

April 2023

THE CHURCH GUARDIAN

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM SHEEPDOG CHURCH SECURITY

happy EASTER

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- Weekly Team Briefing
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TOP NEWS STORY

SEVEN DEAD, INCLUDING THREE CHILDREN AT THE COVENANT SCHOOL ON MONDAY

Seven people are dead — including three children — at The Covenant School on Monday morning after a shooting inside the building.

Three adult staff members are also dead. The shooter, who is also dead, is identified as Audrey Hale, 28. This person had no criminal history. At one point, the shooter was a student at the school.

Source: [CLICK HERE](#)

TRAINING SPOTLIGHT

Protecting Children from Abuse v4

Children are at risk virtually everywhere in today's society. They're exposed to predators and abusers in the wider community. They're faced with deprivation and neglect at home, or at the hands of caregivers. Sadly, they're also at risk in the church.

Child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse and predation can occur anywhere, from the home to children's church and the church nursery. Our children are our most precious resources, and treasured gifts from God. Remember the words of Christ Himself, "If anyone causes one of these little ones – those who believe in me – to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

Within the Protecting Children from Abuse v4 module delivers essential information, tips, guidelines and practices all designed to help ensure that the children within your congregation are protected when on the grounds.



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WEEKLY TEAM BRIEFING

Springing Ahead Looking ahead from March

By now it has been over three weeks since most of us sprang ahead into Daylight Savings Time. Easter is almost here, and Mother's Day is three weeks later. It will soon be summer.

We need to spring ahead into being prepared for summer. Family vacations and holidays affect the scheduling of Safety Teams. Vacation Bible School, church picnics, and outdoor activities will pose security challenges. This means planning for a safer summer. Now is the time to prepare.

March's Articles

"Watch the Radar" (Assess Potential Threats). Threat assessment is a tool to prevent violent disruption.

"1988 Calvary Baptist Church Shooting" (Lesson Learned). The lesson is, "Watch at all times." When no one is watching, disrupters have the advantage.

"This Is Abuse" (Understanding Sexual Abuse). When we know more about sexual abuse, we can be better prepared to prevent it and to deal with it.

"Saint James the Just Church Shooting" (Lesson Learned). In Ogden, Utah, an abusive husband brought his wife to church on Father's Day late in the service and shot his father-in-law, who survived.

Weekly Team Briefing Continued

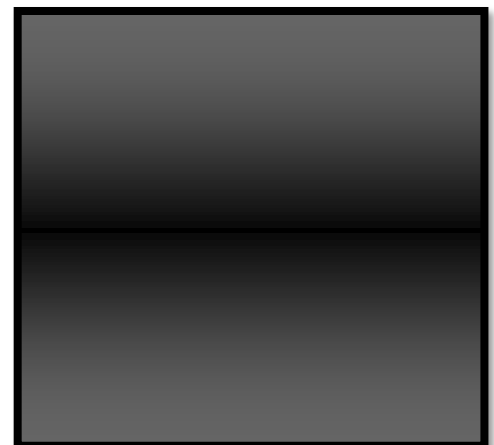
Action Points

For Church Safety Directors –

- ◆ Plan for the challenges of summer: scheduling, training, safety, and health issues.
- ◆ Get new Safety Team members trained as soon as possible with the [Safety Member Certification](#) program.

For Church Safety Team Members –

- ◆ Be ready to serve when needed.
- ◆ Let the Safety Director or Team Leader know about vacation plans soon enough for scheduling.
- ◆ Be up-to-date in training. Participate in drills, practice sessions, classes, etc.
- ◆ Be careful and safe at all times.



WATCH THE RADAR

Assess Potential Threats

From the Bible

Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity (Proverbs 17:26).

“Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children” (Genesis 32:11).

He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death ... And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death (Exodus 21:12, 15).

*** Hatred is a motivation for murder:**

But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities: Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die (Deuteronomy 19:11-12).

*** Jesus equated hatred with murder:**

Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, “Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:” But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, “Raca” [“Worthless”], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, “Thou fool,” shall be in danger of hell fire (Matthew 5:21-22).

Introduction

There are several factors motivating violent attacks on persons in workplaces, community events, schools, and places of worship. The primary ones are hatred, fear, and mental illness. These factors do not always lead to violence, but there are indications of when they are more likely to result in deadly violence.

In church safety and security, we need to be aware of persons who are at risk of becoming violent and watch for signs that they may act. This is the equivalent of Army, Navy, and Air Force radar operators watching for approaching threats.

In the News

It is easy to say, "If only they had known." Sometimes there was no way of knowing certain persons would show up or that they would pose a threat. For some others, however, there was enough reason to keep an eye on them, to watch the radar. We have seen these kinds of situations in our Lessons Learned from Church Shootings series.

