

One Out Of Five State Marriages Ends In Divorce

Nearly 34,000 Marriages And 7,000 Divorces In A Recent Year

By Tom Wicker

33,000 couples marched down the aisle to the marriage altar in a recent year in North Carolina. That's quite a gain for the picture. In that same year 6,700 Tar Heel marriages went on the rocks. That figure only covers legal divorces, not separations of the permanent type. And nearly one-third of those couples who came to the legal parting of the ways had one or more children in their erstwhile families.

Casting another shadow over the Tar Heel family is the fact that approximately one half of all the children involved in official hearings before Juvenile Courts in North Carolina in that

year came from homes in which the parents were not living together. Accurate estimates indicate that 30 to 50 per cent of all juvenile delinquents come from broken homes.

The figures follow closely the national pattern. The picture is the same everywhere. And everywhere social workers, teachers, ministers, and plain citizens concerned for the welfare of the country are facing these questions:

The Family Task

To answer these questions, it is necessary to go back to basic principles. To learn what, in general, it is necessary for the family to do in this building of happy and useful lives.

Mental hygiene and health experts, family life counsellors and social workers can answer that question with a wealth of detail. But some of the more important qualities necessary in the successful family are these, according to their research:

A successful adjustment to each other and to the family as a whole on the part of the parents, so that they may best accept their duties of guiding and controlling the family, but not dominate it to the exclusion of the right of the other members;

Active participation in and contributions to community and neighborhood activities, based on an active sense of the values to be attained in wholesome social life;

Balanced family activities, with work, recreation, learning, religion and social activity all receiving proper emphasis;

A sense of the individual work of the members of the family.

These are some of the basic principles of successful family living. They are important, for extensive social study demonstrates that those who grow up with family loyalty, faith, understanding, love and warmth, are better able to withstand great stress and strain. On the other hand, broken or disorganized families have little resistance to severe emotional disturbances and



various types of delinquency.

Many Barriers Exist

Even as there are many factors which make up successful family living, however, there are many forces in modern life which tend to disrupt the family and to make difficult the establishment of some of the principles mentioned. Among these can be noted:

The urbanization and industrialization of society, which has caused a shift away from the traditional self-sufficiency of the family — families no longer work together in the home as in the past, with the various members working outside the home at widely-varied tasks. In addition, there is the increasing trend for wives and mothers to work outside the home, thus increasing the tendency away from working together at home.

Modern life has also reduced the necessity for families to develop their own recreation and social activities — movies, skating rinks, and other spectator recreations are the most prevalent of today's forms of amusement. In addition, the development of such modern appliances as radio and television has reduced the family dependence upon itself for relaxation and recreation.

Other factors must also be considered — the urbanization of the population and mass housing, increasing the number of neighbors a family has, but leading to a decrease in "neighborliness" and community activities; the lack of opportunities for children to get to know Father, who spends eight hours a day at the office or the factory, rather than working his fields or his own business, where

he is more available to them; the increased number of aged dependents in the home; inadequate housing the high cost of living, especially in its impact on lower-income groups; overcrowded and inadequate school facilities; and many others.

These factors, then, make it difficult to develop the previously-mentioned principles of successful family living, in order to build useful, happy lives. But, say the family and mental health experts, it is still not impossible to do so. It is not only possible to build good family living, they continue, but it is imperative — and they point to the increasing divorce and delinquency rates, the increased population of training schools, prisons and mental hospitals, for their justification.

What Must Be Done?

Family life education, say they, is the answer. Such education should be accessible to all families. It can be made available through organized civic, social and religious groups, and through the public schools, by way of clinics, lectures, study groups, workshops, and community activity. Social workers and their organizations, alert to the need, will also fill a place in the family life education faculty. Tar Heels will be hearing a good deal about such education in the forthcoming Mental Health Week, May 2-8.

This family life education should emphasize the importance of fathers and mothers bringing up their children in an atmosphere of affection, with the right kind of training in a good home setting; it works toward the development of activities designed to draw the father back into more active family membership, and which knit the whole family more closely together in recreation, social and religious activities, and in working together; it makes information available as to where health, welfare and family counselling services may be had; it seeks to develop higher physical standards of living; it advocates increased neighborhood and community recreation and social activities, and the development of better facilities for these activities; better housing and health services are promoted, along with increased educational opportunities and facilities; vocational guidance for family members is available; and, in general, the principles of mental health are empha-

Better Homes Are Being Constructed

Homes going up this year are, on the average, bigger and better than the ones produced in 1949 or 1950, a study of building trends in six metropolitan areas reveals. One-family houses started in these cities in the first quarter of 1951 were not only larger, according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, but also had more bathrooms and quality features than those begun in the last half of 1949 or during the middle months of 1950. The demand for quality building materials continues at all-time highs, in spite of 1951's cutback in housing, manufacturers report. Producers of clay floor and wall tile, for instance, turned out more than 22 per cent more tile in the first half of 1951 than in the first half of 1950. Yet as a result of demand for quality materials in new houses and increased use of clay tile in all rooms of the home, the industry is still hard pressed to keep abreast of demand.

New Financing Plan Used For Income Tax Payment

For the first time in its history, the Treasury is offering a new type of financing—it will sell up to \$1,350,000,000 in "bills" which may be used to pay income taxes next March. By the new offer, the Treasury is trying, in effect, to get and spend now much of the income-tax money which normally would come in next March. Purchases of the bills, who don't use them as income-tax payments, can turn them in for cash on March 15. The bills will be issued only in denominations of \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, \$100,000, and \$1,000,000, and are largely intended for big corporations which are building up reserve funds for income-tax payments.

American mines are furnishing coal for more than half of the world's steel production.

Family life education, then, is more than a course in home decoration, cooking, or gardening. It is an effort to redeem some of yesterday's wreckage, widely scattered in the nation's divorce and juvenile courts, and to prevent more such havoc in the future.

Not So Vacant—Lot Has Many Buildings On It

Philadelphia.—A lot, listed on city tax books for the past four years as "vacant," was found to hold a house, five garages and a boiler room—all built before 1947. The Bureau of Building Inspection gave the owner until October 13 to get a building permit, pay back taxes for the four years and obtain zoning approval—or have the structures torn down.

Saves Own Child When Called To Aid Little Girl

Seattle, Wash.—Called from a shower to give aid to a 22-month-old girl, who had been pulled unconscious from a fish pond, Dr. Louis Salazar, Alaska physician who is visiting here, went to work on the limp body. He applied artificial respiration desperately and was rewarded by a cry. The child, who was revived, was his own daughter, Mary Margaret.

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