

# Say What? | World Conference Resolution G-12 | Rick Sarre

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

G\_12 resolution, gun violence, firearm regulation, gun control, advocacy, firearm licensing, gun proliferation, Peace and Justice Team, 2025 World Conference.

## SPEAKERS

Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam, Kassie Ripsam, Rick Sarre

### **Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 00:27

Hello and welcome to "Say What?", where we talk about the things that make us say, "Say What?" I'm Mary Anne...

### **Kassie Ripsam** 00:33

And I'm Kassie,

### **Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 00:34

And today we're interviewing Rick Sarre about the G 12 resolution for conference this year. It's great to have you here.

### **Rick Sarre** 00:44

Well, it's great to be online here on the other side of the Earth.

### **Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 00:50

So, we have fun questions first. Do you think that you would survive a zombie apocalypse?

### **Rick Sarre** 01:02

Yes, what I would do is I would dress up as a zombie, and so they wouldn't know that I was one of the non-zombies, so I could just integrate myself. And I've survived that quite easily I think.

### **Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 01:14

You just don't have much, much of an appetite for brains that's all.

### **Rick Sarre** 01:21

I would I would look like a zombie, and I would walk around like a zombie. I'd be fine. People sometimes think I do that anyway.

### **Kassie Ripsam** 01:29

So, what part of a driver's test do you think he would most likely fail, or at least do poorly in?

**Rick Sarre** 01:37

well, when I'm driving, I'm listening to music, I drum on the steering wheel, and my wife sometimes says, Honey, stop drumming, because you've got to hold on to the steering wheel. So, I might drive the, I might I might fail the did not hang on to driving with steering wheel test, but otherwise I'd be fine I think. On this side of the world, we drive on the left hand side of the road. So, you'd worry about me. I think being on the wrong side of the road.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 02:09

This is like kind of what I was thinking about personally. Do you ever talk to inanimate objects?

**Rick Sarre** 02:19

No, but I used to talk to my dog a lot, even though it didn't answer back. He just looked at me and think that was pretty cool. So not inanimate, but certainly animate, but not necessarily human. Yeah,

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 02:35

probably just thinking you're nuts or something. That's it.

**Rick Sarre** 02:39

I think anyone who talks to an inanimate object would be nuts, yes.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 02:52

Not like talking to, more like shouting at.

**Kassie Ripsam** 02:55

Or apologizing to or trying to forcefully convince this thing to work.

**Rick Sarre** 03:01

Oh, I see, yes, I have done that. I have I have cursed my laptop. That's true, yes.

**Kassie Ripsam** 03:12

So if you dream, what is the weirdest dream you've ever had?

**Rick Sarre** 03:20

Well, the weirdest dream I ever had, this actually, was quite a profound dream. I had a dream some years ago where I had run across myself as a little kid, you know, six or seven years old. And that was really profound, because I said to the kid, you know, here's what you can expect in your life. And he sort of said, I don't care. And he ran away. That was, listen to me. There I was there. Always there's a little kid, and I was an old man talking to a little kid who was me. I that was really weird and profound at the same time.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 03:54**

Wow, just the fact that he just, like, kind of walked away, like he didn't care. I mean, personally, I would care. I would totally care.

**Kassie Ripsam 04:01**

I mean, I would care, but I can't say for 100% that I would listen.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 04:11**

True. That's very true. So, do you have a favorite thing about living in Australia? If so, what is it?

**Rick Sarre 04:22**

Look Australia is a lovely country. It's it's very modern. It's got beautiful climate. It's got miles and 1000s of miles of beaches. It's got clean air and a very good democratic government. We're well governed, and we're very safe and very well educated. It really is one of the glorious parts of the world to live and I have visited, wait for it, I think I added them up the other day, 75 or 76 countries, and so I've had a good look around, and I can't another country I'd rather live in.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 04:55**

Wow. Personally, it's kind of on our bucket list to visit.

**Rick Sarre 05:01**

Yeah, you're most welcome.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 05:04**

What would be the top three places you would tell someone to visit who wants to to your home country?

**Rick Sarre 05:10**

Well, most people who come to Australia can't see the Sydney Harbor Bridge and the Opera House. They go to the middle of the country to see Uluru, the rock. They probably go to the Barrier Reef, the largest coral reef in the world, or they go to Tasmania to see the Tasmanian devils and do some fishing. But I think they should come to Adelaide. It's where I live. Adelaide is a gorgeous city of a million people on side of the ocean, and I am very proud of the way in which our city functions. It's a lovely city. And that would be the first person, the first thing I'd recommend to come to Adelaide, and come with us down to the beach. We can sit on the beach with no one else and just watch.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 05:49**

I love beaches. I mean, we're kind of biased. Living in Pensacola. We've got white sand beaches. So...

**Rick Sarre 05:57**

I, I've been to Pensacola. You have, I had a Christmas, Christmas, 1996 in Pensacola, Florida.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 06:10**

I think probably my favorite thing about living down south in Florida is we don't get snow. I mean, we got snow last week, but that was insanely weird.

**Kassie Ripsam 06:20**

It was insanely weird. I hate the gold. So you're a retired professor. What were you a professor of, and where?

**Rick Sarre 06:33**

I was a professor of law and criminology, and I have done that here in Adelaide for the last 35 years, but I did have a year at Graceland, teaching as part of their program in social sciences, teaching law and criminology. And I also had a year in Sweden where I taught at a university up north near the Arctic Circle, and that was with the family, and over the years, I've taught in various little programs around Australia. So I've been doing this for a long time.

**Kassie Ripsam 07:10**

I have two questions, what's criminology?

**Rick Sarre 07:15**

That's the first question, what's the second one? Are they related questions?

**Kassie Ripsam 07:19**

No. Why the Arctic Circle?

**Rick Sarre 07:24**

Not related questions. Criminology is the study of crime, who commits it, why they commit it, how they commit it, and what police, courts, corrections can do about stopping it. So that's the gist of it. Now criminology involves four different disciplines. You have the discipline of sociology, looking at the way in which society is constructed that might give rise to crime. Psychology, which is when people's mind goes a little bit more criminal. The lawyers, which is me basically, where you look at the way in which laws can be framed in order to reduce crime. And typically, political science, to see the way in which politicians and governments try to address the whole issue of criminality. So, criminology is something that cuts across a number of disciplines. Why the Arctic Circle? Because back some 20 years ago, when our kids were about your age, a little bit younger, I was invited to go to teach at Umea University, which is a university up near the Arctic Circle at a Swedish University. And so it was very, very dark in the winter and very, very light in the summer. I'd be guessing in terms of latitude, it would be kind of like Northern Ontario, and I did in fact, I spent two years in Canada too, studying at the University of Toronto, so I've had a good look at snow over all these years. No getting snow here while I live, but I do enjoy it when I go on a visit to Iowa and Canada and Sweden.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 08:56**

That's really cool. I personally would never go that far north.

**Kassie Ripsam 09:01**

I might, but I don't know if I would stay there for that long.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 09:07**

So we read in your bio that your children are also into law. Is this a family interest has been there for past generations? And what are your family conversations at dinner like?

**Rick Sarre 09:21**

Well, they don't happen very often these days, because they both moved out of home, but in fact, both of them were here last night for dinner, so that was interesting. They both have partners. They both have other homes, so our kind of what's called an empty nester. Now, my wife has a degree in psychology, and I have this degree in law, and both the kids went off and did things that were not law. One went off and did communications. One went off and did psychology, and then a couple of years later, they came back and said, Dad, think we want to be lawyers. So, I was a bit surprised, and I was very pleased. But yes, there's something about the thinking process of law, which I think must have come through my genes.

**Kassie Ripsam 10:01**

Uh, so you've also been a member of the High Council since two that since 2013 what is the High Council and what are your responsibilities?

