GUNS: Giving Us Negative Security

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Dedication

This is dedicated to countless victims of gun violence in America, and to their survivors who are courageous enough to speak out while living amidst an intimidating national arsenal of unregulated firearms. Furthermore, we give special mention to local, state, and national law enforcement personnel so often called as first responders when the next wave of gun violence occurs. To those who give their lives to bring about gun control we owe a special debt of gratitude, and pray that their sacrifices are not in vain.

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Introduction

America is an arsenal of weaponry; homes are loaded with guns, some of these guns loaded. These firing devices number about three hundred million -- one for every man, woman, and child in this fair land. If the gun industry persists in having its way, the number will continue to grow faster than our U.S. population. A dozen or so states and cities offer buy-back programs to reduce gun ownership; they gather a host of near relics contributed by cautious house cleaners who are nervous about having keepsakes around. This noble effort doesn't check the rising gun population.

Americans have a history of being proud of weaponry. In pioneer times the trusty "piece" was in the most conspicuous part of the humble log cabin, perhaps above the fireplace. In much of U.S. history gun-toters prided themselves in sporting weaponry in public, sort of the challenge to be fastest draw at OK Coral. As a people we are proud of heroic firearms tales, generally those of warfare. At the Battle of New Orleans in 1815 (after the War of 1812 had officially ended) guns were prominent; that battle involved Tennessee "Volunteers" and Kentucky sharpshooters under the leadership of Anglophobic Andrew Jackson. Yes, Americans' gun history has its bright mystic aspect and a darker side of gory misuse -- and antidotes of mournful victims and survivors.

This extended reflection is different from telling a proud or hidden national history. Rather, I have a more modest aim, namely, discerning my own journey from gun-lover to strict gun advocate. If I can reflect in public on my story, maybe others will be bold enough to do the same. It is just about the only legacy that an old man can bring in the middle of a vicious gun rights/gun control national discussion. I pose my treatment in the form of questions, the major unanswered one being whether weapons give us national security, or simply enhance a basic insecurity that threatens our current culture and the world all around us?

The December 14, 2012 Newtown, Connecticut massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School by mentally imbalanced 20-year-old Alan Lanza captivated our nation's attention for a time. He had acquired a thousand rounds by legal means, which would cost the lives of 26 at the school, including 20 little six- and seven-year olds, six school adults, along with his mother and his own life. Earlier on July 20, 2012 at Aurora, Colorado, a mentally deranged James Holmes shot his way to infamy as well. While the first episode involved busy and happy school kids in a quiet suburban town in the Northeast, the second was in a packed cinema of what some described as an explosion-laced Batman sequel, "The Dark Knight Rises." It took live classroom and theater audiences fleeting moments to realize this was not storytelling or fiction -- far less time than this discernment begs from its readers. Moreover, in each five-minute period in Aurora and Newtown dozens were killed or maimed for life. History was made in precious seconds using modern weaponry. We take more time to right wrongs.

Unfortunately, these two disturbing adventures were soon overshadowed by new massacres, such as at the April 2013 Boston-Marathon involving not guns but homemade bombs. However, even before that tragic event ended, guns entered the picture in a suspect bomber's death and a policeman who got in his way -- and later an acquaintance of one of the perpetrators. Playing with virtual violence becomes the ongoing saga of slaughter of the innocents -- children unaware of who came through the door with a load of weapons to kill the defenseless or a more violence-numbed Colorado audience when real shells struck individuals, killing 12 and wounding about 50 others.

The recent incidents of mass killings punctuate a continuous drama occurring throughout our land, of 40,000 annual night and daytime gun episodes in broken homes and commercial places, in schools and churches, and in streets and country lanes. For every nationally reported occasion there are at least one hundred known only in the local or regional media. Gun involvement is a matter of routine occurrence. We recall a number and then they fade with time, such as the 2007 incident at Blacksburg, Virginia when an imbalanced Seung-Hoi Chu killed 32 Virginia Tech students and faculty during a rampage that left the institution and nation in shock. We go back further and remember the Columbine tragedy and on and on, little towns and events becoming hallmarks of our inability to control our consumer love of guns and ammo. Amnesia is our **homemade remedy** to deal with an unhealthy violent situation. Each new incident, such as in 2014 near Santa Barbara with 6 killed and 13 injured, outdates the previous litany of senseless violence.

How does one unravel the questions that start to arise, and how order them? Involved is a personal relationship with weapons, whether as gun owner or gunless. We hear a repeated tale of owners offering a rationale based on citizen need and rights, or the love of such weapons for hunting, target practice, or ornamental display. Offered reasons are attempts to justify

an uncontrolled citizen militia, a love of gun-related sports, a sense of military superiority, or a gun collector's mania. A number of circumstances in my life have raised questions, some immediately and some delayed, in an ongoing reflection on America's love affair with guns. Some were answered to satisfaction in due time but one haunts me most, and that is a real puzzle that takes more time to solve, namely, the security that guns are touted to bring. Are guns really some kind of peacemaking device? Or does gun-bearing precipitate conflicts and disturb the peace? Does easy access inspire misfits to use these weapons? Does presence of so many guns and impending disasters affect our nation's mental health?

Have we confused security and insecurity? Sadly enough the tragedies bring on weeping, consoling words, and national compassion for survivors. Most disturbing to some of us is that each major publicized gun incident is immediately followed by weeks of increased gun sale, making some ponder whether such incidents are used as sales opportunities by profiteers creating advertising to attract the insecure and fearful. Is it fear that drives citizens, who ought to have trust of law enforcement personnel, to buy and buy weapons? Is a gun-buying rush proof of basic insecurity? And do purchased weapons make buyers even more insecure and tempted to acquire an arsenal? Does arming give us security or bring greater insecurity -- and can the argument extend to our national desire to be armed Number One in the world? Have we become so vulnerable that the only answer is in weaponry?

Once after I gave a talk on composting techniques a concerned homemaker asked, "What must I buy in order to start composting?" A new practice for the commercially-influenced consumer involves purchase, whether that is compost equipment or guns. After the 2012 Newtown massacre the National Rifle Association (NRA) testified that every school needs armed teachers and guards -- a ready request for still more arms purchases and still grander arsenals. Does insecurity impel the fearful to become armed, breeding a frenzy of militaristic behavior or actions that reinforce a historic culture of weaponry in contests with phantom or real intruders? Does frenetic weapons' acquisition and touting their effectiveness only give ideas to those who are the least responsible in handling these risky devices? Is it like alcoholics who stash away booze for fear it will be denied them by caregivers?

Those coming to these shores as explorers, trappers, conquerors, or settlers gripped firmly to periodic firearms of their day. These intruders on a Native American culture outclassed the more primitive weapons of the local residents. Firearms became the hallmark of superiority and power, strengthening a sense of independence among colonists separated by an ocean from their motherland. Guns shortened the time of gaining control by overpowering less-armed natives, who quickly wanted the same arms for defense or offense against bow-and-arrow-wielding neighbors and intruders from across the seas. The "right to bear arms" was born in a blaze of

firepower and with Native antagonists falling back farther into often unwanted "reservation" territories.

Thus emerged a right to security wrapped into the thrust for military superiority, an interlocked security/power cultural framework. Unfortunately, doesn't this security/insecurity conundrum haunt us still, for emotions within our gun culture run deep? Try joking about a return to the muzzle-loader days of Federal Constitution writers and you (or better I) get no laughs from gun-lovers. Matters are very serious. I may joke about going from being a gun-lover to gunless, but find no applause among red-state neighbors who whisper, "He is touched in old age." For adherents of this culture, guns are a sacred trust, a defense against an all-powerful government bent on removing their weaponry. Fear of governmental intervention has deeper historic roots than we like to admit -- at least by gun-control people who have a greater trust in government than private trigger-happy militia folks.

In comparison with other countries, our super-armed country lacks gun controls. In other civilized nations, there are far stricter gun controls and yet some (but fewer) tragic incidents occur there. For instance, Britain experienced major gun-related episodes in 1996 at Dunblane and in Cumbria in 2010. Others remember the July 2011 massacres in Norway of 69 happy youth by a distraught Anders Breivik. Still, amid these tragic occurrences, we find that over four out of five major gun-related episodes occur in America.

Qualities of Combatants

In reviewing a personal history with gun issues, we find certain cultural characteristics that define where we are on this subject. In the course of this book, we will look at nine different components that have entered into my own personal journey. Like the eight decades completed and the ninth just beginning, these are not cleanly delineated, and so reflection has been ongoing over an extended period of time. In fact, personal reflection is exemplified in this book as truly a work-in-progress.

1. Cultural assimilation feeds on the American love affair with guns and any reflection takes us deeply within our history as a people. We Americans are reluctant to apply controls on another's personal practices, for we prefer to respect the private rights of citizens to do their own thing. This right or license lies behind our reluctance to intrude on or challenge another's behavior -- and that even extends to toddlers who want to play with guns. We allow individuals to do what they wish, provided they act responsibly and do no harm to self or others. This sense of entitlement is bestowed early and becomes a right of passage for young men (and women) via guns. We tolerate others' actions whether we personally like them or find them morally

objectionable. For Americans, conduct is almost completely a personal choice. Unfortunately, gun play starts early, is often unchallenged, and continues in life. A gun-related right of passage is the subject of **Chapter One**.

2. Individualistic possessiveness is a major issue with Americans -- and this is the heart of gun controversy. Private possession starts very young and each wants his or her store of candy or toys -- or eventually guns. A private store of "my" possessions is for many Americans far more preferred than a common bank shared by many. If guns were stored in a community arsenal, this would be unacceptable. However, the interpretation of the constitutional "right to bear arms" is highly individualistic in scope and lacks a sense of social control and responsibility shown by quoting the **entire** amendment demanding "a well regulated militia." The right to property involving land issues includes individual freeholding and is a tale of private misuse of American land resources. (See *Reclaiming the Commons*, Chapter Three). Guns are more mobile than land, and actions more militaristic. This early experience with possessiveness is discussed in **Chapter Two**.

3. Manliness is a characteristic that came early in American gun history and was quite pronounced in my youth. However, over time women hunters as gun-bearers became more prominent. Examples are drawn of women such as Molly Pitcher and Molly Corbin assisting in Revolutionary War battles, along with homesteader wives in pioneering times and modern women serving in the military services. Use of guns with sharpshooter skills enhances *the curriculum vitae* of gun owners, and is discussed in **Chapter Three**.

4. Emotional control is part of the gun issue, especially in these turbulent times. Lack of control leads to misuse of guns and many sad consequences. Gun rights and gun controls trigger much controversy in certain quarters and, even where proponents or opponents' emotions are controlled, the issue can elicit heated argument. This is found rarely in other pieces of property, even though owners of autos, boats, or electronic devices may discuss the benefits or risks of their favorite objects, but these are not created in order to stop, maim, and kill. Gun owners may hold that a controlled weapon is totally safe (though none are) and that emotion in America does not generally result in compulsive shooting at public celebrations. Emotional balance is part of total human controls and is the focus of **Chapter Four**.

5. Peer pressure and a sense of military might are often unspoken components of the gun issue. What one gun-holder's friend has, another must imitate in order to keep up. This power reaches out from local communities or in the broader community of nations. In order to create and sustain a greater police presence, the gun and other military hardware bear a dominant role, and may create greater insecurity on the part of the unarmed. Silence becomes a political position. Gun-holders have lethal weapons and, taken as

an organized group, become a powerful local and national lobby. In fact, they are so powerful that few legislators are willing to buck hidden and overt intimidation. This is manifested each time gun-control issues come up at the Federal legislative level. Even if gun-lovers were left in full possession, why are multi-clips available for untrained citizens? The pressures on different parts of society are matters of **Chapter Five**.

6. Fearfulness is the most hidden ingredient of the gun debate. Living without guns by certain individuals and in specific locations may conjure nightmares of confrontation with thieves. One might possess guns for sentimental, food harvest, or enjoyment reasons or, by far larger numbers through fear or basic insecurity. Reasons for possession indicate potential misuse. Essentially, the rise in gun sales at the time of a new nationally publicized massacre is based on fear that weapons will be legally controlled and individuals will be without arms when a burglar intrudes into private space. Fear is hard to control and overcome, and that is why armed frightened people incite more and more fear. Will the unarmed be patriotic enough to withstand bullying or will they resort to silence and withdrawal from debate? See **Chapter Six.**

7. Rights versus controls are always lurking in the background of the gun debates. America lacks a consensus on gun rights and gun control. That is obvious to any observer of discussions between gun owners and non-owners. The "right" to bear arms is seen by proponents as the basic right that allowed resistance of the British at Concord and beyond. For them, to bear arms responsibly is the exercise of a citizen's right and adds to community peace. As candidates for a "militia," they become the supposed ultimate keepers of the peace, though through a form of intimidation or bullying. What is more dangerous to the unarmed: an armed individual or private militia or regulated police? One response is to confront the gun lobby firsthand and emphasize the coupling of private militia and national militarization. In this age, favoring private guns is to affirm the military-industrial complex with its many forms -- manufacture, purchase, sporting and showing off, and use for various activities. **Chapter Seven** centers on social controls, a necessity in a civilized society.

8. Addictiveness is an arena in which the various aspects of consumer culture apply -- for guns are very much a consumer product. In *Reclaiming the Commons* we considered the spectrum of social addiction that applies to all consumer products -- and guns certainly fit into this. Most would agree that some gun proponents are highly mesmerized by guns, are avid gun show attendees, and collectors of various types of weapons. Extending this addictiveness specifically to guns may be regarded as overdrawn, but the issue is worth investigating in **Chapter Eight**.

9. Sacrificial risks may enter into this gun discussion. All groups must

recall our national motto "In God we Trust." In the late Roman Empire, the story goes that a Christian entered voluntarily into the amphitheater where fighting bouts occurred and urged the practice to stop before being killed by the mobs. However, the threat is to more than individual heroics. It involves Environmental Gun Violence that threatens the mental state of many. **Chapter Nine** is this current "decade" of my life.

Our personal gun journeys are unique and worth pondering. What we held in youth changes through maturity. Recklessness, a youthful characteristic, generally is modified with time and hard knocks. Maturation is a natural aging process, a mellowing of the rough edges of life, and a coming to terms with our cultural and personal histories with their blemishes and high points. This project involves discernment with an inherent spiritual dimension worth narrating, a making of us into a more perfect people. We have much to reflect upon openly, even if we run the risk of losing friends or the good graces of neighbors on such an emotionally charged issue. To discern is to see change occurring and to acknowledge shortcomings. A journey through the years, from toddler to old age and from toy gun to daring to be unarmed may risk being labeled inconsistent, but *C'est la vie*!

Granted, our food tastes, ways of speaking, amounts and types of physical exercise, departed friends and new arrivals, and our view of the world all change over time. Perhaps, just perhaps, our attitudes about guns change as well. In sports, we ponder whether we cling to childish attitudes, and yet in our heart of hearts we are still toy-lovers seeking comfort and security in autos, boats, electronic devices -- and guns. Do people who age resist change and is this a phase that even our country must pass through? This is a story of one person's struggle to pass through gun phases with a few of the incidents that helped.

To whom is this work directed? The **audience** is clear -- the millions of American gun owners and collectors who ought to come to terms with why they hold so tightly to weapons. Let's hope that they will join the current debate through deeper personal reflection. A decade ago, when I decided to reflect on my tobacco experiences from supporter to anti-smoking advocate, it was to find alternative employment for hard-pressed ex-tobacco Kentucky farmers. However, the book, *Tobacco Days: A Personal Journey*, came out too late to alter the battle over health effects of smoking. In 2004, during the period before publishing the book the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) took charge of controls on tobacco products, finally approved after years of struggle and congressional restrictions. Note that part of the victory was the second-hand smoking issue being openly acknowledged as an infringement on citizen's personal right to fresh air. Are citizen rights of the unarmed being considered?

On the other hand, gun rights and controls place us now at the 1960's

stage with tobacco rights and controls. Gun owners are not endangering health by mere possession, though a continuous gun user, like smokers, may endanger self and neighbors. Even though one death is one too many, using guns do not "kill" in numbers like tobacco misuse does; granted, gun deaths are more definitive whereas tobacco misuse occurs over an extended period of time. Intentionally or unintentionally, blazing guns cause 9,000 deaths a year whereas tobacco smoking cuts lives of 300,000 Americans annually and over ten times that number on a global level. Misused guns are lethal and so is long-term tobacco misuse, but while my tobacco book had a global audience, this is meant primarily for Americans and their national gun craze and high death tolls.

The difference between tobacco and guns include degrees of power and intimidation exercised. Tobacco use, as other forms of substance abuse, is intimidating both to addicted individual smokers and to those who suffer from environmental tobacco smoke. I am old enough to recall in the Second World War that tobacco smoking was regarded as healthy (good for the "T" zone of throat and thorax), with medical doctors advising one or other brand. It took decades, after reports of severe adverse smoking health effects, for general non-smokers to overcome social intimidation and assert their own rights to unpolluted air space.

Guns are not ordinarily used by owners as is tobacco by confirmed smokers; guns are ready for emergencies; tobacco is used daily; guns are to be handled with care; cigarettes are a form of recklessness by deliberate choice; many gun owners practice caution. However, there are similarities: both can be misused; guns are to be kept from wrong hands as are cigarettes, but there are those who want to take risks; tobacco smoke infringes on the rights of non-smokers, and the unarmed urge the right to gunless space. This struggle over gun rights versus controls is colored by widespread insecurities; as the debate warms, a right to be free of local arms is as important as a right to be individually armed.

Chapter One: Is Toddler Pretended Gun-Play Healthy?
(1933-43)

Young boys (and maybe some girls) enter the American culture with guns blazing. Why that early love for weapons of destruction? Few realize how much the domestic scene is related to action that includes guns. In the past few years youngsters (and elders) are able to manipulate a mouse or fingers and accept computer games as a replacement for cops & robbers and cowboys & Indians of earlier generations. How early is it that a toddler will point an index finger as though it is the gun barrel directed at some imaginary adversary? Cultural influences are complex and so it is difficult to pinpoint an early fascination with guns. In fact, those parents who want their youth to avoid such gunplay find it exceedingly challenging since neighbor kids and schoolmates often add a behind-the-scenes propensity for weaponry. The American culture is overwhelming even when there are plentiful alternatives, from playgrounds to swings and soccer balls to scouting.

Americans like their own possessions and prefer some exclusive rights where sharing takes a minor role in what ought to be "mine." Those of us growing up in modest-sized homes had to double up and share bedrooms and toys and play space with siblings. However, even in tighter living circumstances there was still some private space for storing keepsakes and treasures. Amazingly, I recall one such keepsake was my brass letter-opener souvenir that I became infatuated with at the pioneer museum at Harrodsburg, Kentucky. I do not recall the exact price, but it took most of my painstakingly acquired financial reserves. At the time Daddy asked inquisitively, "You really don't want that, do you?" My quick reply was "I really do." Though the object was only a foot long, it soon shortened through loss of a cutting-edge bayonet -- but it was "my first gun."

In youth, we were not denied cap guns and other imitations of the real things. In our more creative youthful days, we fashioned swords and shields but were warned to leave off the pointed swords because of potential eye damage. As for cap guns, the noise was more a bother around our home, but that was short-lived for we lacked funds to replenish ammo supplies -- a fact that often turned poor boys into sharpshooters. I do not recall which Christmas it was when we received our own toy guns and whether some were from my maternal Uncle John's (eight years older) outgrown arsenal. Whatever the source, striving mightily in those World War Two days to expand our imaginations with gunplay was part of growing up.

Some of my early introduction to toy weaponry did not go unchallenged. Upon a visit to our home, my First-World-War- veteran paternal uncle and

godfather, told me pointedly not to aim the toy gun at my brother. Uncle Joe had no love of war or weaponry of any sort. Lena, his daughter, confided to me years later that Uncle Joe would get her to do the shooting at their annual hog killing event. Daddy backed up his much admired brother by confirming that we were never to aim weapons (real or play) at another. If we did, all weapons would be removed from our hands. The stricture was severe enough to make us act with discretion in front of adults.

The early years of World War Two brought our military aspects into our rough house play. My maternal Uncle Ed was in the marines, and so I naturally chose that service as my favorite. All too often playground recess involved wrestling battles with the army, navy and marines in a three-way interaction (recall that the independent American air force did not yet exist). Needless to say, the marines were not best represented due to sheer numbers of the other two services. Virtually all playground rough house endeavors focused on military action and it defined our active vocabulary (see **Chapter Seven Reflection**).

School for me started on September 1, 1939, the opening day of the Second World War. Early schooling occurred in the war years, and that was more determinant of conversation at home and elsewhere than later less engrossing wars (and this even before formal American entry in 1941). Everything was geared to military preparedness and possible expansion. We were immersed in a culture of combat and guns. My father had to register; my cousins and uncles had to go to service or get deferments; and rationing began (not only meat, sugar, tires, and gasoline, but also shoes, rubber footwear, coffee, fuel oil, and at times processed food, canned fish, and cheese). It was virtually impossible to buy silks, cars, bikes, and farm equipment, and even typewriters were rationed. We were told it was nothing like what was happening in Britain and Europe. On Market Street in the center of Maysville was a ten-foot-high box like structure with the names of all service personnel from the County. When one was killed, wounded, or missing in action a coded star went next to the name.

The war effort reached entire families. Radio, the major means of information along with newspapers, was my faithful window to a wider world. In addition, World War II movies played their role even though our limited budgets allowed few showings. However, when time and funds allowed, my choice was war movies. I recall one called "Bataan" that dealt with the courageous last stand of American army elements near Manila in the Philippines in 1942 being overpowered by overwhelming Japanese forces. Our grade school nun asked us to tell about movies we saw and classified my entry as "propaganda." I said, "You mean like the turncoat Tokyo Rose or the Nazi information minister Joseph Goebbels?" She did not relent, even with such a bold question. We ought to be careful in what we see. Amazingly, such concern was voiced and yet, in observing Second World War previews (pre-

TV), she was ahead of her time.

For a short period during the war, we had another experience. Because of the farm labor shortage with many in service, our county received German prisoners of war to help with harvest (tobacco was regarded as an essential to the war effort, elevated to that status in the First World War by General Pershing). These German prisoners were housed at the Maysville baseball park with a hastily strung up perimeter of barbed wire about sixteen feet high. One Sunday, Mama took me and my schoolmates to watch prisoners play a strange game (unknown to us -- soccer) bouncing balls with feet and head in use but mostly no hands. The prisoners were treated well, had Sunday religious services by both local German-speaking priest and minister, and seemed to enjoy the vacation atmosphere of being an ocean away from fighting. After the war, some brought wives to revisit. For us, prison life entered playground routines and included snowball wielding older kids marching younger ones as prisoners.

The progressing war grew ever more depressing when almost daily newspaper headlines told of local young men (I do not recall women) who died in battle, missing in action, or wounded. No amount of toy-gun imaginative play kept us unaware of gun violence on the European and Pacific fronts. The popular pictorial periodicals (*Life*, *Look*, and *Saturday Evening Post*), which we subscribed or received secondhand from relatives, told graphic and dramatic stories through photos and texts. War came to mean killings, bombings, and homeless people, and we, even when very young, were not immune from the stark reality. Note, at that time we did not know that our relatives in France had undergone the largest mass evacuation from Alsace in that country's history -- and they suffered in their central French destination areas from their own compatriots due to Germanic names; they were derogatorily called "Boche," which means *aborigine*.

The war was distant, but occasionally touched us. Holiday celebrations were bittersweet events for the local community remembered so many who were absent. Twelve million Americans were away from home, either in the services or working at distant factories, and gasoline was rationed. Even children were caught up in **The War**. Reminders were every song, every story, and even the green cigarette packs had gone to war and were plain without dye coloring ("*Lucky Strike* has gone to war"). Even kids were asked to save and recycle and to collect milkweed pods to make possible silk substitutes -- it failed but we were contributing to the war effort. The young ladies used *Stocking Stick* leg make-up to substitute for nylons.

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Death comes to all families. Just before and during the war years both my maternal grandparents died. I was five when Grandma died and her

memory is still quite vivid. She was laid out in a pink gown in her parlor at "over home," two miles from our residence. Grandma was the first to die of her large family of siblings and the rush of visitors was immense. I did not want to observe her open coffin in the room with large double doors opening to a hallway with an open staircase going to the second floor. Grandpa saw that I walked up the stairs to avoid seeing the coffin. He came up the stairs and offered me the largest shiny coin I had ever seen, if I only go with him to the coffin. It was hard, but money trumped fear and so I went and saw her motionless body holding a rosary in well-worn hands -- my first traumatic encounter with death.

