Education Can Do the Job

Youngsters have a faith in education which is at once heartening and frightening. It places squarely upon us—the educators—a responsibility which cannot be avoided. Our youngsters depend on us to help see them through to democracy. This is a challenge—a challenge which must be taken up while it is still offered.

 Obviously the best path to knowledge is education, especially that of young people, for it is only through a thorough and systematic education of the youth of our nation, in ways of appreciation and tolerance of other cultural groups, that we can have a generation of adults prepared to meet the inevitable problems that will arise on the long road to harmonious intercultural relations. Since today's youth are tomorrow's parents and will pass this wisdom to their offspring, we find that once this educational program is started it will practically run itself.

 The problem that next arises is how this program will best be carried out. The home, of course, is undoubtedly the best place for this education since the home is the most influential factor in the shaping of our characters and opinions. Had the present older generation been instructed in ways of racial tolerance we could depend on the home as the source of this education. However, because of old hate, conflict, and prejudice which exist, we find this source inadequate, and must turn to the second great educational factor in a child’s life—the school.

 The negro problem is very old and very complex. It would be impossible to draft a single plan without modification, to solve the problem all over the nation. However, the keynote to such a plan would be education. Education of both white and black races should result in each generation finding the gap between white and black steadily diminishing until at some future date the two races can live together in complete harmony and benefit each other by this association.

 If we want to have a true democracy we firmly believe that first and foremost we must educate the Negro, not just a small group of lucky ones, but all, including the poor farmers, the factory worker, the poor scrub women, and ash pit cleaners. By educating them we mean not just as far as books are concerned, but in the ways of being a good American, and living up to a democratic way of life.

 In their association with the whites, we must do away with their distrust and cynicism. We must make them understand that we want to help them. We need their friendship and cooperation to make a true Democracy. Without educating the Negro, this can not come about.

 I think the Negroes themselves should be better educated so as to look at the problems of race relations intelligently. I also think that the Negroes, who in many cases as much prejudiced as white should realize the importance of their attitudes.

 It is all very well to say that this is a Democracy and people should not be held back because of their color, nationality, or religion, and yet we all know the condition of segregation is becoming serious. Education is the only answer. You have seen many a white child playing happily with a Negro or Jewish child. Why can't they work with them when they are grown-up? Because the idea of self-importance is given to them by their parents. The only possible solution is classes for parents—yours and mine.

 JANIE LEE

 Janie Lee is just like me; We play with dolls and toys; We have a heart and soul; we're free, We feel life's hurts and joys.

 This Janie Lee who is just like me, She has a mom and dad, Her dad's as nice as nice can be, Her mom is sometimes sad.

 You see, she fears for Janie Lee, Who ought to go to school, But she is black as black can be. And what opportunities may she see?