

THE FOLSOM VIEW

“...HAVING THE EYES OF YOUR HEART ENLIGHTENED...” EPHESIANS 1:18

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“Church Security”

BY DAVID POSEY

Terry Raposa and I attended a “church security” conference in Lake Forest, California on March 26th. The conference was designed to (a) awaken awareness of violence in churches and other “soft targets” and (b) provide some tools for dealing with issues that could escalate into violence.

Terry and I both feel that, for the most part, the conference succeeded on both levels. We had no idea, prior to attending the conference, that attacks on churches were as frequent as they are. While still rare, there have been many more than most of us would imagine.

The conference speakers were competent and, in a couple of cases, outstanding. The keynote speaker, John Nicoletti, is an expert on workplace, school and church violence. He was a consultant on the Columbine shootings and the recent Virginia Tech attacks. His presentation was particularly useful in that he gave specific examples of how to recognize problems early on and how to prevent them from developing into violence.

Of course, dealing with people in a church setting is more difficult than in other settings. We are here to accept people, regardless of how they look (see James 2:1-7) or even, up to a point, how they act. Our priority is acceptance not suspicion. Dealing with possible “intruders” takes a deft hand and must be carried out with grace.

At the same time, we don’t want to be naïve. There are evildoers in the world and it’s possible that someone may wish to do us harm. If that ever happens, we plan to be ready.

There is certainly no cause for undue alarm or fear, but “to be forewarned is to be forearmed.” Not too long ago, a man entered the auditorium in the middle of the sermon and even made a rather rude comment. His behavior was not “normal” and was a cause of concern. Of course,

nothing more came of it, but it did cause us to begin to think about the possibility of someone coming into the auditorium with the intention of either disrupting services or worse.

In the future, I will be discussing some of the specific lessons learned in the conference and share things the elders determine the entire church needs to know. Meanwhile, we will be establishing a security plan and we will appoint a team of men who will be responsible for implementing it.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask myself, Terry or one of the elders.

Individual “Security”

Everyone wants to be safe. That is, we want to feel secure and unafraid to live our lives and to go where we want to go without someone causing us bodily harm.

But what about spiritual harm? Are we as concerned about security for our souls as we are

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about security of our physical lives?

To protect our lives and property, we lock the doors and are careful where we go and when. You may have a security system installed in your home, monitored by a service like ADT or Brink’s. You want the alarm to go off if someone tries to break into your house. Having the system in place gives you some sense of “security.”

But what steps are you taking to protect the security of your soul and the souls of your children? It would be great if there was a service you could install in yourself and your family that

would warn you each time the devil made an attempt to break and enter. If a temptation set off bells and whistles, it would be easier to identify and overcome.

Unfortunately, no such such alarm exists, at least not in the physical sense. You must be so tuned in to God's will that when Satan attacks, an internal alarm is triggered and startles you enough to make you take steps to avoid his evil attempt on your life.

Part of your job as a parent is to "install" those alarms in your child so that he or she learns to "hear" the siren when the devil comes calling and take steps to get away (II Tim. 2:22). That doesn't happen overnight. There must be a steady devotion to teaching about holiness and righteousness. The goal is not just to get your children to do the right thing, but to get them to the point where they *prefer* the right thing. I hope you see the difference.

God has given us the ability to install a spiritual alarm system to insure that our daily walk with Him is secure and safe. If we "walk carefully" in this lie (Eph. 5:15) God will take us the rest of the way into heaven.

I've printed II Peter 1:3-11 in the sidebar because it is a passage of Scripture that has great power to motivate you to make that walk. It puts to rest the notion that "eternal security" is something God bestows on us unconditionally (see v. 10, highlighted). God expects us to take a part in establishing our "security." He expects us to install a spiritual alarm, if you will, that will enable us to be ready to meet the devil when he comes.

Remember I Peter 5:8,

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

II Peter 1:3-11

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, **for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.** For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord