

Only God Can Heal America

America is reeling again. Families have been ripped apart and individual lives have been torn apart. One day we're reeling from devastating hurricanes, the next day we're torn apart by racial divisions, the next day we're ripped apart by the worst mass shooting in our history. The pain is palpable, the shock tangible. Can America still be healed?

At the time of this writing, no one knows what motivated Stephen Paddock to launch his murderous attack during an outdoor, country music concert in Las Vegas. What we do know is that he was "one of us" –not a terrorist from a foreign country and, to our knowledge, not shouting "*Allahu Akbar*" (although ISIS stated that he was a recent convert to Islam and claims him as one of its soldiers).

As his brother Eric said, "He was just a guy. Something happened; he snapped or something, he was just a guy. He has no political affiliation, no religious affiliation, as far as we know. This wasn't a terror attack."

He added, "Mars just fell into the Earth. We're completely dumbfounded."

And who can imagine the loss and shock of the surviving victims and the families of those killed? Who can make sense of this? And can anyone with a conscience claim that the people mowed down at this country music concert were worse sinners than the rest of us? That they specially deserved to be slaughtered in cold blood? God forbid.

I'm sure that gun control will be a hot topic in the days ahead.

Does the Second Amendment guarantee our right to own assault rifles or machine guns, weapons that can murder 50-plus people and injure hundreds of others in a matter of minutes?

But to focus on this now is to miss the point, just as it was a mistake to focus on questions of global warming during the hurricanes (although these are certainly debates we will have).

No, we must ask bigger questions at a time of such agony: Why are these tragedies occurring? Where is God in the midst of this? How can America be healed?

During the devastating hurricanes, some claimed these natural disasters were judgments from God while others claimed that they were the result of man-made, global warming. Some even suggested that they were being judged because we elected Donald Trump as our president (really!).

What I sensed in my own heart as I prayed was the voice of appeal, the voice of mercy, the voice of the Healer ready to mend and restore. It was God saying to us through the storms, "America, you need Me!"

Today, as I look at the bodies of the bloodied victims laying lifeless on the concert grounds, as I see others running in terror and still others falling wounded, I hear that same voice, except this time calling out more loudly, "America, you need Me!"

It's the same voice I hear as our nation is torn apart by racial strife and division, the same voice I hear as our inner cities are ravaged by gangs, the same voice I hear as baby parts are thrown into dumpsters behind abortion mills.

God is calling out to us, "America, you need Me!"

There is no political solution.

There is no social band aid that can be applied.

There is no law that can be passed that will heal our sickly land.

Instead, we need to get on our faces before the Lord acknowledging our own sins and shortcomings, not pointing the finger at others but rather at ourselves. And whatever our views on climate control and gun control and immigration reform and President Trump and social justice may be, we need to implore the only one who can heal our land. What else is needed to get our attention?

Like it or not, our nation was founded on biblical principles, with God at the center of our nation, and America can only be great if America is good. Without Him, our condition is terminal. With Him, there is hope—but we must act now.

Let us do, then, what millions of Jews did this past weekend in the celebration of Yom Kippur, fasting and confessing sins and asking for mercy. And let us make whatever changes we must make in our own lives and families to stand in right relationship with God and our neighbor.

But let us also look to the cross where the Savior paid for our sins and struck at the root cause of our rebellion and pain.

It's not too late for America to be healed, but our condition is certainly critical.