

Dear Friends,

There is no lack of news on which I could reflect on, comment on, or sound the alarms. Mass shootings are once again at the top of the list with the school shooting at Uvalde, TX, and this past weekend over 20 more people were killed in other communities in our nation. I only have a small piece of hope that this time something will be done in our nation. I hear politicians and others give their 'thoughts and prayers' and talk about mental health, which those same politicians have cut the budgets for across the communities, states, and nation. I hear them talking about hardening the targets which would turn our schools and places of business into places of prison, both imprisoned in fear and physically.

There is violence in our history and in the Bible. Sampson slew his enemies with a jawbone of an ass and the 2nd Amendment kooks would say that they didn't ban jawbones back then, just needed good guys with jawbones. But there is a commandment right in the 10, that says, "Thou shalt not kill." (Going with the King James Version on us). Of all the ways our evangelical brothers (and sisters), who claim they follow the Bible, (but not Christ, the Prince of Peace), have many of Christmas cards holding weapons that are designed to kill God's children, en mass.

Isaiah proclaims that we are to beat swords into plowshares. Jesus tells us that those who live by the sword will die by the sword, to take up our crosses (not weapons), and bless our enemies, pray for them, and help them. There is a vision of a society and world without violence. And there are many nations around the world that have far fewer deaths by gun than ours (because they ban assault rifles and have much better background checks). A lot less! And we should remember that many of the gun deaths in our nation are because of suicide. So, more people in our nation die by their own hand than from some intruder, bank robber, or mugger.

The school shootings affect not just those who are killed or even those who escape. They affect every child in our nation and their parents because they all are wondering if they are next. This is a fear that cannot be dismissed, even though it is statistically improbable that my nephews and nieces will be involved in one. But the fear is real and present.

Is something going to happen this time, in our nation's capital, in the state legislatures that have been loosening gun restrictions at a nauseating pace? I really don't think so, but I would love to be surprised. May we continue to be peace-makers, justice seekers, and work to protect our children from the sacrifices of them to the idol of the gun.

Peace,

Pastor Enno