

## Change Our Thinking, Change Our World

by Suzy Coffee

Sometimes it's a good thing to step back and take a good look at our world from a distance. It's a whole different view, where details diminish and big things stand out.

When I step back to gain an "out of the forest" perspective, it looks to me like humanity in the 21st century has grown into the absolute worst of itself. We are, after all, facing a real end to life on earth; an environmental illness, self inflicted. But more than that, through centuries of time the human race has created an ever increasingly violent, war plagued, painful, inhumane and truly sad world, even in the midst of its indigenous plenty.

Yet nothing is all black or white, and through time humanity has also committed acts of unspeakable beauty, driven and inspired by the highest expression of human love, and these acts have shaped our world and defined our humanity. Today these same acts of human beauty are being perpetrated by many "ordinary" unknown people in the face of the world's chaos and suffering. But what we see in the media, especially in free speech media, is a humanity that appears to have gone utterly mad.

People like you and I want to stop the insanity. We *burn* to quit the endless war making

and senseless grievous killing, to cease the thoughtless abuse of the planet, to bring an end to the corporate injustice in which this 21st century is steeped.

Who could have known how corporations would come to be so inordinately powerful, how these non-human entities would ultimately invade the American nation, buying their way into government, changing laws to suit their purposes, making the nation their own private property?

When you think of it though, it's not really humanity as a race that is acting out its worst possible self, it's not human beings in general that have gone completely daft. It is the modern phantom corporate man that is utterly deranged. It's this man made, non person/person who has removed itself from its true human roots and heart, and dwells only in its mind of business, growth, profits and power. The corporate man is not a natural part of the human race, he's invented, man made, yet today he rules with almost unlimited power and impunity. Some of the world's most despicable, unspeakable crimes against humanity and the planet are being committed in the interest of the corporation and its vampire-like need for money, life and power.

I think the way out of this mess for the masses of non corporate people like you and I is to concentrate on our own genuine humanity, individually and collectively; the highest expression of it.

The challenge for survival facing Planet Earth today is a human challenge that we must

deal with, or perish. We have clearly seen humanity's ugly face of greed, hate and aggression. Paradoxically, it is our very human capacity to seek out, know, and express the intangibles like truth and beauty that I believe holds the promise of our rescue and recovery. This is not an attempt to reach some groovy bubble state of denial by focusing only on the good and the beautiful. I believe that every one of us is obligated to do what we can to make our world better, *today*. To avoid this responsibility is as wrong and as wicked as war or corporate corruption, or the thoughtless misuse of the planet.

We still must resist with all our strength the aggressive lawless acts of the war making, earth killing, people oppressing corporate man, but we can also begin to seriously rethink humanity's place in the world, in the whole scheme of life, beginning with our relationship to the planet, and to each other, focusing on the fundamental human values of peace, home, security, health and good work, and how they eternally connect us as one race.

Truth and beauty are the inversion of the lies and ugliness which are the result of living in an age when corporations rule the world, and therefore, they are the medicine. Truth: fundamental human values like justice and peace and the understanding of the ultimate connection of all living things. Beauty being the expression of these things. Surely it is this innate human goodness that can ultimately save us; beginning with our very own, where we live right now, today.

## The Search For Truth and Beauty in Politics

by Joe Neil

We are easily moved to engage in noble causes and lofty passions by the action or words of political leaders. FDR's fitting and timely "Day of Infamy" speech after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor or JFK's inaugural address, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country," were stirring moments in our history, truth and beauty in the essence of both. But if we look at how WW II ended with Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the fire bombing of Dresden and how JFK got us into Viet Nam and authorized the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, the speeches lose their luster. I would ask; "Does that diminish the essence of truth and beauty in the statements by these two men? I would say that strictly speaking it does, but more importantly it shows how difficult it is to take these two concepts and apply them, or search for them, in our political/cultural history.

Right now I feel America is in the throes of a national malaise, a kind of unilateral depression. I keep looking for some kind of morality, some vestige of truth, some glimmer of beauty in all the horror. I watch CNN for most of the current news and read the NY Times for opinion, hoping for some kind of brightness. There are valid and truthful events and critiques from time to time, but no sign of truth or beauty.

The only vision that comes to mind is a

scene a couple of years ago. CNN showed a shot of a grieving, middle-aged, California mother standing beside a dusty road in Crawford, Texas. She was there asking our vacationing president, who was in his home just down the road, for an audience as to why her son Casey had to die in Iraq. She got no audience and the Administration later referred to her and others like her as traitors...

Cindy Shehan, for that moment in time, truth and beauty on CNN!

## New Humanist Peace Society

Redding has a new Fellowship called the Humanist Peace Society. The principles are simple. We believe in working to make the world a better place for everyone. This quote by Tom Paine explains our beliefs completely, "The world is my country, all mankind is my brethren, and to do good is my religion."

Shelly Godfroy, Robert Mitchell and I decided, after being active in the peace movement for awhile and volunteering at the Redding Unitarian Universalist Peace and Justice Center, that we would like to start this group. The three of us, along with Joan Manning and Joanna Mooney, will serve on the Board of Directors.

Gypsy Perry, a fourth grade teacher and Elisabeth Steadman, a wonderfully knowledgeable lady in our group, are working on curriculum for classes to teach young children to be "Peacemakers". We believe the way to achieve a culture of peace is to begin with the children.

We are attempting to establish peace clubs

in the high schools. Nicky Perry, Gypsy's daughter, is a high school student and is speaking to students and faculty about starting a peace club in her high school. Nicky is also taking our Informed Enlistment packet to school. This packet explains the details about enlisting in the military that recruiters usually don't mention. We need high school educators or students to help us with the high school projects. Anyone who is interested please contact us.

Our meetings will be at the Redding Library in the Community Room on the second and fourth Sunday of every month.

One hundred and three people attended our first meeting on December 9. The speaker was an inspiring young man named Jeff Dotson. He showed a video demonstrating his homemade biodiesel processor. Emphasizing the environmental and socioeconomic impact of this fuel, Jeff stressed making wise decisions when choosing a fuel source.

Our members have many positive ideas and plans for the group. We hope you will join us.

For more information call 410-8796  
or go to [www.humanistpeacesociety.org](http://www.humanistpeacesociety.org)

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