

The Generation Gap

CYO Teen Speaks for Restless Youth

By E. B. DUARTE
(NC News Service)

San Antonio—Young people are separated from adults today by a clearly defined communication gap. And this gap, in turn, is fed and maintained by a simple lack of understanding and a false picture of America's young people perpetrated by television and newspapers.

Michael McGown, 18, president of the Teenage Section, National Catholic Young Organization Federation, offered

views. Young people and laymen were afraid to speak out and when they did, the clergy did not listen.

"These same problems hold true in secular society. Young people have reacted against adults who are set in their ways. Adults get married, have children, hold down jobs and do not care about neighbors," he said.

"I do not believe young people are saying 'Stop working and drop everything.' But they are degrading that we

Offering views on a solution to the gap between young and old, McGown said: "We will all have to face each other—both adults and young people alike. We have to get together and talk as well as listen, to the other side. But we must remember that there is a difference between the communication gap, which can be bridged, and the generation gap, which cannot. The generation gap has and will continue to exist, always existed. It exists now

It is the natural difference of opinions between young people and their elders."

"But the communication gap can be tightened by open minds between the two groups. Adults should remember, too, that most young people are continually discovering—not rebelling," he said.

"Maybe I believe in a bright future because I'm young," he added, "but I believe in it wholeheartedly. It will not be 'topia—this can never happen—but it will be better."

"We are better educated than past generations."

this opinion on problems of the nation's restless younger generation McGown, a resident of Beaumont, came here for the "Impact" workshop for CYO young adult leaders.

"There is definitely a communication gap between the generations," he said in an interview. "And this holds true both within the Church and within society as a whole."

"Today's adults grew up in very difficult times," he said. "They had a depression and a World War with which to contend. They admittedly had it rough."

"But my generation has grown up since the early 1950s, and we have been relatively free from such pressing burdens. We can do just about what we want. We have more time to think about our problems and we have better access to education

are no longer on a personal basis with our fellow man. We no longer look at our neighbors and fellow workers as human beings and we are not living life to its fullest when we only care about ourselves."

Discussing young people identifying with the contemporary Church and adult society as a whole, he said:

"One tremendous asset is the folk Mass. This certainly helps young people identify with the Church. The songs we sing in folk Masses have so much religious significance to us if we sing them our way instead of the way of the 15th century."

"Young people can now identify with the basic concepts of faith," he continued, "elaborating on the renewal movement in the Church. We recognize and respect the papacy, the Mass, the priest

"We will all have to face each other"

"We are better educated than past generations and we therefore have more profound ideas about the world than did previous generations," he continued.

Citing what he called a "false image" of the younger generation, McGown said: "The mass media—such as TV and newspapers—must bear a tremendous responsibility for this image. They ignore the quiet, responsible students who are working in a less dramatic manner."

He criticized the media for "playing up wild student outbursts" as though they were normal campus activities.


Criticizing the demonstrators, McGown said: "The hippies and the dropouts carry banners and wear buttons professing a cause. But they do nothing constructive. They march and march, but what do they really accomplish? Both the hippies and the dropouts do have a message, but they are presenting it in the wrong way."

"I condemn violent outbursts," the CYO leader said, "I believe that young people who resort to violence are wrong. Leaders of violence only make things worse for everyone as well as hurt their own causes."

Referring to what he called a "communications gap" in the Church, McGown said "this is something we young people have been working on for quite some time now and part of the problem has been the Church structure."

"The hierarchy was on a pedestal and the laity was below," he said. "Now we are all coming to realize the equal although separate functions of both. In the past the communication gap has been the fault of all parents in-

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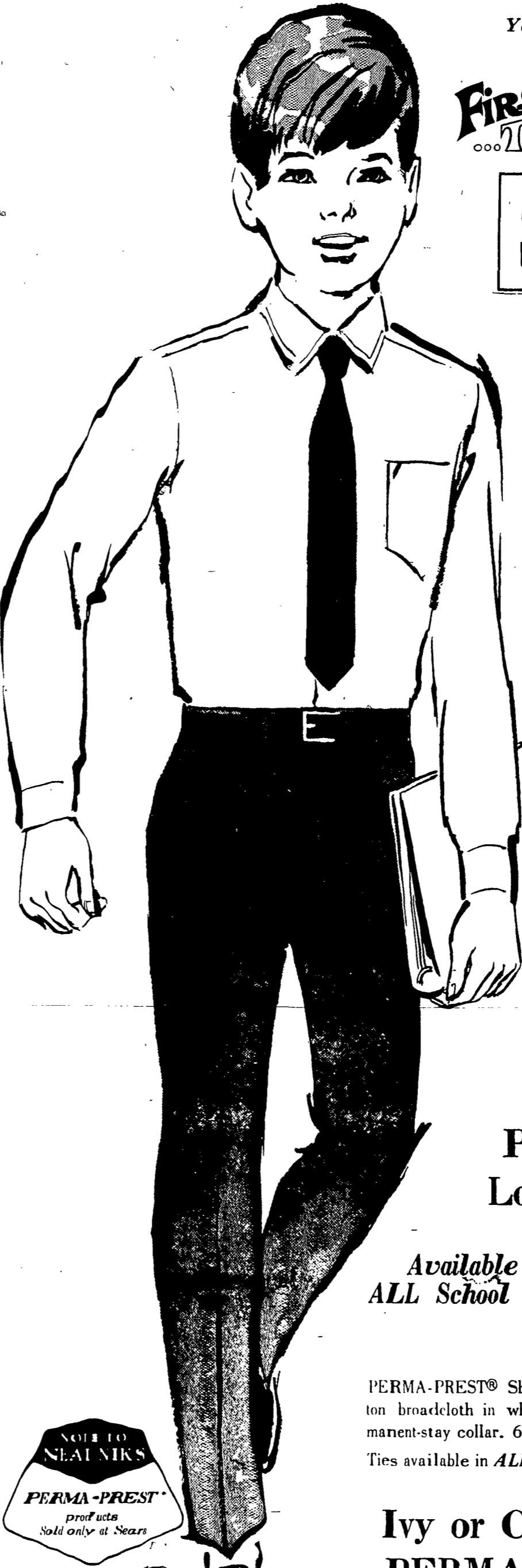
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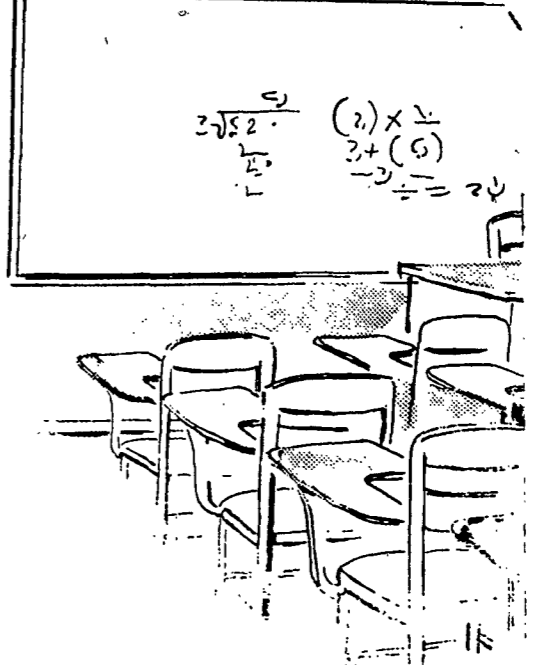
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