

Want to change the world?

Try sharing your activism with kids —after all, they're our future.



Children Welcome

by Francesca Mason Boring

Change the world? In the age of television, we see childless yuppie couples, childfree restaurants, no children in meetings, adult events and fundraisers. Are some of the best minds in the collective hope being excluded?

When Nancy Pelosi was sworn in, she did not just break the "marble ceiling" for women, she used the presence of children to remind the country about this crucial element of our society.

Because you're a progressive intelligent person, I'll commit the mortal sin of journalism, and life in general: I'll make an assumption. I'll assume that you're well informed and at some level an activist. (You took action and picked up *the People's Press*, and took further action by actually reading the contents).

Kids and Community

So, rather than inform, I'll make suggestions. How do we include children? How can we encourage a child to take political action, both now and in the future?

If you see a child, know a child, or have even heard of the little beings, there *is something* you can do to ensure that progressive changes and hope have a sustainable voice:

1. Take a child to an action, rally or community meeting. Take a child in your neighborhood, family or circle to a political action event.

2. Encourage schools to accept attendance at political events, perhaps require it, as homework. Support a child in reporting on a political event you attend.

3. Encourage your child to read and discuss progressive material while visiting friends or family in rest homes. Free thinkers are not a new invention. Some of our predecessors are sitting in convalescent care, waiting for a rebellious or reasonable thought or discussion.

4. Buy a child a bike. It doesn't matter if you know the child. Bikes cost money. You want to protect the environment. Actually support one child in developing the mindset that cycling is a transportation option.

5. Have you ever had a discussion with a child about corporate vs. independent markets? Do so. And then have another, and another, and another.

6. Where do you shop and why? Do your children know why? Set the example, and then share your reasoning.

7. Give a child something *used* as a gift. You must have some treasured book, jewelry, musical instrument or keepsake that's just collecting dust. Explain that life does not have to be based on a throwaway economy.

8. Entertain a child. Have you invited a child for tea and talk? Take a child to an independent theatre production. (Think locally: For example, have your children, grandchildren or neighborhood children seen *The Traveling Bohemians!*, Shasta County's independent, progressive theater collective?)

9. Intentionally discuss political, environmental and ethical issues with a child; any child. Solicit youth for solutions.

10. Give a child a book. Literacy is at a premium; we have a growing percentage of children

and adults who are illiterate.

11. What about single parents? We are community. The child of the single mom will be taking care of you in your later years. Who do you think will be working in the rest home? Nurture your future rest-home worker well.

12. Some single parents are still children themselves. Help those children help their children.

13. If you aren't adept at personal interaction with children, support an organization that supports the healthy development of children.

14. Garden with a child. Nurture a budding relationship with the earth. Give a child a package of garden seeds; something that grows easily. Buy a child a tomato plant and set the gardening experience up for success. When springtime comes, cut bouquets of flowers from your yard for the children in your life.

At the Ideal Table

Address your fear. In this litigation-crazy era, many are afraid to approach a child in any way. Certainly, children need to be protected. But, within the context of a safe environment and experience, we need to reach out.

You may support a progressive agenda. You may support women's rights, gay rights, environmental protection, free thinking, theatre and art. You may be focused on changing the world. Are you sharing that message with the children? Young people are often much more creative than adults. At the ideal table, where everyone is welcome and all ideas are respected, can't we find a chair for a child? Pass this newspaper on to a young parent.



Bring Our Troops Home Now!

by Susan Bower

I was one of the people assembled at the Weaverville bandstand calling our nation's leaders to a different and life affirming solution for the Iraq quagmire, which is sinking America financially and morally. Contrary to our critics, we were not driven there by hatred for America. I knew clearly whom I was following and who had called me there: the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. All of what I know about him directs me to live to make peace, not war.

I and millions of other people worldwide consider him the best person to have ever lived. We even say he is also divine. He was God coming to Earth to show us how the almighty God of love and goodness would live life as a human being. Jesus said that everything he lived and taught boiled down to two things: to love God and to love other people, even as much as oneself. How can killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, including many children, be loving or be done in his name? He even fulfilled the Ten Commandments, God's earlier directives about how to live one's life. Even though powerful people were trying to murder him and eventually did torture him to death, he courageously named their evil behavior, but did not try to kill them. He taught that *Thou Shall Not Kill* should be so much a part of us that we don't even think about killing others. Jesus emphasized that the sword should be used no more, and that using it

begets more death, rather than life. He even urged us to love our enemies, and to pray for them. While being led to his death Jesus healed one of his captors, and while being murdered, prayed for God to forgive them.

Indeed Jesus told us not to war against flesh and blood. However, he clearly called us to fight, through right choices, the evil in our own hearts, and through prayer and repentance, to pray to God to eliminate the evil (in spiritual realms) that is working to destroy people and all life on Earth. Nonetheless, America has more tools for killing people than all other nations combined. America sells more of these deadly weapons to the world than any other country, often to both sides in a conflict. These armaments include the most weapons of mass destruction that any country in the history of the world has had. Yet America killed thousands of Iraqis because we erroneously thought they might have *a few* such weapons. The Pentagon uses more of our national budget than all other federal agencies (such as education and health), combined. We need to repent, and instead spend this money for *life*.

Americans also need to repent of supporting tyrants who abuse their people, such a Saddam Hussein, to whom in the past we sent money and weapons, even a dozen strains of biological weapons to fight Iran. America also supported the Taliban when they were fighting against the Russians, and who were as horrible to their women then, as they are now. Hopefully this Congress will close the School of the Americas where the C.I.A. trains tyrants and torturers. These measures will

do much to bring peace.

Indeed many Christians are heeding Christ's call to be "peacemakers" and thereby "children of God". Within the Christian Church, in some denominations a tradition over the centuries has emerged that believes some war, however, is justified, but only under very stringent principles of cause and conduct. President Bush belonged to one of these traditions, the Methodists, a denomination of 9 million members. However, while building up to the Iraq war, the Methodists officially wrote to him pointing out that this war does not fit even one criterion of their Seven Just War Principles, and therefore he should not go ahead with his war plans, especially in the name of Christ. Thirty six Protestant and Orthodox denominations of the National Council of Churches, the Pope, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the World Council of Churches and others continue to speak out against war as a deadly, destructive, deceptive and futile way of trying to solve international disputes.

We need to disengage wisely, lest our intervention takes even more lives, and negatively affects the world's economy. There are several good plans to bring our troops home that do not rely on violent force. These strategies are already drawn-up by religious leaders and by politicians to help bring stability to that region. They are very worthy of consideration now.

Let us begin today. God help us!