study covers the topics of faith, neighbors, forgiveness, protection, violence, and transformation, and delves deep into the Scriptural response to questions like, “What does the Bible say about self-protection?” and “Should Christians be prepared to kill?” While we distributed this to a small group of trusted faith leaders for use and feedback, we didn’t release it publicly or on the Sword of the Spirit website, and recommended a 2017 public launch to the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute.

FACILITATION TIPS

Introduction

Controversial topics make for excellent discussions. By their very nature, those same topics can evoke passionate exchanges as people experience deep emotions and defend strongly held beliefs. As a facilitator, you can channel that passion into productive dialogue by creating an atmosphere in which all participants feel safe, encouraged, and respected.

Your role is to shepherd a process that enables people to:

- share honestly and respectfully
- learn from one another
- stay on track
- use the available time in a purposeful manner
- work through any challenges that may arise

To accomplish that, you’ll want to remain calm, even (or especially) if tensions rise; speak with grace, even when you’re enforcing ground rules; and express interest in what every person has to say (not necessarily with words, but with your facial expressions and body language).

Facilitators should avoid:

- telling people what they will experience, think, or feel (this almost always provokes resistance).
- providing answers to participants or interpreting the film for them.
- taking sides or using language that might be heard as putting you on one side of the issue.
- making yourself the center of attention by responding to each comment or thanking people after they speak. This practice directs attention toward you and breaks the circle of the group, and could be perceived as unfair if you don’t thank everyone in the same way.
- asking your own questions (except for clarification) or making interpretive comments.
- speaking more than a little about your background or content expertise.

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Event-planning guide

What We Teach Our Children

Lucy McBeth’s attorney, John Phillips, recalls, “Growing up, the Second Amendment was somewhat sacred.” Later, another man says that guns are “in our DNA.” Growing up, what were you taught about guns? What did you learn about the meaning of the word “sacred”? Do you think it applies to guns?

One woman notes that “you don’t have to have the same conversations with a white male that you have to have with a black male. The fear is always in the back of your mind that your son may get shot...” What sorts of conversations about safety do you have with your children (or did you parents have with you)? What do you say to them about guns? What do you teach them about their role in creating a society that values life?






How is listening with your heart different than listening with your head? When you hear stories about people like Lucy, who have lost children to gun violence, do you tend to listen more with your heart or with your head? How about when you hear political arguments? Would your thinking change at all if you listened to grieving parents with your head and political leaders with your heart?



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FIVE WAYS TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

You saw *The Armor of Light*—now what? Check out these easy ways to bring the Christian conversation on gun violence to your home community.

-  **Talk to your friends and family about your experience with the film.**
Why did you find it compelling? What new questions did it raise?
-  **Meet with your pastor.**
Would he prayerfully consider addressing this issue from the pulpit? Ask him if this conversation is happening anywhere at your church. If so, how can you get involved?
-  **Start a Bible study at your church.**
Use *Sword of the Spirit's* small group study, available at SwordOfTheSpiritMinistry.org, and search the Scriptures for guidance.
-  **Host a screening in your home or church.**
Visit SwordOfTheSpiritMinistry.org to request a copy of *The Armor of Light* and materials to help plan and promote your event.
-  **Write an op-ed for your local or school newspaper.**
Your peers are affected by gun violence too. See "How To Write an Op-Ed" for helpful tips.

Conversation Tips

Gun violence is a sensitive subject that can elicit strong emotions. Here are suggestions on how to engage in a respectful, productive dialogue on the topic.




-  **Listen.**
Be slow to anger. Stay calm and truly consider what the other person has to say before responding.
-  **Ask questions.**
Why do they feel so strongly about this topic? Try to understand and meet them where they are.
-  **Acknowledge their stories and emotions.**
If someone shares their story with you, validate their experience. This helps create mutual respect and understanding.
-  **Do not let kindness and truth leave you.**
You are discussing this subject because you believe that directing the collective Christian compassion toward this issue would lead to a better world. Do not withhold compassion from other people in pursuit of that.

Sword of the Spirit provides resources to discuss the Christian response to gun violence.

HOW TO WRITE AN OP-ED

One of the best ways to share your thoughts about gun violence is to write an op-ed for your school newspaper. For inspiration, visit SwordOfTheSpiritMinistry.org to find essays and editorials written by pastors and faith leaders on this topic.

Figure out the nuts and bolts of your school newspaper:

-  **Read your school newspaper's op-ed section.**
Get a feel for the stories and style of writing they publish.
-  **Email the editor a short pitch.**
Find their email address online or in the paper. Tell the editor what you want to write, why your perspective is unique, and why their newspaper is the right outlet.
-  **Write your piece!**
If they accept, they'll give you a word count—typically not more than 700 words—and a deadline. Stick to their requirements.

Once you get the green light, use these tips to write your editorial:

- Identify your one main point.**
Don't get distracted by tangents. The reader will quickly get confused and stop reading, so focus on one strong argument.
- Make the issue of gun violence personal to your reader.**
How does it affect them now? Could it affect them in the future? Help them understand that this issue touches everyone.
- Explain why you are a credible source on this issue.**
Tell your audience why they should take your argument seriously. Are you in a unique position to understand it differently than others?
- Offer a balanced perspective.**
Identify a point where you might agree with people who feel differently on this issue. For instance, everyone is concerned with improving campus safety.

Consider these questions as you write.

What Scripture supports your answers?

- What is a greater presence in your life: faith or fear?
- Should Christians be prepared to kill?
- What does it mean to be pro-life?
- What does the Bible say about self-protection?
- What does Jesus say about how we are to treat our neighbor—and our enemies? What would that look like in today's world?

Related Scripture

- "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." (Psalm 20:7)
- "And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.'" (Matthew 26:51-53)

Sword of the Spirit college toolkit



Session 1: Faith

INTRODUCTION

At the first session, open with prayer.

Before we dive into our study, let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for giving us Your Word. We want to learn to live in ways that please You and that show Your goodness to others. We're asking You now for Your wisdom. We know that You promise to give us Your wisdom when we ask, and so we thank You for it. We ask that You guide our thoughts, our words, and our time together. In Jesus' name, amen.

Next, welcome the members of your group and help everyone get to know each other.

Please introduce yourself by saying your name and your favorite food.

Introduce the study.

The goal of this study is to discover what the Bible says about our faith in God, our attitudes toward others, and our response as Christians to gun violence in our society—and then to help us apply God's Word to these areas of our lives.

The six topics we will cover are Faith, Neighbors, Forgiveness, Protection, Violence, and Transformation.

Prepare to be challenged, to discuss deeply, and to come away with a biblical understanding that we hope will result in greater reliance on Christ, greater faith, and greater spiritual fruit in our lives!

Any Scripture quoted in this study will be taken from the New King James Version. If you would rather use another version, biblegateway.com is a good source.

Read aloud the Discussion Guidelines from the Facilitator Tips section and ensure all group members feel comfortable with the conversation framework.

ASKING THE QUESTION

10 minutes

Session 1: Faith

Today's session is about faith—not faith in some abstract, out-there sense, but specifically faith in contrast to fear. We'll explore how living a life founded in faith is different from living a life based in fear.

We'll begin by talking about reasons to trust God. Then we'll discuss fear and how fear operates. Last, we'll think and talk together about the ways our faith in God our Savior and Protector can lead us into a life that is not fear-based, but faith-based.

Words to Remember

Read this aloud:

In every session, we will consider one or two Bible passages that will help frame our discussion. This session's Words to Remember are:

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7

Form Groups

To make sure we all get a chance to talk, let's form smaller groups. First, find another person who is wearing the same color as you. If you're wearing more than one color, choose one color and call it out until you find someone who is wearing that color or saying that color name.

Give group members one minute for this. If your group is large enough that it would help to create discussion groups of four to six, then add the following:

Now, find another pair or trio wearing the same color as you. Then move to a place where your discussion group can sit together comfortably.

Give people one more minute to seat themselves in these groups.

Question of the Day

Every session features a Question of the Day to help participants focus on the week's theme. Group members can consider this throughout the session but do not need to answer aloud.

Our Question of the Day is:

How is living a life based in faith different from living a life based in fear?

Rapid Reponse to Mass Shootings

Throughout *The Armor of Light* campaign, several mass shootings took place across the country. In each instance, our team mobilized to produce rapid response plans unique to the situation and utilized our digital and film assets to speak out against the violence.

Shooting at AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina; Nine Parishioners Killed

Date

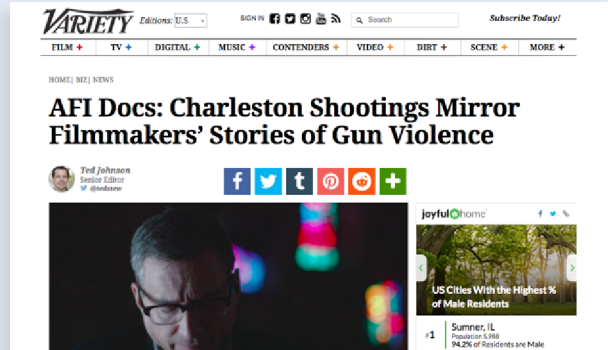
6/17/15

Response

Rev. Schenck and Lucy McBath immediately traveled to Charleston and held a prayer service together outside the church where the shooting took place. From there, Rev. Schenck traveled to the AFI Docs film festival for a screening of *The Armor of Light*, where he spoke about his experiences in Charleston and witnessing the community's response to this tragedy. Festival press covered his comments in *Variety* and *RogerEbert.com*:

“Though his activism has caused him to lose significant financial support, he has “come to the conclusion that some things are worth the cost,” and his recent visit to Charleston only affirmed his convictions. An unbridled “love fest” was taking place in the church in the wake of the tragedy. “No one told me that they wished there had been a gun fight,” Schenck replied, while visibly moved.”