Emporia, Kansas, March 6, 1988 - A man entered the sanctuary of a Baptist church during the Sunday morning service and began firing a handgun. One person was killed and four were wounded. When he tried to reload the gun, a church member hit in the back of the head with a hymnal. What was his motive? Personal rejection. Four years earlier, a woman who was also a student at Emporia State University and attended the church refused his marriage proposal. Apparently he blamed the church. [4]

Vestavia Hills, Alabama, June 16, 2022 - On a Thursday evening, a man attended a Boomers Potluck in a church's fellowship hall. He sat alone, not talking with anyone, even though some asked him to sit with them, He pulled out a handgun and began shooting, fatally wounding three before being hit by a chair and taken down. There was no clear motive, but the shooter had been a licensed gunsmith and dealer. He had occasionally attended services at the church. He also had police encounters related to alcohol use and was seen as an oddball by some who knew him. In February 2023 he was found competent to stand trial for capital murder. The question remains of what role alcohol and mental health played in the shooting. [5][6]

Sutherland Springs, Texas, November 5, 2017 - The person who attacked the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs was involved in a feud with members of his second wife's family. He had been sending threatening messages to his mother-in-law, who lived in Sutherland Springs and was a member of that church. He came prepared to kill everyone. His mother-in-law was not there that Sunday, but her mother was, and died.

The shooter had a history of violence, including a court martial conviction for assaulting his first wife and stepson. If that conviction had been entered into the federal data base, he would have been barred from buying weapons. If the mother-in-law had told the church's pastor about the threats, they could have asked for police protection. As it was, he had been to the church several times, and his presence made members feel uneasy. He would have been a good candidate for a threat assessment. [7]

Laguna Woods, California, May 15, 2022 - The suspect in the shooting of a Taiwanese congregation in Laguna Woods believed that Taiwan should not be independent and hated Taiwanese in this country who favored an independent Taiwan. He lived in Las Vegas, and news stories did not tell of any connections he may have had with the Taiwanese in Orange County.[8][9]

Charleston, South Carolina, June 17, 2015 - A young White Supremacist in his 20s had a website on which he expressed his desire to restore segregation and Jim Crow laws. He stated in a manifesto why he was choosing the AME church in Charleston as the target for an attack. If his site had been monitored and the church had been given a warning, the massacre of nine parishioners, including a prominent pastor, might have been avoided.[10]

On the Screen

There are several phrasings indicating that guardians are aware of certain persons, items, or situations. One of them is "on the screen," It is borrowed from radar surveillance. This goes beyond watching people, vehicles, and packages on church property, or even on the street. This means receiving intelligence about anything which may impact the church. This includes potential threats to the church's safety. We need to do a threat assessment of persons that are on the screen to be aware of threats before they come through the door of the church.

Detecting Threats

We train Safety Team members (and, hopefully, also greeters) to notice facial expressions, mannerisms, and signs of hidden weapons. This can be applied to what we see and are told about people in the church, the community, or anyone with a past or present connection to the church.

Reasons for Disruptive Behavior

Let's begin with those with whom we are connected, whether in the church or to those in the church (such as a member's family). The [Church Security Guide](#) article "[Disruptive Individuals: How to De-escalate the Situation](#)" lists four types of personal crises which may lead to disruption: Family Problems, Financial Problems, Substance Abuse, and Medical Conditions. Here the best option for preventing disruption up to and including violence is in helping someone to deal with a personal crisis:

- ♦ *Family Problems*: failing marriage, children acting out, arguments with in-laws.
- ♦ *Financial Problems*: foreclosure, job loss, difficulty affording basic needs or paying bills.
- ♦ *Substance Abuse*: alcoholism and other forms of addiction put tremendous strain on people.
- ♦ *Medical Conditions*: chronic pain, frightening diagnoses, terminal illness, mental illness.

The Church Safety Ministry is not fully equipped to help them with their issues, but we can connect them with those who can.[2]

Warning Signs of Disruptive Behavior

There are physical warning signs we may observe in those we see at church. The Security Guide article has a list of a few of these warning signs (from the [Canadian Centre for Occupational Safety and Health](#)):[14]

- ♦ flushed or pale face
- ♦ sweating
- ♦ pacing, restlessness, repetitive movements
- ♦ extreme fatigue
- ♦ change in voice
- ♦ loud talking or chanting
- ♦ shallow, rapid breathing
- ♦ scowling, sneering, using abusive language
- ♦ trembling
- ♦ clenched jaws or fists
- ♦ exaggerated or violent gestures
- ♦ glaring or avoiding eye contact
- ♦ violating personal space

Shared Intelligence

Shared intelligence can come from anyone inside or outside the church. Sources may include government agencies (law enforcement and social services, for example), other churches, charities (such as the Salvation Army), church neighbors, and concerned persons in the community. This intelligence may also include reasons our church is a potential target.

The National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) research report *Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016 - 2020* listed behavioral and experiential factors in those who committed mass attacks. Here is an abbreviated version:

- ◆ Most had exhibited behavior that created concern in family members.
- ◆ Many had a history of physical aggression or intimidation behaviors, as evidenced by
 - ◆ prior violent criminal arrest/charges,
 - ◆ domestic violence, or
 - ◆ other acts of violence toward others.
- ◆ Half are motivated by grievances to retaliate for perceived wrongs related to personal, domestic, or workplace issues.
- ◆ Most used firearms; many of these were stolen.
- ◆ One quarter subscribed to belief systems involving conspiratorial or hateful ideologies.
- ◆ Many experienced stressful events in various life venues:
 - ◆ family,
 - ◆ romantic relationships,
 - ◆ personal things,
 - ◆ employment,
 - ◆ legal matters.
- ◆ More than half had mental health symptoms.

Just having one or a few of these characteristics does not necessarily identify the person as a threat to the church. It just means that there is some level of risk. For some subjects this means always being alert to any new indications that a threat is likely or imminent.