**Rick Sarre 10:12**

It's called the Standing High Council, which makes for a few jokes around our family, like my wife would say, Honey. Are you going to watch a Zion of the standing high council, or do you want to sit down? That's a kind of Standing High Council. Is a group of well 12 people, until about 25 years ago, it was all men, and they're all high priests in the church who then provided in a lay ministry style. Other words, you really are not an employee of the church, but the First Presidency uses the standing high council as a kind of a sounding board, so they want to talk about some things that might be changing politically or changing theologically. They were sounded out with the Standing High Council. We meet something like four times a year. We used to meet in Independence. Then, of course, Zoom made that a lot easier. And typically, we meet during conference as well. I'm stepping off the Standing High Council is coming in conference in 2025 so it'll be 12 or 13 years tint, which I think is about right, and I'll be replaced by, I think there are three people stepping off and three people stepping in. So, it revolves, but essentially it provides a good background for the First Presidency to run ideas past and to get some feedback.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 11:27**

Oh, so basically, very much of the council, part of a council, yeah,

**Rick Sarre 11:36**

We provide, we provide Council as in C, O, U, N, S, E, L, by being a council, C, O, U, N, C, I, L, but it's not the same as the apostles. The 12 Apostles are all employees. The 12 of us in the Standing High Council are not employees, but we have to be high priests. That's part of the requirement, and it used to be, I should say, going back some 30 years, the Standing High Council used to come up with kind of dictates, a statement on women in the priesthood, a statement on homosexuality, a statement on baptism. And now the standing high council doesn't do that anymore. We simply provide background information and a talking point for the First Presidency.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 12:19**

like I read one of those the other day. It was, it was actually on abortion, but I know I'm not going to get in that right now. So, you study law, amongst other things, in school. How has that influenced your ministry?

**Rick Sarre 12:37**

I love that question, because there is an element of the way in which lawyers think, which I think does enhance, if not so much personal ministry, certainly administrative ministry. I remember being at law school. It's a four year program here, and halfway through my third year, I remember walking out of a class, walking back to my office or back to my desk, and thinking, I now know what I'm doing. I can now think like a lawyer. And thinking like a lawyer is pretty useful in terms of church ministry. And so far, you weigh things up. You look at things on one hand. On the other hand, you look at the personal aspects of it, you look at the administrative aspects of it, you look at the cost aspects of it. And then you kind of reach out with an idea to test the waters. And every now and again, you need to go to a judge. Of course, in the law, you go to a judge who's actually a judge. In the church, you tend to go to a mission center council or a World Conference to try and get some sense of whether or not what you've come up with is going to be put into law. The legal aspect of what I do in the church, I think is a valuable aspect in bringing about looking at the ways in which things are done, how best they're done, how they appeal to as many people as possible, and how they can operate effectively going forward. So, I rather like the idea of being a lawyer within the church. Yes.

**Kassie Ripsam 13:59**

We read that you attended Graceland university or college at that time. What was your Graceland experience like?

**Rick Sarre 14:06**

I loved Graceland. I didn't finish a degree there. I was only there for one year because I was between law school and going to grade school in Canada. But Graceland College, as it was then, was a turning point in my life, it gave me a magnificent set of friends whom I still keep in touch with, and was one of the high points of my spiritual life as well.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 14:28**

You mentioned that Graceland was a high point in your spiritual life. Could you elaborate on that for us a little bit?

**Rick Sarre 14:38**

Well, I can assure you that back in the 1970s Graceland had a very strong connection with the church. It still has a connection with the church. But back in my days, there were 1200 students in campus, and 85% of them were affiliated with the church. Now there's about two thirds of that number, and only about maybe 15 or 20% of. Students are actually affiliated with the church, so there's a very strong church presence. And we had strong leadership. Everett Graffeo, at the time, was the campus minister. That's before we went on to become an apostle and then later presiding evangelist. And it was just just

a terrific environment. We had a chaplain in our house. We had lots of opportunities to be involved in spiritual activities. I really enjoyed it.

**Kassie Ripsam 15:24**

So um, what made you want to study criminology and how have that field in law shaped who you are?

