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In a dark time the eye begins to see.
- Theodore Roethke

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THE FUTURES FOUNDATION

by Rob Sawyer

Happy New Year! Yeah. . . For who? Certainly not the disillusioned. Nothing has changed for the hungry, homeless, and helpless. Our children's futures hold less promise this year than ever before, but we do not care enough as a whole to leave them a legacy they can live with. We pride ourselves with being human, and act in a manner that makes even the most vicious animals seem kind by comparison. We have taken some steps in the right direction, but overall, we may as well be walking backwards.

The human rights organization, Amnesty International, reported in 1984 that "more than a third of the world's governments have used or tolerated torture or ill-treatment of prisoners in the 1980s." Governments can only abuse their ability to govern if the people they govern allow them to do so. Amnesty International has attempted to expose and stop the use of torture, with much success. Still, most of us continue to remain ignorant of this sad fact.

The Global 2000 Study conducted during the Carter administration stated that, "If present trends continue, the world in 2000 will be more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically, and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now." That is just thirteen years from now. What will 2025 be like?

Even if a person has time to consider such things when not preoccupied with the trappings of materialism, s/he may feel that nothing can change things. So why try? Think about that the next time you look into a child's eyes.

We do not have to spend our time mesmerized by prime-time television, and worrying about our images. Granted, the task of creat-

ing a better world is not a pleasant one, but are we really so self-centered that we will abandon hope for the future? We cannot continue to lay the foundation of hell and expect to be received in heaven.

The United States had a President who felt compassion, looked toward the future, and cared about people. We thought he was too weak-kneed. So we elected a tough guy who believes you can make and maintain peace by holding guns to people's heads. Ronald Reagan calls himself a Christian, but his policies parallel Social Darwinism.

If the Statue of Liberty could express emotion, her tears might help balance the scales for justice. But anyone who believes there is justice in this or any other country has led a very sheltered life. Ask any sociologist how much justice there is, s/he will likely tell you that there is very little. You do not see kids born with silver spoons in their mouths sitting in the cages we have built for the less fortunate. If history repeats itself, those silver spoons may soon be molded into guillotines. Let's hope not. We should somehow be able to transcend conflict. After all, we are a nation of Christians, aren't we? Hell no! We are a nation of materialists pretending we have ethics. As long as our own niche is secure, we are happy. Collectively, though, we are walking down a corridor that leads straight to a hell of our own making.

Education is the key that can unlock the door to a brighter future. But what have we done with our learning institutions? We have put them into the service of faceless monsters called corporations. Our schools do not foster the free thinking that is characteristic of great

minds. Instead they teach our youth to conform to standards set by men who will utilize their minds for one objective. Profit. Why must people walk down lines drawn by the men in the gray uniforms we call business suits? Because if an individual refuses to conform to their standard, they will make certain s/he starves. Then if s/he steals something to eat, s/he will be locked up with other malcontents who question or defy authority.

If we could somehow take our learning institutions back and allow our children to think in a creative fashion, maybe our kids could begin laying the foundation of a better world for themselves and their own children. It is going to be tough to put reins on corporations now that they are global. But if we do not stop the corporations from becoming the governing forces they are evolving into, then the class divisions will continue to become more and more distinct, until most of us are nothing more than proletarians. Sound familiar?

People know what is right and what is wrong. That is why we possess a conscience. Religion is a product of our collective conscience that tries to more clearly define the boundary between right and wrong. Living in the modern world, it is often difficult to clearly distinguish right from wrong. Still, we should be able to see that all of humanity's killing and brutality has not brought us any closer to utopia. We should also know that our individual selfishness often creates another's sorrows. It may be hard to do what is right, but if we don't, then the consequences will be harder still. For all of us.

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