Encourage bystander reporting. This is an important source of shared intelligence. Some workplaces have a notice saying, "See something? Say something." If they know you will listen carefully and not judge them or simply dismiss what they say, family members, classmates, co-workers, and neighbors are more likely to share important information.

Acting on Intelligence

Some behaviors call for special attention. NTAC has an annotated list. This follows a warning to "not wait for a direct and specific threat before taking action." They recommend having a "workplace violence prevention plan." Let's translate that to a "church violence prevention plan." This is boiled down to three elements: identify, assess, and intervene. Understandably, a Church Safety Ministry does not have the same authority over church members and their families and associates as a company has over its employees, but there are ways to identify potential risks, assess them, and intervene in an appropriate way. According to NTAC, this includes "strategies for resolving personal grievances."

Indications of Likely Threats

These are behaviors which indicate a high likelihood that an individual poses an imminent threat.

- ◆ It is of special concern when a person shows an unusual interest in violent subjects, especially past attackers.
- ◆ The individual engages in violent and harmful rhetoric, such as making threats or holding that certain people should die or be seriously harmed.
- ◆ Increase your attention when someone exhibits misogyny (hatred of women) or engages in domestic violence.
- ◆ Be aware of online activity. It is an urgent concern when an individual uses online platforms to make violent comments or to share violent rhetoric and ideas. About 25% of attackers used the Internet this way.
- ◆ When a person of concern shares final communications (such as a farewell post or manifesto) or engages in final acts (such as giving away or destroying personal items), this is cause for immediate intervention, especially involving law enforcement. This includes an "I'm coming to get you" threat to someone in the church.

Set-up to Assess Threats

Church safety ministries need to be set up for threat assessment. In a small church, this function can be served by the church leadership, including the Safety Director. They will discuss any concerns of persons at risk.

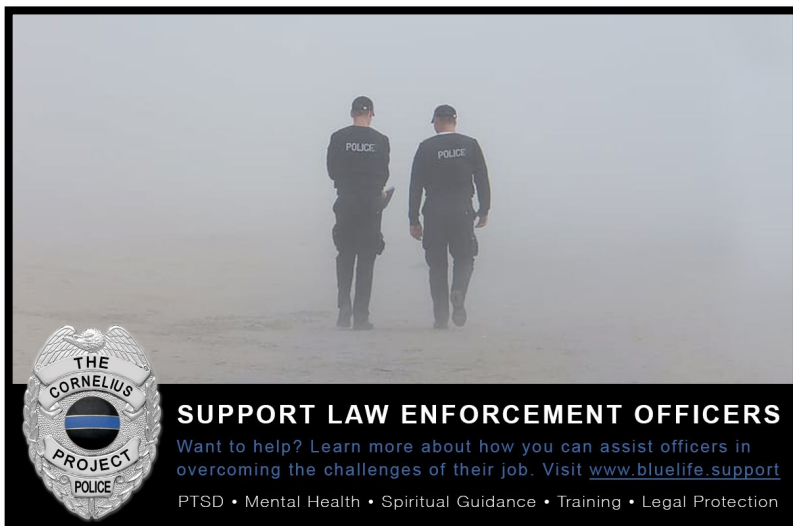
A larger congregation can have a formal Threat Assessment Team. This allows for consistent follow-up. Also, a regular team can more surely keep confidentiality. A person in the church community will know whom to tell about a potential threat and have them as the source remain confidential. Someone in the church who receives threats, such as the mother-in-law in Sutherland Springs, will be more likely to tell someone in the church leadership.

The Team can actually have a relationship with local law enforcement agencies. This partnership works both ways. The team is more likely to hear about community threats which may affect the church, and there is a quick connect and a listening ear for any concerns the church has about specific persons or developing situations.

Conclusion

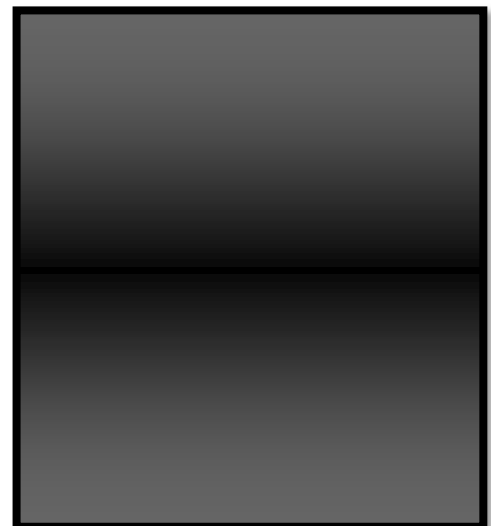
Be aware of potential threats to the church and conduct threat assessments.

Article References



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1988 Calvary Baptist Church Shooting

A MONTHLY FEATURE LOOKING AT CHURCH SHOOTING INCIDENTS

From the Bible

For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance (Proverbs 6:34).

For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one (Job 5:2).

A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones (Proverbs 14:30).

... jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame (Song of Solomon 8:6b).

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? (Proverbs 27:4).

Introduction

Jealousy and anger are emotions which are not always justified. For instance, there is no right to be jealous of something or someone which is not really yours, therefore anger arising from this kind of jealousy is not justified. However, a person may become jealous when they mistakenly believe someone is (or should be) theirs. This seems to be the motive in this case.