—Matt Fagerholm, *RogerEbert.com*



Shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon; Eight Students and One Professor Killed

Date

10/1/15

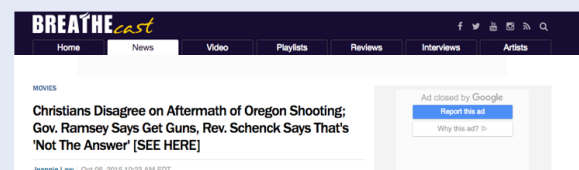
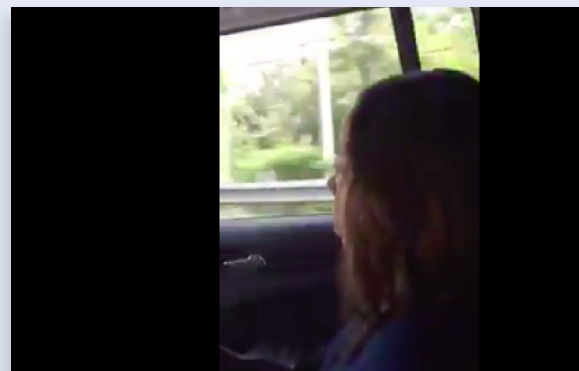
Response

Rev. Schenck called on his fellow pastors to preach about gun violence in their Sunday sermons. Our team posted a pop-up on the Armor of Light website that directed visitors to a page with his call to action, as well as pastoral resources, including videos and transcripts of related sermons.

In addition, we sent out two press releases to Christian and secular press—one covered Rev. Schenck’s call for a gun violence “Sermon Sunday” and the resources available on our website, and the second included Rev. Schenck’s response to Tennessee Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey’s call for Christians to arm themselves. This garnered press in *Fox Business News*, *Washington Post*, the Christian outlet *Breathecast*, and CNN International’s *Amanpour*, and helped establish Rev. Schenck as the go-to evangelical voice against gun violence.

Lucy McBath’s Facebook Live

On social media, we released a video of Lucy McBath responding in real time to the news about the shooting, which received 11,000 views.



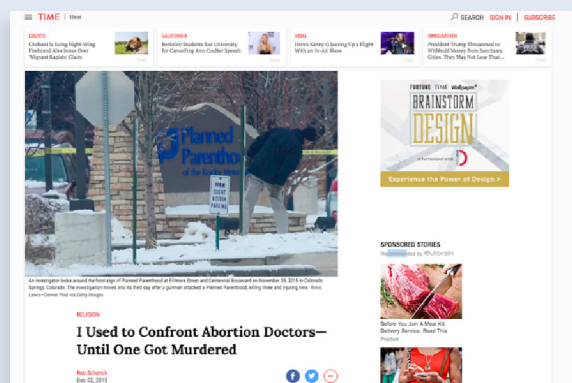
Shooting at Planned Parenthood in Colorado Springs; Three People Killed

Date

11/27/15

Response

Rev. Schenck wrote an op-ed, "I Used to Confront Abortion Doctors—Until One Got Murdered," which we placed in *Time*. The link was shared widely, including by Planned Parenthood and NARAL chapters.



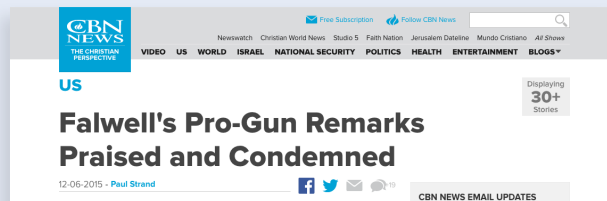
Mass Shooting in San Bernardino, California; 14 People Killed

Date

12/2/15

Response

When Jerry Falwell Jr. called for Christians to arm themselves, Rev. Schenck sent out a press release condemning these remarks, and later wrote a *Washington Post* op-ed reinforcing his position. Christian Broadcasting Network and other outlets covered Rev. Schenck's statement, again solidifying him as a leading evangelical Christian speaking out against guns.



Mass Shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida; 49 People Killed

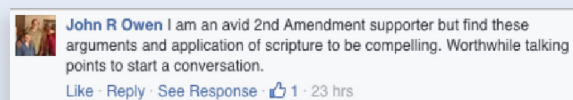
Date

6/12/16

Response

Sword of the Spirit released a video of Rev. Schenck outlining a Christian response to the shooting, our most viewed article, "A Conservative Gun Owner on the Christian Response to the Orlando Mass Shooting."

After Rev. Schenck released his video, Kevin Wright, a minister at New York City's progressive Riverside Church, wrote in *Huffington Post* that we need more Christians like Rev. Schenck "to create a world that



A Facebook commenter responds to the article

honors and protects all lives." He detailed Rev. Schenck's beliefs and cited *The Armor of Light* as an "award-winning documentary" chronicling his journey.

PBS also encouraged stations to re-air *The Armor of Light* and subsequent town hall, which was filmed in Orlando, and our team ran a complementary social media campaign asking people to tweet at their local PBS stations supporting an additional broadcast. It was re-aired at least 20 times, including a prime time showing in Dallas, which was the fifth most watched program in that market's time slot.

PART III

Looking Ahead

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned span both strategic and tactical choices affecting the campaign scope and size, as well as budget allocation.

Strategy

Audience Perceptions

When films challenge their audience on one of their core beliefs, critics will focus on the background of the filmmaker, who in this case was an outsider. Given the insular nature of evangelicals, we decided to create a separate, Christian-specific brand to distribute theological resources for the target audiences.

Smaller over a Large Coalition to Start

Some of our closest partnerships came from the group of 12 pastors and influencers who attended our Disneyland Club 33 dinner with their spouses. We found that in-person meetings, where pastors could receive support from our team and from each other, were most effective as they began to explore and develop a new perspective on a controversial issue. Though we surpassed our goal of 25 national pastor endorsements, collaborating with 5 pastors actively working with their congregations could produce greater learnings and influence than a list of nationally prominent names.

As Rev. Schenck continues to build these relationships, we recommend that he chooses a smaller number—a subset of this pre-existing group who are in the same geographical area—to meet with more frequently and help create a community that is motivated to continue acting in ways consistent with our message even when he is not physically present. The smaller the number, the more deeply he can engage with them, earn their trust, and build relationships among them. If they receive pressure from pro-gun evangelicals in the future, they'll be more likely to stand strong together.

Going for Smaller Churches

After mapping our segmented pastor lists three months into our campaign, we found that the small- to medium-

sized churches (an average membership of 400) had greater numbers of engagement. Our focus on larger megachurches prioritized size over the potential for engagement to test our model and messages.

Begin with Targeting Research

The state and district level targeting began midway through the campaign, after the theatrical release. As a result, the majority of our screenings, Club 33 pastors, and local press coverage were in blue districts, and our social media audience was concentrated among New York and Los Angeles.

Tactics

Digital Ads

The benefit of the digital ad firms is they have access to voter file and issue polling that they can deploy on Facebook, across media properties, and targeted to specific buildings (i.e. churches). Though our digital ads were highly targeted, the click-through and conversation on both social media and website was a 1:10 payoff compared to our own Facebook targeting and advertising on evangelical Christian outlets. A mixed approach could include using a freelance database expert to upload the voter file to Facebook and create a custom audience augmented with the relevant built-in targeting options. A digital vendor could be useful for location-specific ads, such as for an audience that congregates in a centralized location.

Social Media

After the PBS broadcast, we found 'promoting our page' with the stunning film photography of Jeff Hutchens was extremely successful in gaining up to 2,000 followers per week. We should have taken that approach for the lead-up, rather than sharegraphic posts. We invested in an expensive social listening tool, NUVI, which required a higher degree of time to learn and refine the results to maximize its potential and the cost. The services we demoed did not tailor their algorithms to political speech, and after the campaign, we learned of a niche group of two vendors that do.



The Future

From its inception, our campaign was designed to be sustainable beyond our involvement, and Rev. Schenck is in the process of establishing The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute (TDBI), a new faith-based non-profit organization that will focus exclusively on the issue of gun culture, particularly within the evangelical church, for its first three to five years, with the goal of gradually separating the evangelical electorate from the NRA's influence.

We have established the foundation for TDBI, including an online identity, highly engaged email list, and social media following. TDBI will launch with theological resources for pastors, lay leaders, students, and congregants, as well as the basis of a coalition of national faith leaders and pastors. We have transferred all relevant materials to TDBI so they can begin to move forward with a solid strategy.

We also met with the future staff of TDBI to deliver our recommendations as they move forward. First, we suggested that TDBI launch the small group Bible

study that we produced as their first major project. The additional faith leaders who have expressed support or worked with us over the past two years could share the small group study on social media, given their large reach; contact other key pastors on Rev. Schenck's behalf; write articles on the topic for *Sword of the Spirit* or publications like *Pastors.com*; implement the small group study at their churches; and continue to tell other pastors about this work.

We also outlined one of our target districts in Florida, where we have an influential ally, Dr. Joel Hunter, and a high concentration of pastors who regularly open our devotionals and e-blasts, as the most strategic place to continue in-person, on-the-ground engagement with a small group of pastors. This activity could include hosting monthly prayer breakfasts, implementing the small group study at their churches, setting up ministries to serve gun violence survivors, and eventually undergoing training to learn how to take action and mobilize others.

Attachments

Press

Press Objectives

Because the film and campaign centered on reframing the gun debate, press outreach was a fundamental tactic to plant the seeds for this change. Lasting reframing campaigns require years—not months—for success, and our first steps showed concrete movement in the depth, width, and substance of coverage.

From April 2015 to November 2016, our objectives were the following.

1. Obtain film coverage in the national, conservative, and Christian press.
2. Inject a pro-life discussion into the gun debate.
3. Question evangelicals' close relationship with the gun lobby.
4. Establish Rev. Schenck and Lucy McBath as expert spokespeople questioning the morality of American gun culture.