**Rick Sarre 15:33**

Well, in fact, I did criminology as an undergraduate subject in law school, and then I went to Graceland, did some sociology as a as a senior, that's when I was 22 years old, and then I went on to grad school in Canada, where I had a scholarship to study a master's in criminology. It was just something I thought I had an interest in. I had been a criminal and wanted to be a criminal lawyer, and I thought I could also do some studies in policing, which I've continued to do. I just like the idea of making sure that our societies are safe and that the human condition can be so shaped that we don't have to resolve issues non peacefully. So, I suppose being at a Peace Church, the idea was there that criminology was one way, if we could reduce crime, that we can become a far more peaceful society.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 16:23**

Yeah, yeah. So, one of your favorite hobbies is writing. What kinds of things do you like to write?

**Rick Sarre 16:35**

Well, funny, you should say that, because I do write a lot. I do a lot of book reviews. I'm president of the Friends of the State Library here, and over the years, I think I've written maybe 100 formal book reviews of books that I've read. But in fact, I did produce my own memoir. In fact, I'll wave the little bookmark here. I did a book called, "Life, Actually." about back in 19, sorry, 2021, where I reflected upon my life in 80,000 words. So, I like, right? I shouldn't say like writing about myself. I like writing about things that have influenced me and influenced other people, about making our society a better place. So that's what I write. I write solid pieces about good things and how we could better our lives by focusing on those good things.

**Kassie Ripsam 17:27**

Writing is an interesting way to process thoughts.

**Rick Sarre 17:31**

Yeah. Look, I think when you might think in a far better position to know what it is you are thinking about, you have committed yourself to putting something in writing, then you've thought about it, and it has to be logical. Yes, I like that.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 17:48**

So, resolution G-12 is asking the church to support policies that will help reduce gun violence with special interest in Non Proliferation or reducing spread. Is that correct?

**Rick Sarre 18:01**

No, that's a good summary. And in fact, I want to make it abundantly clear that this resolution is designed to get members of the church to essentially try and reduce the number of firearms in

communities. It's just a very sad thing that across many nations, as people get fearful, they tend to go out and buy more firearms, and I'm suggesting reduction in supply of firearms is one of the best ways of reducing gun violence.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 18:31**

Yeah, yeah.

**Kassie Ripsam 18:32**

I, I definitely agree with that. Honestly, fear is the reason for violence, and violence creates fear, which is a very cruel, very cruel circle there.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 18:48**

So, you wrote in your resolution that in Australia, there are policies in place to regulate and monitor the availability of firearms. Would you please say more about those policies?

**Rick Sarre 18:58**

Well, let me tell you something about the world first, and then come back to Australia again. It looks on its face that when I take this G-12 to conference, that somehow or other, I'm being critical of the United States, particularly, not withstanding that we're a world church. But yes, I am being critical of the United States. Four of the five major gun manufacturers in the world are American countries, are American companies. And I should also mention two other quick facts, that for every 100 Americans, we're talking about North not North Americans, but United States citizens, for every 100 of those, there are 120 guns. Now that is twice the number of the next in line across the world. The next in line is Yemen with 50 and Australia at 17. Let me just repeat that. For every 100 Americans, there are 120 guns. So, we're talking more than 400 million guns. Is in Australia, for every 100 Australians, there are 17 guns. So, there's a massive differential in that regard. Another quick one for you, which I put in the background statement with the resolution, is that the United States represents about 5% of the world's population, but has 40% of privately owned guns in the world. So, 5% of the population of the world, 40% of privately owned firearms are in the United States. So, anyone who says that, I'm kind of picking on the United States, I think the answer is yes, and I'm saying you can do it a different way. I'm a bit sad about that, because in some respects, I think America has now gone beyond the point of no return, hence my addressing this particular issue to try and get Americans, particularly, to put guns to one side. But in Australia, we have every one of our guns is registered, and every person who owns a gun has to be licensed. It is a strong, regular regulatory atmosphere, and to that extent, I think we have about, I would be guessing, probably 1000 Australians per year die as a result of guns, probably principally by suicide. In the United States in 2022, 48,000, people died by gunshot wound. Now, half of those were suicides, but that's a lot of people. That's almost as many as the number of American servicemen who lost their lives in Vietnam. So we're talking here about a massive loss of life as a result of firearms. And part of what I'm trying to do here in this resolution is to address that issue.

