

3 Ways to Restore America—And the Next Generation

Like many, I am deeply concerned about school violence. A massive shift has occurred. Talking, chewing gum and making noise were the top three public school problems in the early 1960s. Currently, rape, robbery and assault could lead the list.

Education expert William Jeynes correlates the decline in public schools with the Supreme Court's 1962 and 1963 decisions to remove Bible reading: "One can argue, and some have, that the decision by the Supreme Court—in a series of three decisions back in 1962 and 1963—to remove Bible and prayer from our public schools, may be the most spiritually significant event in our nation's history over the course of the last 55 years."

That decision had enormous implications that will continue unless we make drastic changes. Granted, how can we promote prayer in schools when prayer in the church is at an all-time low?

Tighter guns laws have some merit as long as law-abiding citizens are not restricted. However, guns are not the problem—sin is the problem. Will we outlaw pipe fittings to prevent pipe bombs and cars to prevent road rage? Of course not. Cain killed Abel with a rock. The human heart is the problem.

1. Bring God back into the schools. I remember a time when we weren't embarrassed about God. Teachers and administrators would willingly share their faith. Now, evolution is taught as fact, and God is portrayed as a fairy tale—when in reality, evolution is a fairy tale and creation is a fact. In the same sense that this article did not write itself, we are not here by random chance. Kids need to know that they are made in the

image of God and that their Creator loves them and will guide them if they turn to Him. Bringing God back into the schools will reverse everything from violence to bullying to depression.

Secular groups have been pushing their agenda far too long. "Separation of church and state" is their battle cry. The courts have misused the infamous "separation" phrase to ban religious activities, primarily those promoting Christian principles. Thomas Jefferson used the phrase in 1802 in a private letter written to the Baptist Association of Danbury, Connecticut. The Baptists feared that the government might try to regulate religious expression. They were assured that this would not happen. Ironically, we are seeing this today.

In other words, the people did not want the government imposing a national religion on the people. Jefferson wisely agreed with them. His statement was intended to protect religious expression by building a wall of separation between the church and the state; solidifying the fact that the federal government could not strike down religious freedoms. Ironically, the public school system was first introduced in the 1600s to teach kids the Bible. Scholars were born through Princeton and Yale. God was embraced, not replaced. America, wake up! We can unapologetically acknowledge the sovereign hand of God on our campuses. Acknowledgment is not establishment. I pray that local school districts don't cave in to political correctness; difference makers should make a difference.

2. Allow hope onto the campus. When I inquired recently if pastors could help students after a local school shooting, I was told that they have many trained secular psychologists who can help. In short, pastors aren't allowed on campuses. Remember, "separation of church and state." The irony is that those who can offer lasting hope are not allowed on campuses. Granted, I'm not talking about being aggressive and proselytizing unwilling students. My recommendation is that

(after a thorough vetting process), certain Christians are allowed on campus as encouragers and change agents, building up those who are bullied and offering hope to the hopeless.

3. Bring God back into our homes. As the family goes, so goes the nation. Violent video games and movies do nothing but foster violence. For example, in Grand Theft Auto, kids can have sex with a prostitute, take back the money and set her on fire. Parents, for the love of God, wake up. Turn off the media and invest in your children.

Ironically, the missing element that few want to talk about is the fact that most shooters are taking psychotropic drugs to deal with emotional pain. Therein lies one of the main problems. Homes resemble a volcano ready to erupt rather than a loving, nurturing environment. And our media choices instill fear, violence, and sexual perversion. In short, we are reaping what we are sowing in our homes.

Parents should be the spiritual leaders in our homes; our absence has caused an epidemic. The majority of youth suicides, runaways, rapists and high school dropouts are from fatherless homes. Also remember, we don't have to leave home to be absent; we can check out mentally, emotionally and spiritually and lead our family astray. If we fail to train our children, society will do it for us.

Many who have been interviewed after a suicide attempt talk about feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. They see no way out. By bringing God back into our homes and schools, we can impact the next generation at a very deep level. Parents must repent of their apathy and turn completely to God to be changed from the inside out, which, in turn, will change the atmosphere of our homes, schools, and country.

We are witnessing the tragic results of people dying spiritually. We must point people to the true source of healing, or violence will only escalate. Xanax, OxyContin and

Vicodin will never replace repentance, renewal and restoration through Jesus Christ. We have sown to the wind and are reaping the whirlwind. In addition to violence increasing, SAT scores have sunk to the lowest level since the college admission test was overhauled in 2005. Unless the Lord builds the house, he who labors, labors in vain. Unless the Lord builds the school, he who labors, labors in vain. {eoa}

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