

*Looking at***INTEGRATION**

"The integrated school," this author states, "serves to help develop the child as a member of the community of men. . . . It is the environment where by orderly process the last stage of human growth will be reached, where children, through their experiences in school, will be led to cooperate with their neighbors throughout the world."

IN THE historic, momentous decision of May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States decreed that privileged inequality among the children of the United States must go. This decision was a major victory for the Constitution and for common sense. In it the United States moved toward maturity as a nation, and toward the development of a national character in conformity with its religious beliefs, its democratic ideal and the findings of science.

As Americans, we have shown awareness that if we are to continue to grow strong and to exercise leadership in the world, the cancer of race prejudice must be cut from the tissue of American life. The power of education is being enlisted in this effort. In America we have great faith in education. Even those who say the time is not ripe for many types of social legislation or who oppose direct action to bring about full equality of opportunity, fall back on the refrain, "I believe in education." Education, however, is not the pious

folding of hands, waiting for a favorable change to occur. It is dynamic. It involves taking action to bring about favorable change. This the Supreme Court recognized.

Desegregation is not synonymous with integration. Desegregation establishes the environment in which integration can take place. It is in a sense a physical thing. It is bringing together people who have formerly been kept separate by law and by custom. Legal segregation of the Negro in schools has done more than any other condition to isolate him from the main stream of American life. It has laid the ground work for many economic, political and social injustices. It would have done the same for the Irish, German, Polish or Italian immigrant had he been compelled by law, from the time of his arrival, to attend segregated schools. This would be especially true if skin pigment or some other physical characteristic had enabled us to identify him on sight ever afterwards.

The effect that segregation has had

on the Negro child is becoming increasingly recognizable, not only to social scientists, but to the other intelligent and sensitive elements of our society as well. It is known that rejection of children as indicated in their segregation in special schools for those of "their kind" frustrates a basic personality need and gives rise to unpleasant emotions. It contributes generally to the disorganization of personality. This frequently results in strong anti-social behavior or withdrawal from participation in the many constructive civic and social activities of the community. Many sections of the country are experiencing the direct or indirect repercussions of long periods of enforced segregation in the South.

All communities of the country will be benefited when they are no longer fed by the migration of residents from communities in which segregation and inequality of educational opportunity are the rule.

Real integration will not come until we appreciate fully what segregation has done to the personality and character of all adults. The effect of segregation and discrimination is just as harmful to the character of those who practice it as it is to those upon whom it is practiced. It robs them of a real understanding of the dignity of the individual, of fair play, of the possibility of developing moral and spiritual maturity. Those who bar children from attending school because of color become unable to build sound attitudes toward people of color. Today, this attitude would be directed towards at least two thirds of the world's population.

Integration affects the mind and heart. It is not simply having children of different ethnic groups attend the same schools and sit in the classrooms. It requires changed attitudes and feelings. Certain factors favor efforts towards integration. Human nature is essentially flexible and modifiable. In the past several decades there have been great advances in our understanding of how attitudes are formed and changed. Anthropology, biology, sociology, psychology, psychiatry and many other sciences have added greatly to our knowledge and understanding of people and how they come to behave as they do.

Integration involves the building of new relationships and understandings. It involves the building of self respect and increasing respect for one another as members of one human family. This is not a simple matter but the process is by no means new to teachers in the public schools of America. Have we not from vast immigrant groups built a nation in which people have learned respect for one another and learned to work together toward common ends? Many of our people came as new arrivals, strange in speech, in dress, in customs. They found themselves looked upon with distrust and frequently with hostility. Yet largely through the genius of the public schools, the children of these immigrants have become a part of the main stream and have contributed much to the culture and to the well being of America.

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A Friendly Neighborhood

The community affects the school. A community dedicated to equality of opportunity for all its citizens in the organization of its religious and political institutions, its social agencies and its well-intentioned citizenry is fertile soil in which good schools can grow. The school itself can become the radiating center of willing integration. By example, it can show the way to the community and in time have a salutary effect on housing, economic opportunity and the civic and political well-being of the community. It can be an example for the community and a witness for all people that our great institution, the public schools, is morally sound.

