

# Joseph Paul Manley, Founder, Risk Mitigation Technologies, Talks About The Special Security Needs At Houses Of Worship

*In The Boardroom" On SecuritySolutionsWatch.com*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA, March 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: Thank you for joining us today, Paul. We read with great interest on your site about the Houses Of Worship Consulting Services

(<https://riskmitigationtechnologiesllc.com/houses-of-worship-consulting>) which you provide. Just a few days ago there was a tragic intentional fire at a historic Church in Texas (<https://www.kxan.com/news/local/austin/deeply-heartbreaking-incendiary-fire-started-at-historic-black-church/>) and, unfortunately, hate crimes and violence at Houses of Worship are on the rise.

The White House

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/05/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-takes-action-to-protect-places-of-worship/> ),

and the United States Department Of Justice

(<https://www.justice.gov/crs/our-work/facilitation/protecting-places-of-worship>), have naturally weighed in on this very serious issue.



Joseph Paul Manley,  
Founder, Owner, Risk  
Mitigation  
Technologies

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We are honored to speak with Paul Manley today about the special security needs at Houses Of Worship. He is speaking March 21, 2023, at the Firehouse Center for The Arts in Newburyport, Mass.”

*Martin Eli, Publisher*

Please tell us more, Paul, about the security consulting services you provide regarding Houses Of Worship.

Joseph Paul Manley: Thank you for having me. I always enjoy discussing these important topics with you.

Houses of Worship including, Churches, Synagogues, Mosques, and Temples are places of faith, religion, ideology, and emotions. It is a place where most individuals should feel safe and supported by their community while sharing common views and morals.

Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been an unprecedented increase of religion-based Hate Crimes here in the U.S. and around the world.

These soft targets are vulnerable, and recently they have been attractive targets for crime, mass shootings and other threats. Just recently the Austin Texas Fire Department investigators concluded an "incendiary device" started the tragic fire at the Goodwill Baptist Church earlier this month causing \$200,000 worth of damages, in total. According to the Austin Fire Department someone intentionally set the fire. This and other types of violence against Houses of Worship are no longer strange to the world, and security must be at the best interest of every House of Worship.

As you know, every religious institution is different in size and design. Houses of worship may be a single building with a few attendees. Other places may contain multiple buildings and

entrances with thousands attending services and events every day from morning to night with activities for all ages. Therefore, each facility will have different security concerns.

For example, a small House of Worship of one hundred will have a different list of concerns than a House of Worship of 1,000. However, it is imperative that each religious institution strive to enhance its level of security and determine what is appropriate for their facility. You might remember June 17, 2015, when a 21-year-old shooter entered the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, he chose a location with only twelve witnesses. Yet, when a pedophile is looking for a victim, he may look for a larger religious institution where it is easy to slide right in, unnoticed and unobserved.

I cannot stress enough about the importance of having exterior security controls. Why? Because exterior security controls encourage us to think about how best to secure the perimeter of our Houses of Worship, their parking lots, playground areas, and mass drop-off areas. We need to start thinking critically about the vulnerability of crowds and how they can be attacked, both outside and inside buildings. Check this out. According to the FBI, in a 15-year study of the most



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**Joseph Paul Manley**

Founder, Owner,  
Principal Security Consultant  
**Risk Mitigation Technologies, LLC**



The security challenges facing Houses of Worship are growing each day. We cannot do a "one size fits all" approach because of the age of the House of Worship, the size, the design and even the location make a big difference as to the types of protocols that are recommended. This is why Houses of Worship must have a security assessment completed by an independent security consultant as soon as practical. There needs to be a safety and security plan in place and security training for staff and volunteers to help reduce the risk of violence. It is important to note that as you begin to evaluate your property, keep in mind two distinct threats: a threat from the outside coming in or a threat from the inside that is already there.

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violent crimes at faith-based organizations, more than 70% of the acts occurred outside the building on ministry grounds or parking lots. That is too high and unacceptable to me.

Each House of Worship has its own unique challenges if they are to create a safe place to worship. Various security precautions can be implemented in a non-intrusive manner, completely unknown and unobserved by congregants. For example, implementing a “Welcoming Committee” that includes individuals observing and welcoming people as they enter the facility will be unnoticed as a security program, yet it is highly effective when the members are trained in security detection.

