

Teens Wounded in Shooting at COGIC Church

Two teens were wounded Sunday when a gunman opened fire during a worship service at New Gethsemane Church in Christ in the San Francisco Bay area.

Investigators said roughly 100 people were gathered inside the Richmond, Calif., church when three men wearing hooded sweatshirts entered around 12:30 p.m., the Associated Press (AP) reported. One fired a gun, hitting a 14-year-old boy in the shoulder and his 19-year-old brother in the leg.

Church members screamed and hit the floor as one bullet flew over the heads of the choir, another pierced the red rug by the pews and another tore off a piece of molding, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported.

Witnesses told the newspaper that the teens' mother was sitting near them at the time of the shooting. When her sons were shot, she screamed, ran toward the pulpit and fainted in the aisle.

Neither victim suffered life-threatening injuries and both have been released from the hospital. No one else was wounded.

The three men fled and no arrests had been made Monday.

Sgt. Bisa French told the *San Francisco Chronicle* the victims "probably have an idea of why" the three men came looking for them and are cooperating with police.

The shooting has shocked many observers, who have seen churches as havens from such violence.

"We hate that it happened. In a church? It's just not real," church deacon Charles Wallace said, according to the AP. "[The suspects] have no regard or respect for life, especially in God's house. ... If you can't seek refuge here, then where can you go?"

Several worshipers, community members and pastors gathered at the church Monday, including Bishop J.W. Macklin, second assistant presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ.

"You have to refuse to close your door," Macklin said. "What happened speaks to the level of violence, and the level of hurt among our young people."

"But we'll bring thousands of people for a massive rally on March 6," he added. "We'll unite together on that day."