

Family Council

Editor's Note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, a newspaper editor, a women's editor and two writers. Each article is a summary of an actual case history. The Council reports on problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors. (Copyright 1961—General Features Corp.)

Martha C. - Suddenly he refuses to observe the practices of our religion.

Eugene C. - It dawned on me that this has nothing to do with being a good person.

Martha C. - We're married two years and have no children, and it's a good thing. I want to have the matter of religion settled between Gene and me, instead of quarreling about it in front of our future family.

Before we were married, I didn't discuss religion much with Gene. He lived in another city and whenever he visited me, he accompanied me to services and gave the impression of being devout, pious and observant. We are of the same denomination and my childhood pastor officiated at our wedding.

But now, suddenly, Gene reveals that he was merely humoring me! He doesn't approve of organized religion, he says, and he's not going to be hypocritical about it.

This is a terrible shock. My faith is a great comfort to me. How can I bring up a child to be God-fearing and God-loving if his father throws all worship and practices overboard?

Eugene C. - I knew Martha was an intense religionist but, since she never brought up the matter of my own attitudes toward all that hocus-pocus, I figured she'd leave me alone about it and I'd leave her alone, too.

I'm even willing to let her have her way with our future children. A strict upbringing can't hurt them and it won't stop them from breaking loose later, once they get out in the world and meet wonderful people from other groups. It didn't stop me.

Martha knows I'm a good man. And I believe in God, mainly as He reveals Himself in good people - people who are kind, honest and industrious. I can't see where singing hymns, and lighting candles and going through a w-k-w-a-r-d ceremonials has anything to do with being godlike.

Also, I dislike rigid groupings. I feel more comfortable when I'm among a natural sampling of all kinds of people who are interested in things outside themselves. But to make things easy for Martha, I'll join her occasionally.

The Council: The predicament the C's find themselves in reveals that intermarriage can take place between people of the same faith, as well as those of opposite faiths! They indicate what can happen when, within the same religious persuasion, extreme right wing weeds extreme left wing.

Whatever Martha accepts "on faith" and without question, Eugene rejects as superfluous "hocus-pocus." Without defending or attacking the position of either of these mates, we can discuss two points: The importance of a united front on the "official" religious position of the family before children arrive, and the place of "form" in expressing and preserving "spirit."

Perhaps a clergyman from a middle-of-the-road branch of the C's church can assist them toward a compromise of their tenets. Religion, after all, is meant to increase family love and togetherness. Both Martha and Eugene, out of respect for each other's sincere convictions, will have to "budge" and give in a little, for a "homogeneous" home.

As to ritual, Martha must admit that one can worship without it. Every fine thought and good deed is a form of worship. But Eugene, in turn, must admit that precious things are best preserved in strong containers. Formal prayers and observances are the traditional "containers" for group and communal worship.

Let's hope it won't oppress Eugene too much to go to services once in a while, nor oppress Martha too much when he doesn't.

HITS SEATO MANEUVERS

Tokyo - (UPI) - A Communist North Viet Nam newspaper said Saturday the proposed SEATO military exercises in Thailand next February constituted "an outright provocation against Indochina and Southeast Asia." The newspaper Nhandan, quoted by the New China news agency, said the maneuvers were "part of the U.S. plan of expanding its aggressive war against Laos."



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