**Kassie Ripsam 21:40**

You sort of answered one of the questions that I was going to ask later. I was going to ask, if you think that mandating licenses would slow the would slow the the gun violence. [Pause] Can you hear me?



**Rick Sarre** 22:09

I can now. It says your bandwidth, it's low, but I can hear you now where you go.

**Kassie Ripsam** 22:16

So I was going to ask latter, but since you already touched on it, I was I might as well ask, do you think that mandating licenses would slow gun violence in in most nations [...]?

**Speaker 1** 22:35

Yeah, I'm certainly making the point that in Australia, it has had the effect of keeping our guns well regulated and in the hands of those people who need them for for example, farming or whatever. We don't need guns by way of trying to protect ourselves from others, and to the extent that a person who has a gun in Australia has to show a bona fide need for that gun and be licensed and have all of his or her guns registered. It has the effect of slowing down that proliferation of guns private hands, and to the extent that that is probably now, I would say impossible in United States, I'm not going to say that we should be calling for all nations to regulate guns to the extent that if it's not possible, it's just simply not going to happen. I'm simply in this resolution, trying to make the point again that Christians should be kind of having at the forefront of their mind that guns do not provide peaceful societies. If anything, they make societies far more violent.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 23:45

Do you think that trying to get a gun license would be similar in length and safety to getting a driver's license?

**Rick Sarre** 23:53

The question is, should it be kind of an exercise in the same way that one person needs to get a license to drive a vehicle, in the same way that a vehicle can be very dangerous if used the wrong hands. I think the analogy is correct. A gun can be very dangerous if used for all the wrong purposes. And so if a person is to be licensed in Australia, they need to go through a mandatory training in the safe use of that firearm, all firearms at home, and typically that's only in farmers hands. Or if you're a law enforcement officer, you'll have to have your firearm kept away from the ammunition, etc. So, those sorts of regulatory requirements are here in Australia, and it has kept Australia very much as a gun free society.

**Kassie Ripsam** 24:42

So, how would you envision the church advocating against gun violence, and how would we go about doing that in our communities?

**Rick Sarre** 24:52

It's designed to be a resolution for the entire church. And as you know, the church has a presence in probably 30 or 40 countries. So, the idea would be that we would be advocating a greater stewardship of firearm ownership, and to the extent that nations are looking to regulate and license firearm owners and firearms the church is making a statement here in applauding that particular position. Now, having said that, as I said before, the nation that is most at fault in relation to, if I can use that term, in relation to firearms, is the nation that is actually hosting the World Conference in a, in a, in a very large manner,

as I said, 120 firearms per every 100 American. And the next is, is Yemen at 50. The next after that is Serbia at 30, and you got to go a long way down to Australia at 17. So, even though I'm making a statement, or the resolution is trying to make a statement that all nations where the church is positioned should be making this a point of clarity and a point of concern. The major country that needs to be addressing this particular issue is the United States.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 26:14**

So, um, so, how would a nation like America, whose laws or rights allow for gun ownership peacefully in united ways, accept such stipulations.

**Rick Sarre 26:32**

Well, that's right. It's a change of mindset. And I the mindset I want to change is the one that says we're far safer to have a firearm by the front door in case someone's going to come and ransack our house, but not having a firearm, and all the evidence is contrary to that. All the evidence says that if you've got a firearm in your home, your chance of having a death in that home by mistake or by an angry argument that turns fatal, or by a child picking up a firearm and thinking it's, it's quite safe. In those circumstances, you're far less safe having a firearm in your possession than not having a firearm. And so I'm trying to suggest that a stewardship of firearm ownership is a far better way to bring about a more peaceful society than suggesting we're all going to be like the sheriffs of old, running through the frontier, bringing about peace in societies. It just doesn't work that way. In fact, it's a far greater threat, particularly for young women at the hands of violent husbands. Rather than using their fists, the husband picks up a firearm and shoots his wife or partner, or indeed, the partner, fearing being beaten up by the husband, picks up the firearm and shoots him. As I said, we have 48,000 people a year dying by gunshot in the United States. That's something that really should be making our heads shake and think about some ways of reducing that.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 27:59**

The resolution also asks the church to provide study materials for congregations. What do you hope that'll look like?