The understanding and intelligent handling of the problem of integration in schools rests squarely on the shoulders of school administrators, teachers and the communities that they serve. Communities that have not yet established for themselves a blueprint that squares with democratic commitments, can place major roadblocks in the path of schools. The loud-mouthed bigot in political life as well as the passive individuals who fail to express positive allegiance to an effort to build good human relations, can deter the development of new understandings and the achievement of new goals. "Democracy can't work," says Eleanor Roosevelt, "unless you have a friendly neighborhood where people of different backgrounds, religions, and races can live together, work together, play together."

You cannot have truly integrated schools in communities where housing discrimination and lack of fair employment opportunities relegate any mi-

nority to the poorer and more underprivileged areas of the city. Schools are greatly handicapped where governmental services, including law enforcement and the courts, recreation and health services are administered with bias.

Segregation in private housing reflects the greatest cultural lag in the large cities of America. In most of our large cities Negroes are discriminated against in the purchase and financing of homes. This is particularly true in sections in which practically all of the new homes have been built. In many cases, only areas in which the most undesirable housing exists have been open to the increasing Negro population. Stemming largely from this condition, in most of our larger communities the number of all-Negro or all-white schools has been on the increase. Racially segregated housing creates racial ghettos. These in turn bring about segregated schools. This is true despite the lack of any evidences of gerrymandering of school districts or a basic ruling that a child may attend any public school in which there is room. It is probably particularly true in communities in which all schools have closed boundaries. Fortunately, however, in many cities the walls of the housing ghetto are crumbling and people of different colors and nationalities are becoming more accustomed to living with one another as neighbors and as fellow human beings.

Teachers Affect Relationships

In the process of integration, the teacher is the adult most strategically placed to help develop wholesome relationships among children. Recent studies in human behavior are such that

teachers need no longer have a feeling of bewilderment and confusion in their efforts to build understanding or to relieve tensions or prejudice. It can be said that social scientists and educators are in the process of developing vaccines for the world's most deadly disease, the cancer of race prejudice. Today many teachers are equipping themselves and are ready to make great progress in this field. Work along this line will move swiftly as communities and school administrators assure teachers that the spirit of the Supreme Court's decision is welcomed in their community. With understanding, vision and courage the teachers will succeed in the most difficult, yet most rewarding of all their tasks, teaching young Americans to live together.

The selection and training of teachers are important elements in effecting integration. Relationships among children are largely conditioned by adult attitudes. Teachers are adults strategically placed to keep these relationships wholesome. Since what an adult learns depends in part on what he has already learned, it seems important that we select as teachers only those who have in their prior living developed the attitudes, habits and ideals that fit them for contact with and training of children. The behavior of teachers will be heavily influenced by their beliefs, attitudes, habits, ideals and motives. The teacher as a responsible adult not only controls the behavior of the child but the conditions of his learning as well, so that the child learns to speak, act and believe as do the teacher and the other adults that are a part of his life.

To date we have found no really

satisfactory way of evaluating the true beliefs, attitudes and prejudices of those who enter the teaching profession. A teacher who suffers from unresolved emotional conflicts, inferiority feelings, racial prejudice, neurotic habits, becomes a source of psychic contagion which adversely affects the building of good relationships among children. A teacher with deep prejudices will consciously or unconsciously pass these on to the children. Children thus become infected with warped values.

Teaching in the newly integrated schools will require considerable re-orientation of curricular offerings. In years past, many teachers have spent considerably more time in helping children understand Eskimo life than in understanding other children in their own community. The child's real understanding of people throughout the world will be conditioned largely by his daily contact with people of many groups. The teacher is the key figure in determining the extent and quality of these contacts. He has many opportunities during the course of each day to leave with children a lasting impression of how he feels toward others. By his attitude he can show values in human personality that are deeper than skin pigmentation. This is an element of fine teaching. This element is inextricably interwoven in every contact of teacher and pupil. Pearl Buck has aptly expressed this relationship, "It is the inexplicable love for the child as a human being . . . there are some of us who love all children, who excuse everything to a child and see in children the hope of life and the reason why life continues to be worthwhile."

