

Marriage Matters

Study Checks Success Of Interfaith Marriages

By Dr. Alfred J. Prince

DR. PRINCE is associate professor of sociology at Eastern Washington State College, where he directs the undergraduate social work program. He is an experienced family and marriage counselor and has done extensive research into family problems.

How successful are interfaith marriages? What are the major areas of conflict in such unions? How do couples resolve their differences over religion? How successful are childless mixed marriages?

Our study of several hundred cross-religion marriages throughout the country sought answers to these questions. Couples in our sample had been married from six months to 46 years with an average of 10 years and five months. Approximately 10 per cent had been married 20 years or more. Less than six per cent were

married under two years.

OUR STUDY of cross-religion marriages also included the study of interdenominational marriages, or marriages between members of Protestant groups. Length of marriage for couples in this group was approximately the same as for the interfaith marriage group.

Approximately one-third of the interfaith marriages and 25 per cent of the interdenominational marriages were childless. Of the childless couples more than one-third had been married five years or more. Few had been married less than two years.

Our data show that Protestants and Catholics have intermarried with each other far more frequently than with Jews. Jews have intermarried with Protestants more frequently than with Catholics.

THE CUMULATIVE effect of mixed religious marriages is evident by the fact that more

than half the spouses were themselves off-spring of a cross-religion marriage.

Approximately 75 per cent of the couples in the interfaith marriage group and 85 per cent in the interdenominational group were married by a religious official.

More than half the men and approximately three-fifths of the women reported they attended church three times a month or more before marriage. Four out of five spouses who contracted interfaith marriages reported their church attendance after marriage remained the same or increased.

When people of different religious faiths marry there are few alternatives open to them for resolving their differences over religion: the spouses may maintain their own faith; one spouse may adopt the faith of the other.

Both spouses may adopt a new religion acceptable to both of them; or they may follow no religion.

IN MORE THAN 65 per cent of the interfaith marriages, the spouses maintained their own faith. Our data thus corroborate the findings of other studies which show that couples in interfaith marriages attempt to resolve their differences over religion most often by each spouse maintaining his or her own religious faith.

On the other hand, couples who contracted interdenominational marriages attempted to resolve their religious differences most often by one spouse adopting the faith of the other.

In interdenominational marriages either spouse was equally likely to change to the faith of the other. In interfaith marriages, however, the wife changed religion more than twice as often as did the husband.

Children in mixed religious marriages tend to follow the faith of the mother. However, when one parent, regardless of sex, was Catholic or Jewish, the children were usually

reared in the Catholic or Jewish faith, respectively.

MORE THAN HALF the spouses who contracted interfaith marriages and approximately 70 per cent of those in the interdenominational marriage group were either very much satisfied or entirely satisfied with their marriage. Less than 10 per cent reported any degree of dissatisfaction.

No relationship was found between degree of satisfaction with the marriage and the religious combination of the couple.

Furthermore, couples without children were not significantly more satisfied with their marriage than were couples with children.

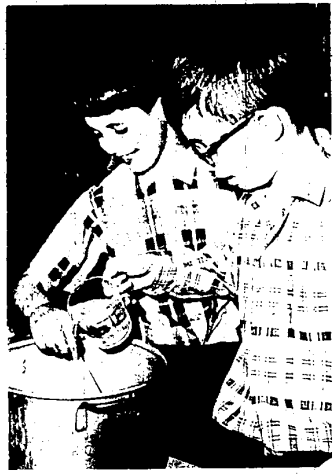
Couples who maintained their own religion, however, tended to be less satisfied with their marriage than were the couples who resolved their differences over religion by one spouse adopting the faith of the other. This was true for couples in

both the interfaith and interdenominational marriage groups.

Do individuals who cross religious lines and marry regret their decision? Given a second chance would they marry across religious lines again? Two out of three spouses stated they would marry outside the faith a second time. Less than 10 per cent reported they would not.

Feminine Look

After several seasons of strictly tailored tops, fashion pacemakers are turning toward a softer, more feminine look. One of the popular soft touches is the jabot, which you'll be seeing on blouses, daytime dresses and evening wear. In case you've forgotten, the jabot is a falling ruffle, cascade, or other arrangement of lace or embroidery, worn at the front of the waist or the neck.



TWO STUDENTS at the Maplewood Elementary School, Garden City, sharpen their cooking skills in the "cook-in" held recently in their class. The boys are Keith Simpson (left) and James Cromarty.

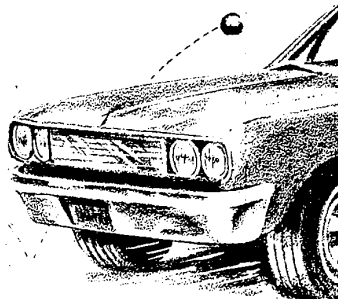
Survey Says Eating Now Takes Turn For Worse

American eating habits have taken a turn for the worse, said Mrs. Anita Dean, specialist in foods and nutrition with Michigan State University's Cooperative Extension Service.

Based upon a 1965 survey by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the nutritional level of American diets has been declining for the past decade.

This is the first such drop reported since the USDA surveys began in 1909, Mrs. Dean pointed out. One household in every five—or 20 per cent—eats a nutritionally poor diet, she related. In 1955, only 15 per cent of American families fell into this category.

WATCH IT!



SCHOOL'S OUT

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL—Vacation play and a speeding automobile can be a deadly combination. With the annual spring exodus from schools, new drivers in particular should be alert to signs of children playing near streets without the close supervision of teachers. Drive defensively and avoid tragedies, says Carol Lane, Women's Travel Director, Shell Oil Company.



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