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Moral Re-armament Workers Say:

NO DIVORCE CAN BE JUSTIFIED

Quote Case Histories to Show That All Marriage Problems Can Be Solved

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THE most commonly found causes of the high divorce rate in South Africa — drink, bad temper, extravagance, mental cruelty, infidelity — serious though they may sound in evidence, are superficial, and not the root causes.

This statement is made by Moral Re-Armament workers who, during the past few years, claim to have brought together hundreds of estranged couples in South Africa and Rhodesia.

Many of these couples had already initiated proceedings for divorce.

The root causes, this body of religious ideologists claims, lie much deeper than the surface irritations that break so many marriages. No matter what the provocation may be all marriage problems can be solved, and no divorce, they claim, is justified.

In proof, Moral Re-Armament cites "case histories" in which marriages which appeared to have been irretrievably broken up have been placed on a permanently happy basis.

One such story is of a Johannesburg woman who had been married for 12 years and had two children. She had reached a stage of complete indifference, bordering on dislike, towards her husband but, for the sake of the children, attempted to put up with the situation.

"Slow Murder"

"It was slow murder," she says, for, in spite of her determined efforts to make the best of an unhappy marriage, her husband's careless habits in the house, lack of appreciation of her studied consideration for him and his boring qualities, only aggravated matters.

So she looked elsewhere for what she had hoped to find in her husband, and unfaithfulness resulted.

To-day this couple describes as "nothing less than a miracle" the change that occurred in their relationship when they decided to come to grips on an absolutely moral standard of living, with the things that they had been hiding from each other.

Open Heart Wins

Many other couples with similar experiences agree that the little everyday trifles that help to break up a marriage are only important when left to grow.

Men and women who put up a cheerful appearance as a facade to unhappy backgrounds are not solving their problems, and the worst sufferers are their children.

"An open heart is a victorious heart in all relationships," declared the wife of one reconciled couple.

"Single people think that marriage is glamorous," another near-divorcee said in describing how he had surmounted the

obstacles in his married life. "To-day I know that it is the highest challenge confronting us."

In another case of a couple who had endured for years what they called a "nightmare marriage" for the sake of the children the husband became a heavy drinker.

The wife found outlet for her feelings in bad temper. Eventually she deserted him, taking the children with her.

Moral Re-Armament workers came into touch with the husband and brought home to him such "trifles" as that he was spending 50 hours a week in pubs, and could not recall when last he had had a normal conversation with his children.

The change that eventually resulted in the husband only infuriated the wife when he tried to influence her too.

She Was Jealous

Later, she realised that she was jealous because people were seeing "some good" in her husband instead of "all the good" in her.

To-day this couple has also become happily reconciled.

Even unfaithfulness in marriage is not irremediable according to M.R.A., nor to be considered sufficient ground for divorce. An estranged couple who had this problem between them decided to have it out with each other and take the consequences.

As a result they discovered that their infidelity had been an expression of defiance on one side, and of repression of the marriage relationship on the other.