Coverage Outcomes

The coverage of the film's release consistently included the narratives listed above, either as a full article or simply reiterating the story summary for a screening or theatrical announcement. **The coverage was overwhelmingly positive at 93.5%.** We reached coverage across local, national, industry, and religious press from left, moderate, and conservative outlets. The total placements were 488, of which nine were op-eds.

Secured coverage in:

The New York Times

The Washington Post

Los Angeles Times

theguardian

VANITY FAIR

FOX
BUSINESS

CNN
INTERNATIONAL

THE DAILY
BEAST

TIME

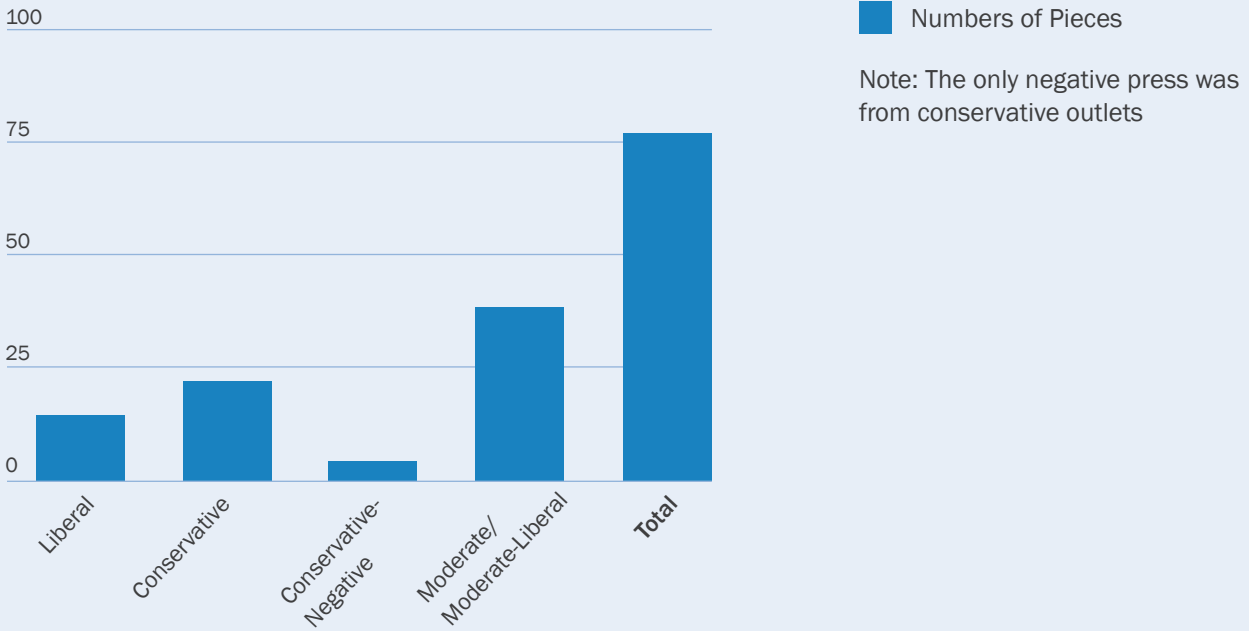
VARIETY

DEADLINE.com

THE
Hollywood
REPORTER

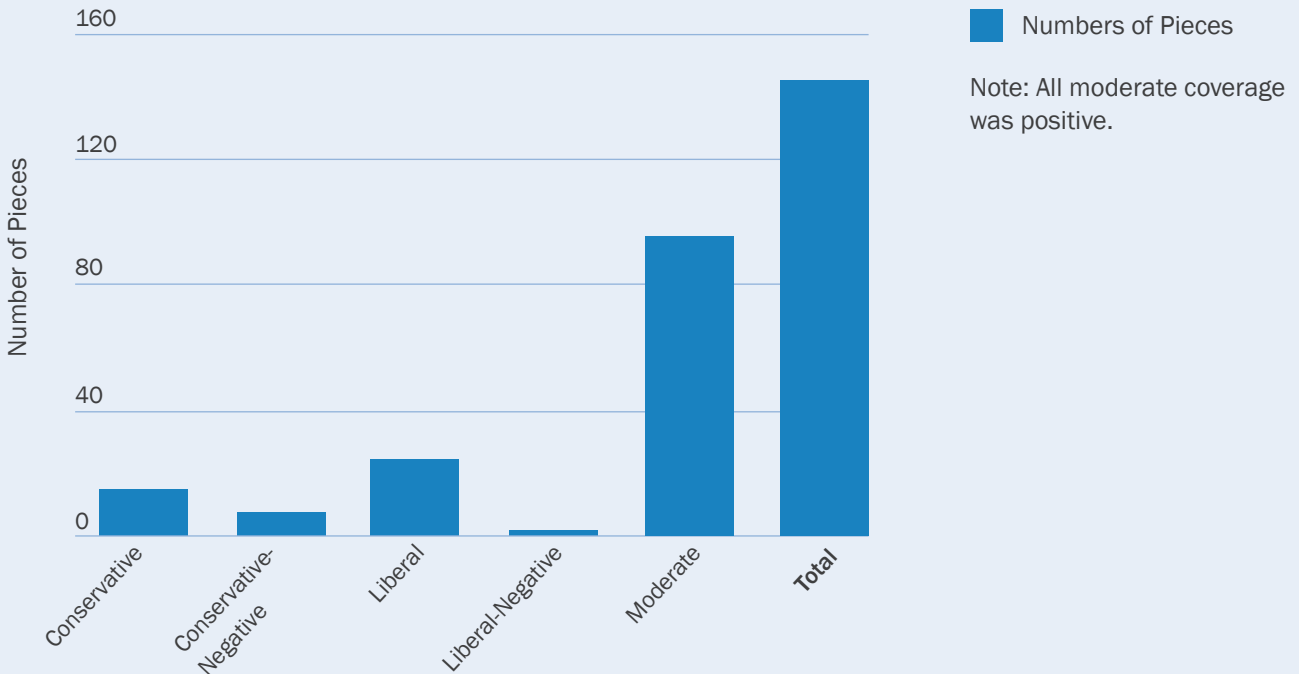
Religious Press Coverage

April 2015 - November 2016



National Press Coverage

April 2015 - November 2016



Impact

Moving from the Film Coverage to the Broader Issues & Champions

Key press objectives were first to move the narrative from the film’s release to the broader issue of the gun debate, as well as develop Rev. Schenck and Lucy McBath as spokespeople for a faith-based voices.

Broader Issue Coverage

The objective was to inject in press narratives the pro-life / pro-gun contradiction, the role of the Church in responding to gun violence, and a question about the relationship of evangelicals to the gun lobby and American gun culture.

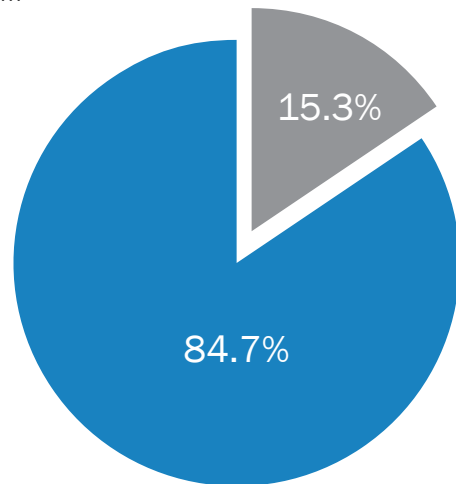
- **Initial Issue Coverage:** After starting the campaign in April 2015, the first story came in September 2015 with a liberal Evangelicals for Social Action blog publishing, “The American Faith in Violence: From Abortion Rights to Gun Rights.” In the first week of the theatrical rollout in October 2015, the first national piece surprisingly came from Cosmopolitan with “How Can You Call Yourself ‘Pro-Life’ if You Do Nothing About Gun Violence” by Jill Filipovic, an established political columnist.
- **Subsequent Issue Coverage:** Other issue-based coverage related to our key messages occurred in bursts during key campaign and issue events, including: the theatrical release (Oct-Nov 2015), PBS broadcast (May 2016,) the presidential election (Oct-Nov 2016), and major gun violence incidents, such as the Colorado Springs, Umpqua, AME Charleston Church, San Bernardino, and Orlando mass shootings.

A standout of this coverage is Rep. Jim Himes’ (D-CT) championing of the film and its message. He spoke to Slate about the Congressional response to the Orlando shooting in June 2016 and said Rob influenced him to begin publicly using moral and

theological language to describe the gun violence epidemic, including a series of widely-shared tweets. “I’ve spent eight years in Congress avoiding moral language... But more and more, we’re in a world where leaders have to speak up, and speak in strong moral terms. Part of why I chose to use the language I did last night is that for some of these folks, you need to use almost Biblical language. I’ve been profoundly influenced—you’ll get a kick out of this, I’m a New England Democrat—but I’ve been profoundly influenced by Rev. Rob Schenck, the leader of a very aggressive pro-life movement. He comes out of that tradition of evangelical activism. He had an epiphany where he said there’s no way on God’s green earth that Jesus Christ, if we have any understanding of what he stood for, would tolerate what the Congress is complicit in. There’s a wonderful movie—if you haven’t seen it already you’ve got to see it, called *The Armor of Light*—and it’s how I met Rob, which traced his journey to this point. He says to his white Southern evangelicals, “This can’t possibly be what Jesus wants us to do.” So I’ve been profoundly influenced by this guy with whom I share almost nothing politically and his moral courage. I think it’s going to be strong moral language that wakes Congress from its torpor.”