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The passing of Grandpa four years after his beloved wife's death in August 1943 in the middle of the war was sudden. How does the family notify his son serving in the South Pacific campaign where Uncle Ed was to be soon wounded in action? In my first decade of life, I regarded the two losses as monumental. I remember clearly many aspects of both funerals though only five and nine when they occurred. Neither death was gun-related, but death nonetheless and the war was a constant reminder. During 1943 the American planes started heavily bombing German military infrastructure and railroads. A thick patch of wild amaranth in our chicken yard became my war target and I took a stick to them. Daddy saw the blasted plants and said if I had all that excess energy, I should use an efficient scythe and cut the weeds. That did not sound enticing.

These events were impressionable, but full comprehension awaited years of maturation. Images remained with surprising clarity. Some early observations were:

* **Guns are part of American life.** Part of growing up in our American gun culture is to play with toy guns as though they are the real things. Kids play war games or pretend to have lethal weaponry and the majority of Americans tend to accept guns as part of cultural osmosis. Even if some youngsters do not experience killing, we still find pleasure in having power of life and death decisions over others, even fictional characters.

* **Death is a reality**. Those of us who think we can live forever have to face the unreality of such wishful thinking. For most people this comes quite early in life either through funerals or through what we see or observe in human or animal life. Death of loved ones emphasizes the shortness and fragility of mortal life and our utter helplessness in the face of definitive death.

* **Guns can be lethal**. They can cause injury and even death. Death of livestock through shooting was first observed either in farm life (in our case of hog, chicken and beef cattle slaughter) or via media for actors in the path of bullets. Guns were more than toys. Important historic events involve guns.

Real guns and toys are different, but reality gets blurred for moviegoers. Yes, President Lincoln was gunned down, as were Presidents McKinley and Garfield and later Kennedy, and some were injured or threatened (Jackson before presidency, and also Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan).

* **Propaganda campaigns fuel the gun culture.** Perhaps this was more prominent in the 1940s than any other period in American history, for our country was strongly isolationist between world wars. Media propaganda was a deliberate effort to enhance the war effort through patriotic behavior.

* **Guns, whether toy or real, change with fashion.** It started with squirt guns, out of fashion by the time I had enough money to purchase one, since coins didn't jingle in my pocket. I decided to save for longer-term items.

Reflection: Guns as Part of the Culture

Many of us are products of a permissive culture -- as I was to some degree. Allowing others to plot their own course is part of our culture in more ways than we imagine -- and farm kids actually exercise greater freedom in some respects because they are less supervised during play periods. Imaginations are allowed to run wild in fields, hollows, and haystacks away from parental gaze.

Current history and guns somehow intermingle. I learned to read by perusing the daily newspaper (as a Third grader at the start of American entry into the War in December 1941). At the time, we were studying Japan in our geography class but soon learned to consider friends in other lands as enemies. With my last name the same as important Nazi leaders (and the General who led the first armies into Poland), we were somewhat held in suspicion even though I emphasized being three-quarters French and kin to "fighting Frenchmen." We followed the exploits of our Allied forces on a large world map on the wall of our family "sitting room." The war entered our educational process, and we learned geography of places and important current events.

Pearl Harbor was a day of infamy. I clearly remember standing on the Church steps before Mass the day after Pearl Harbor and discussing the bombing with a school buddy. After the Hawaiian Islands' attack, where next? Would Hitler bomb New York City now that war was declared on Germany? Early war days were stamped by Pearl Harbor just as would be John F. Kennedy's assassination on November 22, 1963. A national audience glued to the radio listened with rapt attention, just as 22 years later a TV audience watched in utter fascination the assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald, JFK's assassin, as well as the president's funeral. The words of President Roosevelt still ring in my ears.

Early explorers caught our youthful imagination when history and fiction interplayed. Daddy told us that Simon Kenton (one of the earliest Kentucky pioneers) related that he camped for a period "near a strong spring at the headwaters of Limestone Creek where the canebrakes began" (that was on or immediately beyond our farm site). Daniel Boone stayed a period as well in the Maysville vicinity and both were guntoters in the plentiful game-filled Kentucky forests and hills. Soldiers, trappers, explorers, priests, and homesteaders with flag, cross, and gun all came our way. They kept their powder dry for wildlife or enemy.

Native Americans entered our imagination but in a vague way, as Kentucky for the greater part was not their place of residence (though Shawnees were at *Old Indian Fields* thirty-some miles away as late as the mid-1700s). And there was that mysterious mound one mile away on the Margaret Perraut Farm telling us of very ancient inhabitants. We learned that fire power of early Spaniards, French, or English explorers outmatched natives with their bows and arrows. We read that Frenchman Jacques Champlain and two compatriots won a battle for their Huron allies with Iroquois by planting their guns in well-placed front lines, shooting leaders and driving leaderless Iroquois into confusion. Similar Spanish and English episodes were noted as well.

American Revolutionaries entered our imagination, since the last battle of the Revolution (Blue Licks) was fought two dozen miles away in neighboring Robertson County. We imagined ourselves settlers led by the Boone clan and defending their pioneer forts in these parts of Kentucky. Kenton Station was virtually within sight. Pioneer defensive tactics against British-led Indian parties were the informal variety learned during the French and Indian Wars of a decade before. We marveled that colonists used such fighting tactics in campaigns of that war -- in semi-hidden fashion behind stone walls and trees near Lexington Massachusetts. In 1775, General Gage, acting governor and headquartered in Boston, sent his troops to disarm the stirring colonists by taking over the communal gunpowder arsenal at Cambridge. Later in April, he dispatched a second detachment twenty miles to Concord where a common store of weapons and supplies existed. The Americans drove them off with their guns.

George Washington, (our nearby town was the first named after him) while he was the newly appointed commander of the emerging nation, brought in Prussian expertise to train his often eager, but undisciplined colonists-turned warriors. Washington, a master at strategic withdrawal, only outgunned the better equipped British Army on occasion such as at Monmouth. However, we preferred the likes of American General Horatio Gates who won a victory at Saratoga in 1777 that brought France as an ally to help win American independence -- a proud reflection for a grandchild of a French veteran (of the Franco-Prussian War). Our farm was part of the post-Revolutionary War grant

to General Henry Lee. In our early forays, we discovered a slave cemetery near the Lee manor with rough rock as tomb stones and one had "Mary" written on it.

Founding fathers (our county was the first named after James Mason) of the Constitution and its amendments saw the need for security against the mighty British presence in Canada and the occupied Northwest territories. Militias were to have a right to bear arms, at least as a regulated local community. Did it ever enter into the minds of Constitution framers that private citizens would have more than single-shot muzzleloaders? Certainly they knew that private guns were weapons to protect a gentleman's honor through frequent duels; such cost the life of founding father, Alexander Hamilton, Washington's Secretary of the Treasury. In 1804, his life was cut short in a duel with the vice-president, Aaron Burr, after prodding him to the point of conflict.[1] In another duel, Andrew Jackson wore an oversized overcoat which threw off the aim of his opponent, and Jackson lived to be president.

Slaveholding in early America involved guns as much as whips. The fear of insurrections (Nat Turner's in 1831) weighed on the minds of armed slave masters in early nineteenth century. European nations found slavery and slave trade distasteful and abolished them; however, American slave-holding did not go down without a fight, even with the end of foreign trade. Tobacco and cotton-growing kept slaveholding alive for decades, but abolitionists surfaced and became more vocal in the North. Kentucky, south of the Mason-Dixon Line, was caught in the middle as a border state. Here in Washington Kentucky, Harriet Beecher Stowe, visiting author of the influential novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, observed the selling of slaves -- and the auction block remained visible into our days.

This portion of local history left us somewhat ambivalent. We prided ourselves in history but it had streaks. The blackest mark in local history involved bounty hunters legally hunting down escaped slaves in Ohio and returning them across the river to a jail in Washington, Kentucky, wherein they could be returned to "owners." This was the fruit of the 1857 Dred Scott Supreme Court Decision.[2] Times were becoming critical, for Kansas was bleeding; John Brown and his little band attempted to seize the Federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, and dark war clouds were forming.

Civil War hit our area hard with nerves so frayed and neighbors taking opposing sides. The Border States would suffer. A very ancient neighbor, Joe Davis[3], captivated our minds with tales of that war when he was a youth our age. He told about his dad taking him in 1861 to the mustering of the Kentucky Home Guard on nearby grounds, right after Fort Sumter. Kentucky was attempting to remain neutral but that did not last long, even with its armed militia. The seemingly short-lived civil squabble developed into a bloody conflict wherein one out of every fifty Americans lost their lives in battle

or its aftereffects -- and our county had its share. Weaponry evolved from single-shot muzzleloaders and sailing ships to automatic and repeating guns and iron-clad warships. Carbines and side arms were prominent when Morgan's raiders invaded our county during the war. My brother Ed acquired a newly found sword near Route 68 (the old Maysville post road) and they surmised it belonged on one of John H. Morgan's raiders. It was given to the local museum honoring native son Confederate General A. S. Johnston, who was killed while commander of Southern forces at the Battle of Shiloh (April 6-7, 1862).

The Wild West also captured our imaginations through movies and books. Post Civil War attention quickly turned from regional conflicts to taming the western wilderness of fiercely independent Indian nations. Buffalo Bill types shot bison for the fun of it. Cowboys needed their guns to kill rattlesnakes and when they had the seasonal journey to wild towns, they used them during periods of R&R. We saw movies of the shoot outs at high noon, and all the hype associated with gun slingers in the Wild West. It was a matter of the trusty iron and the fastest draw. Gun control was defined by the quick and steady hand and nerve to know when to act. Gun battles involved the U.S. cavalry against Native Americans fighting to retain native habitats. Amid heroics of Wounded Knee and Little Big Horn were campaigns of attrition that decimated buffalo herds and corralled natives into undesirable reservations unwanted by onrushing settlers looking for fertile fields. The conflicts did not totally end with that century but continued well into the twentieth.[4] And we devoured American history.

Application: Control Youthful Toys of Violence

At different times, propaganda war movies and modern computer games are all expressions of the overall culture. It is too confining to call this a "culture of guns," though guns are a major modern ingredient of who we are. We want devices that give us pleasure and hold on to them even after growing up. In our culture we favor convenience that means access at low cost; we like efficiency and dispatch; we want recognition and display. Guns fit this bill all too easily. Certainly controls may be called forth, but is it possible with youthful toys?

Controls on toy gun sales and violent video games and movies. Candy cigarettes give youngsters wrong ideas about smoking, and governmental regulators see these as training youth to want the real smoking device. Why not ban a variety of imitation guns, especially those so close to real ones that they are used in thefts where victims cannot distinguish between real and fake ones? No one, child or thief, ought to carry fake guns that can be easily mistaken and cause confusion. Outright ban on sale of fake assault weapons is a no-brainer (see **Chapter Four** for real assault bans).

Films in cinemas today are loud with gunfire and explosions; such as at the Aurora, Colorado massacre when the audience was confused about what was really happening. At times fiction and reality overlap. Problems of imposing censorship on violent movies are expected to surface by civil libertarians and others. Recall that the Batman film had heightened sales after the theater massacre. Violence is attractive to some degree and yet must be addressed -- and curbed.

Enjoy non-competitive games. Perhaps competitive games prepare people to be successful in a cut-throat world -- but they shorten life through encouraging stressful conditions that trigger heart attacks and other maladies. Why should anyone lose, whether wildlife in the cross hairs of a gun, or some individual who has played his or her heart out on a sports field? Non-competitive games can be played where all parties are winners, much like a team trying to conquer a high mountain together. How about playing games of saving our planet where the outcome is really in doubt? People play small games to have a good time, relieve tensions, be sociable, or get sunshine and fresh air; fine! Teach real games where losing would be costly to the environment and winning can be beneficial to all parties. Let's come away together as winners.

Competitive economic and political games are being played outside of athletics. All too often, these are played in the competitive spirit of winners making gobs of money and losers going bankrupt. So much for reality, but hardly an ideal world; far better to teach real games where poor can rise and win along with all, and that means the wealthy can be transformed into a new motivation of spiritual benefits for all. This involves cheering, not ridiculing, and championing and not overlooking the losers.

Winning is very important, in fact, often more important than merely playing for the fun of it. However, competitive winning that demands losers is not spiritually healthy or enticing; far better to entice the players to move to where all are winners. Sports-wise, pitched soccer battles are little better that real warfare; parents pounce on umpires and referees who do not call their children's play according to their liking; gold medals are counted like body counts during warfare; teams are disqualified if thought to play to lose a certain match to have favorable placement later.

Modern athletic practice is certainly better than sacrificing youth to the gods of old in Mayan athletic events. However, beyond athletics is a grander world of winning and winning by all -- and a planet is at stake. This makes a non-competitive scenario far more vital than appears at first glance. This was my thought early on when peer competitive sports seemed hostile to my rather conservative religious beliefs.

Chapter Two: What About Bearing Arms as Youths?
(1943-53)

One summer after the War, we noticed in the local newspaper that for the following month or so in mid-summer no game was "in season," and thus people had no reason to carry guns about since nothing could be hunted. Immediately, I became incensed, having interpreted this as an infringement on that constitutional right to bear arms as a citizen. Secondly, for us living in crow country, the hungry *aggressors* of our growing corn crop were always "in season." I patted the gun and announced that certain things, including game wardens, were always in season; during that period we youngsters carried our guns with greater purpose and dignity. We were on a gun crusade, for no one was to tell us how to use or when to carry these prized instruments of defense.

Within our farm, we made war on crows; we did not ""hunt" as the urban sportsmen did. The crows were more than simple pests; crows were truly aggressors on our cornfields, and the right to bear arms was fundamental to the security of our economic interest and livelihood -- for how could we thrive without a corn crop to feed our livestock? For us, crows were endowed with skills and social graces; they were smart, could communicate among themselves, and protected each other. In our minds, crows took on the character of a human gang or mob. Thus, these clever, destructive and socially sophisticated birds were always in season -- year-round. We knew that "sentinel" crows could tell the difference between a gun and a walking stick. Battling crows took skill, not the child's play of rabbit- or dove-hunting that was unnecessary cruelty to animals -- and outside immediate interest.

This crow war was serious and involved a tit-for-tat reaction to the economically-damaging practices of mischievous birds. We did not start the fight, but we were willing to engage and not allow the other side to win without a fight. In part, skill was demanded, for it is definitely difficult to kill mature crows with their effective sentinel system. The one opportunity for killing crows is when they are nesting in springtime. We limited this rather mischievous practice to harvesting a few sitting mature crows for hanging on poles in the corn patch. We were aware that this foray bothered the crow society, namely, the ignominy of one of their compatriots hanging in a field. They tried desperately to dislodge the hanging corpse; they were too smart to be scared by proverbial scarecrows, a fact little known to the general public.

Yes, battling crows was a true contest of wits. Since they knew when we openly carried a gun one trick was to hide the gun in the cab of our pickup truck during late summer. This was when our corn fields were infested by feasting crows. They would rip over the green shucks and take a little of the milky young grains but not be satisfied with a single ear. A crow could do considerable damage in one outing. We learned that we could disturb their feasting by halting the pickup on the adjacent public road and whipping out the gun and shooting from the running board. We occasionally got a few, scared off the many -- and the crow war continued.

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Charlie, Eddie, neighbor Lowell, and I hatched a plan to take on the crows and challenge their occupation of our territory (though really they were there first). We had surveyed the sky and realized that many but not all of the crows were confirmed commuters: they delighted in Kentucky's "Happy Hunting Ground." This became a daylight commute, for many (not all) returned to roost in the safer haven of border Ohio counties in the evening. We watched how they skimmed over the then pastoral ridge on which today the Kentucky AA (Ashland to Alexandria) Highway runs. So we went to the ridge and hid with guns for a good volley; as the first sentinel crow came over he (or she) turned a somersault and the rest got the message and the entire convoy of birds turned right and bent around us in perfect formation -- before we could get a single shot off. We commented that the expression "the way the crow flies" (a straight line) does not work with gunners present.

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As youth, we were handlers of weapons and planned to defend our rural turf in the mid-twentieth century just as gangs of mostly urban youth sought and still seek to defend their territories. One difference was that gun possession at that more laid-back age in rural America seemed to give youth more freedom and confidence that they had a job-laden future ahead of them. Furthermore, the new generation is now saddled with safety rules and regulations that were foreign in our day. In our age, we snitched a little mercury from the science lab in high school and would shine dimes with it -- but the sheen wore off quite soon. The mere presence of liquid mercury today would bring in a squad to clear the school over fear of dropping a glob on the floor. We forget that our past remedy was to spread some flowers of sulfur and sweep up the residue.

One other safety-related episode I recall clearly was when Daddy asked me to hurry to the Hill & Thompson Hardware Store during lunch break and buy some percussion caps to set off our dynamite charges. We used between a third and a half of a stick of dynamite for each post hole during fencing in our rather rocky hillside areas. Mr. Thompson was a little reluctant, but when I said who my dad was he was confident I would take caps home and not show them to others. I promised and took the package and stuck it in my desk

drawer until dismissal in the afternoon. Perhaps these rather powerful explosives, if known to be in a student's possession today, would cause school closures, bomb squads, arrests for endangerment, and difficulties for parents and hardware folks.

Ours is a more up-tight world only to some degree. A youth carrying home dynamite caps today would be taken into custody, but what about the privileged bankers whose financial thievery goes unchecked? Restriction has changed and applies really to those wielding less, not more, power. Perhaps the power of the gun-carrying individual bent on terror has something to do with it -- or the explosive-laden individual seeking to stop a Boston Marathon. Whatever, attention is now given to these potential terrorists while the perpetrators of tax avoidance and environmental pollution get off almost scot-free.

Guns at the State and National Level

The art of maturing involves separation from a traditional domestic nest or household, an act that begins slowly and increases with advancing age. In 1947, my first year of high school, I was active and an officer in our newly formed conservation club. State game conservation officials assisted youth in learning the art of proper use of weapons and fishing practices. We went for a week that summer to a newly opened camp and water impoundment of the Cumberland River called *Dale Hollow Lake,* now a major summer tourist attraction. We lived in rather primitive conditions and the food was substantial, but hardly the best in the world. We had daily training in proper fishing techniques and we all engaged in skeet-shooting bouts and how to handle firearms. Not all was new but we were introduced to wildlife conservation -- my first encounter with environmental practices. Kentucky as commonwealth includes wildlife and proper gaming rules and regulations, and the state is willing to teach youth about them.

My second decade included leaving home and attending college at Xavier University in Cincinnati. During this period (1951 and following) in the midst of the Korean War, those of us with draft deferments still had to participate in the college ROTC program for the first two years. An army artillery unit trained us in the elements of formation drill, caring for the howitzer (never jump over the trails), and even rifle target practice. Those advancing to a full ROTC program were to become artillery "forward observers" that in pre-GPS days meant unsafe frontal positions in the battle line and calling coordinates to gunners further back. While we trained, we received reports of Xavier alumni second and first lieutenants killed or wounded in action. My roommate for three years decided to go on to ROTC completion and that meant a commission and possible front line service. Refusing advanced ROTC became my first career decision -- and guns were involved.

Observations in this second decade were becoming quite serious as I began to face the realities of growing older.

* **The Second World War violence spread to us all.** We were caught up in the fervor and began to learn about the causes. This war had brutal origins. *The (Nazi) SA was moving into a new era. Meeting-room bundles and rowdy demonstrations weren't bloody enough. They gave up using chair legs and bottles and turned to guns and knives instead.*[5] Our own U.S. grade school culture and playgrounds became a militant zone in **1944** and that set a tone that would take years to overcome.

* **War is brutal.** When the Second World War was winding down we heard on the radio about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August **1945** -- and few things ever blew my mind as much as atomic power unloosed. How could we drop those bombs on innocent people? Did the end of the war justify the means? Something had brutalized our own thinking.

* **Economics defines a reason for weaponry.** Defense of our farm life was at that time and continues for many farm folks to be a justifying reason to remain armed. In **1946**, the issue was very clear. This raises a question I can not answer now, and that is if under similar conditions as experienced in the 1940s resulting from the crow assault I would choose to be armed today.

* **Militancy enters into cultural expressions in many ways.** In the eighth grade in **1947**, Sister Sheila asked some of us to write and conduct a play, and so I participated in the only play-writing in my life -- with weaponry involved. The plot was simple: gangsters got what they deserved, and each actor would be done away with (killed), and the last two actors would "do each other in" (killed) in a final blaze of glory before the curtain fell. Sister shouted from the audience (that includes several classes of youngsters) that this was enough. We innocently testified that we had no more actors for the cast were all killed. Another sister could not refrain from laughing at our ignominious closure and lack of applause as supposedly shocked students were led away.

* **Guns entered wildlife conservation**. This was my first taste in 1948 between freshman and sophomore years of what is needed to treat our wildlife properly; more on this subject later.

* **Guns give a sense of power** because they are easily executed in the current condition of firearms. To be able to create fear by holding a gun generates a sense of exhilaration that can be mesmerizing to those who handle weapons. Most likely we as youth had that sense of power and showed off in some ways before others. Child soldiers have it to this day. Youth with guns even when well trained do not know how to handle that flush of power and can do stupid and dangerous things. Around that period in **1949,** a former

classmate almost died from accidental gunshot wounds. Too much killing is due to weapons in our midst.

* **War games prepare us for a culture of militancy.** There is a child within us all, and guns can have a way of retarding and not advancing our maturation. Some who experience direct action tell of growing up suddenly in warfare, and so it is. However, that is a minority of our American population even awash in guns. This can incline a partial armed society into an immaturity that allows the military to dictate what is best. In **1950,** a rather brash General Douglas MacArthur sought to show an authority beyond our nation's tradition of a citizen commander-in-chief. I vacillated as to which side to take, his or President Truman's, and in fact our entire nation had to come to terms with who has the military power.

* **War is a personal possibility.** "Well regulated" is part of the Second Amendment and is understood by those of us who believe in the need of a national defense that exists for the good of our country and neighbors. During this second decade we witnessed not only the end of the Second World War but the new conflict called the along with the Korean War just when registering for the draft in **1951**. I followed warfare enough when younger and then as the Korean War dragged on and causalities (including those formerly from our high school) mounted, the war became distasteful -- even while patriotism endured. Would we have a truce soon?

* **Training in everything** from personal handling of guns for hunting and sports to military service decisions in **1952-53** was a necessity. Choices include going beyond play things to real instruments and that requires instruction and proper practice. Refusing to continue to advanced ROTC was a decision requiring some weighing of options. Staying in the advanced corps included receiving pay to help with college bills, which were light by modern standards but heavy for small time farmers/home builders, as was our family. I was not inclined to this military career, even for a brief short period of time. That certainly did not dampen my patriotism or even the morality of the fight against global Communism. I was still militantly inclined throughout the period but preferred to avoid the army artillery if I had the free choice.

Summary: Growing up demanded taking proper steps in everything we do and this involves proper training and care. This period of leaving home was a sobering time on such matters as the service we owe our country in time of war and emergency.

Reflection: Discovery of Power with Guns

A person holding a gun in a hostile fashion can elicit fright on the part of those who face the barrel-- and the gun-holder is intoxicated with the sense of power. A gun is a great temptation for those with little hope whether a half

century ago or today.

The unemployed become a source of global insecurity. This world now has three hundred million plus unemployed (as many as the U.S. total population), besides those with low-paying and part-time jobs with little hope for advancement. The half-literate and seemingly harder hit long-term unemployed are tempted to become violent. Just to command power briefly is for such people superior to quietly living in an apparently hopeless oppressive system. The gun becomes a low-cost portable vehicle for escape for hopeless youth. Those who condemn terrorists fail to see the causes that may trigger such outbursts, forgetting that anger in lacking a foreseeable livelihood has an apparent reasonable justification (see **Chapter Seven**). A deeper reflection incorporates bridging gaps between rich and poor.

Violent revolutionaries know the power of guns but it is short-lived at best. For those with a revolutionary spirit, guns appear to be a temptation, and if democratic process is so crippled by wanton political power by the privileged, hopelessness infests gun-holders who strive to take matters into their own hands -- as happened in the American Revolution. Those choosing a violent route know guns can kill and just might change the course of world history. Wielding guns is an exertion of power over others to whom the weapon is directed. Thus, a person may not be strong or recognized as an "authority," and yet with a gun can issue orders expecting obedience. What power! Lest we forget, guns in slave master's hands allowed continuation of injustice.

Consider the power swelling up in someone with a gun, especially an adolescent. This person is uncertain of results but in a fit of recklessness enacts dreams with a death-dealing weapon of destruction. For youth around the teen years who are permitted to have guns and hunt, the power surge even before being able to drive a powerful automobile is overwhelming. This sense of power can be felt whether the gun is hidden or exposed, but in the latter case the holder can command and others are forced to obey. Individuals, gang members, and child soldiers all vouch for a raw power that elicits fear on those at the other end of the barrel. What if every angry youngster had access to their share of the America's gun arsenal, one weapon for every man, woman, and child?

Materials possessions are inherently insecure. A materialistic society places its safety in material things (e.g., money, real estate, drones, or guns). America is steeped in material things and the most heavily armed nation in the world, but are we safer because of it? This is a question to be repeatedly asked because it emerges over and over in different ways during our journey of life. Does the quest for material security draw insecure people to arm themselves as though that will make them safer? A look at statistics show unsuccessful defense by the untrained to be cause for fatal accidents in

as many cases, if not more, than success in such personal defense. The trigger happy can do terrible things, and current media is full of stories of mistaken identity in hasty use of weapons by the untrained.

Guns are inherently unsafe. The reason for a gun is to do harm to another or stop an advancing threat from materializing. Thus the use of a gun is hardly ever a neutral occasion. Threatening with the gun leads to actions not resulting from an individual's personality or leadership skills, by the combination of a reckless individual along with the "gun." If the gun owner is untrained or without some external control, the degree of safety diminishes accordingly. Not only is the holder at risk but the degree of safety of those in range of the weapon is reduced accordingly. This applies to household residents and visitors along with neighbors. Too many episodes of gunshot wounds and deaths are records both in our own gun-happy regions and throughout all parts of our land where guns are plentiful.

Properly trained and supervised police are safer. No gun is totally safe but good training can help reduce accidents. A police officer can have a good safety record even when bringing guns home with them for protection. Switzerland trains for all its male citizens to bear arms in defense of their homeland. However, each member of that nation-state undergoes a training period and guns are kept secure when not being used. Where training is required, the safety record is greater. Even so, emergencies can result in unintentional injury and death for the untrained. Furthermore, the great majority of gun-holders are not trained like police or military personnel and unintended and tragic accidents result. One of the workmen at my nature center had lost a son who in cleaning his guns did not know that one was loaded and it accidently killed him in his own house. The burden of that gun death lingered through the lifetime of his parents.

Child soldiers are a major danger. This modern phenomenon in weak nation-states is a cruel manifestation of dangers in gun-bearing at its worst. This is more frequent in Sub-Saharan Africa where guns are furnished to young children in order to carry out war-related missions. These youth are often forced, enticed, or enslaved by corrupted operators who want warm bodies to go into dangerous places or intimidate innocent populations. The tragedy extends beyond actual combat, for youthful gun-bearers are stamped during formative years in a culture of violence. It can be quite difficult to rehabilitate youthful soldiers. This raises a basic question as to youth possessing guns, for all youth ought to be unarmed. America has its homemade child soldier problem as well; I was part of it.

Application: Learning How to Use Guns Properly

This application applies to proper possession of guns. Whether one champions a gunless society or not, once guns are legally possessed by

individuals, an ordered society demands the owners to be good stewards. Such ordering is needed for the safety of possessor, those in proximity of a potentially misused weapon, maintenance of gun, and removal of the weapon from the hands of those who could mishandle it at some future occasion. While we generally had proper training as youngsters, not all did. We were shocked when urban classmates with firearms showed their utter inexperience. Handling firearms properly is necessary even when preferring a gunless society where no one outside of police and authorized military are allowed to have them. Yes, we need governmental regulation to ensure proper responsibility for the ones who possess dangerous weapons. The following are points expected of all gun-bearing individuals:

* **Store guns properly**. They ought to be out of reach of toddlers who may want to examine them on their own. Obviously, do not keep them loaded. Though this is the first requirement, it was not kept perfectly at our home any more than that of early pioneers who kept their firearms in the most prominent place to be retrieved quickly when needed by men, women and children in the event of "an Indian attack." They were **not** loaded but our family guns were kept in a closet just behind where we slept as kids. I suspect that I was two feet away by a thin wall and unlocked door from guns for at least a decade of my youthful life.

* **Keep ammo apart from guns**. Ammo should be stored with even greater caution and in places where the young do not have access. This is a good recommendation and yet was not kept in our family home. Our supply of shells and bullets was in the cabinet just mentioned in which the guns were stored, and all of us kids could have gotten the ammo when needed with no trouble at all. When our dad called for a gun for some reason, we would hasten and gather gun and shells and take them to him. However, this recommendation is still most valid today and deserves promotion.

* **Remove and dispose of automatic weapons**, even keepsakes with some sort of personal attachment, e.g., a machine gun that was a museum piece in some homes is and has been illegal for some time and yet such do exist. When my dog was shot and died at my feet in 1992, an Appalachian neighbor offered me her stored machine gun -- a kind offer that I unhesitatingly refused.

* **Know the gun fully before handling it.** This involves familiarity with safety locks and how to load and unload ammo with proficiency. Possessors of guns deserve to go through some sort of training in order to know all the safety precautions and to use them well. This was taught to us and we learned, when given a shotgun, we had to keep it cleaned and well maintained.

* **Never point a gun at another.** Certainly that means the real device

-- but toys could be added. The admonition of my Uncle Joe never to point a toy gun at another (reinforced by Daddy) had deep roots and we winced when others did not obey that basic rule.

* **Keep guns pointed downward when walking.** A stray bullet can harm someone far away. One youngster from the city who was visiting our farm proceeded to show me his gun, barrel first. I noted his finger seemed to be on the trigger -- and the gun was loaded. Yes, it was somewhat scary and so I volunteered a lesson we learned early on emphatically: never point a gun at another and don't carry loaded weapons.

* **Handle guns with special care** at all times, even when entering or leaving or when climbing over a fence or through a barrier. Hand a gun over the barrier to a companion with barrel away from people or after checking it being empty.

* **Try not to hike alone with guns.** It is always better to have a friend along in case of trouble. The story was told in our family about a cousin who was accidentally shot by his own gun and he ran wounded home and died at the foot of his mother. That tale made a great impact on our personal practice of gun-keeping.

* **Load only for immediate use.** Keep guns unloaded virtually all the time. That is more obvious when guns lack safety locks. Today' instruments have all those safety gadgets that allow some to think it is safe to keep guns loaded -- but are they?

* **Clean guns after use.** This involves swabbing the barrel and oiling parts as recommended. We find this task onerous but integral in caring for gear whether for hunting, shooting, or any outdoor activity.

* **Don't take guns into visitors' homes without permission.** I took a truck to take materials from DC back to Kentucky and the driver plunked his gun down on the coffee table of the guest house in which we were staying -- badly offending the hostess.

Note that proper application of these basic rules should not be justification for possessing guns. A Big Brother governmental agency does not exist, but a consensus is emerging that some controls are necessary for the peace of mind of our people.

Chapter Three: Are All Kentuckians Sharpshooters?
(1953-63)

Sharpshooting is known as part of the Kentucky experience from pioneer times through the War of 1812 in which Commonwealth soldiers played a major role (Kentucky lost more casualties than any other state); that participation has continued into modern times. When ammo was scarce, expensive, or hard to preserve, every shot had to count. There was little leeway for the early frontiersman to miss, lest the prize game escape. One shot is often the only opportunity allowed. Hunting with an automatic weapon is not a sport -- it's a slaughter.

In our youth, target practice was limited since the supply of bullets was expensive in the aftermath of the Great Depression. As our economic prospects improved following the Second World War, we were able to enjoy this Sunday afternoon rural sport where guns were handy but companionship limited in rural areas. We hardly ever hiked from home without our trusty weapons and dog. However, the dog did not like me as much as my brothers because when he decided to lie down under the target, I shot over him -- and the good dog really never trusted my aim from then on.

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I was no marksman though my brothers and neighborhood first cousin, Ed Schumacher, were. In fact, Cousin Ed went on to become a sharpshooter during his career in the army, even making the U.S. team for the 1974 World Shooting Championships. In his post-military days Ed worked for *Firearms Training Systems, Inc.* in Atlanta; his civilian work included training security personnel from many countries in how to use systems more productively.

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My brothers Charlie and Eddie certainly excelled in shooting. My lack of steadiness of hand was the drawback stopping me from reaching beyond the moderate marksman category -- and that lack of steadiness ran within our family. The only time Daddy would have any of his brood delay going to school was in hog-killing periods; they were the ones who had to hit each hog in the dime-sized area between and slightly above the eyes, and NOT allow the poor animal to squeal upon being shot. It demanded a single shot. My first cousin

Lena admitted to me that in her youth her dad, who lacked steadiness, persuaded her to skip school to shoot the hogs as well.

Right after the Second World War, we had a veteran as a farm worker nicknamed "Frodge" who had been wounded in the arm during the American Italian campaign in 1943-44. Though he too was unsteady due to his wound, he had been a sharpshooter in earlier years and was able to compensate. He overcame his handicap by an acquired skill of moving the gun across the target area and at the precise instant firing the weapon, thus retaining his sharp shooter status that all true Kentuckians aspire to. We admired Frodge's finesse and regarded him as an expert shot; we witnessed him kill young crows that his wife would fry like Kentucky fried chicken.

Hunting and shooting had their place, but life moves on and I felt called to greater service to God and fellow human beings. Life was taking a new route and I had to adjust to a broader respect for nature and an abandonment of specific Kentuckyisms, like sharp shooting and Sunday forays in the countryside. God was calling me to something more, and guns and cars and other specific possessions had to be given up -- and I did. The question was raised as I departed from home and went to Milford in September 1956 (after graduate work in chemistry) whether the world was going to be a better place by what I could contribute. During this third decade of life, I combined chemical pursuits (graduate degrees) and religious training.

This decade from September 1953-September 1963 was one of relative peace in a world in which the U.S. had no war (the only such decade of my life) and was only broken at the start of the next decade in November 1963 with the tragic death of President Kennedy. It was a period of utter optimistic outlook for many of us: the beginning of Vatican II, academic studies, general prosperity of the post-war era, election of a Catholic president, discovery of writings of Jesuit scientist and evolution proponent Teilhard d'Chardin, initiation of 43 years of jogging, possibility of research on pesticides and plastics for human progress, and a feeling of creativity through reading a book a week. I entered the Society of Jesus and underwent novitiate, classical, and philosophical training and then launched into my chemistry doctorate program. A world awaited being conquered, whether science was theoretical or practical or a combination.

Observations during this third decade were related more to valuing nature and to rejecting possessions (stamp collection, autos and guns). Never again would I shoot a gun after entering into the Society of Jesus in 1956. I not only gave up a car in my name, a real surrender, but also a way of agricultural life -- even though the next five years of training were in rural settings. A new respect for God's creation came upon me, but this special love of nature took time to seep in and penetrate my bones. In fact, we were never far from nature during novitiate and juniorate training. During almost three

years at Milford Ohio, I participated in trimming and cutting trees, raking leaves, and remaking a walking path as outdoor projects. There, and nearly two years at West Baden Indiana during philosophy, I took up "jogging" before it was a popular pastime and that keeps one in touch with rugged land. Additional **observations** are worth noting:

*** We grow out of certain forms of gun-related entertainment.** Hunting in late college days (**1953-6**) had little appeal, except for pragmatic reasons and fellowship with others. Actually, I found no desire to kill anything even though I had been heartless in the past about slaying livestock and crows.

* **All activity is meant for the Greater Glory of God.** Life in all its forms was worth preserving and admiring as having the image of Christ present -- or seeing God in all things. I began seeing Christ in the world of trees and wildlife and chose the ordination verse: *Faith is seeing the brilliant countenance of Christ looking up as us from every creature.* This insight took various forms. In staring down at sparkling dew drops on my meditation walks in the Novitiate years (**1956-58**), I could see the jewels (diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires) of nature as God's invitation to deeper created mystery. Observing the weather patterns had always intrigued me; anticipating the budding plants and first frost had great appeal. Weren't such things the creating hand of God?

* **Classical training** (**1958-59**) proved the power of the written word. Rural life has enduring and often forgotten values worth articulating as in my poem "Upturned Plow," of which some liked enough that they kidded me about it with the actual title recalled by a visitor forty years later -- after I forgot writing it. It was perhaps the only poem that plumbed my soul deeply. A way of life was fading away and would never return, and that included a gun-laced world as well.

* **Earth is worth touching**. In my two West Baden philosophy years (**1959-61**) Rollie Smith, Dave Moreau, and I took to spelunking or cave exploration though virtually none of the other students seemed interested. The southern Indiana caves are quite rugged and in places dangerous (two weeks after one exploration we made in the Lost River Caves two other spelunkers from the nearby University of Indiana lost their lives in that very cave). One thing we learned in those years was that unarmed sport activities could also be physically risky.

* **Stay in touch with Earth.** I noted in my years of study in New York (**1961-64**) and later in Chicago that there was a need to move out into the country after lengths of a purely urban environment. The truism that *"You can take the boy out of the country but not the country out of the boy"* proved itself in my case. I looked forward to retreats, vacations, and weekends in

rural areas associated with the Society's properties (Port Kent and Poughkeepsie New York and Woodstock Maryland). I recall a memorable (unarmed) all day hike in Michigan with fellow Jesuits during summer vacation; we scavenged the countryside for food and had a satisfying lunch of crab apples, ripe cherries, and boiled crayfish. Such simple delights remain as pleasant memories.

* **Chemistry is for better living.** DuPont's motto really took heart for me and this I experienced during the course of my studies, especially doctorate work (**1961-64**). Chemical knowledge is very exciting and yet ought to be utilized to feed the hungry and free people from illness and disease. It is not to make profits for certain individuals or corporations. Here a personal critique of capitalism began to emerge in still unarticulated ways as well as the germs of public interest science.

Summary: It takes an effort to retain a love of nature and to allow it to grow when many other distractions can get in the way.

Reflection: Ambivalence and Ethics in Hunting

Besides target practice, hunting is also regarded as a gun-related sport; however, bow and arrow is seen by many as a more skilled and challenging (and perhaps less dangerous) sport. I confess I never had a propensity for the often social sport of hunting but did engage with college friends on rare occasion in my pre-Jesuit years when taking breaks to return from Cincinnati to the Kentucky farm. The question I raised to myself was why kill innocent life when not needed. Why kill an innocent rabbit even when in season? For me, to kill squirrels seemed downright cruel, as did hunting deer for that matter -- though justification surfaces when the multitude of any wildlife takes on a pest status for orchard owners and homemakers who see their premises invaded. In such cases, hunting is really harvesting. Though not regarded as problems in that decade, several examples have emerged over time.

Wild turkey can and do prove a threat to the landscape when proliferating in large numbers, as in the hills near here; the Kentucky state gaming agency has deliberately interbred wild and tame turkeys to yield a larger and more tender game animal. However, the larger "hybrid" turkey has become a nuisance in the Commonwealth and in neighboring states. These super-turkeys act like mowing machines in the fragile understory of our woods, eating with no discrimination native plants that can be rendered threatened or endangered. Unlike smaller birds that partake of the prized red wild-ginseng seeds in late summer, turkeys have gizzards that can efficiently crack the ginseng seeds and not emit them whole for regeneration. Turkey eating habits

can become the major threat to propagation of highly valuable wild ginseng.

Deer, like turkey have become prime hunting game in recent years, though we never sighted them or turkeys when growing up in the mid-twentieth century. No doubt there are people who are pleased with the proliferation of deer unless meeting them unexpectedly in a moving vehicle -- in which case severe damage to all parties may result. Deer winter quite well on their own and proliferate in sizeable numbers given modern reduced hunting seasons. The owner of a dilapidated barn a half mile away from my current residence confided that the structure allows deer to have a winter shelter. Neighbors friendly to adult deer and their cute offspring permit them to run free on farms, yards, and just about everywhere. They are most unappreciated when their two sparkling diamond eyes appear in the dark a hundred yards away, standing petrified at your approaching vehicle with blinding headlights. In my early Jesuit days this happened once in northern Wisconsin country. The driver was quick to respond to a fellow passenger "deer," and an accident was barely avoided.

Wild geese are another example of graceful wildlife, arousing a certain blissfulness when observed at a distance. This wildlife has become opportunistic in recent decades because mechanical-corn-harvesting is not near as neat as hand cutting, shocking, and shucking of corn was in my youth. Modern harvesting equipment allows sizable amounts of corn to be left in the field in autumn, and this becomes ample wintering feed for gleaning. Why go south with so much good left through the winter here? Wild goose is a challenge for cooks in contrast to baked turkey and roasting venison; it is tough to fix in a satisfying manner, though some cooks are skilled at the task. An added problem with numerous geese is their grazing and defecating on lawns, sidewalks, roadways, porches and just about anywhere they settle in for feeding and roosting.

Hunting for sport has always been something of a dilemma for me. Aren't there better ways to exercise and is this killing really a sport? If rabbit hunting is a concern, what about shooting doves? Isn't the killing of the symbol of peace downright insensitive? I have come to object to amateur sportspeople who hunt on occasion; they are unskilled and dangerous because they are unable to distinguish a deer from a cow. They use guns rarely and without ample precautions already explained, have no sense of danger to self or their companions, and have little regard for the safety of local residents or the distance of their often powerful weapons. They are such poor shots that they often wound their prey without killing it. Furthermore, they don't know or care about property boundaries or ask permission to hunt, leaving for others to tell them where and when they are trespassing -- sometimes at the risk of life and limb. Seeing trophy hunters parading with buck carcasses bobbing out of open truck beds with their antlers in plain view for all is disgusting, but hunters are unaware.

Hunting for food, on the other hand, is quite justified. In parts of Appalachia and elsewhere in rural areas deer venison is prized and many sincere hunters confide that this becomes a sizeable portion of their annual meat supply. All good and well. Cooks know and acquire a variety of techniques to make venison quite appetizing. Harvesters using guns or bow-and-arrow hunt the wild turkey and geese and, to a lesser degree, rabbit, squirrel, coon and other small mammals for food. Again, in order not to waste the harvest these game demand skilled meat preparers and cooks. One of our Kentucky small and larger wild-game delicacies is *burgoo* consisting of a mixture of two or more varieties of "varmints;" these are stewed with potatoes, onions, carrots, and other vegetables along with favored seasonings for a length of time (24 hour average). Burgoo is tasty!

On our home farm, through and beyond the Great Depression, we had ample livestock (hogs, chickens, cattle, and even rabbits) to butcher for fresh or preserved meat throughout the year. For us, "meat" and "meal" were somewhat synonymous. In depression and post-depression times, we realized that poorer folks had to harvest available wildlife to supplement their sparse meat supply. If not raising livestock for meat needs, still the harvest of wildlife is an excellent food source -- if not better than livestock production with its ecological difficulties. The issue is which wildlife to cull and how much to take and share with others. Wild game can be locally found, is organically grown, lacks a need for furnishing winter feed, and may be in need of culling. Eat what is hunted and thank God for the blessing of food that is nutritious, organic, self-supporting, and homegrown.

Poor people seek meat for their diets. Residents in Arctic regions and bush-meat eaters in tropical lands need a certain amount of protein to supplement or support scarce or non-existent vegetarian diets. For many American meat-eaters, wild game is a portion of the food supply, which varies the menu and affords a low-cost substitute for expensive and often chemically laced commercial meat cuts. If we eat what is around us, we truly become "Kentucky" or whatever state we live in. Thank God for the nutritious food, locally grown, organic, and free of the antibiotic- and growth hormones into commercially raised animals.

Harvesting for pest control takes the same hunting skills. A shotgun covers a wider target but shot particles can be worrisome when cooked for food. Automatic weapons users (hardly worthy to be called hunters) have more chances to bring down the target than do the more skilled bow-and-arrow hunter, but danger to all parties rises with number of shots. Other primitive weapons such as sling shot or boomerang require so much expertise that these are not generally considered by Americans. Guns are the preferred hunting weapon but bow-and-arrow seasons for wildlife exist.

Game harvesting is a national issue. During years of performing environmental resource assessments (1982-2002), I discovered that a consistent problem in urban, suburban, and rural settings was excessive and destructive wildlife, especially the uninvited ones. Certainly, wildlife has roamed freely for centuries and regards our "property" as their roaming territory. Furthermore, this applies to larger mammals such as elk, bison and wolf. The lack of predators, wolf and to a lesser degree fox, yields excessive wildlife -- and coyotes only partly fill that niche. When deer, rabbits, geese, and turkeys proliferate for lack of native predators, their meat is superior to factory farm-produced meat. Again, a basic homesteading principle is to furnish one's own organic and locally-grown food.

Exotic invasive species are a major environmental problem. In the past, careless human activity has resulted in certain species of wildlife being allowed to become regional environmental imbalances, e.g., introduction of rabbits to Australia or rats to many Pacific Islands. However, distant places are not alone in introducing exotic species (e.g., kudzu or a host of plants and plant pests here in Appalachia and especially tree diseases in vast parts of America). We hear about pythons in Florida devouring all the local wildlife and zebra mussels and certain voracious fish species threatening the Great Lakes and American rivers. Some exotic introductions are controlled by organized hunts but in some cases this work is not viewed as pleasurable, and the process of control is expensive, such as kudzu eradication.

A major invasive aviary species was the "English sparrow," an exotic that has overwhelmed the birdscape. In the 19th century, bird-loving Kentucky politician and maverick Cassius Marcellus Clay was disturbed by invasive sparrows crowding out other birds. He was known for being quick with the gun with tax collectors and other uninvited guests. He shot and ate sparrows and commented that they were quite tasty.[6]

Fishing is a different story. Fishing involves pulling in fish before the kill and so decisions can still be made to return them to the water; fish are less sensate than higher mammals, though animal lovers may regard this as a weak argument. A fishing rod may have some minor risks associated with untrained handling but nothing as lethal as a gun. On a plus side, the harvested fish is highly nutritious, though a challenge for some to dress and prepare for the table. However, properly-filleted, fresh-caught fish makes an excellent and enjoyable meal without the gamey taste of some wildlife. Furthermore, fishers may need reflection time and so this sitting and concentrating proves a little more restful than tramping through woods hunting for land-based game. There are trophy fish heads and photos of a large one, but few people parade about town with a string of fish dangling from the back of pickups.

Mitigating remarks are needed for confirmed hunters. Some

means to reduce cruelty to animals are in order: target only species of animals that have proliferated to a degree that they are harming the local environment; obey state game rules in the place where hunting; do not merely wound wildlife but reduce suffering as much as possible through proper harvesting procedures; dress the species immediately after killing; and either use this dressed game to supplement your own diet or give to those who are able to appreciate it -- especially limited-income folks. Insist that hunting organizations teach good environmental practices; interact with the respective state hunting-control agencies and try to stop them from deliberately introducing game species that can proliferate easily. Encourage them to reintroduce bear, wolf, elk, or other species that have become threatened or extinct in certain former native territories. If need be, have agencies extend the hunting season for nuisance species.

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In my Ravenna parish, we have constructed a meditation/ edible-landscaping garden on what was two acres of lawn. Landscapers have assisted with bushes and vegetation that are unappetizing for deer -- at least that is their assurance (even for times of drought). We note that deer visit and drink at our pool, and the deer look wistfully on our property from the hill behind the church where some neighbors attract them with a salt block. Living with wildlife is always a challenge, but edible landscaping does include animal as well as human food.

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Hunting is a possible tourist attraction.[7] One of the few growth industries in our commonwealth is tourism (a $12 billion annual industry in our hard-pressed region), employing 175,000 Kentuckians at often satisfying if not high-paying jobs in a variety of services. When farming, mining, and manufacturing jobs are lost, fair and responsible options are sought. Harvesting invasives is not a growth industry and state government agencies depend on license fees. They advertise bear and elk seasons here as well as graceful Sandhill cranes in western Kentucky (over the objections of bird lovers). Fishing has less environmental impact.

Application: Redirect Hunting Practices

Promoting necessary and proper harvesting/hunting through use of bow and arrow would be more ideal than use of guns. The lethal range is less and the skill requires more training and some attention to safety. The goal in harvesting/hunting is not to kill for the sport but to help reestablish a balance in the local environment. Note that the elements of this ideal could be met after declawing the National Rifle Association (see **Chapter Six**).

Safety is always a formidable task. Amazingly, security is regarded as a goal of both opposing parties (the gun slinger and the unarmed).

However, which is more courageous? When the media and public in general perceive the one who stands up to the gun as courageous, the battle will be half won. The other half is demonstrating that freedom is a right for all people working together, not each individual doing what he or she thinks is best to save one's sacred neck -- and to hell with the rest. Every effort should be made to demonstrate that a gun-filled community endangers the health and safety of others as much as blowing smoke into the face of a non-smoker desiring fresh air.

