

# Guest editorial: Are we sabotaging our children's future?

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After the tragic killing of 19 children and two teachers in Uvalde, we must answer the question now: "Are we failing our children?"

Our thoughts and prayers no longer can be our response, nor can we hide behind our silence, fears and apathy while our children are being murdered in their classrooms.

Everyone must begin answering this question directly with positive action, not violence and certainly not just our thoughts and prayers.

Our lack of action leaves our children with little hope for their future. We are setting them up for a future filled with hatred, racism, division, bullying, self-centeredness and domestic terrorism—all of which are destined to increase our mental illness needs exponentially.

Is that who we have become in Texas?

Our children are looking to us for action, not just thoughts and prayers.

## Children now and then

Yolanda Renee King, the 14-year-old granddaughter of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., recently was [interviewed on MSNBC](#) about an [op-ed she wrote for the Washington Post](#). The headline reads: "My generation has to stand up against gun violence."

Reflecting on how "the other generations" have failed them, she wrote: "I

know it is my duty as an American to use the platform given to me by my grandparents' sacrifices to uplift the voices of my peers.”

What she—an African American child in one of our classrooms—was saying is because American adults have failed their children, children are going to have to save themselves.

When I was a child, we had drills at school to prepare us for the atomic bomb from Russia, but now our children are having to practice drills at school to protect them from guns in America. They have to fear assault weapons being used on them by other Americans while in school, shopping, at a concert and even worshipping in their churches.

America, is this who we are, people who don't protect their own children? Is this the world we want for our children? We owe them better.

It's not the world I want. I was a kindergarten teacher for more than 20 years. I am the mother of four children and the grandmother of 13. My heart and my stomach ache; I am sickened and saddened. Enough is enough! I want better for my grandchildren.

## **The value of children**

Some adults are set on getting their way at the expense of everything—seemingly including our democracy and even our children. The majority of Americans want gun control, but our elected officials refuse to do what we elected them to do.

Therefore, our hope today is filled with questions, uncertainty and doubts, which could make our children think that adults don't care. It could also cause them to question whether God is real.

Jesus said: “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around

his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

I was taught in Sunday school Jesus loves *all* the little children. They all are precious in his sight. Are they as precious to us as they are to Jesus?

I’m concerned about the emotional scars on our children, their parents and our teachers who will face anxieties about returning to school next year. Mental health needs increased exponentially with these recent acts of terror.

Can you imagine the depression, anxieties, lack of sleep and even suicidal thoughts that will result from these horrific acts?

## Turning to God

Our children need us to be committed to God and to them, not a powerful person nor a political party.

Such commitment to God looks like this: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

We in America must own up to our sin, acknowledge it, pray about it, seek God’s face and *turn* from our sin that has created the America we live in today. It’s time for us to put godly action with our thoughts and prayers. We need to be healed to make America safe for our children.

God’s way is love, not violence, racism, greed, intimidation or murder. As Americans, we all are promised in our Declaration of Independence the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Yet, some people strive to make this difficult and even impossible for others.

We must not become apathetic, hopeless and desensitized to the voice of

our children's blood crying out to their Creator for justice and change.

## **Pursuing peace**

The Apostle Paul wrote: "Therefore, let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another" (Romans 14:19 NKJV).

In times like these, we must act to pursue righteousness and peace. Everything rises and falls with leadership. We must put leaders in office who will put laws in place to make America better and safer for *all* Americans, including our children.

The answer to the questions raised here must come from caring, mature, God-fearing adults, not children and not a political party.

The church is the salt and light of the world and must take the lead. We must listen to pastors rather than intimidating, bullying, slandering and otherwise seeking to silence them as has been done to some pastors I know.

As for us Texans, we should be saying, "Don't Mess With our Children!" They are our future, and we will fight to leave them a legacy of love, not hate; faith, not fear; unity, not division; hope, not despair.

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