An Explosive Return

It was Sunday morning, March 6, 1988, in Emporia, Kansas. The worship service at Calvary Baptist Church was in progress. The singing of "Like a River Glorious" was interrupted. A man with a duffel bag had come in through a side door, put on ear protectors, and pulled out a handgun. An usher turned toward him to offer a bulletin, but was answered with gunfire. The shot missed and the usher ducked behind a pillar. The assailant fired more shots into the sanctuary, hitting five persons. One of the five wounded persons, a deacon, died with a bullet to the heart. Others were shot at, but not wounded.

When the magazine was empty, the shooter tried to reload - ironically, there was another gun in the bag with a full clip inserted. A church member, Jerry Waddell, took advantage of this lull, charging the shooter. The assailant turned and ran for the door and into the street. Waddell threw a hymnal, hitting him in the back of the head, then tackled him. Two other men joined in holding the shooter down, one taking the gun away. The downed assailant asked something like, "Don't you know me?" This ended the shooting.

Failed Infatuation

The 29-year old killer was an immigrant from Taiwan, the son of a police officer. He had served in the Taiwanese army. He came to the United States to further his education. In 1984, he graduated from Emporia State University with a Masters of Business Administration.

In 1983 he met a young woman in Emporia through her work and attended two Bible classes with her, and also attended a few services. He was infatuated with her, and asked her to marry him and go with him to Taiwan to care for his aging parents. She declined. After graduating, he went to California to work. He also briefly lived and worked on the East Coast.

All this time, the sting of a rejected marriage proposal festered. His resentment fell on her church, a very conservative independent Baptist Church, which he blamed for her not marrying him. Even without her testimony, we can still say it appears that she did not marry him because he was not a Christian, and she did not want to be "unequally yoked."

Some may think brooding over a rejection is a sign of mental illness. However, it is common for young men to take a romantic disappointment hard, even when there was no interest from the other person. Many times it is an obsession which is broken only by a new relationship. Right now, we do not know of any other romantic interest this man may have had in those four years he lived elsewhere. News stories did not name the woman, but did say she married someone else and was still living in Emporia at the time of the shooting. The shooter may have thought she would be in the church when he arrived and experience his revenge.

The Impact

One person died, a deacon. The other wounded persons recovered from their injuries. Jerry Waddell was hailed as a hero for stopping the shooter. It seems providential that the assailant, a military veteran, forgot the second loaded weapon and tried to reload the first. This gave someone time to rush him. There is a lesson here for us (see below).

This incident had an international impact. The shooter's father came here from Taiwan. He and the Taiwan ambassador went to Emporia to make a public apology for his son's actions. It was a sincere apology with no excuses.

Calvary Baptist Church in Emporia, KS, is still well attended. One survivor of the attack, the daughter of the slain deacon, said years later that she is a firm supporter of the Second Amendment.

The shooter was indicted, tried, and convicted for first degree murder, assault with a deadly weapon, and attempted murder. He was sentenced to life in prison. The trial was delayed by sanity determinations. The first one was for his competence to stand trial. The second was whether an insanity plea was valid. He was ruled competent, and the insanity plea was ruled not applicable in this case, considering the wording of Kansas law. There was at least one appeal considered by the Kansas Supreme Court. The conviction and the sentence were affirmed.

Lesson Learned: Watch at All Times

First, remember that this was in 1988, when only a very few churches would have had security teams.

It had been almost four years since the shooter had been to the church a few times. There was no way they could know that he would travel from California to Emporia to act out his jealous rage. The lesson learned is to watch at all times, including when services or classes are in session. If a Church Safety Team member had been on duty in the back during the service, he might have stopped the shooting before it started. Here's one way how:

First, all doors other than the main entry would have been locked. The gunman could not have used the side door without attracting unwanted attention. Therefore, he would have had to come to the main door.

If the main door had been locked and monitored during the service, someone, preferably the team member, would have responded. He or she would have seen the duffel bag, which would have raised concern.

Let's say the man is let in and sets the bag down. The security team member asks, "What's in the bag?" Suppose the man says, "I'll show you," and reaches into the bag. He is watched. If he pulls out the hearing protectors, that would be a red flag, so that's not a good choice for him. The security person is standing close enough to knock a gun out of his hand if he draws it out. Of course, this visitor does not want to simply open the bag and show what's in it.

If there is nothing as conspicuous as a duffel bag and the intruder pulls out a concealed weapon, a safety team member can immediately rush him before he has time to shoot. Anything open and handy, such as a hymnal, can be used as a weapon. Pulling out a gun when the other person already has one out will take too much time and could cost a life, as happened at West Freeway Church of Christ.[6]

If the visitor just takes his bag and leaves, he creates more suspicion. The rest of the Safety Team has been alerted, and he is watched as he goes to his vehicle. Now they have descriptions of both the suspect and his vehicle. Police are on the way, since 911 has been called.

Conclusion

Watch the entry at all times, before services, during services, and after services. Be alert to signs of violent intent and weapons. Violent intruders may come in at any time.

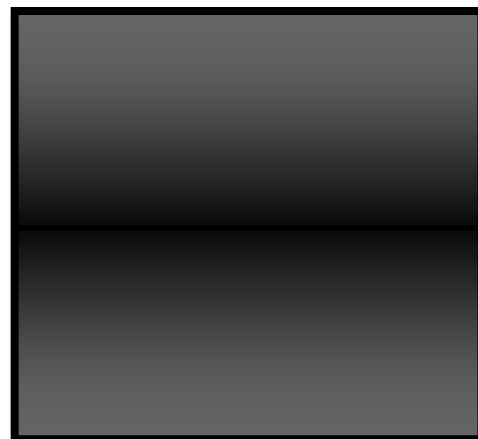
Article References



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THIS IS ABUSE!