Press Angle: April 2015 - November 2016

- Issue: Guns & God/Pro-life/Pro-Gun
- Film



Rep. Himes continued in a similar vein on NPR's All Things Considered: "What I do think we can do is we can start talking about this, particularly as Democrats. You know, we tend to use very technocratic policy language. We've got to start talking about this differently. I mean, let's use religious terminology. You know, let's ask the question. If Jesus Christ appeared in front of us tomorrow and this - you know, the man who said blessed are the peacemakers, the man who said turn the other cheek - you think he'd sign on for the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun? I want to hear my evangelical friends answer that question. where he said that if Jesus was here today, he would not encourage gun violence."

Rep. Himes was recognized widely as an important voice speaking out against gun violence—he shouted at Rep. Paul Ryan during the House of Representatives' moment of silence for the Orlando victims, then walked out in protest when Rep. Ryan did not allow consideration of gun violence prevention bills—so his adoption of the campaign's talking points significantly helped disseminate our message. Rep. Himes' wife, Mary, also listed *Armor of Light* as her favorite film of 2015 in their Christmas card, reaching Rep. Himes' colleagues and others with legislative influence.

- **The Film as the Lede for a Larger Story:** Other issue coverage used the film as the lede or an example to discuss the biblical view of violence/guns, such as "God, the Gospel, and a Gun" for a millennial online magazine Odyssey.

Creating Faith-based Champions on Guns in the Press

We sought to create Rev. Schenck and Lucy McBath as issue champions with the press seeking their comments after shootings or times when the Church confronted issues of gun culture and gun violence.

Rev. Schenck:

- Published 7 op-eds in national mainstream and religious press including: *The Washington Post*, *TIME*, *The Daily Beast*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Christian Post*, *Patheos*, and *Sojourners*. At times, these op-eds caused a reaction in the conservative press. For example, his Washington Post op-ed, "I'm an Evangelical Preacher. You Can't Be Pro-life and Pro-Gun" in December 2016 attracted 1200 comments, and conservative news outlet The Stream published a response titled "I Disagree with Rob Schenck. You Can and Should Be Pro-Life and Pro-Self Defense." Rev. Schenck has also been quoted in response to issues related to firing ranges at Christian churches and colleges, as well as pastors using firearms at the pulpit and in their communities. Indeed, even after our campaign wrapped, he continues to be the go-to evangelical source for speaking about gun violence, and his perspective has become only more sought-after and relevant following the 2016 presidential election. In January 2017, he was the subject of a syndicated story in Deseret News: "What pastors, professional athletes and other leaders can do to heal divides," and in May 2017, the Christian Broadcasting Network interviewed him on camera as an expert and wrote, "Pastor Rob Schenck of Faith and Action is a mainstay in the fight against gun violence."

Lucy McBath:

- Appeared in numerous national, African-American, and faith press in various capacities as the spokesperson for the film as well as Moms Demand Action, Everytown for Gun Safety, Mothers of the Movement, the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign. She has written op-eds and provided comment in local and national press on Stand Your Ground laws and mass shootings. She was honored in the Mother's Day Special "Dear Mama" by Secretary Hillary Clinton in May 2016 and was a keynote speaker at the Essence Festival.

Selected quotes:

- “ Disney’s film turns into a brilliant exploration of the appeal that firearms have for many white religious conservatives in America, and how that appeal is, in many ways, in direct conflict with their supposed beliefs. “So you need Jesus...and the Gospel...and a sidearm?” Schenck asks a pro-gun man of faith. The bravery and civility that Schenck exudes during these confrontations is astonishing to behold. ”
- RogerEbert.com*
- “ Schenck’s journey is a lesson to everyone whose politics are even partially based on knee-jerk us-vs.-them sentimentality — so, everyone, pretty much. So go see it. You don’t have to change your mind; you just have to open it a little. ”
- Washington Post*
- “ At this point in time, it seems as if guns and evangelical Christians are the new baseball and apple pie. So to see, in the new documentary, *The Armor of Light*, evangelical leader Rob Schenck tackle this problematic relationship head-on is as inspiring as his opponents are frustrating. ”
- Patheos*
- “ I can’t imagine anyone, regardless of their beliefs, leaving the theater without something to seriously consider. And though *The Armor of Light* is undeniably well-made and compelling, what startled me most is its incredibly sensitive and nuanced portrayal of Schenck and other evangelicals with whom he interacts. ”
- Christianity Today*
- “ This is a powerful film, all the more so because it struggles with its subjects to find common cause and because it shows compassion and respect for the sincerity and goodwill of all. ”
- Beliefnet*
- “ Dramatically compelling... Mr. Schenck’s colloquies with gun-friendly conservative peers and his voice-over commentary hit the mark. ”
- New York Times*
- “ Emotionally charged, theologically astute... Disney’s work is most galvanizing at the level of discussion and argumentation; it’s a pleasure simply to hear thoughtful, eloquent men and women willing to challenge some of their religion’s most popular tenets in search of deeper, less self-serving truths. ”
- Variety*
- “ Compelling... It’s a vital colloquy on whether we shape our lives through fear or with love. ”
- Los Angeles Times*
- “ Heart-wrenching...Compelling...Schenck sets out to get both sides of the argument, spanning across deep party lines to find common ground. The film emphasizes that many white evangelicals are members of the National Rifle Association... His journey to find the moral strength to preach about the growing toll of gun violence in America is nerve-racking and captivating as we see him argue with his own constituents in an effort to be true to his convictions. On the quest to get his peers to inform their political views of the Second Amendment with his understanding of biblical teaching, Schenck tastefully introduces a subject that, in all forms, needs delicate consideration. His difficult journey represents both sides of the coin and reveals that both sides believe wholeheartedly in what they stand for. ”
- The Christian Post*



Lynn Sherr, Abigail Disney, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Maria Cuomo-Cole, and Alexandra Pelosi

Additional Press Notes

Press Events

In September 2015, influencers Peggy Siegal and Maria Cuomo-Cole co-hosted journalists and filmmakers at a luncheon to promote the film. Nancy and Alexandra Pelosi, Eric Alterman, and Lynn Sherr were among the attendees, and the event garnered coverage in *Gawker*, *Huffington Post*, and *Page Six*.

Op-Doc

Abigail Disney and *The Armor of Light*'s co-director Kathleen Hughes directed and produced a seven-minute New York Times Op-Doc, "Would Jesus Wear a Sidearm?" as a companion to the feature documentary. In the short film, Rev. Schenck explored the Republican Party's political chokehold on the evangelical community. The video was widely shared and received nearly 400 comments on the website alone.

Dove Foundation Seal

The Dove Foundation, a nonprofit that reviews films on their adherence to Judeo-Christian values, awarded *The Armor of Light* its Faith-Based Seal, endorsing the film's content for family audiences. This seal was particularly meaningful for our campaign, as the Dove Foundation is a trusted source for evangelical Christians and is recognized by more than 50 million Americans.

Their review also spoke highly of the film: "*The Armor of Light* is a powerful film that examines a contemporary problem... This documentary will force the viewer to



NY Post coverage of the Sarah Palin controversy

examine his/her own beliefs and agree that, perhaps, some changes in current policies may be necessary... [It] does a terrific job in asking, "Have Christians gotten away from *the Armor of Light* for their protection?"

Sarah Palin Controversy

As part of our partnership with the faith-focused website Patheos, their bloggers were given advance access to screen the film and were encouraged to write reviews, regardless of their perspective on the issue. While this resulted in a number of thoughtful, theologically in-depth pieces, it also opened the door to criticism from Nancy French, Sarah and Bristol Palin's ghostwriter, who condemned Rev. Schenck and wrote that the movie "misses the mark." (Her husband, prominent conservative writer David French, also panned the film in the *National Review*, despite not having seen it.)

The next day, Rev. Schenck posted a response on Patheos clarifying "what I believe about Christians and guns and why I believe it." But when Salon posted a clip from the film featuring Sarah Palin, the controversy kicked back up, and Bristol Palin blogged on Patheos that the film was "one-sided propaganda" from a "pro-abortion producer." Sarah Palin followed suit and posted on Facebook that she "couldn't be prouder" that Rev. Schenck criticized her, alongside photos of Palin holding guns.

Several outlets, including Raw Story, Huffington Post, NY Post, and The Guardian covered the rift, and other Patheos bloggers responded, including a vice president at the company who wrote an open letter to Sarah Palin, calling on her to change her tone and rhetoric.

Selected Reviews

“ Far beyond the courage of its convictions, *The Armor of Light* also has the intelligence and grace to embrace its contradictions. It’s a beautiful, conflicted piece of work. ”

—*Vulture*

“ As a proud gun owner and Second Amendment supporter, I was prepared to be offended and defensive. However, the film was not aimed at my rights or regulations. The film asks for a conversation about a culture of fear that creates the hunger to pack a gun and be ready to put somebody down. Reverend Schenck seems to be saying that being a Christian and being okay with the level of gun violence in this country is not logical or theological... Gandhi said, ‘An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.’ If you are not yet blind, you might want to holster your weapon and see this movie. I still have my gun, but this movie opened my eyes, and for that reason I must give it 4 1/2 stars out of 5. ”

—*Bash Movies*

“ An impressive directorial debut...Exploring the issue of whether being pro-life and pro-gun are mutually compatible, *The Armor of Light* puts a human face on the perpetually divisive topic... It emerges as a thoughtful and moving portrait of a man who has risked his status and career to publicly fight for his convictions. Watching him agonize over his decision—at one point he admits to fearing for his life—makes for compelling real-life drama. ”

—*The Hollywood Reporter*

“ Daring... Inspiring. ”

