

Franklin Graham: Only One Solution to End Violence

In the aftermath of recent tragic killings, such as those that have taken place in New Mexico, Connecticut and Colorado, our nation has focused on ways to curb gun violence.

But **gun control** proposals now circulating in Washington and in many state capitals don't address a more important issue—the constant stream of violence put forth by the entertainment industry. Every year brings a flood of movies, not to mention cable and television programs, that are filled with violence. Whole segments of America's music industry make their profits from song lyrics that glorify gratuitous violence, and there is seemingly an endless number of video games that are nothing more than murder simulators.

The result of this constant inundation is that our culture has been effectively desensitized to murder and mayhem. Blood-lusty Romans gathered in the Coliseum 2,000 years ago to watch people slaughtered by lions for the purpose of entertainment, and our society is no different. We gather around computers, televisions, and movie screens to watch scene after scene of more graphic violence than anything the Romans could have imagined.

Our current administration in Washington has taken aim at guns as the source of violence, as though murderous acts would cease if we just take the guns away.

But the problem—the real crux of the issue—lies not in the instruments of violence used. Hammers or other blunt objects are used to murder more people in the United States each year than semi-automatic and assault rifles. The root of violence is in the evil and depraved heart of man. God's Word clearly tells us, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and

desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9, NKJV).

The Bible records the first account of violence when Cain killed his brother Abel. Scripture does not tell us what weapon Cain used for his murderous act. It certainly wasn't a gun. But it could have been a knife, a stick, a rock, or perhaps the very thing that empowers every other weapon of violence—human hands. Jesus said to His disciples, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders ...blasphemies” (Matt. 15:19).

This is why moral, heartfelt transformation is really the only solution to the deadly and dangerous ills that are plaguing our nation. The Scripture says we need a new heart, not new legislation or regulations. “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you” (Ezek. 36:26).

New hearts are made as men and women respond to the preaching of the gospel of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The Holy Spirit opens hearts and minds to believe in the Savior, and with repentance from sins people become new creations in Christ (see 2 Cor. 5:17). Moral reformation can then happen because there has been spiritual transformation.

Our problems in this country are so huge that I believe we need a massive change to help stem the rising tide of evil. That is exactly what we are launching this year—the largest evangelistic outreach in our history, My Hope with Billy Graham. This paramount effort is close to my father's heart as he approaches his 95th birthday later this year. What better way to honor his 70-year ministry than to honor the message he has faithfully proclaimed: Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on a cross, shed His blood to cleanse mankind from sin, and was raised to life.

In the next few weeks, we will complete the training of 10,000 trainers across the country for this unprecedented My Hope outreach. Each of these individuals has agreed to train people

in four churches—that's 40,000 churches! In each church, we are trusting God for men and women who will be a part of My Hope. We are asking them to commit to pray for their unsaved friends and neighbors and then invite them to watch a special program we will broadcast on television, Internet, and by DVD, during the week of November 7. We pray that tens of thousands will come to faith in Christ through this effort.

You can also be part of My Hope. Your prayers and financial support are vital to help make it happen.

Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life ... more abundantly" (John 10:10). This is the message of the Gospel, and we are called by God to spread this Good News to our neighbors, our nation, and a needy world. I hope you will join us.

In this violent, sin-sick world, our only hope is the Prince of Peace.

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