

**Starting and Strengthening Congregations**

**Matthew Quinton, Speaker**

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Chris Reinolds: Welcome to the Columbia Metro Connection podcast where you can go to get valuable, relevant, and quality resources for you and your congregation. The Columbia Metro Connection is sponsored and supported by the Columbia Metro Baptist Association and the almost 100 partner churches that support the ministry of the CMBA.

This week we have a special sponsor in the form of Connie Maxwell Children's Home. Let's take a minute to hear from the newly-appointed president, Danny Nicholson.

Danny Nicholson: At Connie Maxwell Children's Home, we believe the face of God is a child without a home. As we reach out to children and families that are broken, abandoned, and lost, we seek to minister to them in the name of Jesus, to give them love and make them whole. At Connie Maxwell, we have five different locations across South Carolina: Greenwood, Florence, Mauldin, Chesterfield. Those are all places that we opened our doors to make sure children receive all that they need in their time of trouble and vulnerability. Of course, we are a part of residential care, foster care, crisis care, family care, and very strong advocates of adoption. So, what I'm saying is Connie Maxwell is there to love children in South Carolina, to minister to their needs, and provide a place where they can receive love and a place called home.

The truth is, we really do believe that the face of God is a child without a home. So, as we seek to minister, we reach out to "the least of these." Connie Maxwell Children's Home has been around for 125 years taking care, loving, and ministering to 17,000 children. So, come see us on our campuses. Pray for us. Make a gift. Support us so that we can take care of God's own: our children.

Chris Reinolds: Well, Danny, thank you so much for that. We really hear your passion and what it is that you're doing at the Connie Maxwell Children's Home. And, if you're interested in supporting them and their essential ministry, please get in contact with them and let them know.

Hosts for this week's episode are George Bullard, the Director of Missions at Columbia Metro Baptist Association, strategic leadership coach, lead missiologist and virtuoso of all things church related; and I'm Chris Reinolds, lead pastor at Killian Baptist Church and founder of [chrisreinolds.com](http://www.chrisreinolds.com).

Joining us this week is Matthew Quinton with the Southern Mutual Church Insurance Company. The Southern Mutual Church Insurance Company has been working with churches in a variety of ways for a number of years. In their continual pursuit to meet the needs of the local church, they've been working diligently to educate churches on the importance of up-to-date safety and security procedures.

George Bullard: Thank you, Matthew, very much for being here. We appreciate all the services from Southern Mutual Church Insurance, but particularly today's presentation about safety and security. It's so vitally important to every one of our churches.

Matthew Quinton: Thank you, Dr. Bullard. It's a pleasure to be here and we appreciate our partnership with Columbia Metro that we've enjoyed for a long, long time. And I've said this on our little commercial on the first time we were together: Our first policy holder is Southside Baptist Church, which is in the Columbia Metro Baptist Association.

George Bullard: Absolutely.

Chris Reinolds: Can I get us started, Matthew? We're talking about safety and security and we've just finished up a vision Tuesday where we kind of talked about that as well. But, in your interaction with churches, is anyone really still saying they don't need to worry about this? And if you encounter those people, maybe when you encounter those people, what are you telling them?

Matthew Quinton: Well, with so much in the news today, quite honestly we don't bump into too many people that think it's not a problem. But we meet plenty of people who have no idea how to get started. But if I ever did encounter someone who was proverbially whistling through the graveyard on this issue, I would ask them, "Do you have a fire extinguisher in your home?" Not planning on having a fire, but clearly if you don't have one, you're not willing to prepare for something, while unlikely, but that could be devastating. That would be maybe a reaction I would have to someone who had that mindset.

Chris Reinolds: That makes sense.

George Bullard: So what if you have that person then who is ready to do something, but they don't know what the first step is? What would you say to them about how to get started?

Matthew Quinton: Well, I think just getting started, like we did today for a lot of folks, is the most crucial step. It's just taking that first step. But to answer your question how, I think probably the security assessment of the church physical plant and campus, which is totally different from each church to church. Assessing your specific exposures. Maybe inviting law enforcement to come out and do that, which I'm sure someone here in Richland County Sheriff's Department will be more than happy to do that. As a matter of fact, I know they would. They've been a great partner with us over the years. And to do that security assessment first before we go into the whole setting up of the security committee or team. But seeking out that professional assistance, those are the key starting steps, I think, in this process.

Chris Reinolds: So really, inviting them out, "Hey, come and look at my facility and take a look at these things, and just give me an overall evaluation," that sort of thing.

Matthew Quinton: Exactly.

