



Church leaders prepare for the worst

By [John Garlock](#)

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MACON, MO. -- In light of recent fatal shootings at churches around the country, some area church leaders went through intruder response training this week.

Fact Finder discovered that Crossroads Christian Church in Macon hosted an all-day church security seminar Thursday.

About 25 people attended to learn ways to protect unsuspecting congregations from such violence.

"There was a time when it was unthinkable to think that a violent act would occur at a church, and those times are long gone. And, there's no longer that moral barrier to not committing that sort of act," said Vaughn Baker, who lead the seminar.

Baker is the president of Strategos International in Grandview, Missouri. He travels around the country conducting intruder response training for churches, schools and corporations.

Baker told Fact Finder that besides alarm systems and surveillance cameras, a big key is increased awareness on the part of church leaders, who are taught to be on the lookout for suspicious activity.

Seminar participants learn to identify body language of people who are up to no good.

Some telltale signs include people who walk at a fast pace with a fixed focus. Baker said they often keep to themselves and often sit in a seat next to the aisle. He said many times there hands will be sweating, and they'll be wiping them on their pants because they are nervous.

Baker blames a breakdown of morals in this country for shootings at churches, schools and other places.

"When you see a rest home that gets attacked, that's the true definition of innocent victim, and schools where you have young students who are getting killed, innocent victims, and churches, the same thing. There's no other description but moral decay," said Baker.

Baker said that in 2008, there were 18 incidents of violence at churches across the U.S.

He said in the first half of this year, there have already been 17 such acts.

The Reverend Tim Worstell pastors Macon's Crossroads Christian Church, which hosted the church security seminar.

He said it's better to be safe than sorry.

"You know, it could hit home to us real easy because we're on a crossroads of 63 and 36, major highways. We get a lot of stop-ins from people off the highway wanting help or questions, or just coming in. So, it's real to us as far as it could happen any time," said Worstell.

Of those who attended the event, some were local, but others came from other parts of Missouri and some even traveled from Illinois.