—*Indiewire*

“ *The Armor Of Light* offers a look at the issue of gun control with fresh eyes... Surely, everyone involved in making *The Armor Of Light* was hoping to effect change in the conversation around gun control, but what makes the film more than a political pamphlet is the integrity and the curiosity with which directors Abigail Disney and Kathleen Hughes approach the topic of faith... In the images there is a respectful piety. The interviews are beautifully lit and the subjects are given the time to speak with personality, humor and complexity about their beliefs, whether those beliefs are secular or religious... This is not an us-versus-them approach to a political goal, the way it might have been if this film had been made by a firebrand filmmaker like Michael Moore. Instead, *The Armor Of Light* is a film that attempts to understand and appreciate the full humanity of its subjects. “There are no simple answers,” Schenck offers at one moment, and the film around him is a testament to honoring complex thought and conflicting ideas. It occurred to me while watching *The Armor Of Light* how rare it is to watch an argument where every party is listening to each other... I went into *The Armor Of Light* expecting preaching, but if the film spends some time at the pulpit, it’s the time it spends listening that lingers. ”

—*The Daily Beast*

“ Evangelical minister Rob Schenck... proves to be an intelligent, thoughtful subject in this well-made documentary. Schenck’s short sermon, near the end, will stay with you. So will this film. ”

—*SF Gate*

“ *The Armor of Light* is a fascinating watch because of how cognitively dissonant it can be at times. No matter where one falls on the political spectrum, there’s a strong chance of finding both agreement and disagreement with the film’s main characters. ”

—*Birth.Movies.Death*

“ Abigail Disney’s directing debut which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival is a riveting look at how to stop gun violence... Disney looks at how change is possible when people decide to actually listen to each other and find not what they disagree about but what they have in common... *The Armor of Light* shows a path to bridging the political gap between people of conscience. ”

—*Reel Deal*

“ Ultimately, the film is a beautiful portrait of two exceptionally courageous people who are following what they believe is right, even if it is often an unpopular stance. Regardless of your opinion on this issue, I highly recommend *The Armor of Light*. ”

—*Reel Life with Jane*

“ What works so exceptionally well about this film is that it is thoroughly articulated through the theology of evangelical Christianity. What also works exceptionally well is that the film is more of a story and a thought piece. It doesn’t offer prescriptive steps one through five of how to solve gun violence in America. Some might be disappointed that it doesn’t. But I think that if Schenck gave us those prescriptive solutions, he would be doing the hard work for us. Instead, I think he wants us to get into the Scriptures, to get on our knees, and to honestly challenge ourselves and ask ourselves hard questions. He wants us to wrestle with the issue of guns in our lives and ask God what He is calling us to do... *The Armor of Light* doesn’t give us all the answers. But it sure raises the questions in a morally compelling, respectful-of-Christianity manner. Every Christian who owns a gun or knows someone who does should be willing to set preconceived ideas aside and just sit down and give it a listen. ”

—*Patheos*

Selected Clips

The New York Times

Abigail Disney Builds a Dialogue on Gun Control

Snapshot
By ANDREW BARNES OCT. 21, 2015



In today's click-bait media culture, "The Armor of Light," a new documentary, could be provocatively summarized like this: Disney takes on gun-loving evangelicals.

But "The Armor of Light" tries to avoid quick judgments. The Disney in this instance is not the entertainment conglomerate but Abigail Disney, an independent filmmaker who happens to be Walt Disney's grandniece. And the liberal Ms. Disney, is not exactly trying to spar with religious conservatives or the National Rifle Association. She is attempting to initiate change through a question:

"How is it possible," she asks, "to be both pro-life and pro-gun?"

Snapshot
Best television with ratings and established stars.

James Van Der Beek is the New Diplo	OCT. 20
Regina Hall on a 'Girls Trip' Where Things Go Wrong	OCT. 14
Maria Tarrant on 'Spider-Man,' 'Empire' and Playing Dork and Angry	OCT. 7
Alison Wright, Exiled From 'The Americans' (Review), Bill Broadway	OCT. 5
Drew Barrymore's Next Act: Suburban Zombie	OCT. 27


See More >

Sojourners

How One Conservative Evangelical Pastor Changed His Mind About Gun Rights

As Rev. Rob Schenck discovered, it turns out being "pro-guns" poses a challenge for those with pro-life commitments.

By Betty Shriley OCT. 23, 2015



Though Rev. Rob Schenck was attending the Washington, D.C., premiere of *The Armor of Light* — a 2015 documentary in which he himself was the principal character — he looked exhausted.

"One of the reasons I may appear exhausted tonight is because, well, I'm exhausted," Schenck admitted to the audience last weekend at the AFI DOCX film festival.

MUST READS

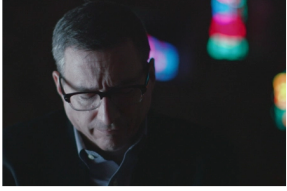
- What Will a Trump-Pence Administration Mean for LGBTQ Rights?
- Seminaries Across the Country Now Offering Black Lives Matter Courses
- Protests at Texas A&M as White Nationalist Steve Speecher Jai Campus
- German Chancellor Merkel Wants to Ban Guns in Germany
- Donald Trump Is TIME's Person of the Year

Deadline

Dies In Crash While Filming | With No Labor Day Wide Bows | Deal, Exits ABC Studios | Netflix | Drops Producing Series Based On 'Secret World' Video Game

'Armor Of Light' Filmmakers Making Offer To Card-Carrying Members Of NRA

by Anita Busch
October 23, 2015 4:31pm



EXCLUSIVE: *Armor Of Light*, a documentary about faith and guns which marks the directorial debut of producer Abigail Disney (granddaughter of the late Roy O. Disney) is bowing in theaters on October 30, backed by an unusual grassroots

- FILM
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What's Hot on Deadline

- 'Deadpool 2' Stunt Crash Victim ID'd As First African-American Female Pro...
- 'Deadpool 2' Casts Atlanta's Zazie Beetz As Domino
- Ryan Reynolds Shows Off Domino From 'Deadpool 2'

The Guardian

Pro-gun control faith-based film will be free to NRA members

Film follows Reverend Rob Schenck as he tries to convince his fellow rightwing Christians that owning a gun is incompatible with pro-life views

Ben Child
@BenChildGeek
Friday 23 October 2015 11:00 EDT



This article is 1 year old

168 17

Los Angeles Times

Abigail Disney, a liberal among conservatives, examines a minister's beliefs in 'The Armor of Light'



Abigail Disney, the grandniece of Disney Chairman (co-founder Roy O. Disney, makes her directorial debut with the documentary 'Armor of Light.' (Luis Elizos / Los Angeles Times)

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OCT. 6, 2015

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- 'Hamilton' is here: A sneak peek at the landmark musical's arrival in L.A.
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Vanity Fair

The Armor of Light Is a Documentary that Explores the Intersection of Christianity and Guns

Filmmaker Abigail Disney discusses her directorial debut.

by BRUCE HANDY
OCTOBER 16, 2015 12:07 PM




Selected Clips

Washington Post

Express

You may think you disagree with the message of 'Armor of Light.' Here's why you should see it anyway.

By Kristen Page-Kirby October 30, 2015



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'The Armor of Light' Explores Connection Between Guns and Religion

By Elizabeth Chmura | Published October 29, 2015 | Government And Institutions | FOXBusiness



The Daily Beast



Walt Disney Heiress Takes on the Gun Lobby

Walt Disney's grand-niece appeals to evangelical Christians in her anti-gun documentary by listening, not preaching, about the issue dividing America.

By TED BUGBEE 10/29/15 10:34 PM ET

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- Colbert Slabs the Mooch in the Front
- He Framed a Man for Charlottesville—Then Trump Retweeted Him
- The Sexy, Controversial Bachelor in Paradise' Premieres

Hollywood Reporter ANTI-GUN

7:30 AM PDT 10/7/2015 by Tatiana Siegel



Well versed in her family's conservative politics, Abigail Disney discusses her new film 'The Armor of Light' (out Oct. 30), which tackles the gun controversy while also reaching out to fundamentalist Christians

Courtesy of Joey L. Abigail Disney

Huffington Post

Evangelical Pastor Wants 'Pro-Life' Christians To Protest Gun Violence

"The subject is very radioactive in my world."

By Samantha Lachman



TRENDING


- White Supremacist in Charlottesville Wearing 92nd Airborne Hat Gets Called Out... By 92nd Airborne
- Rock Legend David Crosby Shuts Down Ted Nugent In Just 7 Words
- Donald Trump Just Retweeted A Notorious Right-Wing 'Pizzagate' Troll

New York Times

Review: 'The Armor of Light' Follows 2 Unlikely Allies Against Gun Violence

THE ARMOR OF LIGHT Directed by Abigail Disney, Kaitleen Hughes Documentary, News PG-13 1h 28m

By NICOLAS RAPOLD OCT 29, 2015



RELATED COVERAGE

- Abigail Disney Builds a Dialogue on Gun Control

CNN International

the religious case for gun control in America



Rev. Rob Schenck
Evangelical Minister, subject of "The Armor of Light"

Washington Post

'The Armor of Light' presents one man's quixotic fight

By Michael O'Sullivan October 29, 2015



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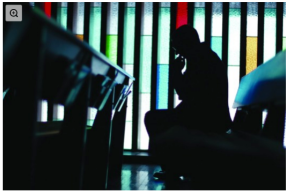
Selected Clips

Culture

MOVIE REVIEWS

The Unflinching, Beautiful Armor of Light Isn't Afraid to Go There

By **Steph Lee**



The only time I've cried during a movie, the first time I saw *The Armor of Light* was probably the second time I saw *The Armor of Light*. Abigail Disney's documentary about a rare confluence of Evangelical

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Los Angeles Times

MOVIE REVIEW

They love God and their guns

'The Armor of Light' examines many Christians' views on abortion, firearms.

BY STEPH LEE

Grapping with what he calls "a deep theological and moral crisis," an evangelical minister undergoes a personal conversion in the new documentary "The Armor of Light." It's not that the Rev. Rob Schneck turns away from his faith. If anything, he connects more powerfully with the Gospel as he tackles the question of the right to abortion.

... Disney set out to unpack the confusion of deep faith and the deep commitment — a theological switch from Christian pacifism that anti-abortion activist Schneck, a self-declared conservative, traces to Donald Trump's shared conviction regarding his quest for the White House.

Schneck and earnest, Schneck rights the film when it stumbles. As someone who's fully present and in the moment, he sees the rhetoric of the shouting heads who dominate radio debate and a fascinating film unfolds.

Before Disney's camera, Schneck is challenged, his culture's place in the church. The response he receives is sometimes an uncomfortable silence, sometimes a party line, with more than one person insisting that "guns don't kill people" and insisting that only "a good guy with a gun" can keep us safe.

The reversal can cut through easy assumptions and argue with analysis right up to the end. It's using his pulpit to remind people that "Fox News and the NRA are not spiritual authorities."

... He adds an operational caveat. When Schneck, recently ministering to the parents of children killed in a school shooting, his visibly affected. And when he meets gun-control activist Lucy McWhorter, the other key figure in the film, her words shake him to the core.

Though "Armor" lingers too long on McWhorter's operative goal, it cuts her lackluster and passion on the topic of gun violence later in the film. Her leverage on Florida's laws, was asked in a widely reported "wand your ground" incident in Florida (a law that was replaced in the aftermath) but posed "15 Minutes, Ten Minutes," released this year. When Schneck speaks to her, it's a call to action. Whether viewers accept the spiritual terms of the conversation or not, the author allows those a burning light on questions that are rarely examined, who we are and what it means to "value life."

A producer of dozens of documentaries — including such essential viewing as "The Beautiful When She's Angry" — Disney makes some unfortunate choices in her directing debut, the first too long, indulgent in content repeats and repetitive preaching. Yet, her film is compelling nonetheless. It's a vital testimony on whether we chase our lives through fear or with love.

'The Armor of Light'

NFPA rating: PG-13 for thematic content and brief strong language

Running time: 1 hour, 27 minutes

Playing Aug. 19 at Holywood, Lawrence's Professor's Presence AMC Cinema, 1000 N. Ontario

Time Magazine

Rob Schneck The evangelical leader and antiabortion activist explains his unorthodox stance on guns as a new film, *The Armor of Light*, follows his crusade



What does your organization Faith and Action do? We attempt to communicate the message of Christ to those at the top tier of government. The President, those who work directly with the President, members of Congress and the judiciary.

Do you get good access? We want to maintain the confidence of the people we talk to, but yes, in fact, we receive a surprisingly warm welcome in all these houses.

You and your twin brother Paul were well known for your pro-life activism in Buffalo, N.Y. Do you have any regrets about that time? Yes, I do. I was much younger. So maybe the tone and content of our message could have been more deferential to all parties. And I was not mindful enough of the women working abortion—the emotional dimensions to that, especially.

Are you advocating for gun control? No, my proposal is for pastors, people I describe as shepherds of souls, to look at this in their respective communities. To see what kind of effect it's having and then to address it, in preaching, in teaching, in moral reflection.

Often gun owners feel you're questioning their moral status.

How has the response been? It's been mixed. People tend to take a very defensive posture in this discussion. When you bring up guns, often gun owners feel that you're questioning their moral status. But I think we can often unintentionally disregard the value of human life, simply because we haven't thought through the issue.

Did you need to get a lot of support from the Tea Party? I did. I expect I'll have a lot of support. I hope with the track record that I have with very conservative groups that they give me some space to explore these things without necessarily dismissing me as a defector. But the deepest of moral, ethical and spiritual questions can't be answered by a political party.

— **REBECCA LICHTENBERG**

64 TIME October 12, 2015

FoxNews.com

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Watch Live | Show Clips | News Clips | Fox News Radio

Film follows unlikely allies in anti-gun violence campaign

Oct. 30, 2015 - 6:10 - **Sponsored Debate:** Director Abigail Disney talks about new film 'The Armor of Light'



Distribution and Awards

Premiere

In April 2015, *The Armor of Light* premiered at the **Tribeca Film Festival** to a sold-out theatre of 422 guests, including NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio, NYC First Lady Chirlane McCray, Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee, and Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook.

Theatrical Release

On October 30, 2015, the film was released in 26 theatres and 17 cities, including faith-friendly markets like Colorado Springs, Orlando, and Dallas-Ft. Worth.

In conjunction with the release, we initiated a promotion to give free tickets to NRA members in seven cities. A total of 68 NRA members accepted the offer, with highest demand in Dallas, TX and Tampa, FL. Two young NRA members said they came to the film because they “wanted to see something meaningful,” and a woman who said she grew up with guns reported that she is now reconsidering gun ownership. The promotion generated a good deal of press, including articles in *The Guardian*, *Deadline*, and *Relevant Magazine*, a publication that reaches 2.3 million young Christians each month.

Digital Release

In March 2016, *The Armor of Light* was released on transactional video on demand (TVOD) via digital platforms including iTunes, Amazon, Google Play, and Vudu, and was ranked in the top 50 documentaries on iTunes. Its subscription video on demand (SVOD) release on Netflix followed in July 2016.

Broadcast

On May 10, 2016, PBS broadcast *The Armor of Light* on Independent Lens, followed by *Armed in America*, an Emmy Award-nominated prime time special hosted by Joel Hunter at his Orlando-area megachurch, featuring a town hall-style discussion with evangelical organizer Shane Claiborne, Christian blogger Dianna Hobbs, Liberty University professor Dr. Karen Swallow Prior, author Rev. Kenneth Blanchard, Operation Rescue president Troy Newman, and Rev. Rob Schenck, moderated by NPR’s Michel Martin.

The film’s broadcast garnered a .4 weighted average overnight and reached nearly 1.5 million viewers—more than double the average Independent Lens audience—within a week of its premiere. An additional 15,000 people streamed it online during the next two weeks. One month later, PBS affiliates across the country re-aired *Armor* in the wake of the Orlando nightclub mass shooting, including a primetime broadcast on KERA in Dallas, which the programmer said received a fantastic response.

The broadcast performed best in Milwaukee, Columbus, New Orleans, Cincinnati, and Jacksonville. Cincinnati and Jacksonville are within our targeted congressional districts, which confirms our hypothesis that areas with a high concentration of megachurches and mass shootings are eager to have a conversation about the role of faith in preventing gun violence.

Film Festivals

The Armor of Light played at 41 film festivals, including the **Hamptons International Film Festival**, **Traverse City Film Festival**, Middleburg Film Festival, Galway Film Fleadh, **Heartland Film Festival**, **GlobeDocs**, Montclair Film Festival, and the **Tallgrass Film Festival**. It was also presented as the Centerpiece Documentary at the **San Francisco Jewish Film Festival**.

One particularly impactful festival screening occurred at AFI Docs in June 2015, three days after the mass shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Rev. Schenck participated in the post-film discussion and reflected on his visit to Charleston where he had traveled with Lucy McBath to lead a prayer service and support the grieving community.

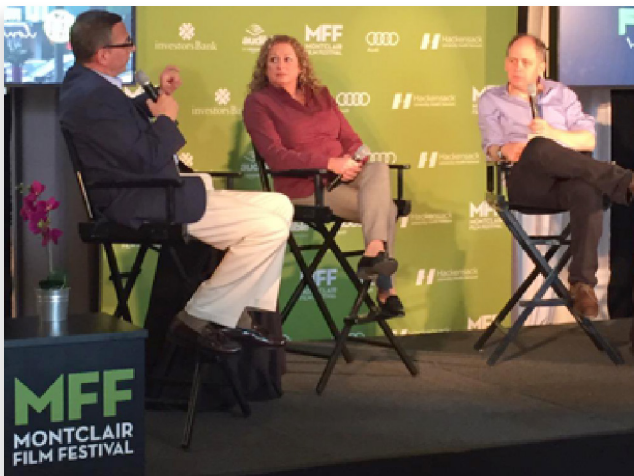
Awards

Wins

- Galway Film Fleadh - Best International Feature Documentary
- Traverse City Film Festival - Founders Prize Special Award
- Tallgrass Film Festival - Golden Strands Award for Outstanding Documentary Feature
- The Religious Communicators Council's Wilbur Award - Best Documentary
- Attic Film Festival - Best Documentary

Nominations

- Emmy Award
- Peabody Award - finalist
- Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize - longlisted
- Urban TV Awards Professional Documentary
- 2015 My Hero International Film Festival Kovic Peace Prize - finalist
- 2015 Crystal Dove Seal by The Dove Foundation
- CINE Golden Eagle Award - Finalist in the category of Documentary, Feature



Journalist Jonathan Alter interviews Abigail Disney and Rev. Schenck at the Montclair Film Festival; Abigail and Lucy McBath speak at the Middleburg Film Festival

Digital

Websites

Continue the story. Serve as the spiritual resource on gun violence.

THE ARMOR of LIGHT

URL:

armoroflightfilm.com

Launch:

April 2015

Features:

14 Video Shorts, Screenings Toolkit, Cast Updates and Op-Eds, Director's Faith Testimony, Mass Shooting Responses, See the Film Options, and "Christian Resources" pointing to Sword of the Spirit features

Audience:

Top 9 out of 10 states were from our targeted areas: NY, CA, TX, FL, VA, WA, IL, MA, OH, plus other Republican states in the top 20. Reached all 50 states.

Web Traffic:

75,400 unique visitors, 187,000 unique pageviews

Standouts:

- 26,000 views of the trailer
- Theatrical Release: 2,300 visitors on October 30, 2015
- PBS Broadcast: 4,585 unique visitors on May 10, 2016 and 2,258 the previous day

SWORD of the SPIRIT EPHESIANS 6:17

URL:

swordofthespiritministry.org

Launch:

April 2016

Features:

80-page Bible Study (public launch in 2017), Weekly Devotionals, Articles, Toolkits for Pastors, College Students, and Lay Leaders, and a private page for pastors to view the entire film

Audience:

The top 9 out of 10 states were from our targeted areas: TX, CA, FL, VA, NY, GA, PA, MI, IL, OH, plus other Republican states in the top 20. Reached all 50 states.

Web Traffic:

28,000 unique visitors, 51,000 unique pageviews

Standouts:

- 16,000 clicks to the devotional series via Facebook from May-November 2016
- 280 pastors viewed the beta Bible Study and 274 visited the private *Armor of Light* online screening page
- 1,300 visits to the Pastor Toolkit
- 1,700 views of guest article, "Conservative Gun Owner on the Christian Response to Orlando" by Devon Bailey, an evangelical lay leader in Texas

Social Media

Create and engage influencer and grassroots audience.

THE ARMOR of LIGHT

Objectives:

Create visibility for a faith-based view of gun violence. Drive tune-in, continue the story, respond to mass shootings, and promote Sword of the Spirit.

Launch: April 2015

Facebook: 6,194 Followers

- **Audience:** Mix of suburban and city men and women in all of our target states. Top 10 cities are in NY, TX, CA, OH, PA, DC.
- **Total Post Impressions:** 5.5 million
- **Post Engagement:** 141,400
- **Video Views (Over 30 seconds):** 78,700
- **27 Devotionals Posted Weekly:** 56,000 post engagements, 683,000 impressions targeted to evangelical, pro-life women in the target states

Twitter: 890 Followers

- **Audience:** Mix male & female between 25-54 years with top 6/10 in our target states
- **Impressions:** 44,436
- **Engagements:** 621

SWORD of the SPIRIT EPHESIANS 6:17

Objectives:

Create visibility for a Christ-led view of gun violence and counter gun lobby talking points. Cover the biblical themes related to gun violence, news items related to the Church and guns, and mass shootings.

Launch: April 2016

Facebook: 9,783 Followers

- **Audience:** Exurb & rural women largely between 40-65 yrs + in all of our target states. Top 10 cities are in TX, FL, OH, PA, NY.
- **Total Post Impressions:** 2.2 million
- **Post Engagement:** 113,000
- **27 Devotionals Posted Weekly:** 73,000 post engagements, 642,000 impressions targeted to evangelical, pro-life women in the target states

Twitter: 623 Followers

- **Audience:** Mix male & female between 25-45 years with top 8/10 in our target states
- **Impressions:** 50,439
- **Engagements:** 779

Sample Social Media Posts

Theatrical

Facebook outreach totaled **1.9 million impressions** during a two-month promotions campaign.

PBS Broadcast Premiere

Twitter

- **ITVS:** 4,000 post engagements and 9,184 uses of #ArmorofLightPBS from May 1-10, 2016
- **@Armor of Light:**
 - **Broadcast night highlights:** 6.3 million impressions and 5.6 million shares related to the film characters, handle, and #ArmorofLightPBS; 6 of the top states included our target areas: NY, VA, TX, IL, NC, FL, CA, PA, LA.
 - **April 20-May 24, 2016 Promotions:** 207,000 impressions and 1,600 post engagements

Facebook

- **ITVS:** 2.7 million impressions and 24,000 posts engagements through the Independent Lens account
- **@Armor of Light:** 153,000 impressions and 7,600 post engagements (through the promotions period of April 20-May 24, 2016)

The Armor of Light
October 22, 2015 · 🌐 Like Page

Times have changed, but what about the frontier mentality?

23,590 people reached View Results

10K Views

Like Comment Share

Anithra McElroy, Sherina Noon and 39 others Top Comments

158 shares 8 Comments

The Armor of Light
Published by Jess Duda · September 6 · 🌐

Rev. Rob Schenck, featured in *The Armor of Light*, discusses what the Bible says about self-protection through a pro-life perspective. "In many ways I consider this a pro-life film...For the last several decades American evangelicals have formed a very solid, unambiguous commitment to the sanctity of life from conception until natural death."
Watch *The Armor of Light* on Netflix tonight: <http://bit.ly/1Tdevig>

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SELF PROTECTION?

19,755 people reached View Results

28K Views

Like Comment Share

Cheryl Moss Reynolds and 100 others Top Comments

45 shares

The Armor of Light

Top Tweets

12,000 Impressions

61 Engagements



ArmorTheFilm @ArmorTheFilm · Apr 30
TUNE-IN: @cbssunday at 9:15 am ET tmrw for look at #ArmorofLightPBS w Director @Abigail Disney + @RevRobSchenck1: cbsn.ws/1SF1Kre

↳ 2 ↻ 6 ❤️ 12 📊 ⋮

9,500 Impressions

142 Engagements



ArmorTheFilm @ArmorTheFilm · May 10
@PBS Town Hall: "White men are some of the most dangerous mass shooters in this country." -@ShaneClaiborne #ArmorofLightPBS

↳ 2 ↻ 9 ❤️ 41 📊 ⋮

11,000 Impressions

70 Engagements



ArmorTheFilm @ArmorTheFilm · May 8
STARTING NOW @VH1's Dear Mama tribute from @HillaryClinton to #ArmorofLightPBS' @LucyMcBath:



Hillary Clinton Gave a Powerful Message to Jordan Davis' Mother Du...
Hillary Clinton gave the most powerful message to Jordan Davis' mother during VH1's Dear Mama. Watch it here.
vh1.com

↳ 1 ↻ 17 ❤️ 22 📊 ⋮

10,700 Impressions

286 Engagements



ArmorTheFilm @ArmorTheFilm · May 10
WATCH NOW: "When is a Christian permitted to use a weapon to take a life?" -@RevRobSchenck1 #ArmorofLightPBS



↳ 2 ↻ 21 ❤️ 31 📊 ⋮

Sample Reactions to the Film

Gloria Steinem

Feminist Icon & Advocate Against Domestic Violence
229,000 followers



Gloria Steinem
@GloriaSteinem

Follow

On May 10, join me in watching The Armor of Light on @PBS @IndependentLens bit.ly/1SdAyDa @libertyutd #ArmorofLightPBS

12:52 PM - 9 May 2016

38 59

Mariska Hargitay,

Law & Order: SVU actress & domestic violence prevention advocate
763,000 followers



Mariska Hargitay
@Mariska

Follow

As I get ready for the gala, a small offtopic shoutout to @ArmorTheFilm airing tonight on PBS! #IIBeDVRing #ThoughtProvokingWork"

4:54 PM - 10 May 2016

144 677

Melissa Joan Hart

Christian and Republican actress
705,000 followers



Melissa Joan Hart
@MelissaJoanHart

Follow

Is anyone watching #ArmorofLight on @PBS tonight? Part of the #ArmedinAmerica series about gun violence and directed by Abigail Disney.

8:44 PM - 10 May 2016

20 78

This follower is Christian and became active on both The Armor of Light & Sword of the Spirit Twitter channels



Sam Lufi
@slufi

Follow

I'm a concealed carry permit holder as well. But I'm learning "what makes for peace" #ArmorofLightPBS

8:19 PM - 10 May 2016

A therapist in Tampa, FL who wrote a post on her personal blog that led with the film.

You Retweeted



Melissa Rodriguez @PurpleOnionMe · May 10

#ArmorofLightPBS got me so fired up I had to bring my laptop to bed to start a blog post.

Lynne Hybels, co-founder of Willow Creek Church

You Retweeted



lynne hybels @lynnehybels · May 9

Are you a follower of Jesus grieved by our culture of fear? Disturbed by our culture of guns? Watch this film.



Fork Films @ForkFilms

Tomorrow is the day! Join us in watching @ArmorTheFilm on @PBS. bit.ly/1SdAyDa #ArmorofLightPBS

One of the commenters to this piece was avid gun supporter Troy Newman, President of Operation Rescue, featured in the film and PBS town hall. His comment indicates a common space in the gun debate can be created with moral arguments.



The Armor of Light

Published by Jamie Doble [?] · May 10 ·

Pastors and Lay Leaders: Touched by The Armor of Light on Independent Lens | PBS tonight? Visit Rev. Rob Schenck's new resource for Christian leaders at the Sword of the Spirit.



Ten Things I Believe About Christians and Guns I by Rev. Rob Schenck | Sword of the Spirit

Point by point, verse by verse, learn how to address #gunviolence using the core tenets of the #WordofChrist, the Son of God.

SWORDOFTHESPIRITMINISTRY.ORG

7,238 people reached

Boost Post

Like Comment Share



Troy Newman Im about 80% with you on this. Maybe 85%

Like · Reply · Message · 40 mins

Write a comment...

Sword of the Spirit

Top Tweets

2,503 Impressions

32 Engagements (as the top 1st and 3rd tweets)

Sword of the Spirit @Swordof_Spirit · Oct 4

"Guns don't save people—only God does," says gun owner [@PrestonSprinkle](#). bit.ly/2dEj2YQ #2A #DISARMHATE



3 7

2,370 Impressions

39 Engagements

Sword of the Spirit @Swordof_Spirit · Aug 28

Jesus has overcome the troubles of this world. SIGN UP for our weekly devotional. bit.ly/1r3e90N



2 3

798 Impressions

19 Engagements

Sword of the Spirit @Swordof_Spirit · Oct 8

DEVOTIONAL: "The Legal Rights of God's Children" by Timothy Gombis [@FaithImprovise](#) bit.ly/2dBtpOE #2A #DisarmHate



2 2

Quick Hits: *The Armor of Light*, in Numbers

The Film

1.5 MILLION

People watched on PBS within a week of its broadcast premiere

RELEASED IN

26 THEATERS



AND



17 CITIES



Religious Communicators Council's Wilbur Award for Best Documentary



Dove Foundation's Faith-Based Seal Recipient



Inspired 2016 "God and Guns" training conference on gun violence prevention for faith leaders across the country

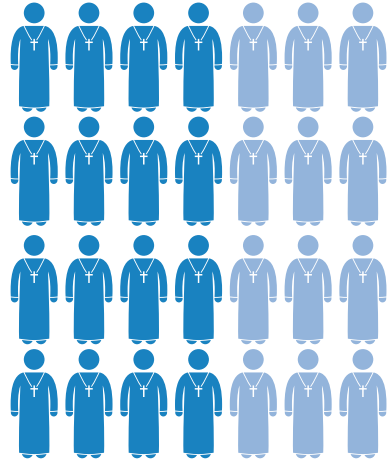


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FoxNews.com
CNN International

Our Campaign

Developed relationships with

28
EVANGELICAL
LEADERS



Worked with nearly
40% of these leaders
at the highest level of
engagement we offered

These leaders reached more than:



188,000

Congregants



1.5 MILLION

Twitter Followers



2.75 MILLION

Facebook Fans



Partnered with

40 ORGANIZATIONS

Who shared our content to a combined reach of

2.3 MILLION+

People on social media and email lists

Our Audience

Collaborated with **323 partners to facilitate 432 screenings**, reaching an estimated **21,600 people** in **46 states** plus Washington, D.C.



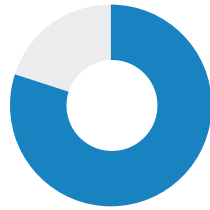
20%
of that group of respondents said they had never before considered this issue through a biblical lens



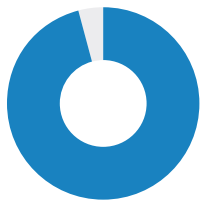
60%
of screenings were hosted by communities of faith



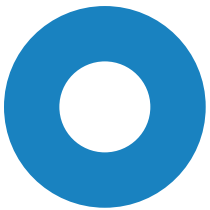
70%
of survey respondents reported that the film changed their perspective on gun violence



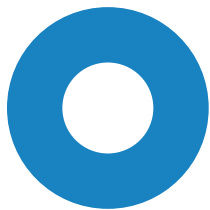
80%
plan to screen it again in the future



96%
said the screening was able to help them reach their organization's goals



100%
of respondents said they would recommend the film to others



100%
said they were likely to speak to a friend about this issue after seeing the film

Digital

THE ARMOR of LIGHT

Ads:

8.6 Million ad impressions for *the Armor of Light*,
50% targeted to evangelical Christians

Website:

75,400 unique visitors
187,000 unique pageviews

Facebook:

Total Post Impressions: 5.5 million
Post Engagement: 141,000

Twitter:

Impressions: 44,436
Post Engagements: 621

Email:

500 Newsletter Subscribers

SWORD of the SPIRIT EPHESIANS 6:17

Ads:

2.1 million ad impressions for Rev. Schenck's
Sword of the Spirit Christian site

Website:

28,000 unique visitors
51,000 unique pageviews

Facebook:

Total Post Impressions: 2.2 million
Post Engagement: 113,000

Twitter:

Impressions: 50,439
Engagements: 779

Emails:

6,000 Pastors, with a core group of 1,160 with an average open rate of 42% representing 521,000 congregants for weekly devotionals covering the biblical themes related to the causes of gun violence, but not explicitly on the issue. For emails on gun violence, this core group had an open rate of 50% to 60% for emails. A subset of this group (232 pastors) opened every one of our last 5 emails representing 129,000 congregants.

500 newsletter subscribers had an average open rate of 30% and most of which are in the targeted districts as well as conservative states.

Weekly Devotionals:

A weekly blog post and email from Sword of the Spirit, also promoted *the Armor of Light* social media channels, reached 1.3 million Christian women on Facebook in our target states, with 127,000 directly engaging with the content and nearly 16,000 clicking through to the Sword of the Spirit website.

Team & Credits

Impact Campaign

Executive Director, Peace is Loud
Jamie Dobie

Campaign Strategist & Digital Director
Jess Duda

Outreach Director
Stephanie Palumbo

Outreach Manager
Alison Diviney

Faith Outreach Coordinator
Melinda Kay Ronn

Intern
Kaitlyn Hamby

Film

Director
Abigail E. Disney

Producer and Co-Director
Kathleen Hughes

Executive Producers
Gini Reticker
Abigail E. Disney

Editor
Andrew Fredericks

Producer
Eva Anisko

Director of Photography
Jeff Hutchens
Original Music
Paul Brill

Associate Editor
Natasha Livia Mottola

Archivist
Stephanie Palumbo

Production Assistant
Alexander Hyde

Additional Photography
Warren Jones
Kirsten Johnson
Andrew Fredericks
Brett Wiley
Max Miller
Cameron Hickey
Peter Hutchens

Sound Recordists
Michael Stewart
Tony Smith
Brian Buckley
Spencer Smith
Adam Rabinowitz

Additional Sound
Joe Campbell
Tom Craca
Mike D'Asto
Michael Filosa
Tom Johnson
Adam Jones
Judy Karp
Mike Martin
Rob Peterson
Bob Schuck
Randy Sparrazza
Jay Ticer
John Toffolo
Aaron Webster
Merce Williams

Archival Research
Vanessa Maruskin
Production Assistant
Ariel Doctoroff

Legal
Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz PC
Iddo I. Arad, Esq.
Melissa Georges, Esq.

Bookkeeper
Kelley Trotter

Transcription
Steve Wylie
Pat Casteel Transcripts

Travel
Victor Esprit
New Act Travel

Title Design
Ada Whitney
Beehive

Original Score Composed, Performed
and Produced by Paul Brill
Recorded 2014-15 at Casa de Rico y
Luca Studios, Brooklyn

Additional Recording by Ed McEntee
at Sterling Society Social Club,
Brooklyn

Additional Music
Elizabeth Ziman
Erik Friedlander
Tom Phillips
Tom Martin
OBT Music

Additional Musicians

Dave Eggar – Cello
 Erik Friedlander – Cello
 Entcho Todorov – Violin
 Rob Jost - Bass and French Horn
 Bill Dobrow - Drums
 Gerald Menke - Guitars
 Peter Lalish - Guitars
 Elizabeth Ziman - Piano and Voice
 Sonya Kitchell - Voice
 Heather Robb - Voice
 Eli Brueggemann - Piano
 Paul Loren - Piano and Organ

Music Supervision

Brooke Wentz

Supervising Sound Editor

Tom Efinger

Sound Effects and Dialogue Editor

Kate Bilinski
 Foley Artist
 Shaun Brennan

Re-Recording Mixer

Tom Efinger

Audio Post Facility

Dig It Audio

Audio Post Producer

Colin Thibadeau

Digital Intermediate Colorist

Will Cox

Digital Intermediate Online Editor

Drew Kilgore

Digital Intermediate Producer

Caitlin Tartaro
 Post Production Services
 Final Frame

Trailer Editor

Will Barton

Web Producers

Orange Static

Executive Assistant to Abigail E. Disney

Dominique Bouchard

Fork Films

Aideen Kane
 Yvonne L. Moore
 Juli S. Kobayashi
 Felice Denny
 Celiné Justice
 Kat Vecchio
 Amy Meacham
 Julia Christie
 Hope Carmichael

Assistant Camera

Mark Burchick
 Dean Freeland
 Alexander Hyde
 Mat MacIntyre
 Rueben Pacheco

Field Production Assistants

Ariel Bruns
 Bill Conrad
 Jennifer Roh
 Liz Salvato
 Nate Savidge
 Sara McDaniel

Interns

Jonah Cader
 Taylor Hom
 Jake Kanengiser
 Megan Loughman
 Sarah Loughman

Shamrock Holdings, Inc.

Nicole Alleyne
 Mike Alvarez
 Kathleen Galli
 Greg Martin
 Arlene Meymarian
 Virginia Moore

Outreach/Peace Is Loud

Angie Wang
 Jamie Dobie

Insurance

Bill Hudson
 Truman Van Dyke Co.

Payroll Company

Entertainment Partners

Publicity

Weiman Seid
 FAT DOT

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 CBN, The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc.
 CNN
 Disney ABC Home Entertainment and TV Distribution
 Gary Cameron / Reuters / Corbis
 James McCoy
 John Phillips
 Motto Pictures
 NBCUniversal Archives
 Participant Media
 Reverend Rob Schenck personal collection

Songs

“Amazing Grace”
 Traditional arranged by Ani DiFranco
 Performed by Ani DiFranco
 Courtesy of Righteous Babe Records
 By arrangement with Sugaroo!

“Abide with Me”

Traditional
 Performed by Choir of Westminster Abbey, London
 Courtesy of Griffin & Co. Ltd

“Unconscious Perceptions”

Written and Performed by Erik Friedlander
 Courtesy of Arconomx Music LLC

Special Thanks

Macky Alston
 Alison Amron
 Joseph and Eugenia Anisko
 John Aquilino
 Paul Barrett
 Rep. Dennis Baxley
 Jessie Beauchaine

Rebecca Bond
Pastor Eulie Brookins
Tom Casciato
Maria Cuomo Cole
Carolina Davis
Disney ABC Television Group
Leah Doyle
Richard Feldman
Chip Flaherty
Micheal Flaherty
Peter Flaherty
Anne Fredericks
Leymah Gbowee
Crown Prince Haakon of
Norway
Charlotte Hauser
Eamon Hauser
Henry Hauser
Olivia Hauser
Pierre Hauser
Judith Helfand
Rev. Dr. Katharine
Henderson
Lisa Hintelmann
Lisa Holton
Robert Iger
Zach Iscol
Andrew Issermoyer
C. Richard Johnson
Rev. Dr. Suzan Johnson Cook
David Keene
Jeff Knox
Sabine Krayenbühl
Gayle Tzemach Lemmon
Beth Levison
Curtis McBath
Terry McGovern
Dick Metcalf
Robert Muggah
Dr. Mark Rosenberg
Rebecca Peters
Cheryl Schenck
Matthew Schenck
School of Visual Arts
Diana Taylor
Laurie Wainberg
Adam Winkler
Milica Zec

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FILMS



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THE ARMOR *of* LIGHT