Chris Reinolds: Okay. Well, that makes sense. One of the elements of the Southern Mutual Church Insurance Company highlights on the website is that the church security program is built on three pillars. Could you talk to us a little bit about those three pillars that are mentioned there?

Matthew Quinton: Yeah. Those three pillars are equipment, protocols, and, the most important we feel, is training. The equipment piece is the actual hardware. I won't call them security cameras because we call them cameras on the video. Because it's only a camera unless someone is actually watching that video and monitoring it to react, or respond rather, to an incident. But that would be part of the equipment piece--panic hardware on doors, medical kits in the aftermath of a mass-casualty incident, God forbid that would ever happen.

The second pillar would be the protocols, which are very important in that written policies and procedures and what we're going to follow so that everyone's on the same page that is on the security team and also the members of the congregation that would know how to follow in the event of a bad day.

Chris Reinolds: Do you find that churches are kind of missing that protocol element of it?

Matthew Quinton: I would say that one of the mindsets or thoughts that we've seen that we really try to get churches away from is, "Hey, we've got concealed weapon permit folks in our church. And we have given permission to four or five folks to be armed in church. And we're okay." What we talk about also are the rings of security, where these issues can be dealt with before they get into the sanctuary. Because that is probably the worst case scenario is having a gun battle inside the church where something could be dealt with before it gets inside. Maybe no shots are fired at all because someone sees someone coming, and locks the doors, and they're unable to get in.

Chris Reinolds: Wow. That makes sense.

Matthew Quinton: And then the third pillar is the training itself. And we are clear to say, "We are an insurance company. We are not a security consulting company." So, what we ask churches to do is to seek professionals in this area to get training on how to deal with this issue and how to set up a plan that works for them.

George Bullard: You know I was impressed when I heard you talk about this and about particularly the training and the equipment, and those kinds of things. You were talking in terms of the church has to be prepared for the first five to ten minutes of when an incident occurs, before first responders can come. Can you speak more into that?

Matthew Quinton: Yeah. It's very unfortunate. We either react or we respond. If we react, it's just what our instincts are, that we would do. And we'll talk about in a moment, Ariel Siegelman says in the video, most people react poorly. If you're not trained to respond a certain way, it doesn't usually go well. But most of these incidents, like you're saying, they're over and done within a matter of five minutes. And 70% of the time they're over before law enforcement can even get on the scene. That's why it's important to have folks at the church on the ground that are prepared to protect the congregation in one of these types of incidents.

George Bullard: But you also say, and I think this is a very important thing, that it's not only about people being prepared in terms of how to respond to an active shooter situation or some other kind of aggression that is being expressed in the church. But the whole idea hadn't occurred to me until I heard you say it today, that people need to be trained in more advanced CPR or medical assistance, and that kind of thing. Share with me about that.

Matthew Quinton: As I said in my presentation, I really don't like to talk about bleeding and blood. But, in a mass casualty incident, that is what we're going to be dealing with. If people have gun shot wounds, a band aid and an aspirin are not going to be effective in taking care of these folks. But a tourniquet or a pressure bandage, and people who are trained to properly use this type of equipment can save lives. I've been told that if someone is having massive bleeding that they can pass away in a matter of about two minutes. We want to be so focused on having people armed to protect, but we also need to have some folks that, maybe a paramedic, or someone who is in the medical field, who can step in and help out in this way. And it is critical in saving lives.

Chris Reinolds: That does resonate with me. I think that a lot of churches specifically, they have those first responders kits or that little first aid kid, that sort of thing that are located all over the place, all over the building, and various places, whether in the children's wing or that sort of thing. But they don't have anything more advanced than just those materials. So it resonates. Is that something you commonly find is the case in most churches?

Matthew Quinton: It is. And one of these kits that has a pressure bandage tourniquet they're not inexpensive. You're probably looking at a full kit at being right around $100. But you can purchase tourniquets and get those at much less of a cost. But we strongly recommend that a church purchase these, stage them throughout the campus, so they can be used in the event of one of these types of incidences.

Chris Reinolds: Now, it's our desire not to see those events occur. Those things happen. So, I guess, my question would be before it reaches that point, what are ways in which a security team or maybe some other ministry can even have some starting practical pointers whenever it comes to general church security, to intercede before those moments even occur?

Matthew Quinton: I think it all goes back to that security assessment and see where there maybe so vulnerabilities, some weak areas. One thing that we've preached since day one is limiting the access and entry points into the sanctuary once the service has begun. Maybe five, ten minutes into the service, those doors are locked, and individuals wishing to seek entry are going to have to go through the vestibule area up front, where you would have, even if it's just ushers or someone, if you don't have a security team established yet. People that they have to pass through so that they can recognize something that's an anomaly.

