

ON SAFETY AND SECURITY

The tragic shooting at West Freeway Church of Christ in Texas brings to the forefront once again the issue of church safety and security. First, let us pause and praise God that more people were not killed or injured. Second, remember the families of Tony Wallace and Richard White, the two men who died during the attack. And third, remember the family of the gunman. One man's poor decision does not condemn a family who is grieving not only his actions, but his lost life.

The shooting on December 29 reminds us of our own vulnerability to such evil. Often, we are lulled into complacency, thinking, "that could never happen here." Regardless of size and demographic setting, any church could be a victim. It is important to note: West Freeway Church of Christ HAD a security plan in place. At least five armed members of the detail sprang into action. It was the training and execution of the plan that saved dozens of lives that day.

We should not live in fear, however. We all understand the brevity of life and the uncertainty of our deaths, not to mention the glorious anticipation for Christ's return. Still, each church must take time to review its own security measures.

Pastors, if you have a security team, gather them as soon as possible to discuss the events at West Freeway and review your safety and security plans. Look for areas that may have been overlooked or need to be strengthened. If you do not have a security team/plan in place, let me strongly encourage you to meet with leadership immediately and develop a plan. Below are some resources that will help guide your process:

Books:

- ***The Missing Ministry: Safety, Risk Management, and Protecting Your Church*** by The GuideOne Center for Risk Management
- ***Keeping Your Church Safe*** by Ron Aguiar.

These books are not readily assessable for purchase online. I have copies and will gladly allow them to be borrowed. Attached is an assessment from SafeChurch that you can use in determining your church's security needs.

Web resources:

<http://www.sbc.net/churchresources/churchsafetysecurity.asp>

<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/church-security/>

<https://www.guideone.com/resource-center/safety-resources>

These websites have a wealth of great resources on all areas of church safety from dealing with a serious attack to playgrounds, van ministry, student ministry, and more.

As always, please contact me if I can assist you and your church in developing a security plan. Our KBC East Region Consultant, Paul Badgett, is also a wonderful resource for developing such a plan.

No matter who leads or assists in this process, let me be clear: A security plan is essential. And keep in mind: Security is more than just being prepared for an active shooter. Security involves financial practices, classroom management, ministry to senior adults, special needs, medical emergency plans, kitchen safety, maintenance problems, and so much more.

For His Glory,

Brian