**Rick Sarre 28:08**

Well, that's right, the church has as part of this resolution as a kind of an action item, a question that we put in the resolution was okay. It's one thing to talk about this. It's something else to actually have some facts and figures in front of us. So, the idea would be that, if the resolution passes, the Peace and Justice Team through me would provide something fairly straightforward in relation to what we think people should know about the dangers of firearms. And one of the great dilemmas of this is that every time there's a school shooting or a mass shooting the United States, and they seem to be happening on a weekly basis, people go out and buy firearms. Why do they go out and buy firearms? Because they think there's going to be some gun control. So it simply proliferates the problem, and that sort of mindset needs to be changed. I believe if we have some materials presented for the church, we can bring about that change.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 29:04**

So how would you make those study materials, like available to everybody?

**Rick Sarre 29:10**

We provide something, put them on a website. That's a lovely thing about websites these days. You provide information for the church very, very quickly. That's what we would do. I'd provide some very useful tools to have people really understand how the mindset of thinking you are safe with a firearm needs to be challenged.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 29:29**

Yeah, yeah.

**Kassie Ripsam 29:32**

So, um, how would you say that? Um, your life experience in law, criminology and other similar things has affected the writing of this resolution.

**Rick Sarre 29:48**

Back in 1996 there was a mass shooting in Australia. It was completely out of the blue and never happened here on the same scale before, where a young man in Tasmania took a number of semi-automatic firearms to the idyllic part of Tasmania, and he started shooting people. And he shot 35 people dead. One of the church members was actually in the cafe where he started that. In fact, she was not hit, but the person next to her bled all over her so when she lay on the floor, he thought she was dead. That's how she survived that particular issue. So that actually spurred me on to bring the resolution to the church in 2000 which first called upon the church to call for a stewardship of firearm ownership as world church resolution 1270 and I have just always, at that point, realized that as a result of the way in which the government of Australia responded to that, which was to destroy hundreds of 1000s of semi-automatic pump action shotgun and automatic firearms that were available, it's now impossible to own a semi-automatic in Australia or a pump action shotgun in Australia. They've now been completely banned, and that was a turning point in Australia's gun control process. We then licensed everyone. We then registered every firearm, and put in place since 1997 this massive control of firearms, and the way in which Australia has now been virtually, well actually, completely mass shooting free in that last 30 years or so has been testament to the fact that that particular buyback scheme, which cost us hundreds of millions of dollars, I should say, because every person who handed a gun in got some money for that particular gun. But we got massive photographs of these guns being put into great big melting melting pots and destroying a lot of them. As you can see, that was something Australia figured it had to do, and it broke the back of the industry. It's hard to believe that would ever happen in the United States, but that's a question for another day.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 31:53**

So you mentioned resolution 1270 and you also cited it in your resolution. How did that resolution influence this one? And would you please paraphrase it?

**Rick Sarre 32:07**

Yeah, 1270 is very short. And the reason for this coming along, the new resolution coming along 25 years later, is because I don't think it was strong enough. So, it's influenced the new resolution by kind

of upping the requirement for the church to make a statement against firearms as part of its peace initiatives. This is what 1270 said in the year 2000. Resolved, that the church encourages its members a thoughtful and reflective stewardship regarding the use of firearms for professional or for sports purposes. And be it resolved the church encourages its membership to renounce the personal use of firearms for all other purposes, as a response to the call to recognize the worth of all persons. So there it is, 1270. It's pretty strong statement that we seemed to think that nothing really had had happened. And part of this resolution was to remind the church that 1270 actually existed, there'd be a lot of people at the church who weren't born back in 2000 who I think probably didn't know the existence of that. So, hence, when our new resolution reaffirms its commitment and then talks a bit about encouraging nations to go about reducing actively the number of firearms in the community was the second stage of that particular initiative, which began back in 2000.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 33:29**

So, it's kind of like I was talking like I was saying to Cassie, it was like, kind of like if a couple of kids are arguing about a toy, you know, just kind of removing the toy from the equation, kind of.

