

Joel Rosenberg on Newtown Massacre: What's Going Wrong? Is There Hope?

I'm grateful to Fox News Channel anchor Shannon Bream for interviewing me on the air Sunday afternoon to talk about the moral and spiritual dimensions of the Newtown massacre. These are not topics that have been discussed much in the media, despite wall-to-wall coverage of the tragedy since Friday.

We didn't have time for a full, in-depth conversation, but we got it started. Here are some of the points I made in the interview, as well as some points I would have made had we had more time:

The slaughter of 20 children and numerous teachers and other adults at the Sandy Hook Elementary was horrifying beyond belief—yet what makes it worse is that it isn't an isolated incident.

- America is experiencing an epidemic of violence and lawlessness: So far in 2012, we've seen 18 mass murder events in the U.S., and the year isn't over.
- Just the other night, another deranged individual fired 50 bullets from a handgun in Newport Beach, Calif., reported the *Los Angeles Times*, though fortunately no one was injured or killed, and thus another tragedy was mercifully averted.
- Yes, violent crime has been subsiding in recent years (and that's good), but the violent crime rate in America is twice what it was in 1960, according to FBI stats (there were 160.9 violent crimes per 100,000 people in 1960, compared to 403.6 violent crimes per 100,000 people in 2010)

- More than 1.2 million violent crimes are committed in the U.S. annually, according to the FBI.
- More than 14,000 murders are committed in the U.S. every year
- Add to all this, there are more than 1.2 million abortions every year—innocent children murdered in their mother's womb.

Why is all this happening? In large part because we are engaged in moral and spiritual disarmament.

- Some Americans are actively driving the God of the Bible out of their lives, out of their families.
- Some Americans are actively trying to drive the God of the Bible out of our schools, our courts, our media and out of America all together.
- Many Americans are simply ignoring the Lord—they don't care to read or follow the Bible, or obey God or listen to Him.
- And then there are many Americans who say they are Christians but don't take their faith seriously, just do what they want.
- Jesus Christ said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)
- People are asking, "What's the way we can move forward and help prevent more mass murders?" Jesus says, "I am the Way," but much of the American society doesn't want to turn to Christ for help in finding our way forward.
- People are asking, "What is the truth about how we can heal our society from such violence and lawlessness?"

Jesus says, "I am the Truth." Indeed, the Word of God (the Bible) is filled with His truth about how to transform a person, family or nation. But much of the American society doesn't want to turn to Christ for help in understanding and following the truth.

- People are asking, "How can we help these troubled young people improve their lives and experience a full and healthy life?" Jesus says, "I am the Life," but much of the American society doesn't want to turn to Christ for help in finding healthy lives here on earth, or eternal life in heaven.

Much of the American church is also weak, and asleep.

- There are 340,000 church congregations in the U.S.—all are supposed to be shining the light of Jesus Christ into the darkness of the world. Yet in many congregations, the light has dimmed.
- In many congregations, the light has gone out entirely—they don't believe Christ is the Savior, they don't preach it, they don't believe the Bible is the Word of God, and they don't teach people to obey it.

This moral and spiritual disarmament is steadily having its consequences.

- The God of the Bible is a gentleman. Jesus Christ loves us, but He won't force us to follow Him.
- If an individual, family or nation continually tells Him to leave and not come back, He will eventually honor that request and let that person, family, and/or nation's heart become hardened.
- Many churches aren't preaching the Gospel, or showing people how to let Christ save them and heal them.

- As Christ is driven out of a society, evil moves in deeper and metastasizes through that society.
- When we tell young people that God doesn't matter, and that Christ isn't the answer, and that religion is unhealthy, we are morally and spiritually disarming them—some become vulnerable to acts of evil; some aren't prepared when evil acts occur.

There is hope—repentance and revival.

- America is in desperate need of a Third Great Awakening. The Bible says, "If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14) Please join me in praying and fasting for America.
- More than ever, America needs pastors to boldly and passionately preach that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only message that will save this country. America needs pastors who will call this nation to humble ourselves and turn from our wicked ways and seek His face, before it's too late. America cannot be saved unless the Church wakes up from our long and bitter slumber.
- "Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near....' Yet even now,' declares the Lord, 'Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.' Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil. Who knows whether He will not turn and relent and leave a blessing behind Him, even a grain offering

and a drink offering for the Lord your God? Blow a trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room and the bride out of her bridal chamber. Let the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, 'Spare Your people, O Lord, and do not make Your inheritance a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?'" (Joel 2:1, 12-17)

Where are you today? Have you received Christ as your Savior and Lord? Are you absolutely certain that if you were to die today that you would spend eternity in heaven with the Lord? Are you leaning on Christ's everlasting arms for complete forgiveness for your sins, for hope, for peace, for comfort, for wisdom and direction in this life, and in the life to come? If not, let this be the day of salvation for you.

Joel C. Rosenberg *is the author of 10 New York Times best-selling novels and non-fiction books, with more than 2.5 million copies sold. He is also the founder of The Joshua Fund.*

Click below to see Rosenberg's interview on Fox News.