

Small Talk – March 24 2021
Required Facial Covering When in Public – Day 245
By Michael Small

In the weeks since I last wrote *Small Talk* (March 3), there has been time with family and loved ones who all have been vaccinated and tested negative for Covid. It was good to step back from the complexities and daily challenges of the world and enter into the wonder and miracle of simply being with one another – and navigating the complexities of being family. And I must say, most of our time was smooth sailing being daily blessed with sunrises and sunsets. And I awaken to a light dusting of snow on the ground – the joy and wonders of living in northern Minnesota.

Changing the words, a bit, I woke this morning with this song on my mind – singing it to myself, “*How many roads must we all walk down, before . . .*” (apologies to Bob Dylan) How many roads? In the past eight days two “mass-murders” have been committed by two, very young, twenty-one-year-old men. Ten people are gunned down in Boulder Colorado. Eight women are gunned down in Atlanta, Georgia. One moment these eighteen people are living life, going about their daily tasks, filled with dreams and hopes – and then – in an instant, one person, in their madness, kills another human. Families will never be the same, in an instant! A mother, father, child, grandparent – all dead in a moment. In 2020, 19,380 people died as a result of gun violence – 38,427 were injured. (Note: this count **does not** include the 20,000 – 25,000 gun-related suicides that occur each year) Thus far, in 2021, latest statistics indicate that 4,127 people have died as a result of gun violence – 7,257 were injured.¹

Only in America when entering a church, theater, school, public place, restaurant, salon, and now a grocery store must we be aware of the exits in case an active shooter decides this is the time and place to wantonly kill. Homeland Security has released a booklet ACTIVE SHOOTER - HOW TO RESPOND². Three strategies. First, evacuate. If that is not possible, hide. And lastly, if these fail, take action against the active shooter. Sadly, this booklet is a must read in America today.

“How many roads must we all walk down, before . . .” I am not anti-gun. I know too many persons who are responsible gun owners. I live in a land where there are multiple seasons for hunting. But, in America, gun deaths have become epidemic. “Every day, 316 people are shot in the United States. Among those: 106 people are shot and killed, 210 survive gunshot injuries, 95 are intentionally shot by someone else and survive, and 39 are murdered.”³

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/03/23/2020-shootings/>

² https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf

³ <https://www.bradyunited.org/key-statistics>

I think we need to ask, why are so many people are killed by guns? In a time when tempers and anger so quickly flare, is it a wise to allow weapons of mass destruction to be so accessible to all? Can we come to the place of “common sense”, developing tools, laws and regulations that build up, rather than destroy? I am licensed to drive a car. I have insurance and I am accountable if I am involved in an accident, or if I recklessly drive. I can be fined, lose my license, and even be put in jail by driving recklessly or under the influence. I must follow the laws. So too with guns – we must license, do background checks, and be certain that those who own and use guns are trained, responsible, and held accountable.

I know this is all complex and not easily understood or fixed. But we must try. *Too many have people died* each day from the epidemic of gun violence. Enough is enough.

And now, the revised Bob Dylan song, *Blowin' in the Wind*. Curiously, this song was written by a very young, twenty-one-year-old man, also known as Robert Allen Zimmerman from Hibbing, MN.

Blowin' in the Wind

*How many roads must we all walk down,
Before we can be a person?
How many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
Yes, and how many times must the cannonballs fly
Before they're forever banned?*

*The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind.
The answer is blowin' in the wind.*

*Yes, and how many years must a mountain exist,
Before it is washed to the sea?
And how many years can some people exist,
Before they're allowed to be free?
Yes, and how many times can we all turn our heads,
And pretend that we just don't see?*

*The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind.
The answer is blowin' in the wind.*

*Yes, and how many times must we all look up,
Before we can see the sky?
And how many ears must we all have
Before we can hear people, cry?
Yes, and how many deaths will it take 'til we know.*

That too many people have died?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind.

The answer is blowin' in the wind⁴

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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⁴ *"Blowin' in the Wind"* is a song written by Bob Dylan in 1962 and released as a single and included on his album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* in 1963.