Understanding Sexual Abuse

From the Bible

***A lot of people do not know that the Bible has many references to sexual abuse
This is only a sample:***

- ♦ Rape was often committed during war on civilian populations:

Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished (Isaiah 13:16).

They ravished the women in Zion, and the maids in the cities of Judah (Lamentations 5:11).

- ♦ We can be almost certain that this was NOT consensual, but priests taking advantage of their authority. These women were likely the virgins who assisted female worshippers at the Tabernacle, in which case it would have been workplace sexual abuse. According to some, Jephthah's daughter may have been one of their victims:[3]

Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation (1 Samuel 2:22).

- ♦ Amnon raped his half-sister:

Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her (2 Samuel 13:14).

- ♦ Seduction is a means of sexual abuse:

With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him (Proverbs 7:21).

- ♦ This was abuse by a political figure:

And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her (Genesis 34:2).

◆ Incest is abuse:

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness (Leviticus 18:17).

Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother ... Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law (Deuteronomy 27:22-23).

◆ Jesus' view of sexual abuse:

"But whoso shall offend [cause to sin] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6; see also Mark 9:42 and Luke 17:2).

Introduction

Sexual abuse of children is now frequently reported in the news. It happens in families, in schools, and in churches. It is not just an, "Oh my! Well, they'll get over it," kind of affair, but can have lasting damaging consequences. Chartier, Walker, & Naimark summarized it like this:

There are few issues that cause children to "stumble" so completely as being abused. Abuse affects every area of victims' lives. Survivors often have issues with substance use, eating disorders, intimate relationships, obesity, smoking, and mental health problems including suicide attempts.[4]

Besides harming children emotionally, mentally, socially, and physically, sexual abuse is also spiritually harmful, especially when done in the context of a church.

The question of what constitutes sexual abuse often comes down to what crosses the line. To answer the main question, therefore, involves answers to a series of questions, which either severally or singularly define abuse. This is why a publically available website listing registered sex offenders has a section explaining what constitutes sexual abuse.

In the News and Online Publications

New York City, New York - The online edition of Psychology Today has a Basics article (with no specific date of publication) on "Sexual Abuse" which also covers sexual assault and sexual violence. After this lead article for the subject is a list of links to articles on many topics within this subject. This Basics article includes a definition of sexual abuse and several areas of the subject.

The Contents are:

- ◆ Understanding Sexual Abuse
- ◆ Healing from Sexual Abuse
- ◆ Helping Survivors of Sexual Abuse
- ◆ Child Sexual Abuse

Of special interest for church safety ministries are questions such as "Are people more likely to be sexually assaulted by a stranger or someone they know?" and the topic of Child Sexual Abuse.[5]

Hilliard, Ohio, January 26, 2023 - Police are asking for information about additional incidents of child sexual abuse at a church in Hilliard. The victims who had already reported abuse were less than 10 years old at the time of the abuse between 2012 and 2014. The perpetrator was a minor at the time who had volunteered to help with children's church and other programs.[6]

The Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio urges victims to come forward. Even though this was a decade earlier, it's not too late.[7]

- ◆ Sexual abuse also happens in prisons:

Oakland, California, February 9, 2023 - A male former corrections employee was sentenced to 20 years for sexual abuse of inmates in a federal women's prison where he had worked.[8]

- ◆ It also occurs in families:

South Dakota, November 3, 2022 - A candidate for the state senate was indicted for familial child sexual abuse. The abuse of the young female relative, who is now an adult, allegedly lasted for six years, including grooming.[9]

- ◆ And in Schools:

State College, Pennsylvania, November 4, 2011 - A grand jury indicted the assistant football coach of Penn State University for sexual abuse of adolescent boys. He was also the founder of a charity for fatherless boys. During the next five days, several high-level persons at the university were suspended, were fired, or had resigned. On December 7, the assistant coach was indicted on a dozen more counts.[10]

Questions & Answers about Sexual Abuse

The [Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website](#) (NSOPW) has a section named "[Questions & Answers about Sexual Assault and Sexual Offending](#)" (Q&A). It poses the answers to nine questions:

- ♦ What is sexual abuse?
- ♦ Why do people sexually abuse?
- ♦ What support is available for victims?
- ♦ How common is sexual abuse?
- ♦ Who are the people who sexually abuse?
- ♦ Do people who sexually abuse reoffend?
- ♦ Can sex offenders learn to control their behaviors?
- ♦ Can sex offenders be effectively managed and monitored in the community?
- ♦ Can sexual abuse be prevented?

This is understandably lengthy, so in this article we will cover only a few of the questions.

What is Sexual Abuse?

This question is answered in the Q&A:

"Sexual abuse includes many different behaviors. For adults, it includes any sexual act committed against someone without that person's freely given consent. For adults incapable of giving consent and children, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention definition includes "any completed or attempted (non-completed) sexual act, sexual contact with or exploitation (i.e., noncontact sexual interaction) of a child" by an adult or an older youth. Sexual abuse includes both touching (e.g., forced sexual intercourse, child molestation, groping and attempted rape) and nontouching offenses (e.g., downloading or distributing child pornography, exhibitionism), and it impacts people of all ages."

