Part 3: Placement, Training, and Risks for Greeters and Ushers
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Being a greeter or an usher is a role that requires a great deal of balance. Coming off too pushy or overly aggressive may turn people off. Some will say nothing and some will just not return. Just as important as balance in the role of greeters and ushers – is the placement of greeters and ushers inside and outside your worship facilities. The safety and security of all attendees is paramount. Attendees must get from the parking areas into the facility and back to their vehicles after service as safely as possible. Posting greeters and ushers inside entrances and outside in the parking areas is suggested. Of course such considerations will depend on the size of the facility, number of greeters and ushers, and the need for such services. In addition, it is suggested that greeters and ushers wear some type of reflective vests. This will provide additional safety for those helping direct traffic or walk individuals to the entrances, but it will also tell others who they can contact for assistance.

Greeters and ushers posted inside may choose to wear a piece of clothing indicating their roles, but this may also be an additional safety issue. This is definitely something to discuss with members of the security team. Greeters should be posted at entrances and exits and should be available to assist guests to areas such as the restroom, childcare services, prayer room, etc. In addition, greeters and ushers should receive training for evacuation procedures, environmental emergencies, fire/tornado drills, and medical issues (i.e., choking, CPR, AED use, and 9/11 procedures). Greeters and ushers should train with members of the security team. Both groups should be able to work together, should something happen. Even though greeters and ushers may not be part of the security team, they must be made aware of all the risks they face in the positions that they fill. There is a chance for injury (e.g., accidental or intentional), so it is suggested that facilities check into liability waivers and medical release in the event a greeter or usher is hurt while performing their duties.

About the Author: Dr. Olivia Johnson holds a master’s in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Missouri, St. Louis and a doctorate in Organizational Leadership Management from the University of Phoenix – School of Advanced Studies. Perseverance in raising awareness to officer wellness resulted in her being named the Illinois State Representative for the National P.O.L.I.C.E. Suicide Foundation. This role led to her being invited to speak at the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit’s 2010 – Beyond Survival Toward Officer Wellness (BeSTOW) Symposium. Dr. Johnson is the Founder of the Blue Wall Institute, which trains first responders about health, wellness, stress, depression, and suicide. Dr. Johnson is a veteran of the United States Air Force and a former police officer; she collaborates with several law enforcement publications and is a columnist for PoliceOne.com. She is the Director of Security for a church in the Metro-East. Her services were contracted out by Crisis Systems Management to train military personnel worldwide on Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS). Correspondence can be sent to: johnsonolivia@sbcglobal.net