

Alveda King: People Wield Guns, Jesus Heals

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"—John 18:10-11

We live in a fallen world, a seemingly nonsensical world.

It's a world where people hold inviolate a "constitutional right" that doesn't appear in the Constitution in order to permit **abortion** violence, yet are ready to trample upon a right that explicitly appears in the Constitution in order to try to stop gun violence.

There is no conceivable **gun control law** that could have stopped the horror of Sandy Hook—at least nothing short of confiscation. And confiscation would involve the government entering people's homes without permission—a clear violation of the Fourth Amendment's bar against unreasonable searches and seizures, not to mention the Second Amendment's right to bear arms.

Still, people want to "do something." I would suggest that we're looking in the wrong place when we look at guns.

I know the horror of violence. Like many, I have lived through its trauma. I lost my uncle and grandmother to gun violence. But I also lost my father under suspicious circumstances that had nothing to do with guns. I lost childhood playmates not to guns, but to a bomb. My own house in Birmingham, in fact, was firebombed while I was in it 50 years ago.

The year 2013 will mark several significant landmark anniversaries including 150 years since the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, 100 years since the formation of the Federal Reserve System, 50 years since the MLK "I have a dream" speech, and the 40th year landmark Supreme Court **Roe v. Wade** decision that **legalized abortion** in America. This will surely be a year of transition and there is a need for a deep **spiritual awakening**.

Life has taught me that anger and hate are not constrained by taking away a weapon. The **civil rights** era proved that baseball bats, lead pipes, and ropes are lethal when in the hands of evil men. Terrorists have proven that fertilizer, nails, and airplanes kill more effectively than guns. The weapon is not the problem. The problem is inside the human being who wants to kill.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, as Jesus was being seized by Roman soldiers and officers of the Pharisees, Peter took his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, a slave of the high priest. Jesus answered this violence by rebuking Peter and healing Malchus's ear.

Jesus didn't take away Peter's sword, He healed.

Today, He still heals.

We will not end violence by trying to take away guns. We will not end violence by trying to demonize guns. We will not end violence because human beings are selfish, unloving, fearful, fallen creatures who will find ways to strike out against others.

The problem is us.

The answer is Him.

Christ's agape love—selfless love for others—is not only what stops violence, it's what builds relationships. It's what strengthens communities. It's what makes people who think that they're different and alone realize that we're the same and not alone.

Politics and legislation are good for solving problems, but not all problems. If our leaders really want to create a society where gun violence—and, for that matter, knife violence, bomb violence, and every other kind of violence—is reduced if not eliminated, they will stop trying to remove God from every sphere of public influence. They should stop trying to hinder the expression and practice of faith and allow the one thing that will bring true healing—God's love.

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