This is quite a long definition, but it needs to include all the stages since the principle of "one thing leads to another" applies. Commonly-recognized acts of sexual abuse are usually the end product of a process which begins with grooming. This enables the abuser to use the victim repeatedly, often for years. It also leads the victim to think that he or she is the one at fault - feeling that he or she led the abuser along.

Why do people sexually abuse?

This is the hardest question to answer. It is addressed here since so many ask. Basically, there is no one reason why people sexually abuse others. The "answer" for this question has a link to a rather lengthy report on research and studies which try to answer the "why" of sexual abuse. It is on another Department of Justice site, SMART (Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking). This report is downloadable as a [PDF](#).^[13]

How common is sexual abuse?

This is a key question for churches. Just judging from news stories, it is rather common in churches and schools. However, considering how many congregations and other religious communities there are in this country, it may not be as common as news stories make it seem. However, also consider that a large portion of incidents are not reported, and some reported ones just don't get into the news.

According to Q&A, sexual abuse happens in all demographic groups, regardless of age or gender, race or ethnicity, nationality or social class, education or religion.

- ◆ About 25% of girls and 5% of boys under age 18 have been abused, and this is only reported cases.
- ◆ The highest rate of sexual abuse is among those 18-24. However, cases in this age group are more likely to be reported by the victims than those against minors.
- ◆ Lifetime abuse rates other than rape are 22% of men and 45% of women. The rape rates are 1/5 of women and 1/71 of men. These numbers would be higher if all cases were reported.

Do people who sexually abuse reoffend?

Most times, yes. There are cases of children or youths abusing someone once and no more. When it has become habitual, an offender is very likely to reoffend. Unfortunately, for most offenders it is habitual, and a hard habit to break, especially for those who abuse children. This is the primary reason sex offenders should not work with children in the church or a school.

There Is More

We are encouraged to take the time to learn what we can about sexual abuse so we can understand the measures we take to prevent it in our churches and to properly respond if it does happen. Read the source materials for this article and other reliable information on sexual abuse.

Conclusion

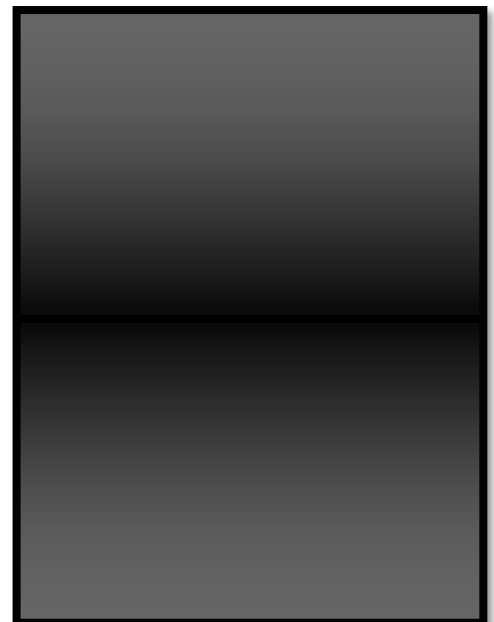
To know how to combat child sex abuse, we must first know about it. This is especially important for those who write the policies and procedures, but also important for those working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

[Article References](#)



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2013 Saint James the Just Church Shooting

A MONTHLY FEATURE LOOKING AT CHURCH SHOOTING INCIDENTS

From the Bible

* Assaulting a parent called for the severest penalty:

And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death (Exodus 21:15).

* If the victim does not die, then it is an attempted murder:

And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer ... (Numbers 35:17).


Introduction

Several contributing factors may lead to a shooting incident. In this case, the assailant had a criminal history, including violence, alcohol and drug use, and domestic abuse.

Ambushed in the Pew

It was June 16, 2013. At the Saint James the Just Catholic Church in Ogden, Utah, the Father's Day Mass was being held. Late in the service, not long before the Communion, a man in his mid-thirties walked in with his wife. The priest saw them enter and thought it strange that they would enter at this point in the mass. The man had been to mass only a few times.

They walked over to behind her father, who was sitting on a back pew. The wife gasped as her husband pulled out a handgun and aimed it at her father's head. He began to turn his head as the trigger was pulled. The bullet went through his right ear and out the cheek, missing the brain. The gun then pointed toward his mother-in-law, but the move was interrupted.



The sound of the blast startled the 300 persons in attendance. Parents pushed their children under the pews. Older siblings did this with the younger ones. Parents held rosaries and prayed for whoever was shot, for their families' safety, and to keep their children calm.

Two of the fathers, a U.S Marine and a USAF Airman, dashed toward the shooter: the Marine up the aisle and the Airman over the pews. The shooter thought, "The whole crowd's a-comin' after me!" He turned and fled, while his weeping wife knelt down by her wounded father.

The two servicemen chased the shooter out of the church and to a nearby house. There the shooter barged in as the owner came out of the shower. Brandishing the gun, he demanded and got the keys to a pickup truck.

Exiting the house, the assailant jumped into the truck and drove off. He headed north, intending to go to Idaho. On Interstate 84 the truck ran out of fuel north of Brigham City. The shooter continued on foot but didn't get too far. On Monday he was spotted and arrested.

A Life of Trouble

The shooter had a long criminal record. Since 1996, when he turned 18, he had been charged with several felonies. Among the charges were burglary, receiving stolen property, criminal trespass, attempted witness tampering, and theft. He pled guilty to some charges and no contest to others.

