

Be a Beacon of Light in a Darkening World



By Aviva Eales

[Author's Note: Although I wrote this piece after the 2018 Parkland School shootings, the views expressed here feel equally fitting today in light of the crazy year that was 2020.]

The year 2017 was a tough one for America, the Caribbean, and the world at large. And as we venture into 2018 with yet more devastating news in the form of the Parkland, Florida school shooting, I think by now we are all feeling a bit rough and raw around the edges.

People are scared and angry, searching for answers, normalcy, peace. Accordingly, they demand action, a resolution to the increasing violence and discord. While perusing the latest updates on the Las Vegas and Texas church massacres, the horrific sex abuse scandals, the Turpin child torture tragedy, California mudslides and fires, North Korea, Puerto Rico, hurricanes and earthquakes, terrorism, race relations, and a myriad of other news items and issues, I hear the familiar commentary time and time again:

We must have gun control.
We must have social equality.
We must improve our disaster readiness.
Must, must, must. Lobby, lobby, lobby. Do, do, do.

It all sounds so simple, so noble, so clear. And in some ways, it is. Change the laws and you change the people, and, in turn, make the world a better, safer, more compassionate place. I'm not saying this viewpoint is wrong. After all, look at what abolition did for African Americans or suffrage for women's equality. A small group of brave souls fought the good fight and brought freedom for one and all. Likewise, I'm sure the idealists of today mean well too, but they forget one vital truth the abolitionists and suffragists did not:

GOD.

No government or social program can legislate love. Laws can't heal a hurting heart, cure the sick, comfort the fatherless, befriend the friendless, bring hope to the hopeless, or transform a soul who has gone over to the dark side. Only God can do that.

Only God can thaw a frozen, hardened heart and make it warm and supple again, able to care, empathize, and love. Only God can turn dark to light, despair to hope, and hate to love. How? Through the transformative power of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Only the Son shines like a beacon in the darkness—the One and Only Light of the World.

Nevertheless, there are some well-meaning people who, in their spiritual naivety, seek to govern the human soul, tell others what to think and believe, what law or political group or "backward mindset" is keeping the world from reaching its apex of enlightenment—the implication being that if everyone felt the same way about everything, we would at last be living in one big warm-and-fuzzy utopia.

But it's impossible. Even at our best, we humans are too self-centered, flawed, and divided to bring lasting harmony. The best and brightest man can do or be is a mere spark compared to the blazing, all-consuming bonfire that is God. Only when human history is over, and the Son of God is reigning on Earth will there be order, justice, and peace for all.

So, in these turbulent days, when we worry this world cannot bear one more piece of bad news, we believers in Jesus are left asking the \$24,000 question. If not through passing legislation, what can mere mortals do to make this world a better place?

Share God's love.

Americans need to put down their cell phones for five minutes and see people again, really see them, hear them, love them.

Build a bond with your neighbors, teachers, coworkers, baristas, tellers, and librarians. Get on a first-name basis. Ask them about their lives and families. Show them you care. Turn coworkers into friends, neighbors into family. Restore that tight-knit sense of community America had decades ago, when neighbors watched out for neighbors and had each other's backs. Let the help and healing start with you.

For those of you who are Bible-believing Christians, you know from the depths of your soul that God is love. So, pass it on. Share God's love and grace as revealed in the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. Teach others to revere God's holiness and respect His Word. Impart truth in a world rife with lies. Demonstrate how marvelous God truly is.

Speak words of comfort and hope to all you meet. Love when others hate. Heal when everyone else tears apart. Listen when the rest shut their ears. Give when others take. Reach out your arms and love. Just love.

Be a beacon of light in an ever-darkening world, and shine, shine, shine.