Another thing in that same vein is positioning people on the security team in all these rings of security, not just in the sanctuary, but also in the halls, outside the building, the parking lot. We talk about we're trying to protect our folks from this horrible incident, but the security team may also catch someone breaking into a car. We've heard about that. We may have someone go down the hall of the Sunday School wing when they shouldn't be down there. So there is a lot of other things the security team can mitigate other than just the active shooter scenario.

Chris Reinolds: I've also heard church security begins with five words. "How, may, I, help, you." Just simply coming up to somebody and saying "Hey! How can I help you?" or "How may I help you?" is an immediate assessment of the situation.

Matthew Quinton: And that could literally take someone who has the wrong thing on their mind completely off guard and diverted that may cause them to leave. And you can do it in a way where you're being welcoming and friendly, just like you said to just divert a situation.

George Bullard: You know a team obviously is more than a group of guys and gals who have a concealed weapons permit. Obviously there must be more training, there must be a procedure, or there must be some kind of plan about what we would do if we had any kind of incident. Like an estranged father trying to steal a child out of the preschool area, in addition to things like an active shooter situation where someone is mentally imbalanced or has an ax to grind against a person doing that. So, what training other than simply the fact "Hey, I can be on the security team. I have a CWP."

Matthew Quinton: Absolutely. I couldn't agree with that more. The CWP training in our meeting earlier, we had a deputy sheriff in the room, and he was just nodding his head, "Yes, yes, yes" to the CWP training in of itself is not enough. To be trained in these type of situations, churches need to go outside to a security consulting company for this type training. Now, as far as the level or degree, it's kind of difficult to say because that is dictated oftentimes by the resources of the church. A small church may just not have the financial resources to send someone off for this type of training. But many law enforcement agencies are very willing and open to providing some level of training. And that's what we would recommend is leaning on these experts in those areas for that.

Chris Reinolds: And obviously we'll have a number of those listed on the website. So, I want to make sure to plug that into our show notes so that people can click on those links directly.

We talked about the church membership and people in the body being aware of things. How involved should the church members be about the emergency procedures? How much knowledge do they need to have about the things that take place, maybe even like a scenario like an active shooter? And how much involvement should they have in that?

Matthew Quinton: We feel that the entire congregation should, at a minimum, be aware that the church has established a security team. Each church has different challenges. Some want to be extremely transparent, others may say, "Well we've got some folks that may get their feelings hurt because they weren't included on that security team." And we actually had that discussion just a little while ago in our meeting. And I totally understand that. But, I think at a minimum, to give the congregation some sense of comfort that you're dealing with the situation, and that you're putting something together to protect them and their families, I think that, at a minimum. And letting folks know that even though you may not be on the security team, but if you see something that just doesn't fit, to go tell someone, or walk up to them, and welcome them, and greet them, and ask if there is anything you can do to help. I think that's one thing that folks may feel, "Hey, I'm not on security team. I can't make a difference." Sometimes, it takes someone stepping up and being courageous to say, "Hey, how can I help?" or deal with a situation, lend a hand. But as far as the amount that you communicate, that kind of goes on a case by case basis. Some churches may want to share every bit of the detail, and others may want to just on an as-needed basis.

Chris Reinolds: Matthew thank you so much for joining with us this morning as we're able to talk about these very difficult topics. If somebody wanted to reach out to you and contact you personally, what is the best means for them to do that?

Matthew Quinton: Well, they certainly can always call our office here in Columbia at 776-9365 and ask for me by name. We are actively looking for opportunities to present our church security workshop to churches, whether they're insured with us or not. Our video is on the website at [smcins.com](http://www.smcins.com) along with a lot of other resources. It's a fifteen minute video that will really help get the process started. And we also have a PowerPoint presentation that will come out, which lends itself to opening up discussion on this matter.

Chris Reinolds: Well great. We'll put all that stuff in the show notes that way people can get in contact with you. Thank you so much for joining with us today.

Matthew Quinton: Thanks for having me.

George Bullard: Thank you, Matt.

Chris Reinolds: Thank you for joining with us, and please be sure to check out the show notes for more detailed information about today's show. Also, if you found this podcast helpful to you or your ministry, share it with others so that we can get the word out about what God is doing. Until next time, from all of us at the Columbia Metro Connection, we thank you for listening, and urge you to share this podcast with everyone you know.

It's the good news about the Good News in the Columbia Metro Baptist Association.