**Rick Sarre 33:51**

Yes. And if they are arguing, take away anything that could hurt each other if the argument gets a bit more physical,

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 33:57**

Yeah, yeah. So would you mind if we read the closing paragraph in your resolution? Ask a couple follow-up questions.

**Rick Sarre 34:10**

Yes, what I what I would want you to do, if you wouldn't mind to read the whole resolution, because I think the last one is simply about the study materials, but I think the nub of it is in two.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 34:23**

Oh, I mean the last paragraph of the support statement.

**Rick Sarre 34:27**

Oh, the support statement, yes, read away. That's perfect.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 34:32**

So, this resolution does not seek to ban firearms, nor is it advocating that people be barred from owning a firearm. Rather, it advocates for the freedom and security for people to go about their daily lives without the fear of becoming a victim of gun violence that is best facilitated by people calling for limits on gun proliferation and the promotion of evidence based policies of responsible gun ownership, storage and use. Is by these means that gun violence will be reduced. It this aim is a is in accordance with two of our enduring principles, worth of all persons and pursuit of peace or Shalom. I love that paragraph, personally.

**Rick Sarre 35:17**

Oh, that's very sweet. Thank you very much. The team did labor over those words carefully, and I think that's does that is the nub of what we're trying to do.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 35:28**

So what would you say to someone who opposes this resolution because their lives were saved by civilian with, with a gun?

**Rick Sarre 35:40**

I'm glad you raised that too, because that issue will always come up in a debate such as this, and the best way for me to respond to that is to say this, that one anecdote, albeit a good outcome, should not be the underpinning of a resolution, to suggest that guidance will always be the best savior in those circumstances. Let me give you an analogy. It's one that I've used before, and I think it's very effective. We have now had some 40 years or so of mandatory seat belt wearing. I don't know what the situation is across the United States, but certainly in Australia, it's now mandatory for every person in a car to wear a seat belt that has saved over the years around the world, hundreds, if not millions of lives over the last 40 years by people having the ability not to be flung into a sharp object in a car during an accident. So, seat belts save lives. There's absolutely no doubt about that at all. But I once heard about a person who was driving his truck without wearing a seat belt, and he had an accident, not a major accident, the result of which was the door flung open and he fell out of the car or the truck. He looked back at that point, the truck burst into flames, and he said, you know, if I'd been wearing a seat belt, I would still be in that truck, and I'd now be burned to death. Therefore, I'm not ever going to wear a seat belt, and I'm going to tell people not to wear a seat belt. Now, the reason I use that is because it's exactly the same thing that happened in that particular illustration you just gave. It is completely and utterly silly. If I can use that word to suggest that one person whose life has been saved as a result of not wearing a seat belt means there should be no seat belts being worn, or no mandatory seat belts being worn, a policy that has saved hundreds, if not millions, hundreds of 1000s, if not millions, of lives over the last 40 years. The story is the same with a gun. It's nice to think, yes, that particular person's life has been saved by having the availability for citizen nearby with a gun. But for every one of those anecdotes, there'll be hundreds of 1000s of other stories where people's lives have been destroyed by the presence of a gun, and I particularly think of women in violent situations at home with the guns available, the husband or the partner has been very upset about something, he threatens with the gun and it goes off and kills her. I would be far more likely to say I'd rather have a policy of gun control than a policy that allows a person, on the basis of one anecdote, to think he can hang onto that gun in the home and save someone's life.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam 38:29**

I, I agree with that, and personally, it would be really cool to know it would be a lot, sorry, It would be a lot better to know that the person who is saving my life, probably, if he has a license, knows how to use it, if it were to happen again.

