



THE DIETRICH BONHOEFFER INSTITUTE

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**EVANGELICAL LEADER WHO HAS BOLDLY BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE
ISSUE OF GUN VIOLENCE GIVES A STATEMENT IN WAKE OF FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING**

Washington D.C. – February 14, 2018: Rev. Rob Schenck, President of The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute; Subject of the Emmy-Winning Documentary, The Armor of Light; and Contributing Author of God and Guns – a Part of the Upcoming Zondervan Book, Christianity Engaged in Culture Makes the Following Statement in Light of the High School Shooting in Florida:

“The murder of school children in a mass shooting is never just ‘another.’ That’s not acceptable in a civilized culture. When children wake up in the morning, they should only worry about homework or a test, not whether they will be killed in a hail of gunfire. Parents should only be concerned if their kids will make the bus, play it safe in gym, or avoid getting in trouble. No parent should worry that a gun battle will break out or that they’ll be met at the end of the school day at the emergency room by a grim-faced chaplain.

“Over my nearly 40 years as a Christian minister, I’ve consoled many people who have been the victims of tragedy, but none as tortured, as anguished, as crushed as parents of a child who has died. Add the horror of knowing your baby’s body was pierced by a bullet and he or she bled to death and the pain is unfathomable. The shooting that left at least seventeen dead and more wounded or injured at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County Florida is only the latest of 290 such incidents since December 21, 2012 when 20 tiny elementary school students were slain by a gunman in Newtown, Connecticut.

“If the solution to this deadly disease in American society is more guns—as the NRA and other firearm lobbying groups assert—than the United States, with over 300 million weapons in general circulation—would be the safest place on earth. It is not. And if, as I can hear many of my gun rights conversation partners saying, the answer to this kind of catastrophe is to arm teachers, janitors, and parking lot attendants, then we will be setting up a world where kids will be ducking for cover in their hallways and classrooms as bullets wiz past their heads and, likely, hit them instead of any assailant.

“Is this the world we want our children to inhabit? Is this the risk we are asking of teachers, administrators, and volunteers in our schools? Is this the foreboding parents want to experience each time they watch their kids climb aboard a school bus? This travesty must stop—and stop immediately.

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“American homes are awash in weaponry—and way too much of it is unsecured or easily accessible to children, or troubled family members, or thieves. Kids are not bringing hand grenades to school—or sticks of dynamite—or even fertilizer bombs because we have decided as a society to carefully restrict and control those dangerous items. Yet, we not only make lethal firearms readily available to anyone who wants them for any reason, but the NRA and others—especially the manufacturers that get wealthier every time a bunch of people are slaughtered—keep pushing for more and more weapons to be easier and easier to obtain.

“In August of 2013, when a mentally unstable student entered his Atlanta area high school administrative office and fired a semi-automatic rifle into the floor, then threatened to start shooting everybody in the school, front office secretary Antoinette Tuff prayerfully mustered all the courage she had and talked the young man down, convincing him to surrender. The only weapon she had was her faith, her bravery, and her love—and she did what few others have ever done. If given the option, which kind of ending would any parent hope and pray for—a gun battle over their child’s head, or a brave soul talking a would-be killer into an uneventful surrender?

“Can we agree that more weapons, more ammunition, easier and greater access to firearms, and good guys with guns have not solved this deadly problem? And we won’t solve it until good people accept reality, resolve to do all we can to change what’s really wrong, keep guns away from anyone who isn’t properly trained and monitored in their use, and begin ridding our homes, neighborhoods, schools, and communities of instruments of mass death.

“We have a moral emergency in our country. It’s time we wake up, face it, and fix it. Local state and federal officials MUST act now.”

The Rev. Dr. Rob Schenck is an ordained evangelical minister and president of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute, located in Washington, DC. He holds a d Doctor of Ministry from Faith Evangelical Seminary in Tacoma, Washington and is a senior fellow of The Centre for the Study of Law and Public Policy at Oxford. Rev. Schenck is the subject of the Emmy-winning documentary, The Armor of Light. He is also the author of God and Guns, a part of Zondervan’s upcoming book, Christianity Engaged in Culture and the book, Costly Grace, due to be released by Harper Collins June 2018. www.tdbi.org

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