Encourage bow-and-arrow as harvesting/hunting instruments. It would be good for those who nourish their hunting instincts to be weaned from the gun to the bow and arrow. Though dangerous, these more primitive hunting weapons can be used with a high degree of safety for the well trained and mastering the practice is more challenging and athletic in physic required. In recent years, pure hunting (whether big-game hunting in Africa or bear hunting in Appalachia) has lost some of its popularity thanks to animal rights groups that can divide families. Environmental considerations can confront neighborhoods and lead to opposition to hunting as a sport. Commercial gun and hunting sales act as an additional driving force to continue and promote the sport, but rising aggressive promotion by animal lovers and animal rights groups is capturing a wider audience that does not like wildlife trophies and having guns around the household. A bow and arrow is easier to handle and control.

Alternative rites of passage. In the past and still in our part of Kentucky hunting is a rite of passage. Elder father or relative serves as mentor and this has expanded in recent years from targeting young men to include women. Seniors take youngsters hunting or fishing, and regard this as an easy way to help the passage to adulthood. It is a secular approach to Confirmation for Christians or Bar Mitzvah for Jews; it is similar to a Vision Quest among Native Americans or a cultural ordeal among primitive groups. Daddy performed his tasks with each of us as we came of age. He taught good gun-use practices and fishing with us at a neighbor's pond. Homesteading and pioneering dangers no longer exist as in previous ages. Elders do not find time or have proper skills, but they do have responsibility for youth. Camping, biking, hiking, photographing nature scenes, boating, rock-climbing or any number of other outdoor practices are safer than shooting guns when acting as companions to maturing youth.

Treat animal-parts trophy exhibiters with disdain. Showing off bagged wildlife is not always regarded as praiseworthy. The mounted wildlife trophy is less and less respected -- and often downright opposed by other family members and such trophies loose their luster. We know that Audubon got his bird models for painting by shooting them but there are better ways. The bird exhibition that Gene Wilhelm donated to ASPI's nature center was entirely from bird window and similar accidents. Really, a collection of photos

or movie shots of live and moving wildlife taken with skill and artistic touch can be just as satisfying as heads of fish or moose. Living testimonies yield admiration.

CITES trade restrictions need enforcing. Poachers who target wildlife (alive as pets or dead and dismembered for trunks, tusk, glands, fur or other parts) plague many developing lands. The *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) was drawn up in 1973 to protect wildlife from exploitation and prevent international trade in threatened species. The U.S. is a party to this treaty, which has proved to be an effective vehicle for protecting these species through severe trade restrictions and commercial penalties. In the growing Asian markets, consumers seeking rare animal parts for food, medicine, luxury items, or live animals for pets, increase commercial pressure when expendable wealth becomes available. A strict regulatory approach to one of the world's most serious environmental problems could strengthen enforcement powers through enforcement of treaty obligations and open commercial trading.

Increased wealth in China and elsewhere has put a heavy demand for ivory from living elephants, and also from mammoth that died ten thousand years ago but whose tusks are discovered (due to global warming) in increasing frequency in Siberia.[8] Loss of elephants through illegal poaching is so severe that remaining herds in many central African countries are in danger of being wiped out before the end of the century. A similar tale of woe involves sale of hippopotamus horns to a ready Asian market. Curbing trade in illegal ivory is part of the problem of saving an endangered wildlife community -- and poaching of elephants, tigers, and hippos occurs most often through the use of guns.

Threatened and endangered species are environmental issues. However, recall the extinction of the passenger pigeon, billions of which blackened the sky of the American Midwest in the early nineteenth century, and yet the last one died in a Cincinnati zoo in 1914. Vast herds of bison suffered the same fate. How could a single century see such devastation except through lost of natural habitat and blazing guns? Yes, gun users have contributed to destruction of certain species in Africa and elsewhere today.

Chapter Four: How Does One Minister in Turbulent Times?
(1963-73)

My decade of chemistry and theology training, ordination, ministry in the military, post-doctorate studies, and first public interest activities was one of the most turbulent periods in the twentieth century. We lived through assassinations with guns blazing of President John Kennedy, his brother Bobbie, and Martin Luther King, and ever more guns used during the Vietnam War. It was the years of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, marches for civil rights and against the war, riots and Kent State (and more guns), and of the first Earth Day. It was the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council and the rise of the peace movement. Times were changing. My study and work life was not diminished but rather accelerated by these events, for they kept the mind and body moving to new adventures with the tide of history.

Vietnam War and Civil Rights Unrest

This American and allied effort to contest Communism in southeast Asia during the Kennedy years soon escalated into a full- blown conflict involving the United States and allies. It was the time of my theology years (1964-67). Normally that is a four-year program but I spent the fourth year in chemistry research and ministry work in Chicago and preparing for the final theology licentiate (STL degree) exam in 1968. In 1965 following my first year of theology, I was able to do some summer chemistry post-doctorate work at Dartmouth. I recall hearing on the radio that Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon was bold enough to speak out in opposition to the Vietnam conflict -- and it resonated with what I held. Yes, Second World War and Korea, but why this one?

Peace or war? War is always brutal and needs avoiding to the greatest degree possible. Why this one with no pronounced aggressive enemy like attackers at Pearl Harbor and in South Korea? Was it worth the added sacrifice and bloodshed? Nightly TV news scenes of fire fights and bombing became more frequent and vivid; war came once more into our homes, though a far

smaller portion was fighting than the 13 million among 131 million in World War Two. A far smaller portion of the population was called to bear the brunt of what was occurring -- and some of these draftees did not want to go, and had no incentive to fight. With time, their numbers swelled and included escapees to Canada. The war's cause was less clear and America's fighting caused collateral damage to civilian populations in a greater degree -- at least it seemed so at the time. Soon we skeptics discounted official "body counts," which later proved overblown and downright deceptive; they involved way too many non-combatants. Peace receded, war was everywhere, and the practices of Gandhi and non-violent resistance emerged as more plausible. Just war or just plain war was being questioned.

Conferences began to bloom. During these Vatican II days, church relations were changing. The opening of doors allowed us to undertake ecumenical dialog with other seminarians and non-Catholic theologians. Several of us were some of the first to enter into formal sessions through a Chicago-based Urban Institute. We broke the spell of the Institute and its head moderator, Joe Schlicker, by traveling back and forth at night, allowing us to compare notes and even joke about procedures. All in all, we were experiencing a going out to others. Our conversations were expanding to new topics, and political situations were clarifying.

Academics were opening to ecumenical subjects in many ways. We went and talked with an Orthodox Archbishop in Chicago. Several of us took a seminar to Purdue University's Newman Center and talked about the relationship of science and theology, and that become the subject of my formal reflections during that period. After being ordained and before final exams I took part in a seminar in New Mexico organized by Colonel Hank Cooper, an engineering classmate of my brother Charlie. I was out of my class truly, for the group contained a number of notables including a Nobel Prize economist and others. I did the best to hold my own for the Catholic position though touring a nuclear facility and talking about bomb triggering devices hastened my pacifism.

Music, never my forte, took a turn during the 60s as modern rock bands in that period sought to prove ever more exotic and provocative. Woodstock was a focal place as were other free and loose gatherings of young people. The volume was high and led to damaged eardrums on the part of audience members too close to the loudspeakers. Costuming was eye-catching to say the least. Sound effects included fireworks for finales and involved even the use of blazing guns on occasions.

Militarism and Pacifism emerged as ongoing conflicts in the American psyche. Conquests were present from the start but a desire to be at peace with distant powers was also part of an ongoing sense of fair play and improved commerce. Various ideas were starting to surface and even present

conflicts. Second World War accounts of bombing the Nazi war machine were approved, but bombing Vietnam rice-paddy workers did not trigger similar support. At first, I thought it was only my conscience. But was it broader? How many others were in sympathy with my growing ambivalence? Gradually a rising tide of discontent at major academic centers began to become apparent. I was not alone; others had grave doubts as well, especially younger male draftees and their fellow women students. Yes, some slipped across the border and went to neutral Countries. Choice as to fight or not became a serious matter.

The Vietnam War progressed in intensity. More in the public, including Eugene McCarthy challenged the Johnson Administration's conduct during the ever more bloody Vietnam conflict. Some spoke for peace and others for ever greater pursuit of the war. My growing opposition was intertied with the rise of civil rights and the movement to justice for all Americans. That issue was far more straight forward because I had always been for greater equality since our living in a region with segregated schools in youth. The war question was truly ambivalent since opposition to the war did not mean abandoning those called to fight.

I was ordained in June 1967 and my parents did not want an elaborate ceremony due to an internal family matter (my brother leaving the priesthood), so I spent those weeks during the summer and following year (1968) of studies working as an auxiliary chaplain at the Great Lakes Naval Base (GLNB) north of Chicago -- along with some chemical work with Professor Carl Moore at Loyola University. Surprisingly, this research was in conjunction with GLNB work on the non-military subject of a synthesis of a potential anti-viral agent.

My first year and a half after ordination (June 1967 to December 1968) was taken up with studies on my own, lab work, living in a dorm with students, and Sunday supply as an auxiliary chaplain at GLNB. We chaplains heard navy recruits' confessions in great numbers (more than all the rest of my life combined) as floods of raw recruits were being prepared for service in the Vietnam conflict. A personal incident occurred in my military work. I was hearing confession in a "brig" (GLNB guardhouse) and the next recruit in line began to tremble and called out to me, "Look out the window, Father." I did, and saw a marine guard with a gun aimed at me and shouting, "For the last time, take your arm off of the window sill or I'll shoot." Thereupon I did and found the occasion part of the wear and tear of attempting to be a little informal in ministry. It was one time that a gun was deliberately aimed at me.

Civil strive was also escalating. Simultaneous with the escalating war was the unrest, mainly in urban areas such as Detroit and Watts in Los Angeles. Riots were vicious, especially after the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968. As a Loyola University dorm chaplain I received a call from

fellow seminarians who were community organizing in a poor section of Chicago. The leader of volunteers, Jack Macnamara, asked if we could open our dorm temporarily for refugees from the furious riots on the south side. Since I resided in a student-run dorm, we ran this issue past the students themselves. The discussions were some of the most open I ever recall. The students had elected an Afro-American as dorm leader but in the discussion deep prejudices emerged from those of stronger ethnic lines (who lived within housing conflict zones). I asked students whether we had truly confronted our biases and the discussion extended well into the night over such issues.

Civil rights was a clearer delineated issue than war. I participated in downtown Chicago marches in support of Martin Luther King (he was at one of the marches before the gun shot got him). "Civil rights" was certainly high on the agenda ever since I burned with rage as a youth when we had to pass in the school bus our neighbor Smith family while they went to a one-room Colored School. Why continued segregation and civil unrest? However, by this time civil rights and anti-war issues precipitated nationwide marches. Sailors at GLNB asked questions and some were attempting to leave the military. Yes, my ministry began with personal and national conflict and soon found many others involved in their own personal issues.

Public Interest Buds

This conflicted situation provoked my personal choices of ministry. Civil disobedience or law and order? Pacifism or military chaplaincy? Academic pursuits or broader non-academic work? A classroom teaching career seemed less and less appealing to me as the unsettled conditions continued. However, after a rather rapid "tertianship" (the final formal training in the Society of Jesus) I headed in January 1969 to Austin Texas to work as a post-doctorate researcher with Professor Michael Dewar at the University of Texas. I traveled by plane on the same day Lyndon B. Johnson left the presidency and returned to Texas as well -- though by a different plane.

Post-doctorate work was highly recommended as a way to prepare me for teaching, but what did this mean? In an unarticulated fashion I wanted to broaden chemistry to practical applications in a world in which the products were heavily influenced by capitalistic corporate interests -- for which I had little taste. Likewise, I found no desire to compete with lay chemists desperate for permanent teaching jobs that I was expected to fill in the normal routine at one of the Jesuit schools. There were plenty of candidates for those positions but none for public interest science work -- nor any money there either. Why not regard teaching in a broader sense than a classroom? Let the world be the classroom. Why not tackle issues on a national or even global span in an age of rapid communications and complex issues? The call to public interest scientific work was germinating, but hurdles existed.

I was in the middle of an anti-war march in November 1969 and perchance took up a conversation with a fellow marcher, Joe Tom Easley; he said he was going to Washington, DC over the coming Thanksgiving holiday for an interview with Ralph Nader (of *Unsafe at Any Speed* fame). Out of the clear blue, I asked him to find out if the group needed a chemist in public interest work, and he replied the next week that I should contact the Nader group; this I did in a trip in January 1970 after stopping in Kentucky and officiating at the wedding of my Cousin. My public interest science work was launched with my provincial Bob Harvanek's approval on provision that I raised my own money -- and that work has never really ended.

During my Texas research in 1969-70, the infamous Texas Tower incident loomed heavy. Here, two years before, at this 307-foot Administrative building at the University of Texas (UT) at Austin, Charles Whitman had carried out the worst school shooting to that time (later surpassed by the massacre at Virginia Tech in 2007). In the course of one horrible August 1, 1966 Whitman killed his mother and wife, then went to the University and killed 3 going into the tower and then 9 more, along with wounding 32 others in gunshots from the tower's observation deck on the 29th floor -- until he was killed. We often talked about that incident.

My work at the UT chemistry department involved going across campus every day to the main-frame computer in the basement of that tower; it was work on molecular orbital calculations and in pre-personal-computer days this meant working with a colleague (Jesus Garcia) in taking turns delivering our trays of computer cards for overnight computing and returning for readouts the following morning, before the hot sun made numerous trips exhausting -- and from which I think I got walking pneumonia. The tower loomed somewhat forbidding, and yet was essential to our research work.

Earth Day, first celebrated in April 1970, involved a rally at the grounds before the UT Tower. A host of hundreds was seated on the lawn listening to a collection of speeches -- the precise contents of which I cannot remember. In front of me was a fully engaged student who squashed his cigarette butt in the grass while cheering about going after those who ruined the environment. The next area of ambivalence emerged at that moment and remains: how can we clean the environment unless individuals do their part and not expect it to be done by exposed culprits? Isn't this an infinitely more difficult task than pointing a finger of blame at specific groups? Do we all share the environmental blame?

In June 1970, we had a sad farewell to a close lab community of international UT co-workers and received the blessings of my boss, Michael Dewar, who said he would do what I was planning to do if he could start over. I traveled to DC and hardly after unpacking I plunged into a host of environmental issues. Academic life in Texas and the DC political scene were

as different as day from night. Washington is the center of a world power. The intoxication of that power is evident upon arrival, and demanded seeking a place in a rather crowded media field. Washington is a lobby town and big money speaks in subtle ways -- but money generates influence, and influence power, and power reigns.

Early work at Ralph Nader's Center for the Study of Responsive Law did not involve guns, but rather work on asbestos in tobacco smoking materials, gasoline additives including lead, mercury contaminating the fish we eat, and other threatening contaminants in consumer products. A relation to guns, another threatening consumer product, began to germinate. The government needs to be involved and it is what "well regulated" means in the Constitutional Second Amendment. A critique of private corporate America and the role of its lobbyists are in order.

Fourth decade observations involved broadened social and political dimensions -- though the largely unrelated academic disciplines of formal education were utilized in public interest work. Some decade (1963-73) insights included:

* **Controls are needed both because of individual and corporate misdeeds.** Public interest defines a difference between private interests and public insistence on serving greater purposes. However, the liberal community seemed to look strongly on public versus private larger scale areas but failed to see that private interests also involve individuals, who are in need of just as much critique as the broader spheres of finance and commerce. This was what emerged in the squashing of the cigarette butt on the first Earth Day and is not resolved to this day. I always looked down on corporations and their imperfect profit motivation, and longed for the day when fundamental motivation would change and all would be non-profits in their manner of action.

* **Public Interest ministry is possible**. Certainly projects in the "public interest" are highly suspicious when bankrolled by big daddy corporations. Academic enterprises all too often make no distinction about money sources and our insistence with Ralph Nader to refuse some funding. Furthermore, public interest means taking on issues that are easily neglected by others and yet are critical to maintaining civic responsibility on day-to-day policies in the local to global interest areas. We work with government and expect governmental controls for preserving the common good. Expecting enlightened self-interest to function well is continuing the fiction of adolescent's game play. Law and order is needed for a proper functioning society.

* **Science has moral obligations.** During the early theology days (**1964-67**), I thought long and hard over the obligations that are incumbent on scientists of faith. We had the great optimism coming from the previous decade, but the assassination of Kennedy and the Vietnam and Civil Rights

issues changed the mood of the country. There was more to science than just producing plastics and pesticides. The manner in which the technologies we generate are used in society is an emerging moral issue. We cannot overlook nuclear power issues or the rivers that burn with pollutants, or smokestacks that caused people to choke.

* **Ambivalence over military issues arose.** My utter dislike for war did not hinder a willingness to serve as a military chaplain (**1967-68**); I enjoyed the work and found it worthwhile. Other clergy opposed this double role but I justified it serving the spiritual needs of individuals in service. In fact, my love for the navy never ceased, even though in less biased moments the entire branch seems an expensive distraction today.

* **Good government is utterly needed in a civilized society.** During the **1968** civil riots and disorder it still was painfully apparent that we need government as the thin blue police line that saves society from falling into chaos. This basic faith in government extended later to gun issues, for the Second Amendment to the Constitution called for a "well-regulated militia and we can hardly trust private militia that are beyond the law.

* **Good government demands citizen participation.** This insight was dawning on me over time and thus the urgent need of public interest training support to the degree possible. In **1969-70**, this meant for me opting for this mode of ministry over classic teaching at formal institutions. A healthy democracy demands citizen participation. What is impossible to continue in this age of emerging globalization is undue influence by corporate interests not answerable to a public that they affect through their policies. During this time, the practical and theoretical worlds that seemed in conflict showed a resolution through Professor Michael Dewar's love of both worlds and willingness to work in both worlds.

* **Spreading the word involves risks.** At the very start of my work in DC in **1970**, I was struck by the power of the press. In one instance very early in my work, a whistleblower brought in samples of tobacco paper used in wrapping small cigars and claimed asbestos was present. I did not follow through due to the massive attack by the Tobacco Institute on an article I wrote that asbestos was patented for smoking filters. In fact, I stored evidence and years later when rediscovered could have used it as evidence. Asbestos <u>was</u> in some tobacco products. Opponents intimidate and that will be apparent on this gun issue. The national media is like an untamed horse with a taste for sensation. Incidentally, during this seven-year period in DC every lead I gave national columnist Jack Anderson was published -- in favor of our data-gathering expertise.

* **Consumer goods can be for the betterment of society.** We need a healthy skepticism and that became clear in **1971** during the battles over

lead and other additives in gasoline, the first grant (from the *Consumers Union*) in which I worked at our new founded Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). Unregulated, consumer goods can threaten human health and harm Earth herself.

* **Environmental problems are global**, not merely local air, water, or land-related issues. Air and water movement transverses regional or national boundaries and small and large marine bodies. Solutions are more than local even when we see damage first hand at the local scene. In June **1972**, I attended the non-governmental gathering of the first United Nations Conference on the Environment at Stockholm Sweden. We attendees discovered the environmental crisis to be a global issue and heard about threats to the Brazilian Amazon rain forest. The UN formal groups made wordy recommendations, but it was becoming apparent that global enforcement power does not exist. In my way of thinking the first buds of a world federalism appeared; the problem is bigger than what nation states can handle alone or in small numbers.

* **The problem is not over-population, but over consumption** by a far smaller number of wealthy consumers who make unreasonable demands of world resources. By **1973**, we started to speak of "we" not "they" as environmental culprits, especially we in North America and Europe and Japan. What if China and India would follow? Would this be a potential nightmare? After the UN Conference, I started writing *The Contrasumers,*[9] and saw the need for broad-based resource conservation with our "Lifestyle Index" as indicating personal and group consumption patterns.

Summary: During this decade my love for rural America did not cease when living in New York City, Chicago suburbs and city, Austin, and Washington, DC (my only totally urbanite living decade). Hope for a less stressful rural life dawned and I got the opportunity to see compatibility between rural and urban life, and this impinges on gun issues.

Reflection: Guns for National Defense and Military Use

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms ****** ***when serving in the Militia*** *shall not be infringed.* Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

***** John Paul Stevens proposed this addition to the Constitution for the sake of clarity.

Justice John Paul Stevens analyzes the history of the Second Amendment and concludes that the interpretation of the NRA is contrary to the

intent of Constitution framers. He says,

For more than 200 years following the adoption of that amendment, federal judges uniformly understood that the right protected by that text was limited in two ways: first, it applies only to keeping and bearing arms for military purposes, and second while it limited the power of the federal government, it did not impose any limit whatsoever on the power of the states or local governments to regulate the ownership or use of firearms. Thus, in United States v. Miller, decided in 1939, the court unanimously held that Congress could prohibit the possession of a sawed-off shotgun because that sort of weapon had no reasonable relation to the preservation or efficiency of a "well regulated Militia."

When I joined the court in 1975, that holding was generally understood as limiting the scope of the Second Amendment to uses of arms that were related to military activities. During the years when Warren Burger was chief justice, from 1969 to 1986, no judge or justice expressed any doubt about the limited coverage of the amendment, and I cannot recall any judge suggesting that the amendment might place any limit on state authority to do anything.

Five years after his retirement, during a 1991 appearance on "The MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour," Burger himself remarked that the Second Amendment has been the subject of one of the greatest pieces of fraud, I repeat the word 'fraud,' on the American public by special interest groups that I have ever seen in my lifetime." [10]

Throughout American history state militia have furnished fighting personnel to the Wars of 1812, the Mexican American conflict, and the Civil War. Militia pertained to states, not to small groups scurrying into woods or the hills to practice warfare together. The collective endeavor could only be one that was well regulated as a body of citizens existing as a government. With time our state defense became a national defense with standing armed services and where "National Guard" units known for regional emergencies and working in coordination with U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force. Effort by "less government" folks to misinterpret the Constitution challenges the common good and leads to a national disaster of thirty states with "Stand Your Ground" legislation. "Well regulated" militia means those with regulations and formal training with weapons. A well regulated state militia is in the public interest; an unregulated private one is NOT, as the joint statement by six former attorneys general clearly states:

For more than 200 years, the federal courts have unanimously determined that the Second Amendment concerns only the arming of the people in service to an organized state militia; it does not guarantee immediate access to guns for private purposes. The nation can no longer afford to let the gun lobby's distortion of the Constitution cripple every reasonable attempt to

implement an effective national policy towards guns and crime.[10]

The heart of the individual arms versus gun controls question is proper interpretation of the Constitution. We need to be armed for defense, but defense is for a collective citizenry, and the arms in proportion to the defense needs of the people -- in some cases through state defenses and in some cases broader defense. Some say the Supreme Court's last word on the Second Amendment came in the 1939 *United States vs. Miller* decision involving transporting an unregistered sawed-off shotgun across state boundaries. The appeal had been made under the *1934 Firearms Act* claiming that it was unconstitutional due to violating the Second Amendment. In rejecting this appeal the Supreme Court unanimous decision held that the Amendment's purpose was "to insure the viability of state militias."[11]

Yes, colonies-turned-states could not meet all demands. The armed aggressor of the American Revolution was England, a world power (and the tea was from the first global private/public corporation -- the East India Tea Company). Defense was not random individuals but a well-regulated colony-turned-state militia; but even these were not sufficient acting individually. Furthermore, it became obvious to all after the ill-trained combined militias took major defeats during that Revolutionary War that the need was for a well-regulated program in which the Continental Army became a more disciplined unit. Thus, Washington and the Continental Congress obtained expert trainers from mainland Europe.

Arms manufacturers use the art of consumer exploitation to frame the debate as individual owners of consumer products (guns) and their right as individual "militia" to possess a personal arsenal. Who creates this false understanding except the profiteers who make fortunes on sale of firearms to individuals? An individual's right to such weaponry is a fabrication of a consumer culture that teaches patterned behavior to certain "needed" products, and unfortunately, lethal weapons are part of this culture. This misguided behavior is emotionally entrenched during times of civil unrest and riots in periods of turbulence. Among the unresolved contradictions of this era was that an individualistic right to bear arms was coupled by the desire that our military force be the best in the world.

Insecurities can heighten in times of panic. The need for a regulated law and order was imperative following the 1968 King assassination. Riots change an urban landscape. The South shifted from the Democratic to the Republican Party. A rural demand for armed individuals gave way to urban need for riot control by police: personal self-defense gave way to community defense.

