

The basis of this story is true. It was related to me at a recent "*Safe To Worship - Active Threats Edition*" seminar. The information and the names have been modified to shield those involved.

John was a "sheepdog" for his church. A gentle family man, he had taken the time over the past several months to go through the requisite training set out by his church in order to be a Care Team member in the entrance area of the church auditorium every Sunday. He was there to watch for, and stop, the "wolf," should the "wolf" ever show up at the church. But he was also there to exercise his first responsibility in giving a good, friendly and loving first impression to people he would encounter as they came through the doors. His primary job, he knew, was ministry.

Somewhere across town, Bill was in a different situation. He had encountered rough times in life recently. Times were tough at home. He and the wife were in the midst of a divorce that was becoming messy. And his temper...if he could just learn to keep it under control, he might not be in the midst of the present crisis.

Right now, Bill was irritated beyond belief over "stuff," but particularly over the issues of the verbal fight he and his wife had in a phone conversation last night. How dare she hang up! He wasn't finished! Now, as he thought with the irrational mind of someone in fury, he remembered how and where he could confront his wife. At the church. With this in mind, Bill grabbed his keys and headed out the door.

John enjoyed being a Care Team member. He had never realized how much fun it would be to give that first kind word to people walking into the church. Now, he looked forward to his post on his assigned Sundays, including this day, as he demonstrated Christ's love to people as they entered to worship. All was well, until . . .

Bill walked "purposefully" through the front door in the church. He knew about where his wife normally sat, and by golly, he was going to make her talk to him this morning! To heck with what others thought! The scowl on his face said it all. Trouble had just walked in.

John, using the predictive profiling techniques he had learned in his training, immediately knew something was wrong with the newest person to enter the church. He noted Bill's harsh scowl, how he leaned forward with an intense, "look through the wall" stare, and even how hard he was breathing. The fact that Bill's hands were both balled into fists, his knuckles white from the pressure, told John this was not good. John immediately squeezed his covert mic for his radio, simply said, "A SAM in the foyer," said a quick prayer, and then made his move. At his call, he knew other team members would already be moving to his location, "just in case."

Stepping in front of Bill, John put a big smile on his face, stuck out his hand, and said, "Welcome, friend! It's great to see you this morning! Thanks for coming to our church. I'm not certain I know you. My name is John, what's yours?" And with that, John kept shaking Bill's hand, kept a big smile on his face, while praying in his spirit. But all the

while, John was also continuing to size up the situation, looking to see if Bill's other hand was clear of a weapon, and then quickly glancing at Bill's waist and chest for any partially hidden weapons. John did all this in about one second before looking back up to meet Bill's angry eyes.

"Please move. I need to go into the auditorium," Bill said somewhat gruffly. Bill would have been even angrier, but John's friendly, outgoing approach had thrown Bill's thought pattern. Now he was having to remember why he came, what his mission was, and refocus on what his next move needed to be.

"Friend, I would love to, but it looks like you're angry. You look like you need someone to talk to," said John.

"I am angry, bro', and I want in that auditorium!" Bill said forcefully. John stood his ground between the present potential "wolf," and the flock inside the auditorium doors.

"Man, you are angry, brother, but did you ever know some of the things Jesus said about anger? Or what the rest of the Bible says about anger, and the hassle it causes?" asked John, still praying in his spirit for discernment and wisdom.

And with that simple, friendly, stand-your-ground moment, all of the anger was suddenly out of Bill's body. John began to share scripture with Bill, and ended up praying with Bill right there in the foyer about his life, his troubled marriage, and for God to bless him in the days ahead. With that, as quickly as Bill had come, he was gone back out the door. Bill never saw John again after that day.

The time is now over two years later. John is shopping in a local store when someone suddenly taps him on the shoulder. Turning, John realizes he is facing the same Bill he had last seen two years previously. Only this Bill was different. He seemed peaceful. And the smile on his face seemed to bring light to the area around him. "You remember me?" asked Bill.

John acknowledged that he did, and asked how Bill was doing.

"I am great now, thanks to you," said Bill. "That day in the foyer of your church, when you firmly confronted me with Jesus' love, was the turning point in my life." Bill then proceeded to relate to John how God used the incident to "shock" him into the reality of what he was about to do. Bill went home a broken man, and allowed the near-violent incident to become the starting point for regaining his walk with God, winning his wife and his family back in the process. He even had a new, better job.

"I owe it all to your willingness to walk with God before you stepped in front of me," he told John. "Thank you that, in the middle of your volunteer security, you took time to minister to me."

Let me ask you something. If "Bill" walks into your church next Sunday, what will you

do? Will you make certain to meet, greet, and stand with your “Bill” until you figure out what his intentions are? If so, awesome.

But in the middle of being a focused, alert, “sheepdog,” always, always remember to minister.

Stay safe out there.