You know how I feel about training. I believe in it. I believe in physical training. Houses of Worship have a responsibility to safeguard their members from harm and work to educate and equip their staff and volunteers on how to physically respond in time of crisis. A religious institution that fails to prepare – prepares to fail.

Here are ten questions we NEED to be thinking about now!

1. Have you designated “security” as a priority and are you committed to developing a security plan?
2. Do you ensure that all workers and volunteers pass a background check with fingerprints and ensure the references are verified? NOTE: It is recommended that you know individuals at least six months before allowing them to volunteer and/or work with children.
3. Do you have security observing who is coming into the parking lots, then the building, and what they are carrying with them?
4. Is each entrance clearly marked with your address and is each entrance well-lighted?
5. Is each entrance to the building attended by someone acting as a greeter during worship times?
6. If a hostile intruder enters the sanctuary, do you have a plan?
7. If volunteers, staff, and/or security personnel need to summon additional personnel, do you have a system?
8. At any given time, how do you know how many people are in the building and who they are?
9. Do you have an emergency preparedness plan that addresses weather emergencies, medical emergencies, and man-made emergencies that could happen at your facility or adjacent to your facility?
10. Do you have opening and closing procedures for each building with a designated person?

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the outside coming in or a threat from the inside that is already there.

Remember, your first goal is to eliminate the threat from coming in. However, if the threat is already inside, the first layer of your security has failed, and you must then react to the threat. At that point, you have no choice. You must react.

As experts specializing in security design and emergency preparation for hostile intruder events, my team of independent security consultants at Risk Mitigation Technologies, LLC assist in assessing the vulnerability and readiness of houses of worship, religious schools, and retreat centers against risks of violence.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: We also noted on your LinkedIn page (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/josephpaulmanley/>) that you have highlighted several significant security tips for Houses Of Worship. Care to elaborate?

Joseph Paul Manley: All organizations that are open to the public need to consider the security of their staff, volunteers and visitors while on the premises. Even though religious institutions and their properties are safe sanctuaries, they are not immune to the same security issues that affect society in general.

I recommend all religious institutions have a security assessment. Completing a security vulnerability assessment is the first step in addressing your safety and security exposures and it will provide you with answers to my LinkedIn post that you referenced. It is essential to have an understanding of the threats and dangers typically faced by your surrounding community, including other businesses and Houses of Worship in your area. Develop a team of staff and volunteers and begin to identify their common concerns related to safety and security for the programs and services you provide. Keep in mind that safety and security needs will vary. For example, an annual carnival event will require different security precautions than your regular Sunday services.

Also, having a security vulnerability assessment is especially important because it examines the safety, accessibility, and emergency preparedness of the House of Worship's buildings and grounds. The assessment should include, but not limited to, a review of building access, visibility around the exterior of buildings, compliance with standards for individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, and emergency vehicle access.

We must not forget to assess our own people. We should have an inventory of every position and person within the congregation who has access to children. This list should include individuals who transport and teach children; people who assist in the dining room, gym, and playground; mentors; youth pastors; ministers; counselors; clergy; kohen; rabbi; volunteers; and even security personnel. Make sure to have your applicants and volunteers sign paperwork agreeing to a background check. Officials should then conduct a national, state, and local record check on anyone who has access to children. They should also contact former and current

neighbors and people who attended other places of worship or organizations with the applicants.

Once individuals have passed through the background check, I recommend that Houses of Worship rotate staff and volunteers on a regular basis to reduce the potential for predators to develop long-term relationships with victims. Officials can also watch to see if, after rotated, a staff member reaches back for a particular child to be included in his or her new role.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: Regarding your firm, Risk Mitigation Technologies, LLC, (<https://riskmitigationtechnologiesllc.com/>) are there any recent case studies, or projects at Houses Of Worship, that you would like to mention here for our readers?

Joseph Paul Manley: You know, several weeks ago, I was on my way to the local hardware store. As I was driving by the catholic church, out of the corner of my eye I saw an individual standing and leaning up against the side of the church partially concealing himself or herself from public view. Honestly, I did not think anything of it at first. I was concentrated on getting to the hardware store and back home before the afternoon school traffic.