Application: Control Ammo and Guns

Turmoil leads people to crave law and order in some degree, and to

support collective efforts in these regards. My time in cities changed my perspective, and thus controls on weapons prove to be in the public interest. My attitudes on guns changed.

Control ammo and limit domestic magazine size. There are three hundred million weapons loose in this country, enough to arm every man, woman, and child, the sane and the crazies included. To consider disarming the populace, especially in a country steeped in the misunderstanding of the "Right to Bear Arms" would be impossible and mere daydreaming. The task is impossible without the real threat of armed insurrection. However, it would be better to control ammo, soon expended and in need of replenishment. Recall that it takes sophistication to manufacture and make available ammunition. Why not control ammo and allow only two or three shots (bullets) per hunting season? When young, we had guns but little ammo, and target practice was delayed to better financial times. Control ammo and outlaw ammo for automatics.

Forbid assault weapons. As President Obama asked, "Why not restrict AK-47s to soldiers in combat zones?" These assault weapons have no business being in the hands of gangsters and even hunters -- for automatics require no skill to shoot. Still, this is big business, a billion dollars U.S. annual business with ready sales at near $1,000 for mesmerized gun owners. Only with strict discipline can these potential weapons of mass destruction be kept from the hands of the multitudes. Where weapons are available in a globalized market, distinctions are blurred by the manufacturers in distant lands who push to have their commodities sold in America. However, a ban on assault weapons would be on both manufacturers' sales to individuals, whether here or abroad, as well as a control on importing weapons.

Collect operational automatic weapons. Good luck, for to disarm America would take a miracle -- though it is possible to beg for miracles. Buy back schemes do not work very well, especially if the guns are not destroyed. Vast private arsenals exist in all parts of rural and urban America, but some control may emerge as necessary. Machine guns are not currently allowed in private collections. Why are assault weapons? If Federal laws were promulgated stating that it is a major offense to have an operational automatic weapon, then some pressure would apply to owners to relinquish their arsenal or for neighbors to report their presence. Does it require inspections and searches of property, a highly resisted procedure? Again, no Constitution framer ever dreamed of automatic weapons and certainly not in the hands of individual citizens to do with however they like.

Gun collectors could receive special licenses. There is no need to infringe on legitimate collections by individuals or within museums. However, modern weapons could be made inoperable.

Chapter Five: How Can We Create a Gunless Culture?
(1973-83)

This decade was the busiest in my life with a host of public interest projects and assignments. Upon going back to Kentucky in 1977, the pace was meant to slow down but both auto and air travel increased. Certainly, the mountains were less stressful than Washington, DC. However, during the first four years back in Kentucky (1977-81) I returned monthly to DC because part of my research operations was still functioning in that city. To say I planted both feet in Appalachia would be inaccurate for I straddled two places.

In part, the return to Kentucky with the blessing of my Jesuit Provincial was to establish a center in a poor part of America. We hoped to show that simple living among lower income people could be model for an overly consuming national culture. The basic insight was that the poor are to be leaders and not recipients of the largesse of the rest of the nation. Our work took on a more regional rather than local cast and would remain so until my departure in the next century -- whereupon it became more localized. The intermixing of domestic, regional, national, and global levels of public interest work is exemplified by looking at the emerging work during this decade -- much of it leading to new attitudes about guns. **Observations** emerged:

Militarism and a simple lifestyle are incompatible. Well before we started the Appalachian-based Sorghum Alliance in 1981, it was evident that nuclear power was not the way to go. Around 1974 I joined the board of the *National Intervenors,* one of the first anti-nuclear groups. This was a time when anti-nuclear activities were emerging as an environmental issue. Within a decade, these activities would have the salutary effects of freezing construction of new powerplants due to dangers associated and rising costs from added regulations.

Much of the original nuclear power impetus had spun from the guilt

feeling that America had dropped atomic bombs on innocent populations. In response, the "atom for peace" program was rushed, ill-conceived, and consisted in construction of dozens of powerplants; these were inherently dangerous and the resulting waste had no final satisfactory disposal place. After forming our Appalachian public interest group we opened a regional anti-nuke group to help stop newly-planned nuclear power plants in the region. Most of the regional targeted plants were stopped in part through activist demonstrations and protests. None of the proposed six nuclear power units closest to Kentucky's boundaries was built, though some were converted and constructed as coal-fired plants. In conclusion, military solutions were not simple lifestyle ones, and nuclear power applications were NOT turning swords into plowshares.

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To the south of ASPI across the border in Tennessee is the major Uranium Processing Facility (UPF) at Oak Ridge, a part of the National Nuclear Security Administration bomb-making and storage complex. The Bush and Obama Administrations have been overly generous in bestowing still more money for expanding the facility.[12] At that facility gun-toting guards are supposed to make the storage and processing area secure, but in 2012 three activists including an 80-year-old nun cut through four rings of security fencing and smeared blood on the storage building of high-grade nuclear materials. Legislators were asking the agency in DC where the safety and security are at that site; at the same time a Federal court sentenced the peace-making perpetrators to prison time.

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Environmental issues are complex. On Earth Day 1970, many of us concerned about environmental issues naively thought that such problems could be quickly solved and were of a limited duration. By **1975,** as our nation prepared for the bicentennial the next year, it was emerging that the issues were not short-lived but involve longer-time solutions and ever-greater complexity. Furthermore, solutions addressed went beyond pinpointing culprits and taking them to court or enforcing existing or new regulations. Environmentally active citizens suddenly discovered lack of basic skills, hidden costs that were not anticipated, opponents not imagined, and imperfections in workmanship that idealists never considered.

* **Ideal environmental goals are more easily articulated than effected.** It is easy to show indignation at what others do wrong, but forget that there is a gulf between think tank possible solutions to actual implementation. Unfortunately, DC was and remains a hotbed for proposing solutions without experience as to whether they will work in the long run. In **1976**, in travels for conferences I was hearing the faint but distinct cry of the poor. Native Appalachia was hurting and it was time to return. My CSPI team

of volunteers worked on the book *99 Ways to a Simple Lifestyle*.[13] This demanded some form of implementation. It became evident that the challenge was to effect lifestyle changes in Appalachia and not just in wealthy DC suburbs.

* **The term "Appalachia" is often a biased concept.** In **1977,** we decided on the move and on the name of a new regional organization. A noted point that is not often articulated is that the name "Appalachia" dredges up a host of stereotypes. The very businesses that had accepted my checks when designated "Center for Science in the Public Interest" refused checks now entitled **Appalachia-Science in the Public Interest.** Nothing had changed but the name, yet from a public relations standpoint much had changed. We were in an impoverished region where glory in work was less appealing. Some earnestly begged us to change the name but we stubbornly refused. Amid it all, we started with promising grants from the National Science foundation for a citizens' science project embracing the five-state Central Appalachian Region. Overall, returning from urban life to rural America was a cultural shock, and guns entered quietly into the picture. The Hatfields and McCoys had gun-related feuds and these weapons are part of Appalachia's legitimate and illegitimate economies.

* **The poor must work together.** In **1978,** we had a disastrous flood and began to work closely with groups that were hurt and in need of showing that the floods were exacerbated by surface coal-mining operations. Part of poverty is an inability to effect change due to limited resources. The greater the degree of solidarity even among poor folks, the faster the speed at which change may occur. The poor must recognize their limitations while realizing the urgency and knowing that change is possible through solidarity.

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During this period, I also worked with Art Purcell on waste management issues at our jointly directed DC-based *Technical Information Project*. The USEPA funded a series of conferences in all parts of American to acquaint people with regional waste problems. On one of a number of trips in Alaska after a well-attended conference in Anchorage, we took a little time off to go to the Denali National Park. In that mid-September period we were the only campers. We pitched our tent near a sign telling us to be on the lookout for grizzly bears. Upon returning to the city the locals asked, "Didn't you take guns along?" I retorted, "What would I do if confronted with a grizzly with a gun? About the same thing I'd do without a gun -- crap in my pants." Apparently, our ignorance made for sounder sleeping at the camp. [14]

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* **Radical change is a special goal worth pursuing.** This must be done in one's own unique way -- perhaps through a special calling? Honoring the creative inspiration of individuals is all too often overlooked by those

thinking of themselves as leaders in the field, or with some sort of satisfaction in their own skills. The notion of a fossil-fuel economy being temporary was surfacing in **1979** after two successive oil crises. This was when we finished our complete solar house (the first of its kind) at our budding center. All the while, we continued to work on coal pollution programs: coal haul roads, blasting effects of surface mining on water wells and homes, and flooding due to coal operations. We were shifting attention from confrontational pollution effects to time-consuming renewable energy implementation while confrontation was still heavily in our blood.

* **Appalachians have a hidden wealth of experience.** This wealth relates to the land with which many in the region are identified. In preparing a land resource book for a Conference in the autumn of **1980** a sense of differences in land value was evident. Property holders had the "absolute right" to make land use decisions through Saxon concepts of fee simple; gun ownership followed the same philosophy. Furthermore, energy and water conservation methods, soil enhancement, and building techniques have a long history of expertise and development, but the formally educated did not respect rural wisdom and experience. In fact, experienced Appalachians, while poor, had practical solutions worth honoring -- though they were losing some of this precious heritage. They advised children to move to urban areas right when the new technology of the Internet made such movement moot.

Appalachia is gun country. The part of central Appalachia where our budding Nature Center was located was certainly wild, forested, and prime marijuana-growing country. We purchased the property in order to leave the area undeveloped; it is located in the middle of the Daniel Boone National Forest and surrounded by rugged hills, unusual rock formations, and more varieties of native trees than any other temperate area in the world. The informal local Appalachian economy was "pot," and the small patches of the outlawed crop were and to this day are booby-trapped, and often guarded by those with gun-toting crop defense. Visitors must not venture into potentially dangerous pot fields. I spoke with some clandestine growers and told them of concern for the safety of stray hikers and campers and they showed a touch of empathy.

In this rugged country, one mile from Interstate-75 at Exit 49, ASPI has many visitors; too many like to drop off for pot pickups and others like to drop off unwanted cats and dogs. One particular visitor was a stray chow that had wandered from a residence at Mount Vernon, the county seat, and traveled over the twelve-mile distance to our Center. The dog was hungry and mean; it cowed our own guard dogs, and blocked the main entrance to our office building. I asked Lewis, our grounds manager and a proud and dedicated gun owner, to fetch his weapon from his pick-up and dispatch the crazed animal -- and he did so with one shot, which is all his and our human safety allowed him. We retrieved the dog tag from the corpse and mailed it to the owner telling

him (or her) never, never to let an uncontrolled vicious pet that was a weapon in itself loose in the countryside. Guns serve as a necessary purpose in emergencies, and rustic Appalachians know it.

Abandoned animals are certainly a problem in wilderness areas that are near public roads. Ex-owners will drop off singles or litters of cats or dogs as happened in my youth. This practice is exceedingly cruel and leaves the onus on those living in the wilderness area to contend with half-starved strays or drop offs. One of our urban volunteers came to tears when she heard me ask one of our local gunners to do the dirty work. She said we ought to take the dog to a vet who would "put the animal away." I asked her what she meant, since that is what our people were doing at no cost or investment of a long trip with the unfortunate beast. Vets use other means, but people with good shooting ability can dispatch neglected animals without pain. Regardless of state laws, the misdeed is in the dropping off, not administering mercy.

* **Appropriate technology (AT) is a global issue.** It was astounding that the very concept of appropriate technology was considered differently in Europe when conversing at the Paris World Council of Churches consultation in **1981.** For us to "appropriate" means to make one's own what is already present. For some Europeans at the Paris conference "appropriate" was and is to transfer what we (haves) have to another (have-nots)-- a neo-colonial approach to AT. Both meanings are derived from both French and English usage of the word "appropriate." Just as environmental problems are global, so are solutions and these are found in primitive and rural cultures.]

* **Multi- (local, regional, national, and global) levels must work simultaneously.** This appears to be an application of the principle of subsidiarity that means performing at the lowest level of society what can be best achieved at that level. Libertarians can misinterpret this, for what the principle actually affirms is that there are also higher levels demanding activation at higher levels -- in other words society is multi-leveled, and each has its proper place with coordination among levels. In **1982,** we were simultaneously building our local solar center, organizing the state *Sorghum Alliance*, acting as a key group in the Southeastern regional *Solar Unity Network*, belonging to the *Solar Lobby*, and helping to build a solar house at the *Knoxville World's Fair*. That year two of us attended the Berlin *International Solar Conference*. Truly, promoting solar energy is a multi-level operation.

* **Deeper degrees of "humble action" occur in working with the poor.** In the arena of public interest science by **1983**, the Reagan Administration cut public funding. Through volunteer resources it was evident that people need ever-deeper levels of motivation to solve environmental problems. The first level is coming to know and perceive issues as problem areas; the second level is dipping in and out among the poor and getting one's

hands dirty helping them with their problems; and the third level is becoming one by becoming identified with the poor in solidarity and speaking of being "we the poor." We were desperately seeking to stay afloat and thus moved more heavily into volunteer programs as well as beginning to perform environmental resource assessments and sales of calendars and flower note cards. We were coming to the conclusion that to champion the poor, one must experience poverty.

Reflection: Arms Manufacture, Trade, and Reduction

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961 Farewell Address

Changes in our society occur at different levels and this became evident during the twilight of the Cold War. Environmental problems cannot be exclusively addressed at any one level but include a fluid interaction of issues touching individual, local, regional, national and global levels. In fact, in no other decade did I spend so much time on all of the five levels at once -- and this was intriguing.

On the **individual level,** we had produced the *99 Ways* book and now wanted to implement these, with the great majority being individual activities from conserving water and energy to organic gardening and recycling wastes.

Locally we focused on a model for others to follow. Our AT center contained the first complete solar house with greenhouse, cistern, and compost toilet. A series of 70 *ASPI Technical Papers* were produced in these pre-Internet times to assist AT homesteaders and others. It was part of a program to make the activities we undertook in gardening visible from an accessible (Interstate-75) location. The hopes were to teach citizens to implement changes that assisted in community building from the ground up. During this period, we constructed a yurt, cordwood building, and dome, acquired and designed dry compost toilets, and initiated various raised-bed and other intensive organic gardening techniques.

ASPI became the host coordinator of the *Appalachian Institute*, which

was principally a **regional level** organization. We coordinated through the National Science Foundation a linkage of five different groups in the central mountain area. Solar energy was a major focus and our center helped with establishing a solar house at the Knoxville World's Fair, along with a conference during that time. I served on the regional solar energy coalition, the *Solar Unity Network*, which included groups from all the southeastern states. We ran a regional anti-nuclear group already mentioned. We brought to Appalachia some of our strip mining work and held a conference on blasting effects of surface mining.

The **national level** was a continuation of what we started while in DC. For a while the solar program was also moving from regional to national awareness with *Solar Lobby,* eventually snuffed out by the Reagan Administration. During the friendlier Carter Administration we were to run conferences on waste management in 15 U.S. cities as well as performing 200 environmental resource assessments in 33 states and Canada.

Likewise, at the **global level** I attended a World Council of Churches meeting on appropriate technology near Paris in 1980. Environmental awareness expanded. The move from urban to rural life was also a move from social concerns to individual safety issues. What is said about individual consumers finding safety or even security in weapons is said of nations seeking security in armaments as well. How can we expect the nation to be willing to have a sane guns policy if we tend to think of Americans as champions of law and order with a major share of a global arsenal of nuclear weapons?

The American military-industrial complex is part of a global problem; this feeds on taxpayer willingness to promote a strong U.S. military presence throughout the world. America's military advocates promote a pet "Star Wars" Program, aircraft carriers, and stealth bombers costing billions, which are of little genuine security as mentioned elsewhere. Tanks (*Abrams MI*) that consume 1.67 gallons of fuel per mile (yes, per mile) need to be far fewer in number. Military aircraft are the major user of petroleum-based fuel. Weaponry maintains security of high-paid defense contractors and the power of the military-industrial complex makes conversion to peacetime practices difficult. Contractors sweeten their bids for the booming sales of weaponry in many countries through development of local technical projects -- a form of kickbacks and "offsets" that economists call distorted and which is banned by the World Trade Organization.[15]

Questioning a Global Police Force sounds strange, but is it really so? Why are we called to have hundreds of bases throughout the world, to have scattered nuclear weapons and to be the required source of weaponry with each new global conflict? Maybe a maritime force is necessary to keep trade routes open but that is to the interest of China and BRIC nations as much as to the western Big Seven or Big Eight or Big Twenty. This is a twenty-first

century observation but the seeds were being sown during the first and second energy crises of the 1970s. Finally, Americans started to complain that others who benefit from world peace must contribute more to the defense expense tab. Our gun culture that was so evident in Appalachia goes hand in hand with our global policing.

America's insight is to federalize. Should we surrender to a greater power (the United Nations or its successor) some of the jealous power we have as American people? National solutions are insufficient to answer a world in need of permanent peace. The question is somewhat the same as the one we poised earlier on trusting ourselves to be disarmed as individuals and surrender our trust to local police forces or security agencies at a higher level. It takes courage to be unarmed; it takes courage to allow a broader world power to take some of the responsibility we tend to bear at an unsustainable cost to our national economy.

The international weapons trade is lucrative and currently valued at over sixty billion dollars. Recall that it was starting to grow strong even in the latter part of the twentieth century. A UN peacekeeping force at various times and the UN Conference on an Armed Trade Treaty in July 2012 could only go so far. Why such a lucrative arms business? If the weapons were only going to legitimate governments for national defense this would be cause enough for concern. However, weapons fall into hands of rogue groups. The paralysis of our Congress has kept the UN treaty on commerce in weaponry from being signed. U.S. exceptionalism was growing in the 1970s and extends to a number of other reasonable international treaties such as the "Law of the Seas." Major manufacturers in the U.S., China and Russia are remiss in signing such restricted controls for they are bad for current business. The industrial/military complex that President Eisenhower foresaw is having a telling effect over time.

Arms trafficking is a fault like arms manufacture. Again, entire groups of insurgents are certainly not wise controllers of such instruments of mass destruction. Entire nations such as North Korea or Iran are judged by the world community to be incapable of long-term proper controls. By the twenty-first century, the travesty was emphasized by mishaps such as the "Fast and Furious" campaign that went awry and allowed trafficking of weapons to drug lords in Mexico. Some six thousand guns got into wrong hands, but this mistake by the Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco is only part of the national problems built up over years of commerce in armaments. Guns need to be destroyed not traded.

Arms reduction is a constant call. Disarmament is a difficult task whether at the domestic level or in broader terms. Certainly, efforts to buy back guns are somewhat limited and have some good only in showing the necessity of gun-free zones. As the National Rifle Association seeks to increase

guns in citizen hands, efforts for disarmament seemed doomed. Two drives in early 2013 to remove a thousand guns each from Phoenix households was coupled by opposing efforts of an Arizona state legislation, demanding that state-financed gun buy-backs could be resold through approved gun sellers.

Disarmament at all levels ought to be a major concern to every law-abiding concerned citizen, but is it possible? However to be gun-free in one's home really demands that our communities have response units that could assist when needs arise. Thus, an active police force is sparse in rural America -- and so individuals respond with weapons. The same applies for state National Guard units (armed for emergencies) that are needed at the regional level, as occurred during some very severe floods we experienced at our center during that period. During the Cold War, we aspired to a strong national defense along with vast military expenditures. However, for the first time people realized that stabilizing global health was a better expenditure of limited resources. Arms consumed much more of the national budget than did foreign aid programs. While the Cold War continued, keeping NATO and our treaties with Japan and South Korea operative held high priority. However, shouldn't global defense be a global issue and different from America being the policeman of the world?

Application: Support Disarmament at Every Level

Guns are articles of violence; they are not doves. Peace is a slow process, and patterns of friendship involve turning spears into pruning hooks. To count on guns for coming to peaceful living is to expect images to be turned upside down, for symbols indicate how we operate. We create a peacemaking atmosphere -- discovering or making proper restful space, turning down noisy appliances, settling internal quarrels, getting sufficient sleep and rest, meditating, taking proper care of health and physical exercise, and getting rid of guns. At the community level we need to expand employment opportunities, settle local quarrels, help reduce drug abuse, and join peacemaking organizations such as *Pax Christi* <www.paxchristiusa.org>. A few years back, Theodore Hesburgh, former president of Notre Dame, proposed a Peace Academy to research the causes of peace, train leaders in conflict resolution and mediation techniques, and serve as a clearinghouse to provide information to policymakers and others.

The winding down of the Cold War started us thinking of the possibilities of a peace dividend. However, military savings did not survive the Clinton years, and 9-11 seems to have accelerated the new twenty-first century militarism. The U.S. went through a period of staunch isolation in the 1930s and 40s. Then since the Second World War, we regard ourselves as the "world's policemen." Neither extreme isolation nor super-power status is viable for long in this age of globalization. Vietnam was a yellow flag and then

wars in Iraq and Afghanistan lasted far too long, if ever justified in the first place. Europe and Japan prospered and needed no American troops for defense long after the Second World War. Gradually foreign military bases became obsolete in an age of rapid force deployment. "Bring them home to rebuild our infrastructure."

Massive military expenditures have become outmoded, especially when about one-and-a-half trillion dollars is required to maintain these standing armed forces. The only possible redeeming feature for such global military deployment is when a natural disaster occurs, at which time these military units can be quickly deployed in a disciplined manner to offer assistance. America's forces do respond to disasters. The 2010 Haitian earthquake, 2011 Japanese earthquake/tsunami, and the Filipino earthquake and Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 involved US military assistance. Coordinating national forces (NATO, African Union, etc.) has been a proper use of peacekeeping resources. By the autumn of 2006, recruitment of personnel for work in Lebanon and Sudan had swelled the UN peacekeeping ranks to nearly 100,000, and new trouble spots such as Congo and Somalia demanded increasing numbers to the present day. Pax Americana is extremely costly and needs sharing.

U.N. Peacekeepers ought to come from the affected regions of conflict. The hesitancy to arm peacekeepers is debatable; self-defense and defending innocent civilians are legitimate reasons for arming such units. However, only a minor part of the current global military budget goes to training, equipping, and transporting UN peacekeepers to conflict zones. Here again, we need a federated-global organization with enforcement powers.

Chapter Six: Why Are We Tempted to Retake Up Arms?
(1983-93)

During the period of the Reagan and George W.H. Bush Administrations (1981-93), federal agencies in Washington were hostile to expanding environmental protection. The issue had been bi-partisan during the period following Earth Day in 1970, namely, through the Nixon, Ford, and Carter Administrations. However, during this period of the 1980s all of the funding we had received with such fanfare in Appalachia, especially the Ted Kennedy-sponsored National Science Foundation's (NSF) "Science for Citizens Program" was abruptly halted when Reagan came to office in January 1981. The Carter-installed solar hot water system was removed from the White House. During this time, we saw citizen solar organizations wither through withdrawal of federal government funding.

Our own ASPI program for involving non-profits in Central Appalachia public interest science was, by a last-minute effort by sympathetic NSF staff, shifted to a land-study program and thus saved, where most of the other eleven Science for Citizens Programs ceased or were severely limited. ASPI barely succeeded through a combination of volunteer work, environmental resource assessments, calendar and note card sales, and private grants. Times were hard, but this period taught us frugality and hard work.

The making of an organization that would apply appropriate technology took much time during this decade. My own energy was heavily directed to performing *Environmental Resource Assessments* for eventually about 200 non-profit organizations. The thrust was to establish peace with our wounded Earth through local appropriate use of resources. Environmental healing was a new concept with the advent of my book *Renew the Face of the Earth*.[16] Theoretical first level environmental action of exposing in an aggressive

manner the malpractice activities of individuals, companies, and governmental agencies gave way to second level eco-awareness, namely, repairing a broken environment through appropriate technology (including benign practices such as solar applications with lower cost and community participation).

Guns and drugs are a regional issue. During this period, efforts were multi-level with heavier emphasis on local and regional activism. Drug production, use, and traffic were the Appalachian's major distraction; many concerned about the region's welfare refused to publicly tackle the drug problem for guns and pot (marijuana) went (and still go) hand-in-hand. Guns furnish the security and pot the economics of the region. As one Federal prisoner said to me, "How else can we raise our family?" Guns help protect high stakes cultivation and ensue drug trade. Guns have always been an essential instrument first for pioneers and homesteaders, through civil and family strife and bootlegging, to the present drug culture. However, weapons' traffic and use are not limited to Appalachia. They accompany a flow of drugs from Latin America to wealthy North American markets and a reverse flow of guns and ammo from here southward.

