



Practical Ways to Secure Your Church

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History and Scope of Operations

- In the community since 1853, current location since 1948.
- Downtown campus, over 10 acres. On average over 5000 people a week flow through the facility. (population of Belton is 18,000)
- We host a private school, licensed child-care facility, robust missions program.
- Near a large military installation (Ft. Hood), many service members and their families attend.
- 34 exterior access points.

What is the Issue?

Despite our wonder and greatness, we are a society that has experienced so much social regression, so much decadence, in so short a period of time, that in many parts of America we have become the kind of place to which civilized countries used to send missionaries.

-William J. Bennett

Securing Your Place of Worship

- It starts with planning.
 - What are you trying to secure?
 - Who are you protecting?
 - When is it taking place?
 - Where is it happening?
 - How have you trained/prepared for the event?

Securing Your Place of Worship

- Planning begins with conversations and note-taking.
 - Nobody likes meetings.....it is much worse meeting after a major incident has happened.
- Planning ahead allows for more input from stakeholders.
 - More input translates to greater buy-in.

Securing Your Place of Worship

- Planning begins the process of creating a culture of safety and security.
 - If you are not intentional about creating a culture of safety and security, you will not have one.
- A robust safety and security program is not always popular.
 - Everyone wants to be secure...until it causes them perceived major restrictions.

Safety and Security Culture

- Understand who your primary security person is (its not who you think), and plan accordingly.
- Buy-in and support has to come from the highest level.
- Those responsible for safety and security must be empowered to enforce agreed upon policies, with all parties.

Safety and Security Culture

- It needs to be, so make it, a team effort.
 - Every ministry should be given the opportunity to contribute and participate in the conversation.
 - Enlist local subject matter experts.
 - Your local first responders should be your primary resource for information and advice.
 - Seek and attend every applicable training you can.

Culture First....Then What?

- Practical steps to start increasing the safety and security of your facility.
 - Consider changing the locks (without telling anyone).
 - If you have had a facility for longer than 3 months I would venture a guess that someone has a key to it that you are not aware of.
 - Not everyone really needs a key, boundaries and controlled access are good.
 - Keep doors locked. Direct individuals to certain doors, the ones you want them to use. (I do not keep all 34 of my doors open when we are open)

Practical Steps

- Train and enlist the help of your friendliest people.
 - With some exception, those intent on harm do not want to be observed either at all or until they are committing the act.
 - Friendly and aware greeters help reduce opportunity.
 - A trained and dedicated team of greeters also increase the “eyes and ears” capability of your security program.

Practical Steps

- Trim and remove screening and vegetation where you can.
 - Seek the balance between “looking good” and “place for someone to hide”.
- Add exterior lights, more than you think.
 - LED technology is improving, prices are dropping.

Practical Steps

- Get some radios.
 - Cell phones are great, but radios can connect much quicker.
 - They do not have to be super expensive, they just have to work.
 - Make sure you have spares.

Practical Steps

We don't rise to the level of our expectations; we fall to the level of our training." -Attributed to Archilochus, Greek soldier, circa 650 B.C

- Train. Train again. Train some more.
 - No matter the level that your safety and security program is at, meet and train on it. Figuring out what you want to do in the midst of the storm is not good.

Recap

- The preceding described where any church, no matter their resources, can start:
 - Create the culture.
 - Use local resources.
 - Change locks.
 - Enlist friendly folks.
 - Direct folks to particular entrances.
 - Get rid of hiding places.
 - Add some light.
 - Get some radios.
 - TRAIN

Next Steps

- It can start there, but it should not stop.
 - Policies and procedures need to be updated and reviewed at least annually.
 - Cameras, access control, security doors, security personnel need to be considered and evaluated.
 - Research should be constant.
 - Utilize every magazine, journal, web list you can.

Connect

- Connect with the local churches in your area.
 - Share tips, processes, and intel.
- Connect with church friendly security experts.
 - WFX is a great place to start, seek others.
- Talk to your community First Responders.
 - They want to empower those they serve.

Thank you for your time

Further questions?