



Hoosiers Concerned About Gun Violence

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David Mason and Marian Towne, editors

"Don't Feel So Safe With Having Guns at Home"

(Op-Ed piece by HCGV Board Member
Stephen R. Dunlop, M.D., in the
Indianapolis Star, 7/2/2010)

The Supreme Court has decided that its new incorporation into the Second Amendment of a gun-owning right based on self-protection should be incumbent on states and cities. The decision was no surprise from this radical court. Unfortunately, this is a right to make a dangerous mistake. The relative risk of suicide is four times higher for men in homes with guns. Women in the home are more likely to be murdered. Homes with guns are as or more likely to be burglarized than their neighbors. Civilian weapons are rarely

used to defend against criminals, despite widespread ownership. Less than 3 percent of burglaries are resisted with a firearm and less than 1 percent of victims of violent crimes defend themselves with guns.

A gun supporter in the Chicago case was quoted saying that owning a gun was as safe as playing golf. Fifteen Hoosiers died from accidental shootings in Indiana in 2007, but I can find none accidentally killed by golf balls or clubs. Just the other day, a Don's Guns customer shot himself in the head. A Purdue student playing with a gun recently killed a buddy, and a small child in Southern Indiana killed his sibling not long ago.

The liberty of gun ownership may be associated with a feeling of power, an opportunity to kill game, or amusement from shooting targets or

cans, but it brings far more risk than safety into a home.

HCGV to Speak at Mid-North Shepherd's Center Nov. 3

On Wednesday, November 3 at 11 a.m. Stephen Dunlop and David Mason will speak on gun violence to those gathered for one in the eight-week series "Domestic Decisions" sponsored by the Mid-North Shepherd's Center located at North United Methodist Church, 3808 North Meridian Street in Indianapolis. The series brings highly qualified local experts to the podium to address serious issues in our neighborhoods, cities and state. Admission is free and open to the public.

Stephen Dunlop, M.D., will give a power point presentation on gun violence, followed by a conversation between Dunlop and Dr. David Mason, Professor Emeritus of Political Science. Members of the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions and engage in a discussion of this important issue.

Dunlop and Mason, members of the board of HCGV, have each spoken previously in the "Domestic Decisions" series.

We Welcome New Board Members for HCGV

Dr. James Maybury retired in 2007 from practicing Child Psychiatry in Indianapolis. Prior to that he had attended medical school in Minnesota and worked for the Minnesota Department of Corrections in the area of probation and parole. He is glad to be involved in HCGV. He is also involved

with the Chalice Circle of Universal Unitarian Church of Indianapolis.

Rev. Bob Sanders is a retired pastor in the American Baptist Church. He was educated at Union University, Jackson, Tennessee; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville; Vanderbilt University; and was a Merrill Fellow at Harvard University Divinity School. He served American Baptist churches in Tell City, Indiana, and taught at St. Meinrad School of Theology. He pastored American Baptist churches in Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, and Honduras.

Marshall Gibson is a lobbyist for the Indiana Friends Committee on Legislation. He is a storyteller, and during the Christmas season for approximately seventeen years he has played Santa Claus for children. He has a Bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland and a Master's degree from the Earlham School of Religion. He has pastored several Friends (Quaker) churches in Indiana and has held various positions for the U. S. census in 1990, 2000, and 2010. At the present time he is still working for the 2010 census.

The Tragedy of Gun Violence in the US

(From David Mason's book *The End of the American Century*)

". . . The United States is the most violent country in the industrialized world. . . While poverty, inequality, and hopelessness may be the major contributing factors to crime and violence in the United States, it is almost certainly the prevalence of guns that makes violence so deadly and that so inflates the homicide rate. About two-thirds of all murders are committed with

firearms, and about three-quarters of those are handguns. There are almost 200 million privately owned firearms in the United States--almost as many guns as there are people--including some 65 million handguns. Every year, about 30,000 Americans die from firearm injuries; about 40 percent of these are homicides, and most of the rest are suicides. Firearm homicides are the leading cause of death of young African American males and the second leading cause of injury death for all young people, after only automobile accidents.

. . . The death toll from gun violence in the United States is more intense and more sustained than from most of the full-scale wars that the country has been involved in. And many doctors and physicians' organizations are now treating firearm violence as a medical epidemic: the number of annual deaths from gun violence far exceeds those from polio in the 1950s or AIDS in more recent years.

Despite the scale and tragedy of the homicide and gun violence epidemic in the United States, there is curiously little public outrage or political action on the problem. Public opinion polls show overwhelming popular support for a broad range of measures to make guns less accessible and less dangerous, including licensing firearms in much the same way that automobiles are. Even most gun owners favor such legislation. But under pressure from the National Rifle Association (NRA), one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington, neither Congress nor most state legislatures have been willing to take action on these issues. . . .

The proliferation of guns in America and the apparent national obsession with them is based mostly on fear, but it also reflects a decline in the

sense of community and public spiritedness that helped define and shape the country. People who buy guns do so mostly for self-protection and out of fear of crime and criminals. This attitude reflects a lack of confidence in the ability of the police and the courts to protect them and ultimately a lack of faith in the community. . . ."

(Dr. Mason is a recently retired Professor of Political Science from Butler University. *The End of the American Century* was published in 2009 by Rowman & Littlefield).

Religious Groups Taking Gun Violence Seriously

At the 2010 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) the following was adopted:

"The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, recognizing the need for a new approach to the plague of gun violence, recommends. . . :

To awaken members and communities to the faith dimensions of our on-going tragedy:

1. Encourage the church at every level--from individual member to congregation, presbytery, synod, and national church--to become informed and active in preventing gun violence, to provide pastoral care for victims of gun violence, and to seek a spiritual response of grief and repentance, grace and courage to resist that violence and celebrate the Lord and Giver of Life. [This proposal does not preclude the legal use of personal firearms for hunting or sports-related purposes.]

2. That the church take responsibility to build public awareness of gun violence and the epidemic of preventable gun-related deaths, totaling more than 620,000 over the past twenty years, with hundreds of thousands more wounded. . .

3. That congregations address the temptation to gun suicide and murder-suicide among both old and young people, and that pastors especially present practical theologies of peace as alternatives to fantasies of power, idolatries of force, strategies of vengeance, and the gravitational pull of nihilism or depression.

4. That the church liturgies not only call for periodic preaching on gun violence but also contain prayers for the victims and perpetrators of gun violence and confession of our own complicity in the perpetuation and toleration of violence in all its forms in the culture.

To assist congregations and members in supporting focused local and state initiatives:

5. That, to embody its spiritual awakening in response to this tragic devaluing of life, the church work to build a movement of urban-suburban ecumenical partnerships in order to better understand the problem of gun violence and take more effective action.

6. That local congregations lead or join in ecumenical gatherings for public prayer at sites where gun violence has occurred and to support, or assist with, appropriate law-enforcement guidance, "ceasefire," and other urban gang intervention strategies based on the public health model of addressing the most vulnerable populations.

7. That the church. . . work with local law-enforcement agencies and community groups to identify gun shops that engage in retail practices designed to circumvent laws on gun sales and ownership, encourage full legal compliance, and support higher marketing standards, and . . . take nonviolent action against gun shops and gun shows known to sell guns that end up in crime, using the faith-based campaign of Heeding God's Call, a group active in Pennsylvania as an example. . . .

Heeding God's Call
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Did you know. . .

In 2006, guns murdered:
27 in Australia
59 in England & Wales
60 in Spain
190 in Canada
194 in Germany
10,177 in the U.S.