Poverty and drugs are intertwined. Upon returning to Appalachian Kentucky it became evident to me that poverty of the region includes the drug traffic in both directions. Our Nature Center road only two miles from an Interstate-75 exit was a way station exchange. When I jogged on weekends on our quiet Rockcastle River road some unfamiliar but expensive cars were parked in early morning hours awaiting distribution in one or other direction. In such circumstances, guns were always just below the surface. Was it safe to go without arms? Better, was it safe to be armed?

During 1986-87 considerable attention was diverted from the regional to the national level. During four months as visiting scholar to the Washington National Cathedral I helped lay out plans for a *North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology* (NACCE) in northern Indiana, which resulted in 500 attendees. The preparation had its rocky edges and these went from bad to worse immediately after the conference proper while I was deeply distracted by a death in the family. The struggles with this diverse grouping with a variety of viewpoints made me far less willing to engage in so-called "ecumenical" environmental efforts. Henceforth I limited my national work to environmental resource assessments throughout the United States. Likewise, I did continue global interests with a trip to India and conducting practical solar applications to Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Peru. Furthermore, ASPI sponsored associates going to Peru, Honduras, and Malawi for solar oven and efficient wood-stove design and implementation.

A maturing environmental movement spawns deeper questions. This was particularly true during this period when aggressive groups wanted to hold a status quo in the economy and political situation. In the 1980s, the raw

Appalachian experience made me a wiser person. Mere opposition to ecological damage gave way to needs for a deeper spirituality, one that touched the grassroots and still expanded outward through practical applications to a broader world. The period was the time of the rise of Creation-centered spirituality that would become quite popular and lead to our efforts in the next decade to offer a counter-measure Resurrection-centered spirituality that gained little popular recognition. Other observations during this period included the following:

* **Appalachians identify with the land;** there is a reciprocal relationship, which where mutual respect occurs benefits all (people and their environment). In fact, at our meeting in western Virginia in **1983** our *Appalachian Institute* brought together speakers and people aware of needs in the region. Appalachians' general love for land came in direct contrast to an American concept dating back to Saxon times and beyond to sole land use decision by individual owners of land with no regard to more public interests. This has become critical for much land is now subject to decisions by mineral rights owners, especially coal operators. Collective land decisions are resisted and so Appalachians are caught in the vise of land mismanagement.

* **Non-violent and other forms of resistance to ecological assault were raised.** Some radical activists sat on giant trees or faced down bulldozers; some spiked trees to remove their commercial value and others plotted to blow up powerlines. Generally, developers had the law on its side and through court injunctions protesters were starting to be hauled away. Temptations to eco-violence predated the terrorism of a rising Middle East and radical associated groups. An open question is whether non-violent practices include or exclude such rendering of resistance when local environment is threatened or endangered. During this time in **1984,** John Davis moved on from an internship with us and became a member of *Earth First*; this group appealed to eco-Appalachians who considered Robin Hood tactics.

* **Our forests are unique treasures worth defending.** During this period, we were becoming all the more aware of the precious temperate forests that covered our land. Some suggested that the ASPI trees be cut that had been damaged by a 1973 tornado that came through. This management practice to maximize forest harvest seemed harsh to us and so we deliberately refrained from entering a governmental program that paid for cutting out damaged trees. Nature had damaged and over time, nature will heal if we cooperate. From **1985**, we at ASPI initiated a network of nature trails that would have descriptive signs and explanatory booklets associated.

* **Art and environment science work well together.** From 1976 in DC a *Simple Lifestyle Calendar* with suggestions from *99 Ways to a Simple Lifestyle* became a project where science and art worked together for the same goal. A soft sell still had clout and is needed to win over those seeking

profound change. In **1986**, I started working with photographer Warren Brunner who had contributed many of his Appalachian photos for our ASPI calendars. Taking a selected number of his photos I wrote a reflection along with what was considered a fitting biblical verse and it was published as *Appalachia -- A Meditation*.[17] Over the succeeding decades I was privileged to compose texts that accompanied three other books with Warren and invaluable design and preparation by his wife Pat and their children and grandchildren. We agreed that Appalachian art and text combine for a total story.

In early **1987**, Tommy, a Vietnam War vet and our land trust manager, was killed by a gun in a reported domestic dispute. It was a jarring experience to say the least, and one of the most horrible episodes in my quarter-century Nature Center experience. On that windy March day when the state troopers went to the scene of the murder in Laurel County, they found Tommy's house filled with marijuana plants. Tommy had apparently planned to use our land trust with all its forested areas for the prime Marijuana crop, but his sudden death forced a change of plans. However, the tragic killing was gun-related. For the sake of the living and on-going suspicions we will leave the rest, including further suspicions, unsaid. However, it did have an effect on all of us, for Tommy was kind-hearted and helped those in need. One could say that distractions and risks in AT work come in many ways, especially when guns are present.

* **AT is a global means to non-violence.** A **1988** visit to India changed my perspective on global AT. In that trip to a Baroda Indian International Jesuit Appropriate Technology conference I insisted that the U.S. needed to be involved while others regarded this as exclusively a Third World event. In fact, we were both right: we need AT here in America, and Asia, Africa and Latin America need it there. The plane I had originally intended to fly to Ahmadabad in Gujarat State crashed killing everyone on board. Instead, I flew via Mumbai (Bombay) to my destination. Jesuit Bishop D'Souza of Baroda offered to drive me to Mohandas Gandhi's Ashram (community religious center) near Ahmadabad. This trip to India confirmed a more non-violent approach to environmental issues that I was starting to consider essential.

* **Appropriate technology implementation was good but it was difficult to gain media attention.** For AT people at a time of no governmental benefits as enjoyed by the fossil fuel industries, solar energy was a benign energy source of the indefinite future. ASPI had solar applications in its buildings and a retrofitted solar car. Over time things would change for renewable energy, though hydropower had been around for a long time. By **1989,** we were almost getting more environmental assessment requests than we could handle from non-profit (generally religious) groups seeking to make their properties more ecologically friendly. In order to assist church groups to stand out as models for the environment, we wrote the book

Eco-Church.[18] During a short period around **1990,** several of us went to Dominican Republic and Haiti and on to Peru to promote solar applications, especially solar ovens. Our contention was that every locality should ideally furnish its basic food, water, fuel, and building material needs.

* **Ecological activism must be down to earth.** With the Cold War ending, a global peace dividend seemed to be emerging. The environment demands that we know our locality which will color our spiritual stance, and thus we need not borrow from others. However, this **HERE** where we are located must remain a livable place, and so we must act **NOW**. Simultaneously in knowing our place and need for action we discover our poverty and that we need help from the larger public, the environmentally conscious **WE** of our world community. This is the message of our **1991** *Down to Earth Spirituality*.[19]

In **1992**, residents in a neighboring house disliked my watchdog. It seemed to have been friction among my and a neighbor dog of which I was not aware. The family wanted to dispose of my dog and in their bungled way allowed their own dog to gobble up a portion of the poisoned hamburger -- and it died virtually on the spot. My dog survived when I gave her milk and eggs. Even then, I had not yet realized that the poisoning was deliberate. A short time later a car squeaked to a halt at our nature center -- and a gunshot rang out. I went to the door and my faithful watchdog came running up to my feet and dropped dead having taken the brunt of the shotgun blast. Unaware of intentions, I thought someone was targeting me for a public interest issue. A grandmotherly neighbor volunteered that she had a vintage machine gun and I could mount it on the hill above my house and "spray all approaching attackers." Generous thought! I said that it was tempting to have a gun but added, "Dora Mae, all I would ever do is hit the wrong person with that machine gun."

Immediately after the incident I had an opportunity to speak on environmental matters on Mother Angelica's EWTN program in Birmingham Alabama. I mentioned the gun incident and she said "A priest with a gun!" Maybe she hadn't read much church history. I said it was only a temptation; that live broadcast (and her only environmental program) went from bad to worse as callers voiced their disapproval of having me on the live TV show. I attempted to attest to my love for St. Francis for the good mother called herself "Franciscan." I refused to leave the microphone and held it all the closer when Mother brought on her favorite theologian to refute me. Matters continued for two hours past airtime when she left. One TV viewer confided it was EWTN's funniest show, but the network refused to send me a copy of the TV airing. Guns were tempting but not my choice, even in a gun-happy valley.]

In early **1993,** a new Clinton Administration brought high hopes that environment would again have the standing of the Carter pro-solar age.

Renewable energy was promising and with the fall of the Berlin Wall, it vied for attention, but that was slow in coming. This was a decade of continued struggle for me to present a message of hope in the midst of poor folks. The creative challenge was to stay alive institutionally and to get the message out in Appalachia.

Reflection: Does NRA have the Proper Answer?

During the 1980s, the ambivalence of gun-use and gunlessness became paramount in my own life. Power is always a major issue, and proximity to power changes our ways of viewing the world. Mother Angelica's comment of a priest with a gun was apparently not heeded by her successor TV host, Jesuit Mitch Pacwa, who sent me an email of himself with a gun and a many-pointed buck at his feet. I will not dispute that some clergy in history have been armed, but this is not my way of being a follower of Jesus, where peace should be the order of the day. If we are to have a peaceful well-regulated society, it must begin with church leaders, who are called to be courageous peacemakers. This means a willingness to confront our armed American culture and its most articulate gun, the *National Rifle Association* (NRA).

Currently, the NRA has about four million members and is one of the most powerful lobbies in America. Fear stalks the hearts of those in arms because of basic insecurities associated with material possessions and yet executed through arms in their arms. Headquartered in Virginia, across the Potomac from the capitol, this stalwart NRA group is feared for its voting power and cultivated for its support by legislators and politicians of all stripes. Few political candidates, especially in rural America, want to attract the wrath of the NRA, which flaunts its red-state credentials through ownership and commerce in guns of every kind. The NRA annual meetings manifest strength in the size of the gatherings, the failure to get gun control past first base in the U.S. Congress, and the wild applause given such celebrity gun-lovers as Charlton Heston. Thanks to NRA's powerful bullying, owners of guns have a voice with their narrowly interpreted constitutional "right" to bear arms.

People kill people, says NRA executive vice-president Wayne LaPierre. He speaks of the moment when the glass breaks in the middle of the night. For him, leading voice of the NRA, the suggestion after the Newtown massacre was armed guards at every school and armed teachers trained in use of defense weapons. Their cynical responses are in keeping with the philosophy of the group, where the best defense is offensive weapons. "People kill people, but guns make it easy."[20] NRA sells itself as protective and points to a Pew Research Center finding that 48% of Americans (2013) own guns due to safety versus 29% in 1999.

The sweeping strength of the NRA is manifested by *Stand Your Ground* laws in 30 states. Likewise, it influenced the 2011 Florida legislation, the

Firearms Owners' Privacy Act, also known as *Doc vs. Glocks*. This was directed against family doctors asking patients about gun ownership. The laws enacted through strong NRA influence placed heavy fines and even medical license withdrawal on doctors who contest gun ownership, no matter how dangerous and stressful the situation. As of 2012, the law was struck down by U.S. District Court Judge Marcia Cooke for violating the free speech rights of doctors -- but appeals are pending. In fact, this law pits the First and Second Amendment restricted interpretations of our Constitution against each other.

The NRA regards individual responsibility as of highest importance and seems to forget the first part of the constitutional amendment calling for a well-regulated militia (a part of the wording omitted in the sign over the headquarters door). Individuals in the woods playing soldier with exotic and powerful weapons are NOT regulated at all. At one moment, NRA members dislike government's call to license their individual practices, yet they want strong governmental support to continue those practices in an unregulated manner. Can they have it both ways? Their quick response to gun violence is more guns to defend against the next wave of attacks wherever and whenever. This collective paranoia is worthy of serious theological commentary.

The practice of Appalachian snake-handling has much to teach us with respect to peer pressure. One could dismiss this practice based on Mark's Gospel (Chapter 16) as dead-end fundamentalism, but it says that when fundamentalists are sucked into this practice it is hard to exit. They are regarded as "true believers" if they can handle snakes properly, a sign of being as good as a believing "peer," who can control poisonous weapons of human destruction with no regard as to whether it is legally or morally permitted or not. To say you are doubtful means you are NOT a true believer and thus, a sign of weakness in faith. To practice and to be bitten by the snake is to show that you are not worthy of being called a believer, because you could not handle snakes like true believers. A handler is moved to risk physical harm to show religious favor.

The culture of NRA is a form of snake-handling: the true belief is to follow what other providers of safety in the community do, and that goes back to pioneer days and includes possession of weapons for defense by a militia of individuals joining together. If you truly believe you will own and handle the gun properly; you are manly and able to be like the bravest in the locality. If you shoot yourself in the process, that is a sign of poor management and manhood. If you are successful in gun handling you can gain bully status and be a proud gun handler, a mark of acceptance.

Handling weaponry can desensitize people as much as our youthful playing soldiers did during the Second World War period. People who constantly play war games, see violent movies, and have access to weapons soon take on the characters of Star Wars, and those bully deliverers of

firepower on the unarmed and less skilled at the draw. Evidence has been accumulating over time of the *weapons priming effect* that includes induced anger and impulse aggression on the part of gun holders. Angered participants, exposed to a rifle or revolver, during laboratory experiments aggressively administer electrical shocks to another individual to a greater degree than others.[21] Do gun users sink to lower instincts of power thanks to those who insist on the "right" to have an arsenal with more firepower than a colonial brigade?

Application: Tame Negative Power by Citizen Action

The NRA seems unstoppable, but is it? In 2013, the NRA annual meeting in Houston in May drew over 70,000 participants, an astounding number considering the organization is under sustained attack. Perhaps the attacks are causing the resurgence in interest among gun advocates who are a minority in this country. Accountability by the majority will win out in the long run.

Gun control financing seeks support. Financing by billionaire former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg has had a decided influence on the outcome of the gun control debate. His activities included starting *Mayors against Illegal Guns*, which later united after the Sandy Hook massacre with *Moms Demand Action* to form *Everytown for Gun Safety*. The mayor bankrolls pro-gun control candidates in closely contested districts throughout the country and this brings some to confront large-scale campaign funding, even for a good cause. Progressive-leaning *MoveOn.org* groups of small donors are sprouting up and showing the same political influence as the Obama election machines did in 2008 and 2012. These groups can also tap into the growing ground swell of the silent majority who are willing to support gun control publicly.

Strengthening legislator backbones is a major order of business. The red state half of Congress that comes from traditional gun-control districts stand to gain from financial and moral support, and candidates mostly in Republican areas are starting to take notice, for this is not a strictly partisan issue. In fact, 90% of the public wants some type of gun control. In recent votes it has become evident that only the most inane and neutral propositions can be presented for congressional approval at the federal level, even though some generally bluer states (e.g., Colorado, Connecticut, and New York) have moved forcefully after the Newtown Massacre of 2013 to present comprehensive state gun control regulations. The winds of change challenge current legislators paralyzed and unable to do more than offer condolences to massacre- surviving victims and families. With each school shooting it is urgent for them to act in the public's interest and aggressively control guns in this land.

Other nations can teach us something. Australia outlawed many guns after a mass shooting in 1996. The murder rates using guns fell, as well as break-ins and robberies. In a similar period America has had 65 recorded cases of such mass violence. Women in America are 11 times more likely to be murdered with guns than women in other high-income countries. In fact, all other civilized nations have far lower overall gun-related death rates. Nevertheless, America is a slow learner when influenced by gun "snake" handlers.

I came out of that decade knowing more than when I went in. At the end of that decade in the spring of 1992, I went to the Holy Land as a guest of *The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel*. In a side trip, two of us got up early one morning and visited the Church containing the Calvary hill and empty tomb. When touching the rock of Calvary a thought came clearly "Look what they have done to my Earth!" This was a spiritual turning point in my entire environmental career.

Chapter Seven: When Do We Arrive at Total Non-Violence?
(1993-2003)

This final decade of the twentieth century was one of American prosperity along with a period of optimism following the fall of the Berlin Wall. The USSR collapsed and Eastern Europe was liberated from Communism, with surprisingly little violence involved. A window of time was opening for a peace dividend and lowering of the national military expenditure. The national debt was being paid off during the Clinton Administration, and a bubble of prosperity seemed to be expanding indefinitely. The prospect of a world on the steady road to peace and a reduction in extreme poverty seemed bright. However, there's nothing perfect in this world. The Intifada burst upon the Holy Land; attacks by terrorist groups hit American interests such as the Kenya embassy bombings and the attacks on the warship Cole in Yemen, and on September eleventh, 2001, the *9-11 infamy*.

Palestinians were highly frustrated and so struck back at Israel's gradual and inevitable taking over of the West Bank. The logic of disturbance in a decade of illusive tranquility became clear to those of us delving in foreign affairs. Random terrorist attacks were not incidents out of the blue, but resulted from basic insecurity and discontent. Arabs and others saw their culture threatened by a Western materialistic culture, thus causing antagonism among the under- and unemployed; this was the same fertile ground that sprouted Nazism in post-World-War-One Germany.

The threatened lash out when options are few; those with little sense of future can cripple a sophisticated technology by well-placed explosives when

this is one way of voicing discontent. It takes more ingenuity and resources to build a sophisticated communications network and infrastructure than it takes to tear it down. Keeping sophisticated systems healthy requires mutual trust; and observations show that healthy peacemaking activities require great effort.

* **Personal ecological balance demands interior peace and exterior controlled activity.** Activists allow themselves to burn out due to unattended injustice in the world around them. Certainly as we age (I reached 60), we note the waning of physical energy and must compensate by encouraging the growth of interiority. How do I bring my interior house to order? How must a peacemaker act when called to be interiorly at peace and yet on fire to bring about change -- a boiler with good valves? In **1994,** I witnessed and officiated at the funerals of favorite Perraut cousins, especially Richard, who was my age. Mortality rears its head and becomes part of a maturing life; activism must be coupled with wisdom, knowing the shortness of life (Psalm 90). My annual retreats, always taken in the wilderness or camping areas, took on a growing importance. Now resolutions were more than just written and unvisited statements. In this year when I held a Chair at Santa Clara University, I strived to bring together environmental resource assessment experience as well as the AT work at our nature center.

Peacemaking demands interior balance and we need and have a harmony or balance found through prayer and reflection. The process involves finding God in all things and renewing oneself and one's presence in the world in order to reestablish harmony.

* **A call for more comprehensive spirituality of eco-activism arose**. In **1995**, Bob Sears and I authored *Earth Healing: A Resurrection-Centered Approach*.[22] Bob introduced the basic aspects of growth levels in the ever-deepening experience of faith. I attempted to show that this emergence actually has a counterpoint in a broadening awareness of damage to our Earth and that we must perform activities commensurate with this growth in consciousness. In a way this was a little noticed seminal work. A surging militancy is countered by a resurrection-centered spirituality calling for profound renewal of spirit, but that is not easy to introduce into a distracted world.

* **External activity includes thoughtful AT projects.** During **1996** we collected our AT applications into a readable format that would not be completed for another six years. Many of these ideas were foreign to a society bent on convenience and submerged in a fossil-fuel economy. Our modeling had a place, but it was not sufficient; environmental resource assessments were received well by some and ignored by others, but they were starting to drain me in on-site observation and compiling each report in a practical format for the target group. During this period, Ralph Nader advocated to funders for us, and we received a number of sizeable private grants that gave us precious

time to work. Truly, it takes resources in time, energy, and finances to bring about peacemaking through public interest organizations.

*** Violence involves violence to Earth.** A changing situation that needed global attention was that the very climate was being threatened by excessive pollution in our environment (especially excessive carbon dioxide through anthropogenic sources). This was the time of the Kyoto Protocols in **1997** that were to go into effect in 2006. The U.S. never ratified that or other global treaties and so without coordination violence to Earth would continue. This serious global environmental problem requires every resource to awaken a public lulled by the false activism of militarism and its individualistic allurements.

* **Powerlessness for the activist is a problem.** This had emerged when returning to Appalachia and I even brought it up with Dan Berrigan when he gave a course at nearby Berea College. This I sought to address during my chair position at Marquette University in **1998**. The paradox became clear: to accept our powerlessness is the moment of liberation and the time that we become empowered. I wrote several drafts on an unpublished book attempting to address this issue of powerlessness that needed further time to develop. Faced with specific violence we start to feel powerless, but must begin to realize that empowerment comes in recognizing our condition and working with the empowering Lord.

* **Hidden violence must be addressed.** In **1999** as we prepared for the upcoming change of millennium, many regarded the need for change to be worthy of deeper consideration. Resolutions to redistribute wealth and renew the economic and political system were in the air, and a variety of suggestions surfaced. Expecting the oppressed to be patient is not a primary Church-promoting activity. We may counsel patience to prisoners and those with debilitating illness but not to the able-bodied. Remaining silent when others act unjustly is not a time to counsel patience, for a holy impatience is called for. Jesus was gentle and Jesus reacted when some claimed commons for themselves. Do we find the merciful Jesus who purged the Temple of moneychangers and cried over Jerusalem to be a perfect example of peacemaking? Is he not the perfect ecologist?

*** Violence affects everyone.** The turn of the century in **2000** brought up the question whether this country could turn to non-violent pursuits. This became a time of forgiving debts and preparing for a period of global prosperity. The threats of Communism diminished but in its place is a world experiencing inequality in power and influence. The power of the gun was globalizing. The Moslem world was awakening and differences had causes that had to be addressed. Non-violent peacemaking does not come easily. Whether admitting it or not, many harbored doubts about the Moslem culture being peaceful. We had to reconsider our interfaith relations as violence began

to flare, especially in the Middle East. Our regional work seemed at times far removed from immediate peacemaking activities.

* **Non-violence is difficult in a violent world.** The attack on September 11, **2001** changed our outlook about an inevitably emerging world of greater peace and security. Stepping on the toe of the most armed nation that ever existed by a group of terrorists who were quite organized in their own right, was to precipitate violence with violence -- but was that an answer? Security threats opened the way to violent responses that seemed to rule the day. Terrorists were convinced that power resided in refusing assent to a fragile and pervasive system, which expected them to remain passive and await an occasional job in an indefinite future. Power through hidden weapons of disruption, in a world where the privileged had free reign, was abhorrent to them. Was military counter response the answer? After 9-11 my position that terrorists had an understandable grievance (even if we disagree with their actions); this was misunderstood -- and that lost long-standing supporters, more than any other issue undertaken. The violence of guns or weapons of mass destruction such as airplanes directed at targets, garnered more attention than the ways of peace and non-violence.

*** Peacemaking requires pastoral activity.** In the spring of **2002**, I was concluding my work as director of ASPI after precisely twenty-five years of service in that capacity. I was wearing down. It was time not to quit working but to stop actively directing a public interest center, for that took an enormous amount of effort. I was leaving ASPI in its best condition, though it had never been in debt. Directing the center allowed one opportunities to meet people, but certainly not always in a personal fashion. For the upcoming (not retired) period while in good health, I would devote half time to public interest "research" that included daily reflections on the Internet and to writing books; the other half would involve a permanent pastoral assignment in one of the diocese of Lexington's parishes. My Jesuit Provincial, Dick Baumann, asked me to investigate two other possible ministries (one college and one social justice) but after visits, I was called to pastoral work in areas of Appalachia, within natural settings if possible. How else could we touch the hearts of our people?

* **This is not time for more violent crusades;** rather, a time to uncover root causes of violence and respond through non-violent activities. My open opposition to the second Bush War occurred in March **2003**. After a Sunday Mass right before the launching of the war, I was beset at my Somerset parish by hostile Lexington visitors opposing my anti-war stance. A nation incited to war by a weak president with a wrong-headed suspicion of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction showed their militarism. After tens of thousands of casualties and hundreds of billions of dollars, the minority of us opposing that war were right. Former crusades had their good and bad results but this was pure aggression, not something clothed in outdated crusade

language. Peacemaking had to counter the military "might" of the only superpower. Over time, my opposition to this war proved justified.

This decade started with the grand promise of becoming a peaceful period wherein longer-term environmental problems could be addressed. However, this new millennia included grand resolutions of betterment of our wounded Earth, which proved overly optimistic. The tragic attack on 9-11 and the subsequent fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq brought us back to reality. Peacemaking change was still challenging, illusive, but well worth proposing and defending.

Reflection: Awareness of Arms Language

Sister Paula Gonzalez told me after one of our conferences in which she was a participant that she thought my language involved too many military terms. It started me reflecting on this subject.