As I was driving by the catholic church on my way home from the hardware store, I saw that same individual walking out from behind the church. Once the person saw me looking from my car, he or she turned right around and walked quickly back behind the church. It was a cold day, and the person was wearing a heavy coat, hoodie with the hood pulled up over the head, and the hood strings pulled tight making it difficult to see the persons face.

I turned my car around and headed back towards the church. I parked my car across the street from the church to better see what was going on. I did not see anyone; therefore, the person was still behind the building. There were no construction or utility vehicles of any kind parked on church property, along the street or in the parking lot across from the church. I had not seen anyone coming and going from the church but yet this person was on private property and did not seem to be conducting legitimate business and he or she was trying to conceal themselves.

The police department was only one block away, so I got out of my car and walked to the police station to report my observations.

When I returned to my car, the police were arriving on scene. Soon I saw the officer walking out from behind the church escorting a male who had been placed in handcuffs. The officer transported the man away from the scene.

Later that afternoon, I received a phone call from the arresting officer. I was told that the male had "outstanding warrants for his arrest" and had a criminal history for drug possession, trespassing, and theft. The officer informed me that there were no signs or reports of unlawful entry or vandalism to property. The officer thanked me for reporting the incident and mentioned that he informed the leadership staff at the catholic church what had happened.

No one knows for sure what was going through the mind of my suspicious person. What is important is that YOU pay attention to your surroundings and when contacting the police, it is important for you to be able to articulate:

1. Who you observed (a description)
2. What did you see, be specific?
3. Where was it?
4. When did you see it?
5. Why in your opinion was it suspicious? Remember, you are more aware of what's normal for your community than anyone else, but you need to be able to communicate that.

You can make a difference!

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: Any upcoming events or speaking engagement you'd like to mention Paul?

Joseph Paul Manley: I do. Thank you for asking. I am extremely excited to be presenting on March 21, 2023, at the Firehouse Center for The Arts in Newburyport, Massachusetts. The subject matter is Customer Service: De-escalating Difficult Customers.

This scenario based interactive training will help front line personnel with situational awareness and strategies to recognize and respond to problematic behavior. Participants will be learning about body language, tone of voice and active/reflective listening to de-escalate situations and create a safer and more productive environment. I am very appreciative of this opportunity. The training is sold out. The demand is such that we are in the process of scheduling a second class in Newburyport before the end of the month.

SecuritySolutionsWatch.com: Thank you again for joining us today, Paul. We look forward to future updates. Are there any other subjects you would like to talk about today?

Joseph Paul Manley: Yes, thank you. I want people to understand that the risk of targeted violence is substantial. Anyone or any organization can be at risk.

As I mentioned earlier in our discussion, as you begin to evaluate your organization, keep in mind two distinct threats: A threat from the outside coming in or a threat from the inside that is already there. Your first goal is to eliminate the threat from coming in. However, if the threat is already inside, your first layer of security has failed you.

We are here to help you. Our customized security programs are focused on YOU, your industry, your vulnerabilities, your specific risks, your goals, and objectives. Not all organizations have the same concerns and issues so partner with us to get the desired outcomes that you want and need. We will do the research, the interviews, the planning and whatever it takes to deliver the

value to you and your organization.

Do not hesitate to give us a call or send us an email for more information. Our website provides further detail, but we always appreciate a call !

For the complete discussion with Joseph Paul Manley, Founder, Risk Mitigation Technologies, "In The Boardroom", please click here:

[https://www.securitysolutionswatch.com/staging/Interviews/in\\_Boardroom\\_RiskMitigationTechnologies\\_Joesph\\_Paul\\_Manley.html](https://www.securitysolutionswatch.com/staging/Interviews/in_Boardroom_RiskMitigationTechnologies_Joesph_Paul_Manley.html)

For many more useful security tips, and a complete overview of the Security Consulting, Services and Training provided by Joseph Paul Manley, Founder, Risk Mitigation Technologies, please click here: (<https://riskmitigationtechnologiesllc.com/services>)

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