

## Community Comment

The sad news out of Newtown, Connecticut hits us right where it hurts--in our hearts. What could be more heart breaking than watching children be shot by a deranged and unconscionable gunman? Such senseless violence is getting to be all too common in these United States, and I agree with President Obama that we should never let such tragedies become "Common". We must ask --if need be, again and again--are we doing enough to keep our children safe? In light of December 14<sup>th</sup>'s horrific shootings, we are not doing enough. Some would point to the fact that mass shootings are rare. But American gun violence is not rare at all--each year between 10-20,000 persons are killed by guns in our country. That is about a million killed in the span of my life time, which is more than any single war in our nation's history. We declared war on terrorism when about 3,000 persons were killed in the World Trade Center attacks. Where is our sense of proportionality? ~~Should we sit idly by while thousands die every year from every sort of gun imaginable, peddled with few restraints or regulations.~~

What can we do? First, we need to become aware that we have embraced a culture of violence in America. Not only do we love our guns, sporting and owning an estimated 300 million in our country, we think violence is entertaining. Video games are loaded with graphic violence, TV and movies are saturated with violence <sup>too</sup> ~~and other forms of electronic media too~~. Recently I commented to my wife how many TV series today are about murder or solving murders. ~~True, almost everybody loves a 'who dunnit.'~~ But the programs of yesterday were far more content to depict every day families doing every day stuff: Where is leave it to Beaver when we need him? Today, we've largely conditioned ourselves to see a murder, stabbing, shooting or corpse every several minutes. ~~In fact, we as a culture are so fascinated with violence and death that I can't help but ponder the possibility that we as a culture stand on the cusp of death. Our culture as a whole is looking remarkably like Rome shortly before the invasion of the Visigoths.~~

Second, we must have frank discussions about the crazy amount of guns we cling to. We not only have every sort of gun imaginable from Glocks to AR 15s, we have few restraints on the number of bullets that can be loaded into magazines and chambers. I have a friend who hunts and he says it is rare and un-sporting to put more than two shotgun shells into a gun when shooting ducks or geese. But twenty, fifty or even a hundred rounds are fine if it's an assault rifle? The implication is that we should act humanely when it comes to hunting, but, when it comes to shooting people, the sky should be the limit!

Finally, it is very disturbing to me that a number of people who say they will cling to their guns at all costs, call themselves Christians. Disturbing because these people seem to be ignoring the very teachings and purpose of Jesus himself who taught that we should love our enemies, pray for our persecutors and turn the left cheek to those who strike us on the right cheek. Jesus taught that those who live by the sword will die by the sword and he was not speaking admiringly. Coming as these tragic shootings have this time of year, we would do well to remember the child born earlier this week some 2000 years ago was called, among other things: the Prince of Peace.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment