

# Evangelical Pastor: Guns Are Not Christian

By [Belinda Luscombe](#)

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Here's one thing all Evangelicals — and Christians of every stripe, actually — hold to be true: humans are sinful. They cannot stop being sinful. They will always be sinful. This is why, according to the Christian gospel, the Father deployed his Son and that Son died; to take the rap for sin. If any human could have found a way to live a perfect life, then that sacrifice would not have been necessary. The sinfulness of all humanity is one of Christianity's foundational beliefs.

Given that, why do so many [Christians](#), particularly those on the right, so steadfastly oppose any kind of meaningful gun control? It's true that guns don't kill people on their own. People kill people. But since Christians believe that people cannot be perfected this side of Glory, why not limit the harm we fallen people are able to do? We can only change one side of the equation, and that's the gun side.

Compare the Christian attitude to guns to the Christian attitude to marriage. It is not in the nature of mammals to be [monogamous](#), and yet churches support marriage, offer couples counseling, discourage the watching of pornography or the solicitation of prostitutes or the secret affair. Churches acknowledge people are not perfect, so they endorse the introduction of some guardrails to help them do less damage to those around them. They promote some limitations on freedom to stop people getting hurt. Yes, the Lord said go forth and multiply, but Christian people do not then take that to mean you have the right to have children with whomever you wish at any time, after a three-day waiting period.

Or let's look at the Christian perspective on giving. Traditionally, Christians believe in the tithe. That is, they give up 10% of their income to the church or some godly purpose. The thinking behind this is that since everything humans have comes from God, they are merely returning to God what is God's. To hoard money is to rely on something other than God. To give it away is to acknowledge that God is the ultimate provider. So why do Christians rely on guns for protection at all times? Do Christians believe guns are stronger than God?

Why not then give up even 10% of the access to guns — say, just the semi-automatics?

“I would call it the libertine loophole,” says Rev. Rob Schenck, a Washington D.C. - based evangelical pastor. “You get to do anything you want when it comes to a lethal weapon. Everything else you restrain. You watch what you drink, what amusements you go after, what relationships you pursue, even what you do with your money, your time, the words you employ and don’t employ. There are all kinds of restraints and constraints. But [owning guns] is an exception to all the rules and the question you have to ask: why? Why would we make this exception?”

About five years ago, Schenck, a pastor whose [anti-abortion credentials are robust](#), began to question whether his commitment to life and his commitment to guns were mutually exclusive. If one believes in the sanctity of human life, how could one countenance the idea that everybody has the right to a tool that can end life so fast? This is a guy [who was on Roy Moore’s side when the 10 Commandments monument](#) was removed from the judge’s courtroom, so he’s not exactly a liberal. And while the Constitution gives Americans the right to carry guns, the Bible sees rights differently, says Schenck. “The [scripture](#) says, ‘All things may be lawful, but not all things are helpful.’”

But when he began to try to have that discussion with his conservative Christian base, as shown in the documentary [The Armor of Light](#), the idea was a total non-starter. He’s now winding down his D.C.-based evangelical group [Faith and Action](#) and starting a new one, [The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute](#).

“Bonhoeffer would say we’re creating a fantasy,” says Schenck. “It’s a serious separation of the gospel from reality: ‘I’m creating a new world where people are saved by guns.’ It’s a theological disaster. This issue is terribly, terribly, terribly important for the existence of American evangelicalism. You can’t understate the magnitude of this crisis.”

Protestors who stand outside abortion clinics with medical-looking photos or models of fetuses, as Schenck has done, like to say that if they only save one life, it’s worth trying. Why can’t the same also be said of gun control? Many young lives could have been saved this week if we had already found a way to keep semi-automatic rifles out of the hands of people who have no need for one.

The most angry of all the Old Testament prophets, Jeremiah, singles out one thing the Israelites keep doing that God finds repulsive: they sacrifice their children. The Israelites are sacrificing them to their much loved traditional gods, but God makes it clear that He’s not a fan of the practice for any beliefs, including, presumably, that of the sanctity of the Second Amendment. Yet many Christians choose Second

<https://time.com/5163376/christians-gun-control/>

Amendment-worship over the safety of their children — and others' children — everyday.

Jeremiah has a warning for his countrymen: change the way you're doing things, he says, or the place you live will get a new name: [the Valley of Slaughter](#). That's a pretty apt description of that Florida high school on Valentine's Day.