

For Immediate Release

Contact: Steve Honig
The Honig Company
818-986-4300
press@honigcompany.com

**NEW STUDY ON VIOLENCE IN CHURCHES REVEALS STRUGGLING ECONOMY
LEADING CAUSE OF ATTACKS ON HOUSES OF WORSHIP AND CLERGY**

**Places of worship falling prey to acts of violence at an alarming rate; study provides insight
into leading causes, misconceptions and challenges dealing with attacks**

NEW YORK, Apr. 6, 2009 – [SCG International](#), a U.S.-based global provider of fully integrated, domestic and international security, logistics and training services, today released highlights from a yearlong study on the issue of violence against churches and other places of worship in the United States.

The study showed violence against churches, clergy and congregants is on the rise, and despite advances in technology and security procedure, most places of worship are ill equipped to handle even the smallest act of violence.

“Unfortunately, an increasing number of churches and religious organizations are falling victim to violent acts every year and the problem is expected to get even worse,” said Jamie Smith, CEO of SCG International and a former decorated CIA officer. “It has become imperative that definitive action be taken to protect churches, pastors, staff and the church-going public from these senseless acts. Religious leaders at churches, mission organization as well as universities with denominational affiliations across the country need to take a hard look at what security measures they have in place, and determine if those measures are adequate.”

Highlights of the SCG International study on church violence:

- During economic downturns increased anger is directed against God
- Most acts of violence against churches are planned and undertaken by an individual acting alone
- Perpetrators are overwhelmingly males 25-60
- Perpetrators see churches as easy targets
- Vandalism and theft are the leading crimes committed against places of worship
- Unlike robberies, when a firearm is involved there is usually either a death or serious injury
- Many lone perpetrators tend to target religious or cultural symbols
- Root causes include anger against God and anger against the Church

- more -

Another report, “A Study of Church Vulnerability to Violence” by William Bourns and Wesley D. Wright, surveyed pastors and ministers across the country and found that 60 percent said they have observed violence increasing in their churches, with 78 percent believing anger is increasing in both adults and juveniles, which is one of the leading causes of violence against churches.

Earlier last month, a 27-year-old man armed with a .45 caliber pistol entered an Illinois Baptist church during a Sunday morning service and shot and killed the church’s pastor in front of the entire congregation. In July 2008, a 58-year-old man opened fire on a crowd in a Knoxville, Tennessee church during a children’s play, killing two people and injuring six more.

SCG International recommends churches and other houses of worship develop and implement security programs that address:

- Reaction to natural and unnatural disasters, including crime, terrorism, threats to services and special events
- Special situations, such as guest speakers or visits from high-profile individuals
- Training ushers and greeters on security procedures and emergency response
- Detailed security assessment of access control systems, alarms, video surveillance systems as well as access to sensitive areas such as a children’s centers and nurseries
- Reaction to these situations during services and special events, and during the week when only staff are on campus

“Every single month we see churches come under attack from rogue members, furious unbelievers and random threats,” said Dr. Ergun Caner, President of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. “Sadly, in our world and in our own country, the need for threat prevention and a clear action plan is essential. In this current climate, you can either watch, wait and pray that nothing happens, or you can be proactive and stop problems before they ever arise.”

[SCG International](#) is a U.S.-based global provider of fully integrated, domestic and international security, logistics and training services, to both the government and private sectors, and is recognized as a world leader in risk mitigation, intelligence support and training. Established in 1996, the organization offers clients practical solutions to promote stability and resolve conflict no matter how large or small. SCG International clients include Fortune 500 companies, entertainment and media conglomerates, financial institutions, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Intelligence agencies, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Army, U.S. Naval Special Warfare, the U.S. Marine Corps and high-profile individuals including dignitaries, politicians, celebrities, athletes, corporate executives, media personalities and other public figures.