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A Broken Promise

by Tim Swann

Seeing on TV the horrible incident in Aurora, Colorado, where a twenty-four-year-old man shot several people at a movie theater, killing dozen or so, brings to mind an incident that happened to me in 1980. I was working at Lone Star Steel Company near Daingerfield, Texas. All employees alternated shifts weekly, one week on days, next week on swing shift, and next on graveyard shift. Before going in for my graveyard shift on Saturday, June 21, 1980, I promised my wife that we would go to church the next morning. Since we were members of the Baptist denomination and new to town, we decided to go to the First Baptist Church of Daingerfield.



After working my shift, I got home at about 7:30 A.M. I never could get used to working all night. My wife reminded me of my promise to take her and our two-year-old son to church. Feeling sleepy, I lay down and told her to wake me up at 10:30 A.M. Falling asleep instantly, I was awakened by my wife at 10:30 A.M. I told her I was just too tired and there was no way I could take them, and I went back to sleep. She woke me up again at about 1:00 P.M. and said there were news helicopters flying all around town. We turned on the TV and saw that a man named Albert Lee King had walked into the First Baptist Church, the one we had planned on attending, and opened fire on the congregation with a machine gun, killing five and injuring a dozen more.

One of the victims was a man that I worked with at the steel mill.

I hate to break a promise, but this time I was thankful I did.