

A Problem With No Present Solution

Gun Control

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Radio, the Internet, TV news, newspapers, and news magazines are filled with news of the tragic mass slaying of the children and teachers in Newtown, Connecticut. At the beginning of the reporting, the news was almost entirely of the event itself. But each day, the calls by politicians—mostly liberal Democrats—became ever-more strident that *something* must be done about gun control in order to stop such massacres from ever occurring again. This is a normal reaction, and of course what we want to occur is that they never happen again. Is not this what we would all very much like to experience?

But I reported to you last Sabbath that *Mother Jones News* reported that this was the 61st mass murder in the United States of America since 1982 ["It Won't Stop Until We Stop Giving Permission"]. Such events seem, in some way, almost as American as apple pie.

But now, wait a minute. It did not just happen in the United States. It happened in Germany, with gun laws stricter than what we have in the United States. It happened in Norway, where 70 people were murdered by one man at one event. It has happened in Chechnya, where a number of school children were murdered by more than one killer. It happened in Rwanda, where a rebel group set a Christian church building on fire with people trapped inside. Scores of people died in one fell swoop. When one begins to do some research, it becomes apparent that the murder weapon was not always a gun, and that mass murdering is not confined to the United States. It is a human problem.

Most of the attention by those saying that we need stricter gun control laws has been given to banning access to the assault rifle category. At the beginning of the reporting, it was reported that Adam Lanza used an assault rifle during his murderous spree. No, he did not. He used single shot guns. He did not aimlessly spread assault rifle fire indiscriminately and wildly in every direction within the school rooms. His intent seems much more focused, especially in regard to the adults, and most especially in regard to his mother, who was killed at home in her bed and shot in the face before he departed for the school. Well, that seems to me to indicate a very intense personal hatred.

After riding back and forth between home and the office [and hearing the radio], and reading many news emails that filter through my computer, I'm rather disgusted at hearing of this or that politician quoted as saying what they think should be done. I have have neither read or heard even one of these well known people even mentioned God, except for asking why He would allow such a thing to occur, or questioning why He did not step in and stop it before it occurred. In other words, there is an accusing bent to their comments.

One reason why I believe they do not mention God is because they know deep down, in their very being, that to turn to God might be personally costly to them. Above that, they want a solution quickly, and they are pretty sure that God would not provide a solution quickly. So they say what they think must be done. And do you know what? Some of the solutions might even work reasonably well, but they would be time-consuming in terms of putting them together and into operation, and costly in terms of manpower, and they still wouldn't be 100% effective.

The ideas that I think would work better than others are all based on the same general principle: All of these mass murders were perpetrated against people who cannot fight back. They cannot defend themselves, and therefore, there is no danger to the murderer unless he kills himself.

Have you ever heard of Dodge City, Kansas? It was founded in 1872 and quickly became the murder capital of the United States of America. It had the reputation of being the wildest place to live in the United States, and for a while it truly was. How many shoot-'em-up Westerns have their location in Dodge City, Kansas? Dodge City is indeed storied, but it is largely only in fiction because law enforcement with aid from the public got things under control fairly quickly after a spectacularly bloody start. Pulp-fiction novels distorted the reality, but there is good reason why the turmoil settled down quickly.

Dodge City had some famous sheriffs with names like Bat Masterson, Wyatt Earp, Frank McLean, Bill Tilghman, and Charlie Bassett. By combining episodes from the lives of these men, they became the model for TV's famous Marshal Matt Dillon of Gunsmoke fame.

Believe it or not, Dodge City leaders attempted some measure of gun control during the city's wilder times. They did this by not allowing sidearms—you know, the six-shooter at the side—in certain sections of the city. But you know what? It did not work then, either. By about 1880, they reverted to allowing sidearms again, and quickly, everybody in the city carried a gun. Also very quickly, any attempt to kill another person was very likely to get the attempting murderer killed too. Along with allowing everyone to carry a sidearm anywhere in the city, the sheriff's department established a plan very quickly in response, and with it, quick justice.

Sometimes the justice imposed was almost immediate. The Dodge City Sheriff Department kept fairly good records through the years, and the storied Wyatt Earp was sheriff in Dodge City in 1883. Do you know how many murders were committed in Dodge City in 1883 with Wyatt Earp as mayor? Only two. The fear of immediate retaliation was apparently the most powerful deterrent to committing murder.

The most powerful deterrent *of all* is the fear of God. But for now, that deterrent just is not going to happen. But no solution short of that will ever work. Mark 7:21-23 explains why. Jesus says,

Mark 7:21-23 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.

What's happening is that mankind is suffering the penalty for rejecting God, and thus, the creating of a spiritual problem. But attempting to solve the problem in this way or this manner by a physical solution will never work. It will never work because the source of the problem is in a man's heart. The physical solution of gun control cannot change the heart.