A home life fictional story emerges with its many conflicts: Dad, the big gun, who in the trenches of home life can be a straight shooter, is often quick on the draw when with his little warriors, or when another gets into his sights. Mom, a battle-hardened veteran of domestic combat campaigns, can easily take a hit for the sake of ultimate victory. However, her counter-attacks are shots from the hip with a clean bore; her comments often hit a bull's eye. Their son Johnny is a true warrior in his own right, a smart gun at school though sometimes a flash in the pan. When he advances with guns loaded ready to exchange salvos with combatants in his fire zone, he precipitates a loaded cross fire. His sister Mary is the opposite; she can hold fire for a time, even take a bullet for her brother, but when she declares a cease fire with white flag, she muzzles hostilities and comes to terms. All said, theirs is a gun-loving family.

What is the language of peace? So often, our language betrays our inner self. Though I said I disliked hyper-competitiveness, still my mind was full of *struggles* and *conflicts* in which I was engaged with all the *tactics* and plans used in *combat campaigns*. These are now part of my ordinary lexicon. However, I never used or like the term "God's marines" for Jesuits and regard myself as a peaceful person.

Our culture is militant in language and that tells us more than we want to hear with an American military budget that almost equals all the rest of the world's combined. The *big gun* is a successful leader or very important person; to *be quick at the trigger* is to initiate a process without much thought. A *clean bore* is where no obstacle is present, while a *straight shooter* is someone who tells it with no frills attached, for he or she often *hits the mark*. A *smart gun* is one who is experienced with the ways of the world. To *target*

another person or thing is to focus attention on a particular individual. A *white flag* is to pause in the middle of a disagreement for some sort of compromise; to come *with guns loaded* means to be prepared for a given contest with proper information at hand; to *exchange fire* is to engage in discussion with some biting barbs involved; and to *cease fire* is to halt the discussion for a period. To be in the *trenches* is to be in the middle or thick of a controversy; to *look down the barrel* is to show a willingness to take up a controversy; to *take a bullet* for somebody is to sacrifice by accepting blame for another. A *flash in the pan*, means quick but fleeting publicity for a person not known before; *to muzzle* is to compress or control; *to bite the bullet* is a wounded soldier's determination to endure pain while a shattered limb is being crudely removed by a surgeon; and *in my sights* is to be the focal point of someone else's expected action.

Discernment is necessary; we Americans must examine ourselves not just to change our everyday language, but also to think about how we express our actions. The ease of proper peace language comes with time and patience; just as cursing folks need to watch their tongue. It takes much to change heart and clear up our impulsive expressions through a scrutiny of language used. The ordinary landscape is not just *warfare* on Satan or his *armed fighters* but a deliberate movement to a *weltanschauung* of peace.

Peacemaking takes effort. It is hard to talk about holy people, blessed ground, an atmosphere of serenity and calmness, and times of sacred silence. Such is less dramatic than to use battle terms. In fact, choice of words accompany a way of speaking meant to influence others in a non-confrontational manner, a putting of differences behind us in a quest for what is unitive and a cooperative endeavor. Peacemaking language is a challenge for those with militant backgrounds, and so we have to develop attention-gathering episodes that emphasize merciful, patient and loving goals. We can grow together in peace without confrontation.

Entertainment where all are winners is better than games of winners/losers, and this troubled world needs recourse to win/win situations. Competition overwhelms our ordinary life: those who want the same candy or toy; the striving to be at the top of the class or for recognition; those desiring the same sole job opening or funding source; a gambler at the race track or player on the athletic field; or the first to get a new fashionable car, boat or plane. Such struggles are militaristic in both goals and language. Can community togetherness be redirected, rather than dismissed as childish, immature, or lacking in redeeming value? Must we strive to be the fittest in an evolutionary struggle for survival, or dare to break the rules of natural behavior?

Amazingly, peacemaking takes on a variety of tones and directions. We must first believe that it can come with ease when we experience the peace of

soul of people who are not bent on conquering the world, but rather to serve others in a gentle manner. Caregivers stand and act at the frontier of peacemaking. However, it is not necessary that those of a more competitive spirit behave exactly like others. The more creative may want to stand out as leaders in situations that need desperate improvement. Thus, peacemaking can become competitive when action is needed over inaction, speaking over silence, and leadership over shirking responsibility. Become the first to do something beneficial and desire to be the first to break the silence and passivity of inaction. Become first only with the hope that others quickly follow and we need not stand out, but be part of the advancing multitude.

An additional point is to avoid fictional competitive situations and violence even in entertainment. Some of us go to few movies in theaters and even prefer TV or computer viewing. Fictional violent acts of blazing guns, car chases, and loud explosions ring out in the commercial theaters' never-ending previews of coming attractions, leaving one with a near concussion. Avoid the gun-blazing previews at all costs.

Application: Address Gun-Bullying Incidents

During this writing, NPR reported on Chicago school closings being ordered by the mayor. One protestor said the mayor ought to get "the bullet" and not the vote. The remark was casual and went without reporters' comments; it sounded as though to shoot an opponent was standard practice. Was this a threat on a mayor's life? NPR was not apparently disturbed, nor the audience in our gun-filled society. We either allow threats as though an everyday occurrence, or we are too bullied to break silence.

Bullying comes in many ways and is a weapon of power. When accompanied by guns the power is magnified. Even the possibility that a bully will resort to arms intensifies the practice. During the famous Appalachian Hatfield and McCoy feud in the 19th century, a reporter at the scene said, "The majority of the people here are peaceably inclined, but are overawed and domineered by the bullying element."[23] One leader, Devil Anse Hatfield, appeared a master at the art. Perhaps the person refused to fight back and this leads to use of guns by either the bully or the one who is the brunt of the actions. Reactions can be as drastic as the original action. Bullying is competition gone awry. Bullies try to impose their will over others through forceful action or hostile language communicated in order to get results contrary to the will of the victim. In this age of easy social contacts (Facebook or Twitter), bullying becomes a major problem. It's easy to threaten another by revealing a real or hypothetical story that imputes another's character. How about smearing the disliked by publicizing through powerful social media?

Keep guns out of hands of bullies and the bullied. Those with

powerful lethal weapons are easily tempted to exert that power over another. Guns speak when holders exercise a rather silent bully pulpit. Weapons have a certain advantage when exercising abusive power over others, especially in troubled unsafe neighborhoods. Schools have reports of bullying activities but with other daily concerns, they relegate these to the backburner. However, bullies and the bullied fester and can reach for guns. Recall how many American massacres involve newly minted gun bullies who prefer these weapons that are thought somewhat less bloody than knives. Internet and person-to-person bullying should never be tolerated, and every effort taken to see that such practices cease, but that is easier said than done in a public unconsciously bullied by wealth and the wealthy.

Terrorists are bullies as well. Let's extend this discussion to include those who blow up unsuspecting people whether those leaving mosques of a different persuasion in the Middle East or those who plot and carry out a dramatic act such as destroying the Twin Towers in 2001. We all live to some degree under threat of the bomber, coming when we least expect. In turn, this raises added fears of the possible bully using weaponry of all sorts to frighten others.

It hurt deeply having friends abandon me over my essay on terrorists at the 9-11 (September 11, 2001) sudden attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. For me, these terrorists were souls with little normal recourse to remedies except through use of weaponry and explosives. A well-placed monkey wrench can stop a sophisticated system, for such systems demand "law-abiding" by all. A system that tolerates privileged financial extravagances does not address real generators of insecurity and bullying by the wealthy. In turn, those who feel bullied regard themselves as almost powerless and thus have recourse to guns or to weapons of mass destruction (even commercial airliners) to frustrate a smooth-running unjust system that triggers their frustrations.

Nations as well as financial systems can bully. Larger or more military nations can lord it over weaker neighbors or over states or agencies within the nation. We can recall instances in history of atrocious bullying such as what Hitler and company did to Czechoslovakia and other small nations immediately before and at the start of World War Two. But do we Americans consider our own history of bullying? Read about the Mexican-American War or the Spanish-American War, or even consider the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Pretexts were drummed up to start hostilities. Consider what is occurring today in America's relations with Cuba. Through the *Helms-Burton Act,* American delegates to international financial systems such as the International Monetary Fund are required to vote that Cuba be excluded -- all to the detriment of improving relations and even breaking down the Stalinist mentality of Cuba itself. America's bullying as a nation right now impedes cooperative efforts and a growth of democracy in the little Cuba.

This brings us to a final question: are we bullies as individuals having been influenced to do so through a national mentality of militarism, or is our nation simply expressing the cultural situation of a guns mentality that encourages bullying at the individual or local level? While the issue is certainly academic and worthy of further research, it may have an answer that the bullying works both ways, namely, from bottom up and from top down. We tend to influence national policy for who we are, and we tend to be who we are because of what our nation is -- a first class bully in many instances. The same permissiveness that allows and encourages the local bully is that which has a massive military budget and encourages a nation to bully another; the case of Cuba has many parallels deserving of an expose' on the subject -- if not already written.

Chapter Eight: Are Guns Part of Social Addiction?
(2003-2013)

It is within this decade that the idea of bringing together a lifetime of ideas surfaced. Massacres and gun violence in many places resulted in focusing on struggles, problems, principles, and new ideas, and desire for a coherent chronological ordering of the lifetime process. Short-term memory becomes more challenging with years and so a habit of keeping "Day Books" is proving helpful. Our culture prides itself in information retrieval that includes recorded or narrated memory of past events.

What became clear in this decade is that we are an addictive culture, not only from over-the-counter drugs in Appalachia and elsewhere, but from an entire economy based heavily on production, sales, and maintenance of a variety of consumer products. We either love and buy and possess "stuff" or we are permissive enough to allow this to define our economic system. Socially, whether we want to or not, we all suffer from collective or social addictions, practiced by many to varying degrees and seldom challenged publicly. Let us look at several **observations** in this decade.

* My eighth decade started in **2003** filling in for two emergency pastoral situations at Somerset (January to June) and at Frankfort (October 2003 to June 2004). The understanding in both situations and later ones throughout the decade was to spend half-time in pastoral ministry and half-time

continuing public interest work. I gave up environmental resource assessments and yet retained prison ministry until it became too burdensome in 2011. I did not and have never believed in so-called retirement if God gives us health to continue working.

By mid-2004, I continued as priest worker in Ravenna (Estill County) and Stanton (Powell County), and eventually pastor in the former in July 2009. In these two sparsely Catholic counties of our Commonwealth guns hold sway and the drug culture is rampant. The challenge is to keep law enforcement uncontaminated, for these counties have been more troubled by drug trafficking. The people find it difficult to get meaningful employment. One opportunity author Kristin Johannsen and I suggested was through enhanced tourism, already booming at $12 billion plus in the Commonwealth. Thus, we published *Ecotourism in Appalachia* and argued that this beautiful region could have a new birth from attracting people to ecological forms of entertainment in the region. In the late twentieth century, Appalachia suffers from the relative decline in extractive industries (coal and wood) and from the demise of small manufacturing (mainly garments and furniture). Besides tourism, another consideration is promoting a return of retirees to their native places -- and this could allow a quarter of a million people to relocate in this Commonwealth alone. North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee see gold in attracting retirees and their funds to enhance ordinary commerce and especially the health service industry.

Federal prisons are a growth industry in Appalachia and the justice systems employ regional people with gun experience. The Appalachian Mountains are home to numerous federal correctional institutions and I served (with FBI clearance) one such facility for a number of years. This was especially true after **2005,** when a permanent Catholic chaplain was no longer at the Manchester prisons. Age and a 200-mile round trip caught up with me by 2011 and fortunately the local Catholic pastor, Pat Steward, was willing to include prison work in his two-parish ministry. Prisoners live in artificial conditions, especially those in the maximum security unit are always within proximity to the guns of guards, (though these weapons are locked up in the main office). A militarized regime, even though generally disposed to proper and fair treatment to prisoners, surrounds them.

Simple living is an answer to the predominant drug culture. This obvious answer does not mean that it can be easily implemented in an age of convenience and globalization. Appalachia has some local organizations that emphasize AT methods, especially related to food growing. Our local "Garden Thyme Herb Club," which I joined in **2006**, was located for a time at our church. This was the year that Paul Gallimore and I published *Healing Appalachia.*[24] Our recent parish meditation garden installed in 2013 even received a request from the mostly Protestant herb garden club to help as volunteers to install biblical herbs.

Guns are dangerous in the wrong hands. It takes a special skill to handle guns and this became evident after the massacre in central Appalachia at Virginia Tech in **2007**. As stated previously, possession of guns adds to aggressive behavior and this is especially true among the mentally imbalanced. Many tales show good guy gunning for bad guy -- but what about a mentally unstable gunner? Even the champions of less government want police protection from drug gangs and other violent elements -- but gun owners overlook that the great majority of Americans are not qualified to handle dangerous products and especially guns -- and many of them due to age or mental or physical condition admit it. The Virginia Tech massacre more than any other incident made me aware that stricter gun control will be needed.

Violence is endemic. In one of my two counties (Powell), Ralph Baze killed two law enforcement officers on January 30, 1992 with an assault rifle; they had come to his house to serve him a warrant from Ohio. Though the deaths were in no way pre-meditated, still Ralph was sentenced to death in 1994 by lethal injections. He and another death-row inmate appealed that this was cruel and unusual punishment forbidden by the Constitution's 8th amendment. On April 16, **2008,** the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Kentucky Court's decision to allow the execution to take place. The majority of our parishioners endorsed abolition of our state's death penalty, even though the two officers killed were close friends to some of them. This and other death penalties are forms of violence to the human person and contrary to a pro-life stance. Note: as of this writing the execution has not taken place.

*** Military establishments can be dangerous.** Efforts were undertaken to destroy the world's largest arsenal of chemical weapons at our local *Bluegrass Army Depot*. Over and over delays occurred and finally around **2009** it was determined that the incineration plant would be constructed using the best possible technology for destroying the nerve gases. Local residents feared shipping the fragile weapons elsewhere could result in an accident. This sprawling complex, while located in neighboring Madison County, is upwind from my Estill County residence. Here at Ravenna we receive annual updates on evacuation routes and gathering centers in the event of chemical gas leakage. The Depot is currently well-guarded and secure -- we trust.

* **Dangers to personal and community health must be addressed.** *Tobacco Days*,[25] a precursor to this book, was finally written and published in **2010,** just before the Brassica Books publisher, Mary Davis took a quick turn for the worse with cancer and died February the next year. By that time the book's message was just a little too late to have an impact, for in 2009 the FDA was finally empowered to handle tobacco products and launched into regulation to discourage tobacco smoking. The eight-decade pattern of seeing tobacco practices come to full governmental regulations is the same pattern undertaken in this book to see gun controls someday as well. Addiction to

cigarettes is part of an addiction to consumer products, and to these may be added a billion dollar gun culture.

* **We all need to work together on social justice issues.** The "Occupy Wall Street" demonstrators in 2011 captured our imagination. The super-rich are blind to imbalances they create by wielding undemocratic practices, allowing the frustrations of the powerless to search out new power sources. This is the theme of the digital book *Reclaiming the Commons*[26] (first draft **2009**, second **2011**, and third **2013**), which is still a work-in-progress. This book develops deepening levels of environmental awareness and explores the addictive nature of consumer products in the manner conceived, promoted, and allowed to advance from a luxury to a necessity item. In summary, consumer addiction affects us all, and in pinpointing excess we have an opportunity to grow spiritually.

Reflection: Guns Are an American Addiction

Attention, gun-lovers! I have attempted to develop a case that we call social addiction to which we Americans suffer with respect to consumer products.[27] We deceive ourselves into thinking we need more and more consumer products and come to accept these luxuries as necessities on which we are willing to spend and spend and spend. We are socialized to becoming dependent upon an expanding number of these items, purchase them, and then want and crave them. Material things are insatiable; we are never satisfied and without adverting to it we become product-bound expecting constant model improvement whether in car, boat, electronic device, or household appliance -- and want them addictively.

Breaking such bounds can be difficult. Collectors of any class of material objects (whether stamps, shoes, coins, or guns that can quickly reach one thousand dollars each) are caught in the morass of material wants. Some would object that collecting things does not reach near to the physiological compulsion of those addicted to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco; however, some of the same symptoms manifest themselves -- a craving for more and more of the particular material possession and the expectation that it will satisfy desires.

In addictive matters, rational discourse and discussion gives limited results. We acknowledge our tendency to addictive behavior when and where we begin to become excessive, but we believe it is under control. We are socialized by persuasion from others, conversation, and personal reflection. Observe the craze for cell phones and social contact devices. Guns can be addictive, though some owners have a keepsake, an ornament, or a general feeling of greater security. However, for a greater part the gun enhances a consumer addiction, for it allows this security to help justify and fortify the practice of gun ownership -- and there is power associated with the

possession. The gun makes us important! More pronounced addictive behavior would include a number of such weapons, the size and quality of the arsenal, or the compulsion to carry a weapon openly or hidden. A persistent need for more and more effective guns accentuates this consumer impulse.

America's **social addiction** to guns is accelerated by a rationalized need or panic to gain material security. The gun gives power and the ability to intimidate others. From a cultural and security standpoint, the addiction to guns extends to the enhancement of our military-industrial complex and the size of our standing armed services in top condition to fight several wars simultaneously -- even when no war is in the offing. Americans engage in gun addiction in both individual and collective ways: the right to bear individual arms, possession of multiple domestic weapons, and proneness to exert the power of the gun or bullying through gun language. It is also expressed by over-militarism and regarding weaponry as of greater priority than fixing weakened national or regional infrastructure.

Social addiction becomes even more ingrained when we as a nation place too high a priority on military solutions to existing problems. The military-industrial complex requires ever more money, even when it is not a higher portion of a growing GNP. Expenses rise for sophisticated weaponry as well as service personnel health and welfare costs, procurement and maintenance of weaponry, overseas military engagements such as in Afghanistan, and maintenance of Cold War bases in Germany, Spain, Italy, Japan, and on and on. Military priorities take precedence over health and educational care with national health needs and a college population accruing massive debts due to a 440% increase in tuition in the last decade. City and state governments are starved for lack of past Federal allocations and scramble to meet budgetary needs such as pension fund obligations.

Addictions deepen over time through permissiveness. We need response to the 4,000 to 6,000 rounds of Ammunition that was purchased (apparently on line) by the unstable Aurora, Colorado shooter in 2012. Violence breeds violence, and a fully armed nation that thinks it can delicately balance priorities in a world of crazies is unrealistic in its self-assessment -- this is the imbalance of the addicted with clouded judgment. Gun addiction, like all consumer product addiction (fashionable clothes, electronic devices, or automobiles) includes an insatiable appetite for more possessions, whether gangster, hunter, or domestic insecure homeowner. But the gun is the product of consumer pressure from commercial advertisement and peer pressure to express individual power; it is the mistaken sense of personal control over basic individual and domestic insecurities. The gun is the idol of a weak and limited materialistic culture.

Guns capture the imaginations of many, not only in past ages but also through the demand for greater security -- the heart of the addictive rat

race in our current age. As mentioned before, after Aurora the sales of guns rose rapidly, not only in the state where the mishap occurred but nationwide. This phenomenon, state- and nationwide has recurred with each massacre; it is accompanied by the fear that gun controls would limit purchase of weapons and ammo and thus the impulsive need to replenish and upgrade the arsenal. Each new gun-related episode enhances the growing arsenals of private citizens of all stripes. A permissive society where individuals can define "enough" is prone to ever-greater levels of material acquisition in order to break an insatiable appetite. More guns, more ammo, bigger ones, those that are more accessible, those concealed and those openly flaunted.

Addiction at individual and social levels, as well as the inherent danger to others of the addictive product (guns), makes the gun issue even the more disturbing. Lack of control is an important component of our troubled consumer culture, where spending is a major gauge of economic prosperity. Narrow libertarian economics calls for loosing controls; on the opposite side, health and safety call for creating and tightening gun control. The ingredients are ripe for total lack of control even when the Constitution calls for a "well regulated" militia. For some, guns are a necessity in our society; with others, gun control is a necessary for preserving a free society.

The U.S. Supreme Court must reconsider this subject; it has ruled in favor of the constitutionality of gun control laws provided they are not complete bans on individual gun ownership. But where are the limits to that control of which some states have a stricter interpretation? Why not compromise and give everyone a muzzleloader as envisioned by framers of the Constitution? If a gun owner has all matters under control, why is there a problem?

Each of us who have a "right" to travel from place to place do not have to license our shoes, or even bikes for that matter. However, the powerful automobile is and can be a dangerous instrument on the public highway, and without following the rules someone can and often does get hurt. We want to be assured that sober, healthy, and sufficiently trained drivers are allowed to use public roads -- for their health and safety and that of others. Likewise airplanes, buses, and cruise ships are expected to be safe and operated by non-twittering and sober captains and drivers. Guns are made to kill, whereas autos are made to travel in. General permissiveness and intolerance for social controls adds to the epidemic of an unsafe instrument in the hands of wrong people. Achieve instant publicity and notoriety by gathering the assault weapons and ammo and go to where innocent people are congregated. Unfortunately, many of the deranged succumb to this temptation.

Murder within uncontrolled gun cultures. Two out of three murders in America involve guns (Britain has one in ten); nine thousand murders occur each year in this country, each a tragedy in itself. Furthermore, Americans are

four times more likely to be murdered than an Englishman, six times more than a German, and thirteen times more than a Japanese. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported 11,078 homicides in 2010; the total deaths including law enforcement, accident and suicides were 31,672.

Those who de-emphasize gun problems[28] point out 33,687 deaths caused by vehicular accidents (though no mention that homicide by autos is negligible). At times, the murder rate fluctuates and each downturn is regarded as a good sign. The presence of firearms increases violent actions, because they are accessible and easy to use. Australians show decreases in gun violence due to new controls placed on guns in their land, contrary to pro-gun propaganda; likewise, household break-ins actually declined. While Americans do not celebrate births and marriages with gunfire, people in the Middle East certainly do.

Many Americans are unfit to have guns. Major portions of our American population do not know how to handle guns. That includes those under age and those too senile to operate them -- a third of the population for starters. Now add the unskilled, the overly nervous, those too physically or mentally ill, and we have half the people. Now take the other half of the population and remove those who do not want to have weapons around and those who resolve to be courageous in the face of possible weapons, and the population of the unarmed mount to three-quarters, conservatively speaking. The minority are hunters, home providers, police, security guards, sport people, gangsters, and one class of the insecure.

Applications: Press for Gun Licensing and Registry

Licensing imposes a certain civic responsibility. To assume that all who own guns will use them properly is a false assumption, and others of the community of nations seem more aware of this than the U.S. An individualized interpretation of a properly regulated militia's right to bear arms does not mean allowing uncontrolled crazies to acquire and use arsenals. Many, especially in urban areas, accept that gun control is as necessary for a healthy society as licensing mentally capable auto drivers to use our highways. Acquiring driver licenses is bothersome until we remember that this helps all of us move more safely from one place to another. Certainly, bureaucracy and increased insurance bills come into discussion, but still these procedures are not extremes. Removing barriers improves traffic flow and forbidding certain practices (e.g., no texting while driving) ensures safer conditions and prevents additional traffic accidents.

Gun licensing is a reasonable requirement. Good order makes some form of control on guns imperative. Unfortunately, such gun regulations have been loosened in some states in recent years with the heavy stress by red states to abide by tea party demands for less government. The bogus

argument of the "slippery slope of more regulation" hardly stands before the counter argument of greater safety in a neighborhood. Why not have a national license on guns? Actually, lack of citizen control is NOT a true conservative issue but the very opposite. Permissiveness of individuals is a false liberality that allows individuals to bear assault weapons and not single-shot, muzzleloading guns. Assault weapons with immense firepower were not traditional arms at the time the Constitution was written; they are to be forbidden, not licensed. All who use any modern gun for entertainment or so-called "security" ought to be licensed after taking a basic examination, showing that they have undergone proper training and certification for such a privilege.

Mentally incompetent James Holmes reportedly used an AK-15 in his rampage in July 2012 at Aurora Colorado. In reality, only police and institutional and utility guards in a given locality ought to be so designated to carry military-style weapons. What "right" do hunters have for automatic weapons? Are they actually that poor a shot? Current loopholes in regulations allow for trafficking in weapons with gangs and drug operators and just about anyone. Some say new rules may not be as needed as efficient enforcement of existing ones, but a general licensing of guns should be nationwide for the sake of uniformity and national security. Granted, no licensing system could be so thorough as to screen out all misfits. Nor can we expect that all three hundred million weapons' holders will be licensed. However, licensing will go a way in excluding those unsuited to carry or possess firearms.

Universal background checks of all who seek to acquire guns should be routine, for our computerized world is able to handle large amounts of information efficiently and at low costs. Good background checks could take some of the burden off gun sales personnel rather than over-burdening them. A more uniform national system would detour gangsters from purchases in a looser regulated state. Why is it so hard to convince the current Congress that 90% of the American people are behind their doing something in this matter -- and yet the gun lobby bullies them? Why should busy commerce at popular gun shows be allowed as part of the unregulated militia aspects of our permissive society? A national system of universal background checks is a key to regulation and even to sensible Second Amendment regulation.

