

From the Desk of Dave Rodwell



CONTROLLING CORPORATE CRIME

Violence and the Church



One would believe that attending a church or other religious location would be a safe act. But that is not always true. One only has to look the shooting incident on June 17, 2015 when nine people were shot and killed while attending Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. There are also many incidents of arson perpetrated on religious institutions.

We are living in a time, when unstable individuals are striking out against religious institutes of all denominations. It appears the number of attacks are increasing and not decreasing. People in charge of these institutes need to start taking precautions to protect their members.

Those attending a church, mosque or temple need to be vigilant for suspicious individuals and unattended packages. Ushers and others in key positions need to be trained on how to de-escalate what could be a violent situation. The goal is to create safer worship environments.

Maintenance of the church or structure, and surrounding landscaping should be kept clean and neat. Pruning of unkempt foliage for persons to hide is important

to the overall feeling of security. Good lighting in the evening is very important and necessary.

If there are youth groups or a nursery attached to a religious organization, volunteers must have thorough background checks completed on them. This is to ensure they are suitable to be around those age groups. Have key individuals been taught first aid and is the necessary first aid equipment on site and being maintained.

Churches should consider having a security assessment conducted and a small committee should be formed to meet and discuss security. Is there a crisis team in place with a well throughout plan of action to be taken if a crisis happens?

Religious administrators and leaders have a responsibility to ensure that those attending their facilities are in a safe environment. In a perfect world, people should be able to attend the religious institute of their choice without fear of violence occurring within or near it. But alas, we don't live in a perfect world.