His history includes drug and alcohol use. In a 2017 parole hearing, he said that before the shooting he had been staying awake on methamphetamine for seven days at a time.

Mental illness was considered an issue in the shooting. The shooter claimed to be "hearing voices." The prosecutor for his trial claimed that it was the result of drug use. Studies have shown that certain drugs, including marijuana and PCP, can cause mental illness.

We don't know how he met his wife, but there was domestic abuse and strained relationships with her family. The abuse included threats to kill her parents if she left him. The parents knew of the threats and bought guns to defend themselves. Although he could not legally have a firearm, somehow he got one. His wife apparently did not know he had a gun when they went to church on Father's Day to be with her father.

Afterwards

The shooter's father-in-law survived and recovered from his wound. The damage to his jaw had to be surgically repaired and he needed speech therapy. For a while he had to communicate by writing. Currently he works as a project manager.

The shooter was charged with attempted murder and felonious assault with a deadly weapon. His bail was originally set at \$105M, but was revoked by the judge because this was a failed murder attempt and he might try to "finish the job."

The suspect was psychologically evaluated and found competent to stand trial. He admitted to firing the gun, but said he thought he missed. He pled "guilty but mentally ill." His hope was to spend his time in a mental institution instead of a prison. He was found guilty and sentenced to four years to life, the longest term for attempted murder, with the recommendation for life. The reason was that, considering his mental state, drug use, and record, he would always be a threat to society.

According to the Utah Department of Corrections, the shooter is still an inmate in a Utah State Correctional Facility. The release date is listed as N/A (not available or non-applicable), which is in accordance with the sentence and the judicial recommendation.

A parole hearing was held after four years of the sentence had been served. The father-in-law testified that he did not know his son-in-law had entered, and when he heard the "explosion" he did not realize he'd been shot, a reaction not too uncommon for gunshot victims.

The convict said he did not hear voices any more since he'd been off drugs while in prison. The parole board denied parole and determined that the next parole hearing would not be until 2038, another 21 years. At issue was whether he considered the trauma inflicted on others. Another reason for extending the time is that so many inmates with a drug history return to using drugs after being released.

The Saint James the Just congregation healed from the shock. Soon there was a mass of cleansing from the crime. The congregants were thankful that the victim recovered from his wound. Six years later the priest/pastor said that forgiveness was still a struggle. The parish is still strong and the church well attended and active in the community. The priest is now pastor of a parish in Salt Lake City.

Security details at the church are kept confidential, but awareness has increased. The priest said he now takes note when someone enters late in the service, wondering why. Roman Catholic churches in this country are now training greeters and ushers in security and safety. If they had been on watch in 2013, they might have paid special attention to two latecomers that Father's Day.

Lesson Learned: Consider All Threats

As was noted, the church in Ogden, Utah, was taken by surprise at a Father's Day shooting. They have now learned a lesson. While we need to be aware of suspicious activity – especially violation of norms – we should also have an informed awareness.

In this case, there was known tension between two members of the parish and their son-in-law. The couple was aware of spoken threats against their lives and armed themselves for defense (though they were not armed at church).

The lesson learned from this incident is: Consider all threats to church members and respond appropriately. Here's the outline:

Be open to shared threats. – Church members and other attenders need to feel free to share any threats they receive with the pastor(s) and/or the Church Safety Director. They need to know they'll be taken seriously. Also keep open lines of communication through which threats to the church or its members may be shared.

Be aware of situations which may generate threats. – Some situations within the congregation and the families of members may lead to threats. Of special concern is domestic violence.

Assess all threats you receive or of which you are informed. – Threat assessment analyzes threats for their seriousness and likelihood. What can the church do to help the situation? How can we protect the church and those threatened?

Get needed help. – Depending on the threat, law enforcement may need to be involved.

Ensure Reliable Communication. – Be sure that lines of communication are reliable. This is critical for any emergency, including a likely shooter. These lines are between Safety Team members (2-way radios), between the team and key church personnel (ushers, greeters, platform leaders, church leadership, etc.), and with emergency services (law enforcement, fire department, EMTs).

Guard the gate. – With a threat there are persons at risk of being targets, and there is a person (or persons) of concern who may carry out the threat.

Lock all doors. The main entry may be held open, but already be locked for when it is closed.

Advise greeters and Safety Team members working at the entry to watch for a person of concern. If you have a photo, show it to them.

Place persons trained to respond at the door.

Always watch the door. Also, monitor security cameras.

Guard persons at risk. – If the threat is imminent, have team members shadow persons at risk.

Seat persons at risk in a different location from where they usually sit.

Be ready to move them to safety.

Be ready to stand between them and the threat.

Be aware of anything unusual or out of place. –

Some persons of concern will try to come in unnoticed. In this incident, he came in late.

Observe posture, stride, facial expressions, tone of voice, and other indications of mood or state of mind.

Pay attention to indications of substance abuse. The Instructor's Guide for "Security Team Fundamentals" says, "Church members (or their family members) can and do show up at church under the influence of legal or illegal substances and present behavior that is disruptive or threatening to others." [4]

Watch for violations of norms in the person's behavior.

Look for signs of weapons.

Be ready to respond.

Conclusion

When you are aware of any threat made to the church or persons in it, take it seriously. People in the church should be confident that they can share any threat with you.

