Youth Views

The Realities—The Challenge

MOST of us during our childhood are shown only the good sides of the world. Yet we have to realize that our country, much less the world, is not perfect. Many of us must stop and really think about the realities we must face in today's society. While they surround us every day, often we do not realize the real problems with which we are faced. The change has come, though. The young people of today are learning what their problems are and how to cope with them.

When we first learn what our problems are, the steps of solving them cannot be far away. Not all of our troubles are at home. They are not just between people. They are widespread, and this makes solving them a greater challenge. We must first, however, look and think about what the realities are that we must encounter. I have thought particularly about a few of these realities.

The Realities

Realizing we are at war in Vietnam and that we must do our part is a hard fact to understand. Many people are not even aware of why we are fighting. We have been told that we are in combat to prevent the spread of communism. Is this true, or is the United States just protecting a source of trade and a weak ally? If young men and women are to be rushed into fighting, they need something to fight for. Are we fighting to help a less fortunate nation, or is this to help defend the integrity of "Old Glory"?

At times we wonder, why did the United States get into this affair in the first place? Why is it not possible for the Vietnamese to solve their own problems? In simple words, it is hard to put faith in our government when we cannot yet see why the United States is involved in problems that we did not need to step into so deeply in the first place. The young people are really not asking for a pullout from Vietnam so they do not have to fight. We want to live in peace and solve problems that we still have here at home.

When we awaken and walk to our windows to look out upon a new day, we are met with hillsides with scars from open-pit mining and naked mountains where trees have...

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been mass-murdered. Are these our purple mountains that so majestically rise over our shining seas? These waters really look more like the Jolly Green Giant's bubble bath from all the wastes and pollutants that our industries pour into them. How could the seas shine anyway? There are not even enough sun's rays finding their way through the smog to get a glimpse of the earth. Where will all this pollution end? We are told that smoking is hazardous to one's health, but maybe we are worse off inhaling automobile exhaust fumes. Not only must new laws against the guilty polluters be adopted, but these new acts must be enforced to the utmost. If we do not put a stop to this abuse of our resources, then we will not only run out of resources and room for our growing population, but also of people.

When the thought that families of the future may only be allowed to be composed of three, and at the most four people, how can we help but be shocked? For many past generations people were urged to enlarge their families for different reasons. Either a country was to become more populous, or maybe a religion did not have enough members. Now some people treat others as if they were traitors for having three or four children. This matter cannot be looked upon as a joke, since eventually there will be—people, people, everywhere, and not a place to live. Something must be done. But what?

People might realize the problem better and take action if they were more informed. Community and church groups, radio and television, state and national agencies can all help disseminate information to people. This help needs especially to reach the people who do not receive it now. If action begins immediately, maybe we can deal with this problem before it becomes more serious. With the increase of people, we must also face up to solving other problems, including our racial differences, before more prejudices grow.

With so much in the news about racial disturbances, I often wonder why they occur. For the majority, I think young people of today are not bothered by integration situations as far as getting along with the members of another race. Those who must be bussed across town probably always will be angry. The students are the ones who work out most of the troubles at school. At my own high school, we have black students being bussed to our school for the first year. After fights broke out between a few blacks and whites, the police were called in. The next day a group of students and a few advisors met to discuss what would be done about the disturbances.

Our classes then had open discussions and we talked over our differences. Many of us felt that some of the trouble had been caused by outsiders, and that all or most of the problems could be solved by students. Since then, we have worked at the problem. We have much-improved relationships between blacks and whites now and we wonder why people of two different races cannot get along all right most of the time. Maybe if some parents had not imposed their prejudices on their children we would be better off and would see a greater future.

If We Learn

Each generation has had to stand up to some pretty startling realities before, but none like those of the present. Or so it seems to me and my friends. These troubles, any one of them, could mean the end of the human race. Some have predicted the world will end six or seven generations after ours. Others, some of my own age, believe nuclear war will end life in the next few years.

We must not just think of our own living conditions. If future generations are going to exist, we must start to work immediately. We must strive for a peaceful world, for air clean enough to breathe and water fresh enough to drink.

We need to learn to get along with others, without regard to race or religion. The point that gives us hope is that every day, new advances are made in all fields of resources and research. If people will just learn to get along with others, and use their knowledge to the fullest, the coming generations will be the luckiest of all.
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