**Rick Sarre 38:48**

Well, there's always the question about, How do you know whether the person walking down the street is the good guy with the gun or the bad guy with the gun? There was a comedy thing on the television here some years ago where three or four people burst into a bar and they all had a gun, and everyone claimed they were the good guy. They weren't sure who to shoot. That's the situation. The people don't wear shirts that say good guy and bad guy. So, the idea of actually having a good guy with a gun is just a fallacy.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 39:18

Yeah, I watched a video about this girl who was having panic attacks at school because they wouldn't allow her to have her phone, because she had this experience where they thought that there was an active shooter on campus, and all the kids around her were trying to get her to text her mom about these things that they just wanted to say to their parents, and now she can't be away from her phone because she has to be able to contact her mother, so she regularly has panic attacks because they want her to not have her phone in school. How would you as a minister comfort someone who is having these panic attacks without signing like you're pressing an agenda?

**Rick Sarre** 40:06

Yeah, well, as a minister of the church, or indeed as a human being, I would direct that person to get some solid psychological assistance as a as an issue about panic attacks. But I come back to the question, which I think underpins your question, and that is, how best do we reduce school shootings? Is it to do, as some commentator, idiotic commentator, I should say, some years ago, said, Well, it would just give all teachers a firearm. You can imagine how a disaster that would be. Or, or indeed, just have active shooter trials, lockdowns, and have the children practice getting under desks, etc, and throwing desks at the active shooter, or go to the heart of the problem and make sure that there are fewer firearms available on the hands of people who shouldn't have them. And indeed, then have a licensing exercise that has the effect of making sure that a person who does have a firearm for a legitimate purpose has gone through all the training, etc, and doesn't have a mental illness, for example. So, the idea is not so much to try and prevent the active shooter from getting away with shooting people by having lockdown type exercises, but rather get to the heart of the problem, which is the massive over supply of firearms in society for the first place.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 41:29

Well, I mean, like, how would you comfort a person who has these attacks, these panics?

**Rick Sarre** 41:40

That's a matter really, for a professional I don't think ministers are best equipped to ensure that people who have panic attacks are being addressed. I can assure you, I know of two families, two families who have moved back to Australia from the United States because their children in their elementary school years were feeling unsafe about going to school. Now that is a lament which we should be taking very, very seriously. To think that anyone has an attack about or a panic attack about going to school because of a mass shooting, one would have thought that particular issue should be addressed and not be addressed by politicians and commentators who say, Well, the best way of getting rid of that

particular fear is by arming teachers, or arming more people, or indeed allowing students over 18 to take a firearm to school. The proliferation of firearms is the problem that should be addressed, not the idea of trying to put kids under desks so that when an active shooter comes along, they all feel safe, but the panic attack issue is real. It's no question about that.

**Kassie Ripsam** 42:48

So thank you for answering our questions before you go, we have one last question for you. If you could have coffee or tea with anyone alive or dead, who would it be, and what would you ask them?

**Rick Sarre** 43:03

I was giving some thought to this. There's a lot of people I'd like to talk to, but I really would like to talk to the late Martin Luther King to ask about what was firing up his activism. And I don't think there's any doubt at all that he knew that he'd be a martyr, but he decided that it was important for him to continue his activism and continued to espouse the things that he valued. And I'd like to hear a bit more about his motivation in doing that, how much his Christian values assisted with him in relation to that, how much his spiritual practices assisted him in relation to the activism, that would be something I'd really enjoy.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 43:47

I think that would be very, very fun conversation.

**Kassie Ripsam** 43:51

An interesting one too.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 43:56

So we want to thank you for being here and talking to us and answering our questions.

**Rick Sarre** 44:02

My pleasure. Christie and Mary. Ann, I've very much enjoyed talking with you as well.

**Mary Anne Bennett-Ripsam** 44:09

We also want to thank our listeners for being here, and we want to remind everyone to put on their full armor of God and just walk in faith. Bye,

**Kassie Ripsam** 44:20

Bye

**Rick Sarre** 44:21

Bye bye