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## 5 Dead After Gunman Opens Fire in a Church in Louisiana

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BATON ROUGE, La., May 21 — A man opened fire inside the Ministry of Jesus Christ Church here during a Sunday morning service, killing four in-laws and wounding another before kidnapping his wife and killing her, law enforcement officials said.

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Ozier Muhammed/The New York Times

Jeffery Howard with pictures of three victims of Sunday's shootings, his parents, Gloria and Leonard Howard, and Erica Bell, his goddaughter.

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Lee Celano/Reuters

Anthony Bell after being arrested Sunday in Baton Rouge, La.

The man, identified by the police as Anthony Bell of Baton Rouge, also abducted three of his children, including an infant, as the service was nearing its end, the police said. The children were later found unharmed.

Mr. Bell, 25, was charged with five counts of first-degree homicide and one count each of attempted first-degree murder and second-degree kidnapping.

Resting his hands on his knees and shaking his head outside the church, a small metal-frame structure attached to a guitar shop, Chief Jeff Leduff of the Baton Rouge Police said: "When you start stacking up human life like this, it's sad. It's a sad day for the whole city."

Chief Leduff refused to release the names of the dead.

But Jeffery Howard, 47, of Baton Rouge, a church member, said his parents, Gloria and Leonard Howard, were among the dead.

Mr. Howard identified the suspect's slain wife as Erica Bell and said he was her godfather. He said the other two people killed were Deloris McGrew, Mr. Howard's aunt, and Darleen Mills, his cousin. Mr. Howard said the wounded woman was Claudia Brown, Ms. Bell's mother and the head pastor at the church.

"He killed some good people," Mr. Howard said as about 50 friends and relatives spilled out of his family's home into the yard. He added that the suspect "called my aunt before he did it and told her what he was going to do."

Mr. Howard said the shootings probably stemmed from domestic problems between the Bells.

"She was getting on with her life and wanted to keep worshiping and following God, and he just wanted to run on the streets," Mr. Howard said. "He was in and out of her life a lot."

He said Mr. Bell had problems keeping a job and often gambled.

Chief Leduff said Ms. Bell's body was found in a parked car at the Ardenwood Park Apartments, a few miles from the church. Mr. Bell was discovered nearby, he said, crying and holding the infant, and was taken into custody.

Chief Leduff said the other two children were apparently dropped off at another residence before Ms. Bell was killed. By evening, the three children who were abducted were sleeping at the Howard family home.

The church's members are mostly related, Mr. Howard said, and total membership numbers about 100. At an average Sunday service, 20 people might be in attendance, he said.

At the apartment complex, residents walked about holding children, swapping details — from grossly misleading to fairly accurate — and looking to the back of the parking lot where police officers lingered.

"Ain't nothing like this ever happened out here," said Tina Jones, 33, with her back to a window displaying a variety of religious regalia. "I mean, I let my kids play out here all the time."

Chief Leduff said it could take considerable time to confirm everyone's connections and to determine Mr. Bell's motives.

Mr. Howard said that Ms. Brown's condition was stable and that she was recovering at a local hospital.