Many newspaper editorials and reports since the desegregation decision of May 17, 1954 have indicated that in some parts of America we are more afraid of the shadows than proud of our lamps. The ideas and ideals of those who struggled for American Independence still have a tremendous emotional appeal for all who struggle for liberty. Our problem is to keep vital and meaningful our dedication to the common ideals which create and recreate our vitality as a nation. The treatment of the less fortunate is the best index of the working and strength of a democracy.

America has yet much to say to the world about the moral and spiritual values inherent in our democracy, about its strength, about its durability. Subject peoples throughout the world are studying the American character. Nourishing the roots of democracy consists not so much in a display of military might or giving economic aid to foreign countries, as in the building of democratic citizens at home. Acceptance of equal justice under the law, as interpreted by our highest court, is the foundation of the American way of life with all of its implications for human freedom throughout the world.

The Community of the Mature Person

Early childhood is the best time to start the development of democratic citizenship. It is in the earliest years that the framework of character is established. It is in the earliest years that relationships and understandings with those outside the immediate family are established. As Walt Whitman has expressed it, "These become part of a child for a day, for a year, for the

stretching cycle of years." Only as the public school teaches the child to make his life inclusive, to love his neighbor as himself regardless of whether that neighbor be brown, white or yellow, can it fulfill its commitment either to democracy or to its religious values. When children are educated in schools from which others are not barred because of color, the visual embodiment of the ideas in which we believe tends to become a part of their character. As we bring colored and white children and teachers of the community together and assist them in solving our many common problems, we are lending real vitality to our children of different ethnic groups. It is the focal point in directing the development of national and international understanding.

The integrated school serves to help develop the child as a member of the community of men. We must insist again and again that the personal contacts and relationships experienced by children in school are at least as important as the knowledge gained and the skills developed. These personal contacts, to be enriching, must be broad. They must move out beyond contact with children of "our group." In forming the broadest contacts with other children, we help satisfy a basic personality need and exercise a great influence on behavior, on the development and attitudes, and on the formation of ideals and value concepts.

The destructive influence of negative group thinking is revealed in the defeatist attitude of some teachers where a few Negro children move into the neighborhood. All of our findings in child development have revealed the

danger and fallacy of thinking of human beings in terms of caste groups rather than as individuals. Remove the category, and we find that the Negro child is like other children. He has the same need for belonging, for adequacy, for affection, for self-respect and for the respect of others as does any other child. He has the same need for success and for the thrill of accomplishment. He has the same potentialities and the same desire for the fulfillment of the American dream. Physical well-being, emotional stability and the practice of the democratic principle are as necessary for his wholesome per-

sonality development as for that of any other child. No child can develop as a free human being within the framework of segregation.

Paraphrasing Lewis Mumford, the integrated school can form the basis of the community of the mature person. It is a true sample of the whole world. It has the utmost variety of human beings learning side by side. It is the environment where by orderly process the last stage of human growth will be reached, where children, through their experiences in school, will be led to cooperate with their neighbors throughout the world.

KIMBALL WILES

STEPS *in* INTEGRATION

What practical steps can be taken in school and community to facilitate desegregation, to improve communication and to increase understanding and acceptance of individuals? This author reviews some years of exciting progress and expresses high hope for the future.

IN A WORLD in which five of each six persons are yellow, brown or black, integration in the United States is not only desirable but imperative, if we hope to exert moral or intellectual leadership in the world.

We have come a long way; we have a long way to go. Let us explore the progress in the past thirty-five years through the experiences of one member of the majority group.

In the 1920's I lived on a farm in

southern Ohio and the Negro farm hands ate with us and Negro children went to school and played with us but they "knew their place" and we did not consider them our equals. They were never invited to attend our parties or come to our church.

In the mid-thirties I taught and coached in a Midwestern city. A Negro was the star player on the basketball team I coached but when the team went to a movie to celebrate

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