Gun registry is another piece of systematic regulations that could go a long way towards gun control. Possession of a lethal weapon by a neighbor who could be prone to bouts of violent temper may move someone to phone the police. For all intents and purposes this is a valid way to bring about neighborhood safety and gun control at the local level -- and not by neighborhood vigilantes as occurred so tragically with the shooting of young Trayvon Martin in Florida. More on the growing controversy over "Stand Your Ground" legislation is being developed while this is report is being written. Gun possession by a mentally deranged person is a threat to neighbors, and safety first is the ounce of prevention. Why should peace and order in a

community rest on the hope that the mentally imbalanced neighbor may or may not use his or her weapon? Registration would change all of this.

The effects of the projectile from an activated gun can transcend a boundary of one person and enter dangerously into the property or living space of another. As law-abiding citizens, we have the right to know that weapons are registered in our community. Collectable guns that are proven inoperable could be a registered as well. The overall social effects of a gun are partly in its mere possession. Knowing that a neighbor has a registered weapon and its type may reduce anxiety. Knowing that this neighbor does not have operational machine guns, bombs, nerve gas, and assault weapons is important. Security means that all citizens should rest assured that neighborhood weapons are known and registered -- and this is a deterrent in itself. It is as valid as registering known predators in communities for the safety and security of residents.

Gun registry is good community bookkeeping. Today, computerized registry can make the job far less onerous than when registration occurred through hand tabulation and paper filing. The practice of knowing that specific gun owners are identified through background checks would be enhanced by knowing where the guns are located and what type they are. Furthermore, restrictions on amounts of ammunition could make the gun possessor a better abiding citizen.

Welfare of unarmed persons should count on the local and higher levels of government rather than allowing the unbalanced to bear arms. Law-abiding citizens should have no more worry than expecting a national registry of auto records for protecting against car theft. If we register cars, we ought to register guns as well. One is for general highway safety, the other for neighborhood safety. Why allow one and condemn the other?

Note: At the end of the Revolutionary War, General George Washington urged Congress to allow enlisted men who were leaving the army to take their guns and cartridge boxes with them. It was somewhat like General Grant some four score years later allowing the vanquished Confederates to take their horses. Washington, knowing these soldiers were departing with virtually no pay for their services, said that their weapons would be "handed down to their children as honorable badges of bravery and military merit."[29] The danger was that the guns could also have been used for further rebellion against a do-nothing Congress, and that danger surfaced a mere decade or so later.

Chapter Nine: Why Speak Out Now?
(2013+)

The days of the Wild West are over. American citizens are starting to realize that good regulation is part of the Second Amendment to our U.S. Constitution. We must speak openly in support of gun control, and not be bullied into silence. Such speaking up takes human courage and divine assistance, for it is difficult to act alone or in small groups on such a nationwide problem. Insecurity must be addressed in a holistic manner.

Those of us in our "gratis" eighties are beyond the time when average people of our race and sex live; we are freer to speak --provided our mental and physical capacities allow us. The last stage of mortal life is both our preparation for eternity and a time to leave a legacy for future generations. We have to count these final efforts carefully for they are final impressions. Didn't St. Boniface die at the hands of the Frisians in old age while most martyrs and most gun victims are far younger? Old age is not immune from death (or death even from gunshot), for we all live by odds that shorten with time.

Through the swiftly passing years, we have matured from toys to more spiritual gifts needed for our final journey. We can't aim guns well any more if

we ever could; we find no power in showing or handling a lethal weapon and even auto driving becomes a challenge. Life shortens while we secretly wish it to extend. When our minds are clear, we ask a basic question: **WHY GUNS?** Better, why guns in the hands of all? Most of us -- young or old, skilled or unskilled, unbalanced or stable, emotionally stressed or calm -- do not need guns, and we are the great majority.

Americans whether armed or unarmed, are intimidated by the presence of arms in the wrong hands. Many of us do not trust a private militia any more than we trust the rank and file of citizens to be armed with sophisticated weapons: muzzleloaders for hunters, yes: automatic weapons for cranks, no. The unregulated atmosphere results in an intimidation of people and the disturbance of the general order. Heavy drug use and untreated mental instability are unsettling. That some will remedy troubled situations in their own due time is even more unsettling. A degree of permissiveness by a society to domestic arsenals in the hands of untrained and often distraught individuals along with a national militarism of manufacture and trade in weapons should move us as a free people to action.

In the course of reflections, it is becoming evident that security does not come through arms. We are individually no more secure domestically with a personal arsenal of arms than is our nation with the largest armed force in the world. History speaks to both local and broader attempts of the past that did not secure but actually made possessors more prone to conflict due to perceived power by the powerless through material means. Those with weapons became the targets of upstarts and power-mongers. Weapons generate insecurity and more and more arms make it worse.

A personal coming to awareness on gun controls has involved a large aggregate of people at domestic, local, regional and national arenas -- and even global if we are to relinquish our "policeman of the world" status as Americans. This is the course of the last eight chapters. Security does not rest in material things, but in a spiritual outlook and trust in God. To focus individually on guns or nationally on armaments is to enter into an insatiable quest for material security, which will never be satisfied. Guns are simply one example, though a vivid one, of what is at stake in the consumerism that engulfs our people. Entering into this quest results in a corrosive cast of mind that may show aggression with respect to others whether individuals or entire communities.

As time for our active contributions shortens, we cannot defer addressing the gun culture to another generation, as if it is their inheritance. Along with the printing press, gunpowder was regarded as one of the great inventions of humankind. In some ways, it proved effective (for better or worse) leading to the rise and fall of many nations. Successful handling of useful inventions has always been a challenge, and that is certainly the case, as we are well aware,

through such a litany of misuse of guns by the general public. If uncontrolled, promises turn into perils.

Observations in this forthcoming decade (my ninth) include the basic insights of the earlier chapters, taken together along with an emerging understanding of *environmental gun threats* (EGT). We need to do something soon about the addictive consumer culture that includes possession of guns and the climate this creates on the general public. A purely secular solution is futile; coming to terms with security is a spiritual issue and one deserving deeper reflection on the part of those so inspired.[30]

Reflection: Environmental Gun Threats (EGT)

Pastoral work is certainly challenging. "What happens if a person wielding a weapon comes to your door and pushes the gun in your face?" This question was posed frankly by a gun owner who challenges the basic premises of this study, undertaken by an unarmed person in a very red state. My initial response was that I have outlived average white males by several years, and mortal life at this stage is somewhat like "gravy," an extended gift that is perhaps more expendable than for young people with family obligations. However, this quickly conceived answer overlooked the divine gift of longer life extended for a purpose.

Our entire national "neighborhood" is threatened by the mental unsettling condition of having 300,000,000 uncontrolled guns. This is an environmental gun threat. As a nation, we are being bullied and are too embarrassed to say it. When Colorado's updated gun laws were enacted in March 2013, the concurrent assassination of the state's director of public safety pointed to the risk of being public in gun-related matters. Assassins are moved to respond to threats to their supposed right to current gun- carrying practice. The now famous murder case of Trayvon Martin by neighborhood watchdog George Zimmerman in 2012 aroused an entire nation on racial AND safety issues. The quote from an anonymous juror of the state acquittal trial that she was certified to carry a gun caused a national uproar. Doesn't this have a bearing on the case in question?

Murder can and does stem from domestic violence. It is far less messy to kill another with a gun, rather than stabbing or bludgeoning with knives or clubs. However, the end result of any weapon used in a lethally meaningful manner is violence. Threatening with weapons at home, especially by and against relatives, is domestic violence that can escalate out of control and incorporate bystanders. No one is safe when gun violence erupts, and youngsters as well as adults learn from TV and personal observation that guns are meant to kill.

Suicides are violence to self; they are not higher in America than in

some other nations for a number of reasons. America is not the highest nation for suicide rates but two-thirds of all suicides in this country occur through the use of guns that are regarded as less messy. The owning of a gun can be a great temptation when one contemplates violence to self. The highest gun ownership is in the state of Wyoming -- and that state has the highest suicide rate in the nation. Three-quarters of that state's suicides are gun-related -- a "cowboy up" mentality with tragic results. Little wonder, for the distraught and tempted find it so much easier to "cleanly" pick up a gun and shoot out one's brains, rather than carve around and watch the blood in a cutting or stabbing wound.

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In my pastoral work, I was once called by the mother of a young man who was falsely accused of a horrible crime. He became temporarily distraught and so killed himself with a gun. His mother asked me to go to the scene and say final prayers. I readily agreed and went to the mobile home and met a state trooper at the door. He asked if I had the stomach to go to the immediate scene, since it was not a pretty sight. The young man in one last act of desperation had blown part of his head away. I said I think I can take it, and went in to bless the remains. Truly, I never knew brains could be so scattered around a whole room. His surviving mother was never mentally the same after his death.

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We read about an unfortunate woman who lost two sons through suicide. As part of recovery, she has turned to the positive action of forming a suicide prevention foundation. Not all survivors can overcome hurt and paralysis and move to doing something positive for the common good. The hurt caused by violence to a loved one is immense and sometimes paralyzing. Suicides may be considered by the victim as a way out, but the tragedy caused to loved ones is perhaps ignored. Blindly one acts, and guns are convenient.

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A friend of mine from post-doctorate days wrote that his family was now only he and his wife. His only two children had committed suicide a year apart in their native Switzerland. It struck me that decades before, his older child (a six-year-old) was the only person I was ever able to converse with in my elementary German and have it understood. On hearing of the two deaths, I found it very difficult to offer consolation to people so deeply hurt, and never asked whether it was by guns. Violence by any means, whether to self or others, is difficult to handle even pastorally.

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Other forms of violence occur. Those who seek to reduce abortion numbers speak of a similar happening in our nation and in all parts of the world where abortion is routine. It is the culture of death. A fetus is violated -

- and this has an affect so often narrated by those who are caregivers as well as victims. Abortion affects the morass of an entire nation. Rather than being a simple act between a mother and a child, this enters into the social fabric of a nation and is something that hardens individuals, who like to blame those who bring up the issue as creating "guilt." Yes, there is enough guilt involved, but that is part of a mental state that is not isolated, but begins to seep into the cracks and crevices of society and cries out for merciful forgiveness. Violence to persons in all its forms becomes a plague; mean-spiritedness is part of the disease that becomes infectious. However, forgiveness brings rectitude.

We all may have a violent side. Violent events help create an atmosphere of ever-deepening violence. We know that people under certain circumstances (warfare, plague, emergencies) will do things they would not otherwise do in normal times. Some perform heroic deeds and some descend to horrifying cruelty, as during the French Revolution in the 1790s. People quickly do violent deeds as do interrogators in prison situations. As partly mentioned before, class experiments among psychology students include prodding other students for answers by forcing them to act through resorting to electric shocks. Administrating students were willing to give levels that would do actual harm, to the student questioned (a dash of Hitler). The administrating student becomes the primary subject for he or she often exceed supposed harmful limits in order to receive a desired response.[31]

Violence due to threats weakens the social fabric. Guns can harm and, when they do, they do more than kill and wound individuals; they do collateral damage to the social fabric. Certainly this is an unexplored feature making *GUNS* a work-in-progress. Some of this associated violence to others includes a rise in anxiety levels, especially among those who are bullied in some fashion. Teachers tell us that the current school environments include students who act in a very mean fashion (I recall my own school days). As already stated, this meanness and its reactions by victims is equivalent to harmful effects from Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS). If this is true, then a society that depends on trust of its members can find that trust weakened by ongoing cases of threats and violence that strike often and without warning in random parts of that society.

The gun threat is to US, not just to ME. I started this final reflection on an assumption that I was in trouble for even mentioning guns. Yes, it involves more than my blessed neck. Fear of losing parishioners is certainly present, or of precipitating violence from neighbor hotheads. Indeed, this threat has a broader social dimension. If we live under an ongoing threat, some may be able to accept and handle such circumstances more easily and with a degree of equanimity -- but not all. An undetermined number in society become very unsettled -- and the degree of threat may not be handled in the same fashion by all.

Dustin Hoffman never carried guns in his performances for they threaten people, but that sensitivity is quite rare in show business and elsewhere. However more and more actors are becoming public in favor of gun control (e.g., Tracy Morgan, Kate Walsh, and Tim Daly). They realize that people may be stressed by the presence of guns in a neighborhood, a condition affecting nervous systems and hearts. The entire population includes a sizeable portion of people subject to EGT, and these deserve our protection. Is it proper to subject the young and old to a culture of guns in hands of the mentally unstable, any more than to allow the drunk to drive on our highways?

Assurances that some can handle guns are insufficient. Here the NRA intimidating lobby efforts are at their worse. Simply saying that the fittest can survive the gun jungle does not mean that all of civilization, including the mentally distraught, can withstand the growing social pressure to act normally in an atmosphere of mental stress. Not all ought to drive; not all should use or have guns. Violence breeds violence and we reach a fictional situation wherein only gangsters stand out as normal and the rest shrink to the shadows. Is this what we want our country to be?

Unregulated consumer products are the problem. The earlier critique of tobacco (*Tobacco Days*) comes back to haunt us. The beautiful flowering tobacco plant is not the culprit, but it is a party to a malpractice that has both an individual and corporate (social) component. The smoker is partly to blame but so is a tobacco industry that deliberately furnishes nicotine delivery to such a degree that individuals become hooked on tobacco products. The gun is a dumb or neutral instrument and in some cases even an artistic piece. Much rests with enticed and often untrained individuals -- and more blame to a multi-billion dollar industry, which pushes sales of this consumer product to far too many people. The glamour of smoking and gunowning is somewhat the same, but one is being addressed and the other ought to be.

Yes, restrictions are troublesome. A nation priding itself in freedom always finds any restriction a burden, and so space is open to all sides. Status quo seekers always play off the inertia of people who champion liberty for all. They are quick to remind us that to restrict one's freedom for whatever reason is onerous -- but fail to see that restrictions can come to both parties. When excessive action infringes on the rights of others, we pause and reflect. In a free society like ours, the pause unfortunately can extend over precious time during which additional harm occurs.

This becomes the period when profiteers and their legal and scientific henchmen reap in additional profits (see *Merchants of Doubt*).[32] Profit-mongers benefit from the malpractice and lackeys, some with supposed scientific credentials, are bankrolled to speak out in their own defense. Smoking had individual pleasure and tension relief as excuses to extend lack of

regulations; gun ownership is for sports or security whether personal or social. Added benefits such as revenues from tobacco taxes or hunting revenues, or the benefit of harvesting excessive wildlife enter into decision-making scenarios.

The tendency to return to normalcy after each tragedy is strong. Politicians enter the act with renewed resolve, and lobbyists find their voice and targets. The inevitable voice of dissent to any form of control sounds forth, and the unregulated raise their voices in chorus, "You won't take away my playthings!" It is as though the immediate killings by deranged individuals have occurred on another planet. Americans show concern for victims and then allow all to do what they want -- and the public be damned. American irresponsible individual rights without duties try to stand beside apple pie and motherhood -- a fiction needing change. Environmental gun threats beckon us to change now.

Application: Publicize Urgency to Act

If the gun control issue awaited longer-term solutions, we could speak of the "curse of amnesia" or issues soon forgotten due to other pressing matters. We say it's time to send automatic weapons to guarded arsenals, to ration ammo for hunting, and to stop commercial trade in military weaponry that is unsettling a troubled world. Peacemakers must reduce militarism at all levels:

* Join *Demand Action to End Gun Violence*, *Everytown for Gun Safety*, and other local, regional groups and national groups and participate in their petitions and actions. In 2014, after the University of California at Santa Barbara shooting that ended in 7 deaths, Richard Martinez, the father of one of the victims was instrumental in starting a 2.5 million postcard campaign; this targeted every member of Congress and governor with the basic message "Not One More."

* Dare to get rid of domestic guns and try to persuade your loved ones and friends to do the same, even though this must be done tactfully and with respect for where gun owners are coming from;

* Break silence on the gun issue and speak out so that a broader audience can hear you -- and consider doing this via the Internet;

* Challenge the traditional media not to move quickly to other issues but to stay with the gun issue for as long as it takes to hear all sides and to fashion a formal debate on gun control;

* Use your power in the responsible social media through website editing, blogging, Twitter, and Facebook and encourage others who feel bullied

to take a public position on this issue;

* Confront the NRA/gun lobby immediately when they speak out with half truths, especially after the next tragic incident as though they know the answers;

* Promote further research in gun safety technology where the use of a particular fingerprint is needed to unlock a gun: and

* Communicate with legislators after initial sympathy, eulogies, and commentaries of outrage subside, and call for regulatory changes before the next slaughter of innocents. Almost two kids per week are killed in shootings that involve unsecured guns, so pressure states lacking laws that allow police to bring charges against a gun owner whose negligence leads to young people's death.

Show that the unarmed are courageous. Reverse the message. It takes little courage to wield a gun, much to face up to the armed. Gun-bearing by individuals with little or no regulation is completely contrary to our Federal Constitution and returns to the tired and misguided arguments of 'all rights and no duties' associated with some popular rights language. Would that this nation comes to its senses; violence affects people and Earth both in a general consumer culture and specifically with guns. We must take steps to come to rationality so that our right to bear arms becomes a collective civic duty, a point of national pride, not shame.

A focused mass media can win basic gun-control. The media should capitalize on the 90% of Americans who desire some gun controls and help create a climate for political action. The media must show again that courage comes with the unarmed. Publicity intimidation is a form of hidden bullying that many victims are ashamed to admit. Guns are unsafe and offer negative security. The unarmed trust in law enforcement - not in private arsenals. Medias are good and influential propaganda instruments for better or worse, and these can be free speech champions and foster peacemaking.

Conclusion

The gun control issue is not settled, whether in this book or elsewhere. As with all human innovation, controls are important but difficult to implement. Here, as with other environmental issues such as water pollution, ETS, and land use practices, the social component must be emphasized. This is more than an individual's right to do something apart from the community, but rather a willingness to accept controls on use of materials that can harm others when misused in their presence. ETS and guns have much in common, though the virtual presence of the latter must be emphasized here.

A resolution of this issue involves growth in understanding and maturation. It is more than individuals giving up their attitudes about toys; it is about an American society coming to grips with a specific problem, the so-called "right of every Tom, Dick and Harry to bear arms." This issue is more complex because it is interrelated to that of coexisting individual rights (rights to arms or right to happiness in a gun-controlled society). Since consumers acquire goods often for convenience and self-satisfaction, the acquisition is subject to moderation through self-control and a larger community. My journey to this understanding is exemplified through insights over the decades:

1. <u>Guns are not playthings.</u> Even though our ways of life comfort us, we see profound changes like death and lifestyle adjustments calling us to relinquish control, for life is letting go of things. A child's play is just that, but too often the public continues fictional play as though it is real life. Here guns enter in as adult toys. Individuals and nations must mature.

2. <u>Critical life-changing decisions are needed.</u> Over time, we make life-changing decisions that come to many when leaving home or choosing a life's profession. Basic rules for proper decision-making involve accepting discipline in some matters and starting a process of self-control so that one can make decisions in a systematic fashion. Understanding when mistakes have been made allows us to accumulate experience needed for good judgment. How we handle and mishandle weapons is part of that life-experience.

3. <u>Controls involve self-discipline and social regulation.</u> Everyone needs periods in life when attention is given to self-regulation on many matters, and this is especially important during times of academic and formal training. In this regard, good gun maintenance, commerce, and use is similar to having and using an automobile; this requires a combination of individual car maintenance, insurance, and driving habits, plus proper highway conditions and societal driving regulations and controls; these include accepting society-recognized driving and passing lanes in a regular and accepted manner. Self-discipline is imperative.

4. <u>Democratic controls involve civic participation.</u> Citizens in a

democracy expect and affirm a governmental system of fairness and justice for self and others. Unfairness such as simultaneous gross disparity of wealth and extreme want can hardly exist side by side without inherent insecurities arising. A ministry called "public interest" must not allow a democratic society to tolerate injustice to others -- and so the public interest movement flourishes as a way for citizen responsibility within a democracy to be exercised and encouraged. This means proper use of consumer products, with special attention to those with a potential to do harm -- and guns can and do kill when mishandled.

5. Proper Controls must consider a global view. Even though they are painful, proper and balanced controls like a well-regulated militia demand eternal vigilance and constant innovation. The American Revolution reached out to experts in other countries to help train its militia and therefore improved its own regulation. Democratic processes such as environmental controls and AT implementation need interaction on all levels of governance. This includes input from experience at the global level from other (even primitive) cultures on which controls are the most environmentally benign and community-enhancing ones to support.

6. Security does not come with more arms. Possessing armaments makes one more vulnerable, a condition that must be respected and addressed in a non-materialistic manner. Though there are times and places where arms are needed for security, this certainly can be overdone without proper individual and social control measures. Misuse of arms can mean death to individuals even within one's working team (e.g., ASPI associate's murder). The risk is always present with a plethora of weaponry in the hands of many in a militaristic society. Our world suffers from the arms race and those with better judgment call for greater efforts at peacemaking. We must start beating swords into plowshares.

7. Genuine Peacemaking must be non-violent. The temptation in a militaristic culture is to answer current problems through an aggressive use of arms (Iraq War) and through bullying (NRA). However, non-violence can also be effective and is championed for longer-term peace efforts. Some make distinctions between violence to persons and violence to property. Groups like the NRA trumpet counter-violence involving more security guards and arming teachers to protect those who could at random be subject to unexpected violence. On the other hand, even amid the temptations to use violent means, authentic peacemakers promote a change of heart and take the courage needed to speak out boldly and act in ways that do not involve weaponry.

8. Social addictiveness encompasses the guns culture. A permissive society that advertises medicines and encourages their use indicates that the drug culture is far deeper than mere excessive or illegal use by a minority of people. Regarding an entire consumer culture as addictive

lacks the preciseness found in classifying drugs, alcohol, and even nicotine as such -- but the purchasing and retaining of all consumer goods fits similar behavior patterns as those of the illegal drug culture. Instead of yielding to powerlessness brought on by addiction, many prefer to champion consumer product innovation, safety, and accessibility. However, guns are a consumer product, one designed to kill; excuses to possess them include sporting, ornamental, or bullying purposes. Safer goods are not key to gun control, but rather a thorough critique of a consumer culture that breeds a multi-billion dollar gun industry. Confronting the issue will be a moment of truth, an opportunity to grow spiritually.

9. <u>The unarmed are often intimidated.</u> For over three decades, non-smokers publicly resisted and exposed ETS, and ultimately obtained tobacco regulation by the FDA. The nation's unarmed must break silence about uncontrolled guns in their locality and beyond. The American convenient consumer culture seems bent on safer products and greater sales accessibility -- a gross distraction. A multi-billion dollar weapon's industry practices the same deceit as the uncontrolled tobacco-company efforts for the last half of the twentieth century. Their lobby lackeys continue to intimidate legislators and omit the fact that *GUNS Give Us Negative Security.* In fact, presence of guns in the wrong hands hastens the atmosphere of insecurity among the general population. In the face of intimidating bullies, people choose to remain silent when they ought to speak up for themselves and those around them who suffer from EGT through a variety of social and mental disorders.

What is becoming clear in creating this book is that guns are simply a further example of unregulated consumerism -- allowing the desire for luxury products among the wealthy to become the template for a surging middle class bent on imitating the affluent. This drives a misguided economy in such a fashion that it leads to resource depletion and pollution of air and water, together with failure to share resources with those in essential needs. This leads to social and ecological disaster.

In **2014**, we are preparing to reissue *The Contrasumers* on the fortieth anniversary of its publication in 1974. The tobacco-smoking and gun-control issues give us further insight into the addictiveness of our consumer culture and the means to address this in a more spiritual fashion. The gun culture can be a personal addiction though few gun owners would regard themselves as such. We cannot treat our addictions by ourselves, especially when immersed in the addictive culture. We must go outside it for healing. Here we move from the limits of our physical world and personal abilities to that of the need to turn to a Higher Power beyond ourselves -- a sincere spiritual quest for salvation.

Taking our addictions seriously becomes a spiritual journey. We need God's help to solve this problem of a gun-filled society. Let us understand the

situation, see our own weaknesses, and come together as a faith-filled community. This does not mean we settle back in utter quietude. Rather we are emboldened to speak out, to make this a political issue, and to do all in our power to bring about needed control. We need to re-emphasize our national motto **In God We Trust**. We could add a new sub-title with respect to *GUNS*: God Underlies Needed Security.

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