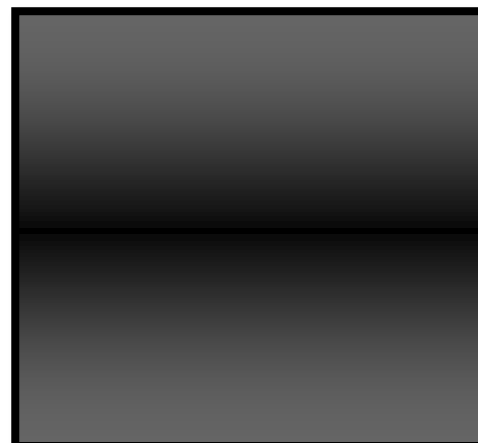
Article References



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SHEEPDOG'S MONTHLY GUEST ARTICLE

Band Aids Over Bullets, An Odd Choice of Words.

BY: TERRY B.

An odd choice of words by any thought I realize.

Nay...Shall I even say... "Click Bait!"

Yes, Yes it is...But it worked.

As I was writing an article on developing a safety and or security team in a house of worship, I realized that even more important than the security aspect was the medical teams needs and development.

I realize that many believe that the world will stop turning if the house of worship that they attend does not have a proper safety or security team, but I want to suggest that there may be something just as important, if not more.

I think any house of worship with a gathering of more than a dozen parishioners is in dire need of a formal scheduled medical response team. First and foremost, simply because having any routine gathering places people in a susceptible predicament for injury or illness. Add to that the fact of having children of all ages being taught and entertained, and we all know that the best of the best Sunday school teachers often have difficulty keeping kids contained. This is often referred to as "herding Cats". Add to the group of sugared-up children, a few older and more "medically experienced" folks that have been in the hospital enough times that they greet the EMS providers by first name, and you have a recipe for a medical team.

For those that feel a tactically trained and "packing" security team is a necessity, realize that by showing your church leadership that you have the welfare of the congregants first and foremost on your mind may eventually open the doors for a Security Team as well.

I can speak from experience of running security teams, medical teams, as well as parking teams, umbrella teams, and off-site parking shuttles for a large church, the medical team is way more called upon than anything else.

What's in a name?

Some just like the term "safety Team" to try to check all the boxes. Unless you are in a state that requires such name bending to prevent the authorities from coming knocking, I certainly suggest setting up separate teams. Not everyone who wants to serve in a responder position was called to do both medical and security. Many great security team members that have their heads on a swivel and are situationally aware to a T, really don't want to get involved in that call with the bumped head and bleeding nose in the nursery. They would much rather stand guard and direct traffic in the hallway outside of the nursery while the medical team deal with the injury and issues. Then from the other side of the fence, the medical team can be staffed with volunteers that are or have been in the medical field. Those nurses that are coming into service after a twelve-hour shift are not going to want to "make rounds" throughout the building, and the retired nurse that is willing to serve is definitely not going to want to patrol the parking lots during a snowstorm or heat wave.

So let people serve where their passion is!!

Remember, we are the Body, we are not all feet or all eyes, some are ears, and some are hands.

You will get more volunteers and more enthusiastic team members serving the church in a way that they are able to use the gifts given to them by God.

One possible way to "get around" the stipulations of having a "security" team if by state law only allowing a "Safety Team" would be to have the safety team members divided into an "S-platoon" and an "M-platoon". And yes, for those that have military backgrounds, I realize that 4 squads make up a platoon, so a squad would make more sense, but in many cities an ambulance is often referred to as a squad and we didn't want this article to really take a turn!

So these are my thoughts on Security Teams, Medical Teams, Safety Teams and the what nots of naming them.

I would love to hear from others regarding this topic, who they have volunteering, and what you're calling them. So please feel free to email me at terry@churchemergency.com with your two cents.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this and all my other articles, I truly feel blessed to be able to contribute and to share with others what The Lord has blessed me with the ability and experiences he has gifted me.



Terry Berringer is the owner/operator of Church Emergency Consulting. He was the founder, developer, trainer and director of the security, parking and medical teams of one of the largest congregations in south-west Pennsylvania for over 20 years.

To learn more, click on the image below:



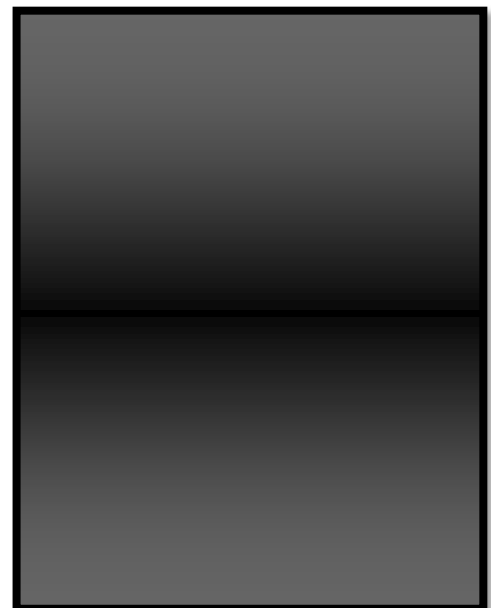
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A Police Officer with over 18 years of experience and a retired Army Captain and Company Commander. He has certifications in Crime Prevention, Security Assessments, and the Crime Free Program. He also has a Bachelor's degree in Ministry and a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership.