

Marriage, Religion,
and the
Common Good



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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Welcome to *Mapping America*!

Mapping America is a weekly release that uses federal survey data to show how the intact married family that worships weekly is the greatest generator of human and social goods and the core strength of the United States. The federal surveys used include the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, the General Social Surveys, and the National Survey of Children's Health.

Each new issue correlates religious attendance, family structure, or both with topics such as marital happiness, drug use, and fighting. Each "maps" America and gives a snapshot of who we are or how we behave on each issue.

Though only launched in 2008, *Mapping America* is already being used by many in the pro-family movement. For instance, Julaine Appling of the Wisconsin Family Council frequently uses the weekly *Mapping America*: "We find these helpful and useful in a number of areas. Right now we use them frequently to help shape our 'Wisconsin Family Minute' radio spots." Dr. Michael Ross of Defending Our Father's House says, "These data are of vital importance to my work in advocating for the legal and institutional integrity of marriage and family."

For this special collection of *Mapping America*, we have selected the most interesting and engaging "maps," those combining religious attendance and family structure. It is our hope that *Mapping America* will make the "core strength of the nation" more obvious to more and more people, thus encouraging the restoration of faithful marriage and religious worship.

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D.

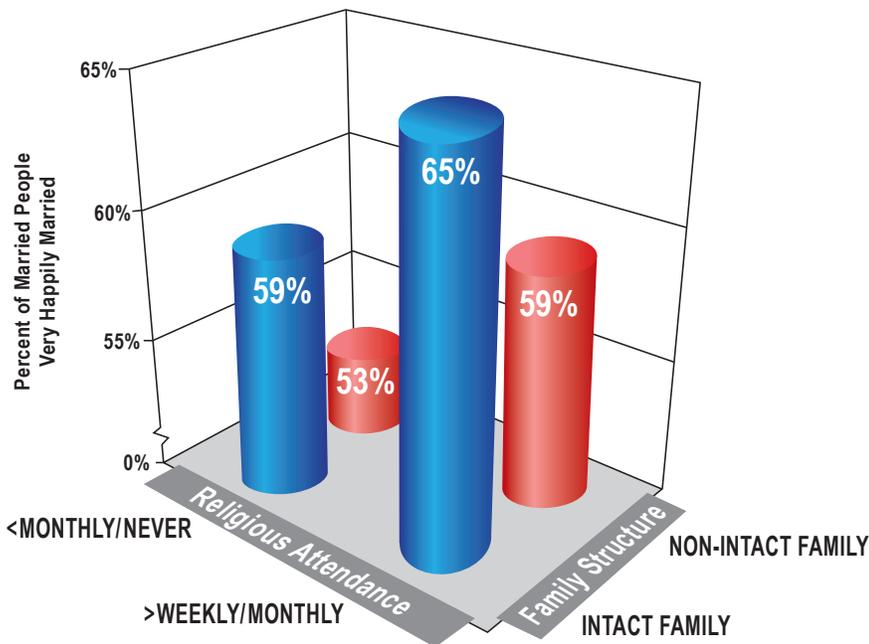
Senior Fellow and Director, Marriage and Religion Research Institute (MARRI)



Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Intergenerational Links to Marital Happiness: Religious Attendance and Family Structure

Percent of Married People Very Happily Married by Frequency of Their Religious Attendance and Family Structure during Adolescence



During Adolescence: Religious Attendance and Family Structure Combined

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

This chart is taken from a study conducted by Visiting Fellow Althea Nagai for Family Research Council.

Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents and grew up living with both biological parents experience higher levels of marital happiness.

According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 65 percent of married adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family as adolescents were very happy with their current marriage, compared to 53 percent of married adults who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in a non-intact family as adolescents. In between were those married adults who had attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (59 percent) and those who lived in an intact family but attended religious services less than monthly (also 59 percent).¹

Other Studies

Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Paul Amato and Alan Booth of the Pennsylvania State University

reported that strong parental religiosity led to fewer instances of parental marital discord and “that parents’ marital quality has a causal impact on offspring’s marital quality.”²

W. Bradford Wilcox also found that husbands who believed strongly in religious attendance and the importance of intact families had wives who reported high levels of marital happiness.³

The data indicate that the benefits of frequent religious attendance and the intactness of parents’ marriages will positively effect marital happiness in adulthood.

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

Dr. Fagan is senior fellow and director of the Center for Family and Religion at Family Research Council. Dr. Nagai is a visiting fellow at Family Research Council.

1 This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Survey, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

2 Paul R. Amato and Alan Booth, “The Legacy of Parents’ Marital Discord: Consequences for Children’s Marital Quality,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 81 (2001): 627-638.

3 W. Bradford Wilcox, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 178, 186. This finding is from www.familyfacts.org.



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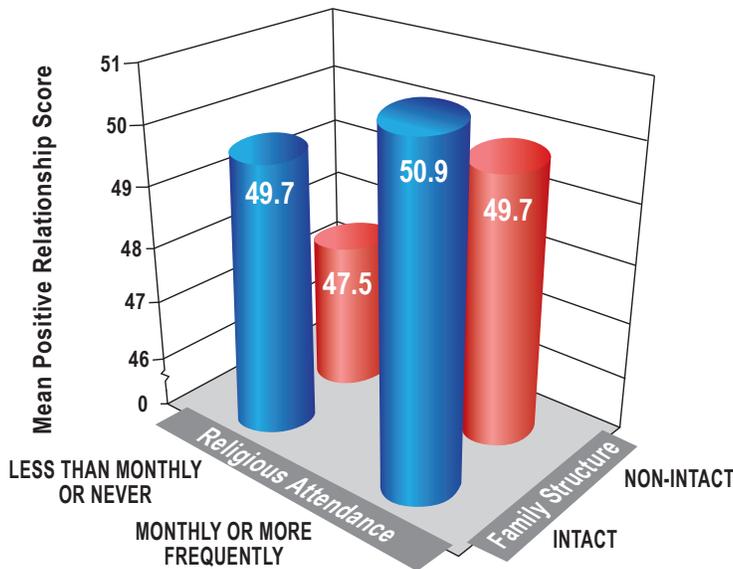
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Quality of Parent-Child Relationship, Religious Attendance, and Family Structure

Quality of Parent-Child Relationship by Children's Religious Attendance and Family Structure



Religious Attendance and Family Structure Combined

Source: National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH)

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents or two adoptive parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents or two adoptive parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, always single-parent families, foster-parent families, and other-relative families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

This chart is taken from a study conducted by Nicholas Zill, Ph.D.¹ for Family Research Council.²

Children from intact families who frequently attend worship are most likely to have a high-quality relationship with their parents.

This chart depicts the mean positive parental relationship score of children aged 6 to 17, correlated with religious attendance and family structure. Children who worship frequently and live with both biological parents or with two adoptive parents have a higher score (50.9) than those who worship less than monthly and live in single-parent or reconstituted families (47.5). In between are those who live in intact families and worship less than monthly (49.7) and those who live in non-intact families who worship at least monthly (49.7). The data are taken from the National Survey of Children's Health.

The stress of marital conflict and separation, and the strains of maintaining a household and rearing children as a single parent, often interfere with the task of interacting with children in a calm, positive, yet firm and authoritative manner.³

On the other hand, when parents and children are involved in a religious

community, other members of the community and their children provide emotional support and practical assistance to the family and make it easier for parents to raise their children. Members of a religious community also reinforce the moral and spiritual lessons that parents try to impart to their children.⁴

Other Studies

Several other sources corroborate the direction of these findings. John Bartkowski of Mississippi State University and W. Bradford Wilcox of Princeton University reported that single parents “are more likely to yell” at their children and that conservative Protestant parents are less likely to do so.⁵

W. Jean Yeung of the University of Michigan and colleagues also found that fathers in intact families devote more time to their children and that most of the “social activity” time fathers spend with their children consists of religious activities.⁶

As the data indicate, religious attendance, religiosity, and intact families are building blocks of healthy parent-child relationships.

Nicholas Zill, Ph.D.

Research Psychologist

Former Vice President of Westat

Founding President of Child Trends

-
- 1 Nicholas Zill is a research psychologist and consultant. Until his recent retirement, he was a vice president of Westat Inc. He was the founder of Child Trends and its executive director for 13 years.
 - 2 This chart draws on data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics in the National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH) in 2003. The data sample consisted of parents of 102,353 children and teens in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. 68,996 of these children and teens were between six and 17 years old, the age group that was the focus of the study. The survey sample in this age range represented a population of nearly 49 million young people nationwide.
 - 3 Paul R. Amato, “The Consequences of Divorce for Adults and Children,” vol. 62 (2000): 1,269-1,287.
 - 4 E. Mavis Hetherington and John Kelly, *For Better or For Worse: Divorce Reconsidered* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2002): 75-76.
 - 5 John P. Bartkowski and W. Bradford Wilcox, “Conservative Protestant Child Discipline: The Case of Parental Yelling,” *Social Forces*, vol. 79 (2000): 265-290.
 - 6 W. Jean Yeung, et al., “Children’s Time with Fathers in Intact Families,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 63 (2001): 136-154.



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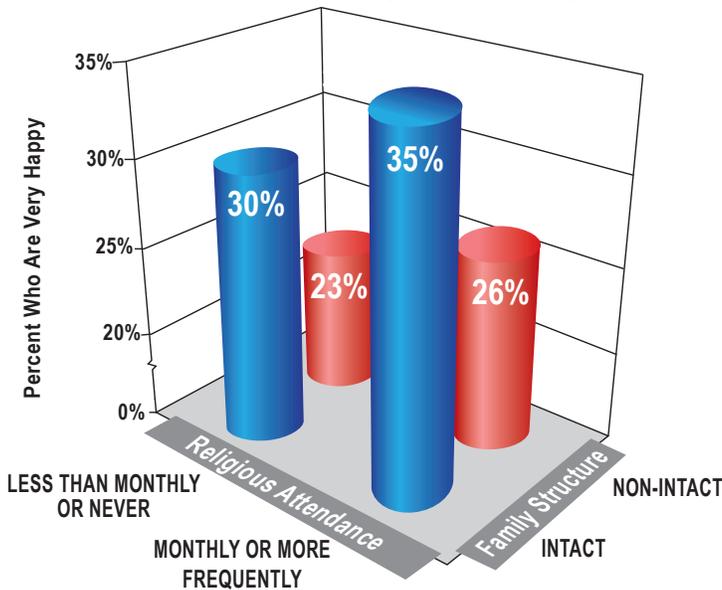
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Intergenerational Links to Happiness: Religious Attendance and Family Structure

Percent Who Are Very Happy by Frequency of Their Religious Attendance and Family Structure during Adolescence



During Adolescence: Religious Attendance and Family Structure Combined

Source: General Social Survey (GSS)

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

This chart is taken from a study conducted by Visiting Fellow Althea Nagai for Family Research Council.

Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents and grew up living with both biological parents are most likely to be very happy.

According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 35 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family through adolescence considered themselves very happy, compared to 23 percent of adults who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in a non-intact family as adolescents. In between were those who had attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (26 percent) and those who lived in an intact family but attended religious services less than monthly (30 percent).¹

The combination of frequent religious attendance during adolescence and an intact family background clearly increases the likelihood of being very happy in adulthood. The data indicate, however, that family structure may have a more pronounced effect than religious attendance.

Other Studies

Very few studies have examined contemporaneous effects of both religious attendance and family structure on happiness, let alone intergenerational effects, but these studies generally support the direction of these findings. Arthur Brooks of Syracuse University reported that while “practicing a religion makes people very happy, on average,” married people are “nearly twice as likely as singles” to report being very happy.²

In a study of Caribbean adolescents, Robert Blum of the University of Minnesota and colleagues found that adolescents who report having religious beliefs and connectedness with their parents are less likely to experience rage.³

Though the evidence demonstrates that an intact family may have a greater influence than religiosity on the likelihood of being very happy, the combination of frequent religious attendance and an intact family yields the highest proportion of very happy people, as adolescents and adults.

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

Dr. Fagan is senior fellow and director of the Center for Family and Religion at Family Research Council.

Dr. Nagai is a visiting fellow at Family Research Council.

1 This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Survey, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

2 Arthur Brooks, *Gross National Happiness* (New York: Basic Books, 2008): 28, 30, 217, 227.

3 Robert Blum, et al., “Adolescent Health in the Caribbean: Risk and Protective Factors,” *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 93 (2003): 456-460.



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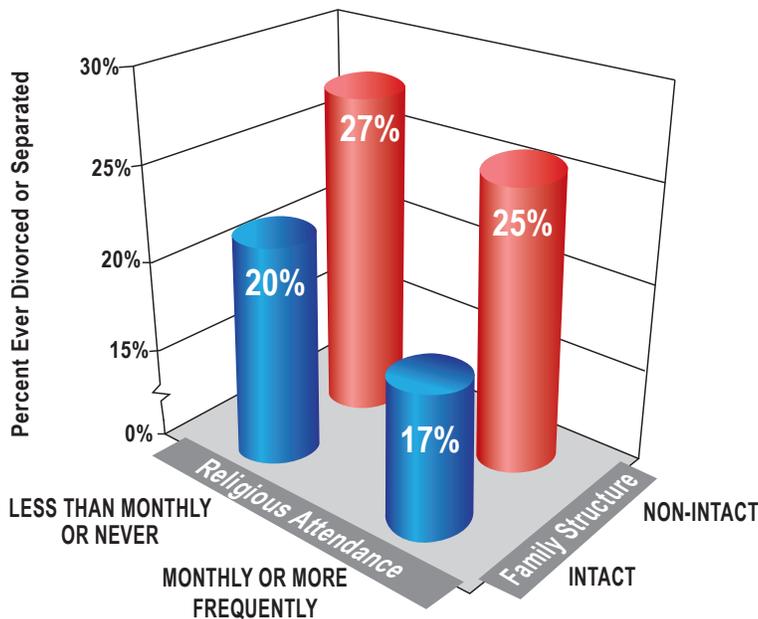


Mapping America™

Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Divorce or Separation: Religious Attendance and Family Structure in Adolescence

Divorce or Separation in Adulthood by Religious Attendance and Family Structure during Adolescence



During Adolescence:
Religious Attendance and Family Structure Combined

Source: General Social Surveys (GSS, 1972-2006)

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more frequently vs. less than monthly or never) and family structure (intact vs. non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

Visiting Fellow Althea Nagai provided the data for this chart.

Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents and grew up living with both biological parents are least likely ever to be divorced or separated.

According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 17 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family through adolescence have ever been divorced or separated, compared to 27 percent of those who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in a non-intact family as adolescents. In between were those who attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (25 percent) and those who lived in an intact family but worshiped less than monthly (20 percent).¹

Other Studies

Several other studies analyzing religiosity, childhood family structure, and adult divorce corroborate the direction of these findings. Matthew Bramlett and William Mosher of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

found that “women whose religion is somewhat or very important are...less likely to experience a breakup of their first marriage than those whose religion is not important” and that women who grew up living with both parents “are less likely to experience the breakup of their first marriage than women who were not raised with two parents throughout childhood.”²

Examining divorce in the Netherlands, Paul de Graaf of Radboud University Nijmegen and Matthijs Kalmijn of Tilburg University also reported that “religion has a clear negative effect on divorce” and that “the overall effect of a parental divorce is significant and substantial: People who have divorced parents (when they were growing up) have a 1.9 times higher odds of divorce than others.”³

As the data show, religion and an intact family during childhood prove effective in strengthening marriages against the possibility of divorce.

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1 This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Surveys, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

2 Matthew D. Bramlett and William D. Mosher, “Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the United States,” *Vital and Health Statistics*, series 22 (2002): 1-32.

3 Paul de Graaf and Matthijs Kalmijn, “Change and Stability in the Social Determinants of Divorce: A Comparison of Marriage Cohorts in the Netherlands,” *European Sociological Review*, vol. 22 (2006): 561-572.



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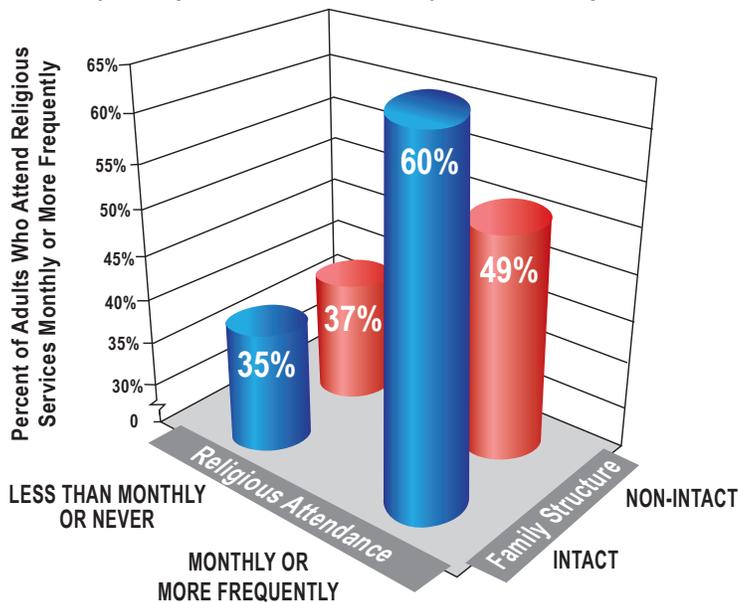


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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Adult Religious Attendance by Religious Attendance and Family Structure in Adolescence

Attending Religious Services Monthly or More Frequently in Adulthood by Frequency of Religious Attendance and Family Structure During Adolescence



Religious Attendance and Family Structure During Adolescence Combined

Source: General Social Surveys (GSS)

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more frequently vs. less than monthly or never) and family structure (intact vs. non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

Visiting Fellow Althea Nagai provided the data for this chart.

Adults who attended religious services at least monthly as adolescents and grew up in an intact family are significantly more likely to attend religious services monthly or more frequently as adults than are those who attended less frequently and whose family of origin was non-intact.

Additionally, those who attended religious services at least monthly frequently as adolescents were substantially more likely to attend religious services as adults, regardless of whether they came from an intact or non-intact family. In other words, with regard to adult religious worship, frequent worship in adolescence significantly mitigates the negative effects of growing up in a non-intact family.

Description: According to the General Social Surveys (GSS),

- 60 percent of adults who grew up attending religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family (i.e., lived with two biological parents) attend religious services once a month or more as adults;

- 49 percent of adults who grew up in a non-intact family but attended religious services at least monthly also attend religious services at least monthly as adults;
- 37 percent of adults who lived in a non-intact family and attended religious services less than monthly attend religious services at least monthly as adults;
- 35 percent of adults who grew up in an intact family but worshiped less than monthly as adolescents attend religious services at least monthly as adults.¹

Related Insights from Other Studies

Several other studies add insight to these findings. Scott Myers of the Pennsylvania State University reported that “parents’ religiosity is the primary influence on the religiosity of their adult offspring” and that adults “raised in households characterized by high marital happiness and with both biological parents present are more likely to resemble their parents in religious beliefs.”²

Darren Sherkat of Vanderbilt University also found that childhood religious participation along with strong parental religious participation helps sustain religious adherence in adults and counteracts secularizing influences.³

As the evidence shows, children who grow up in intact families that attend religious services frequently are more likely to worship frequently as adults.

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Dr. Fagan is senior fellow and director of the Center for Family and Religion at Family Research Council.

Dr. Nagai is a visiting fellow at Family Research Council.

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- 1 The statistics in this chart draw on data from the General Social Surveys, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 per year. No survey was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS was conducted only in even-numbered years, with two samples per survey, totaling approximately 3,000 respondents. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.
 - 2 Scott M. Myers, “An Interactive Model of Religiosity Inheritance: The Importance of Family Context,” *American Sociological Review* 61 (1996): 858-66.
 - 3 Darren E. Sherkat, “Counterculture or Continuity? Competing Influences on Baby Boomers’ Religious Orientations and Participation,” *Social Forces* 76 (1998): 1087-1115.



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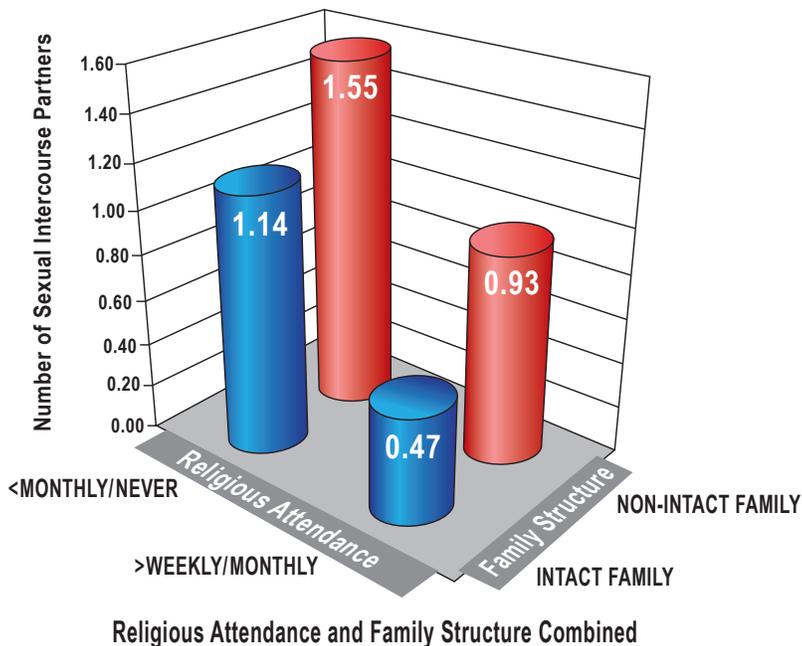
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Religious Attendance, Family Structure and Sexual Intercourse Partners—Adolescent Girls

Girls' Sexual Partners by Religious Attendance and Family Structure¹



This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

¹ This chart draws on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. This work was done by the author in cooperation with former colleagues at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Adolescent girls from intact families who worship frequently have the fewest sexual partners in high school.

This chart depicts the average number of sexual intercourse partners for American female adolescents in Grades 7-12 when correlated with religious attendance and family structure. Female students in Grades 7-12 have an average of 0.47 sexual partners when they live in intact families and worship at least monthly. By contrast, those who worship less than monthly and come from broken or reconstituted families have an average of 1.55 sexual partners. Those who worship at least monthly but come from broken or reconstituted families have 0.93 partners. Girls who come from intact families but worship less than monthly have a slightly higher average of 1.14. The data is taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II.

Other Studies

Several other studies corroborate findings along these lines.²

Analyzing fathers' relationships with their adolescent daughters, Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas

at Austin and Laura Luchies of Northwestern University report that while dads may feel off balance when their daughters become teenagers, their involvement in their daughters' lives makes a significant difference, especially if they take them to church weekly and minimize their dating.³

Surveying more than 26,000 female *and* male adolescents, Christina Lammers of South Dakota State University and colleagues reveal that teens are more likely to practice sexual abstinence if they are more religious, live in a two-parent household, and believe that their parents care about their actions.⁴

Michael J. Donahue and Peter L. Benson of the Search Institute in Minneapolis also find that religious worship is the aspect of religiosity most directly correlated to abstinence among adolescents, more so than considering religion important or participating in church-related activities.⁵

Analyzing contextual environmental data on family structure and religious adherence, Karin L. Brewster of the University of North Carolina and colleagues report that adolescent girls who live in neighborhoods with a high percentage of divorced or separated women are particularly likely to have premarital sexual intercourse. This likelihood, however, is modified by the percentage of religious believers in the community. The greater the percentage of those who practice their faith the less the sexual activity of adolescent girls.⁶

Absent fathers and empty churches contribute to the increased sexual activity of female adolescents. The evidence strongly indicates that teenage girls are least likely to engage in sexual intercourse when living in an intact family that worships frequently.

Thus the two great relationships, between spouses and with God, seem most protective of the sexuality of young female teenagers.

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D.

2 The following findings are from www.familyfacts.org, except for Regnerus and Luchies, which is from the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society.

3 Mark D. Regnerus and Laura B. Luchies, "The Parent-Child Relationship and Opportunities for Adolescents' First Sex," *Journal of Family Issues* 27 (February 2006): 159-183.

4 Cristina Lammers, Marjorie Ireland, Michael Resnick, and Robert Blum, "Influences on Adolescents' Decision to Postpone Onset of Sexual Intercourse: A Survival Analysis of Virginity among Youths Aged 13 to 18 Years," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 26 (2000): 42-48.

5 Michael J. Donahue and Peter L. Benson, "Religion and the Well-Being of Adolescents," *Journal of Social Issues* 51 (1995): 145-160.

6 Karin L. Brewster, William R. Grady, and John O. G. Billy, "Contextual Effects on the Sexual Behavior of Adolescent Women," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56 (1994): 387-404.



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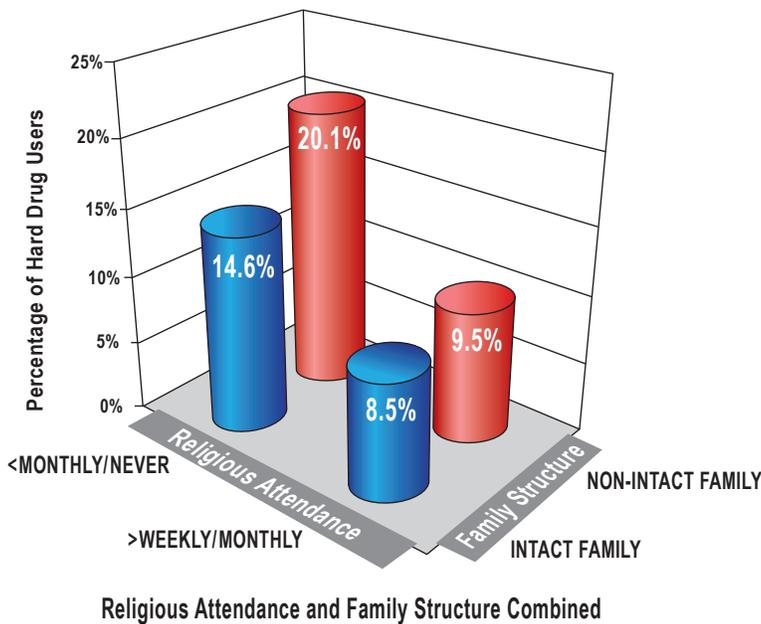
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Religious Attendance, Family Structure, and Adolescent Use of Hard Drugs

Hard Drug Use by Religious Attendance and Family Structure¹



Adolescents from intact families who worship frequently are least likely ever to try hard drugs.

This chart depicts the percentage of adolescents in Grades 7-12 who have ever tried hard drugs when correlated with religious attendance and family structure. Only 8.5 percent of adolescent students who live with both biological parents and worship at least monthly have ever tried hard drugs. By contrast, over 20 percent of adolescent students who worship less than monthly and come from single-parent or reconstituted families have used hard drugs. In between are those in a non-intact family who worship at least monthly (9.5 percent) and those who live in an intact family but worship less than monthly (14.6 percent). The data are taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II.

Other Studies

Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Jerry Trusty of Texas A&M University and Richard Watts of Baylor University found that students who attend religious activities frequently are more likely to have involved parents and less likely to use drugs.²

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

¹ This chart draws on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. This work was done by the author in cooperation with former colleagues at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Jo Anne Grunbaum of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and colleagues found that increased church attendance and family involvement are significantly associated with decreased cocaine use among students in high school recovery/dropout prevention programs.³

Analyzing data from a random set of 13,250 adolescents in Utah in 1994, Stephen Bahr of Brigham Young University and colleagues reported that while good father-adolescent relationships, as well as good mother-adolescent relationships, have an effect on deterring drug use, a much more significant deterrent to drug use is a student's religiosity.⁴

Ray Merrill of Brigham Young University and colleagues found that students at Brigham Young University were less likely to have used drugs if their parents were involved in church and had frequent discussions with their children about appropriate conduct. By contrast, those students whose parents had a neutral or dismissive attitude toward religion were more likely to have used drugs.⁵

While religious attendance appears to be even more protective than intact marriage, the intact married family that worships frequently is the most protective. The two great loves, of spouse and of God, make a difference to adolescents.

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-
- 2 Jerry Trusty and Richard E. Watts, "Relationship of High School Seniors' Religious Perceptions and Behavior to Educational, Career, and Leisure Variables," *Counseling and Values* 44.1 (1999): 30-40. This finding is from www.familyfacts.org.
 - 3 J. A. Grunbaum, S. Tortolero, N. Weller, and P. Gingiss, "Cultural, Social, and Intrapersonal Factors Associated with Substance Use among Alternative High Schools," *Addictive Behaviors* 25 (2000): 145-151.
 - 4 Stephen J. Bahr, Suzanne L. Maughan, Anastasios C. Marcos, and Bingdao Li, "Family, Religiosity, and the Risk of Adolescent Drug Use," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60 (1998): 979-992.
 - 5 R. M. Merrill, R. D. Salazar, and N. W. Gardner, "Relationship between Family Religiosity and Drug Use Behavior among Youth," *Social Behavior and Personality* 29 (2001): 347-357.



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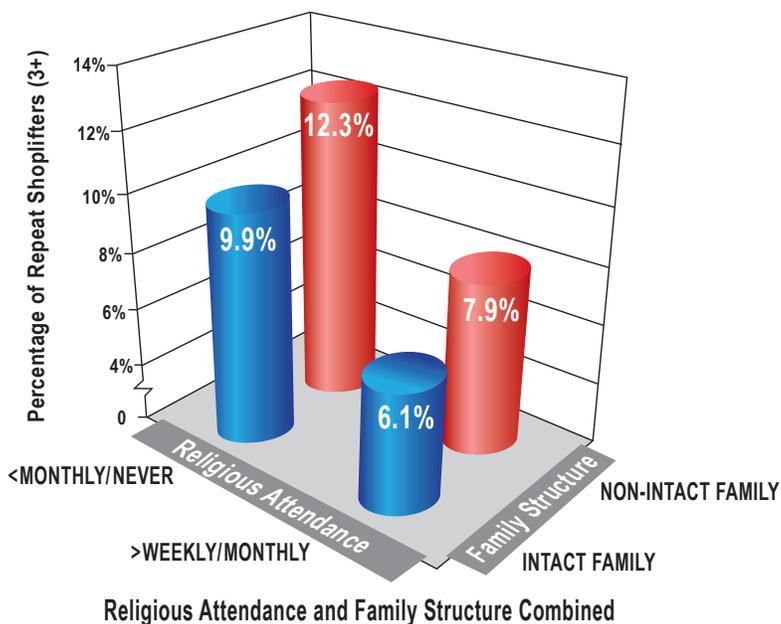
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Religious Attendance, Family Structure, and Shoplifting

Repeat Shoplifting by Religious Attendance and Family Structure¹



This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

Adolescents from intact families who worship frequently are least likely to shoplift repeatedly.

This chart depicts the percentage of adolescents in Grades 7-12 who have repeatedly shoplifted (3+ times) when correlated with religious attendance and family structure. Only six percent of adolescent students who live with both biological parents and worship at least monthly have repeatedly shoplifted. By contrast, over 12 percent of adolescent students who worship less than monthly and come from single-parent or reconstituted families have shoplifted repeatedly. In between are those in a non-intact family who worship at least monthly (7.9 percent) and those who live in an intact family but worship less than monthly (9.9 percent). The data are taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II.

Other Sources²

Several studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Byron Johnson of Baylor University and colleagues found that while religiosity

¹ This chart draws on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. This work was done by the author in cooperation with former colleagues at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.

in adolescents has a negative impact on delinquency, adolescents who live with both biological parents are also less likely to associate with delinquent friends.³

Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin reported that adolescents with higher family satisfaction and a greater degree of parent religiosity are less likely to be delinquent.⁴

In another study, Regnerus and Glen Elder of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that the more important religion is to adolescents and the more satisfied adolescents are with their family, the less likely they are to engage in delinquent behavior.⁵

Jerry Trusty of Texas A&M University and Richard Watts of Baylor University also reported that the greater the import adolescents place on religion and the more often they attend religious activities, the more likely they are to have involved parents and the less likely they are to be delinquent.⁶

The moral beliefs and values developed through frequent religious worship and an intact family powerfully counteract the temptations of shoplifting and other delinquent acts. Through attendance at religious service and the influence of married parents, adolescents are more likely to respect others' property.

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2 The last two findings are from www.familyfacts.org.

3 Byron R. Johnson, et al., "Does Adolescent Religious Commitment Matter? A Reexamination of the Effects of Religiosity on Delinquency," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 38 (2001): 22-44.

4 Mark D. Regnerus, "Linked Lives, Faith and Behavior: Intergenerational Religious Influence on Adolescent Delinquency," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42 (2003): 189-203.

5 Mark. D. Regnerus and Glen H. Elder, "Religion and Vulnerability among Low-Risk Adolescents," *Social Science Research* 32 (2003): 633-658.

6 Jerry Trusty and Richard E. Watts, "Relationship of High School Seniors' Religious Perceptions and Behavior to Educational, Career, and Leisure Variables," *Counseling and Values* 44 (1999): 30-40.



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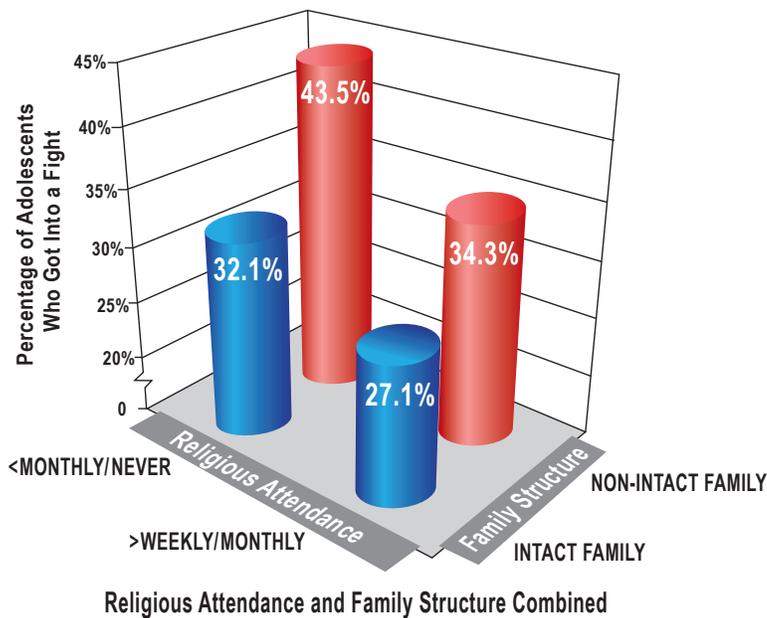
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Religious Attendance, Family Structure, and Fighting

Ever Got Into a Fight by Religious Attendance and Family Structure¹



This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

¹ This chart draws on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. This work was done by the author in cooperation with former colleagues at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Adolescents from intact families who worship frequently are least likely to get into a fight.

This chart depicts the percentage of adolescents in Grades 7-12 who have ever been in a fight, correlated with religious attendance and family structure. Only 27.1 percent of adolescents who live with both biological parents and worship at least monthly have ever been in a fight. By contrast, 43.5 percent of adolescent students who worship less than monthly and come from single-parent or reconstituted families have ever been in a fight. In between are those in non-intact families who worship at least monthly (34.3 percent) and those who live with both biological parents and worship less than monthly (32.1 percent). The data are taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II.

Other Sources

Many other studies confirm the direction of these findings. Wendy Manning and Kathleen Lamb of Bowling Green State University reported that teens who were more

religious had less behavioral problems than other teens. They also found that adolescents living with married biological parents were less delinquent than those living within any other family structure.²

Michelle Pearce of Yale University and colleagues found that “a greater level of parent involvement and private religious practices were associated with a decrease in conduct problems over a 1-year period.”³

Lela McKnight and Ann Loper of the University of Virginia also reported that residing in a single-parent household was one of only two significant risk factors associated with delinquency in female adolescents. Degree of religious belief was one of five significant resilience factors.⁴

Christian Smith of the University of Notre Dame found that adolescent children whose parents attended church regularly were more likely to expect their parents to be upset if they discovered their children had been fighting.⁵

When it comes to keeping children from getting into fights, the intact married family that worships regularly is the most effective peacekeeping force.

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2 Wendy D. Manning and Kathleen A. Lamb, “Adolescent Well-Being in Cohabiting, Married, and Single-Parent Families,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65 (2003): 876-893.

3 Michelle J. Pearce, Stephanie M. Jones, Mary E. Schwab-Stone, and Vladislav Ruchkin, “The Protective Effects of Religiousness and Parent Involvement on the Development of Conduct Problems among Youth Exposed to Violence,” *Child Development* 74.6 (2003): 1682-1696.

4 Lela Renee McKnight and Ann Booker Loper, “The Effect of Risk and Resilience Factors on the Prediction of Delinquency in Adolescent Girls,” *Social Psychology International* 23.2 (2002): 186-198.

5 Christian Smith, “Religious Participation and Parental Moral Expectations and Supervision of American Youth,” *Reviews of Religious Research* 44.4 (2003): 414-424. This finding is from www.familyfacts.org.



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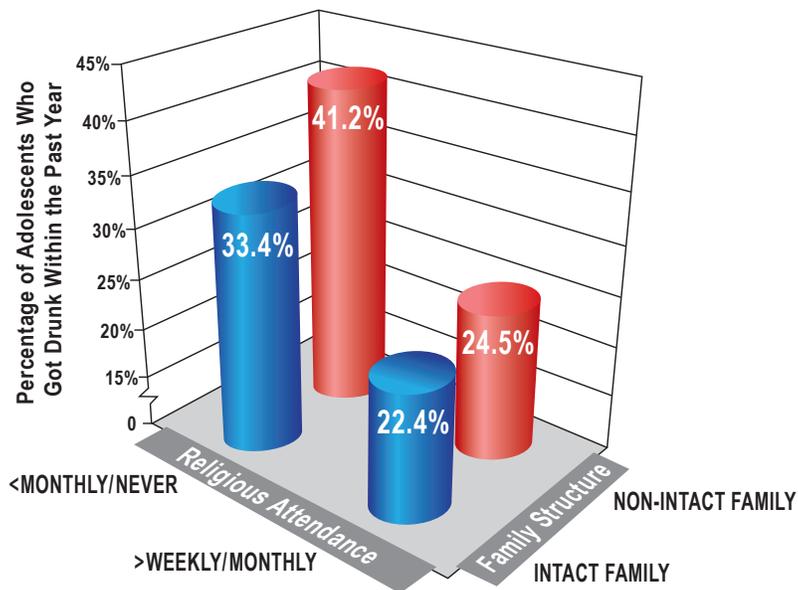
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Religious Attendance, Family Structure, and Drinking

Getting Drunk by Religious Attendance and Family Structure¹



Religious Attendance and Family Structure Combined

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

¹ This chart draws on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. This work was done by the author in cooperation with former colleagues at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Adolescents from intact families who worship frequently are least likely to abuse alcohol.

This chart depicts the percentage of adolescents in Grades 7-12 who admitted to getting drunk in the year prior to being asked, correlated with religious attendance and family structure. Only 22.4 percent of adolescents who live with both biological parents and worship at least monthly have abused alcohol. By contrast, 41.2 percent of adolescents who worship less than monthly and come from single-parent or reconstituted families have abused alcohol. In between are those in non-intact families who worship at least monthly (24.5 percent) and those who live with both biological parents and worship less than monthly (33.4 percent). The data are taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II.

Other Studies

Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Roy Oman of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and colleagues

found “a positive, significant relationship between [participation in church or religious activities] and the nonuse of alcohol” and also that “[y]ouths from 2-parent households were significantly more likely than those from 1-parent households to report nonuse of alcohol.”²

W. Alex Mason and Michael Windle of the University of Alabama at Birmingham reported that adolescents who had close familial bonds “were more likely to be religiously committed and involved” and that this religious commitment and familial support were both directly related to less alcohol consumption over time.³

In a study of adolescent students in British schools, Ian Sutherland and Jonathan Shepherd of the University of Wales College of Medicine found that 31.4 percent of students who frequently attended religious services used alcohol regularly, compared to 68.3 percent of students who did not attend religious services, and that “[a]dolescents without religious convictions were...2.8 times as likely to drink alcohol.” They also noted that 59.4 percent of students from intact families regularly used alcohol, compared to 65.9 percent of those from non-intact families.⁴

The data indicate that the intact family that worships frequently is most protective against the abuse of alcohol.

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2 Roy F. Oman, et al., “The Potential Protective Effect of Youth Assets on Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Use,” *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 94 (2004): 1425-1430.

3 W. Alex Mason and Michael Windle, “Family, Religious, School and Peer Influences on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Longitudinal Study,” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, vol. 62 (2001): 44-53.

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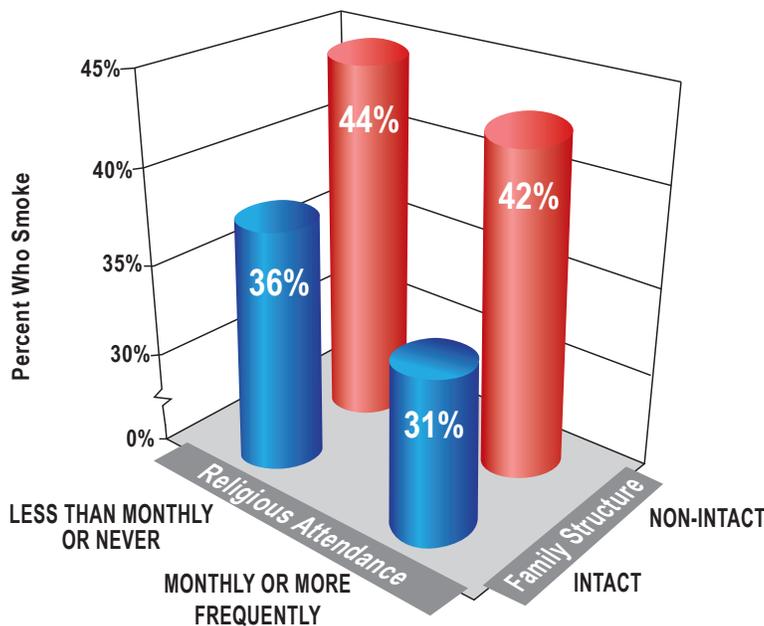
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Smoking in Adulthood by Religious Attendance and Family Structure in Adolescence

Smoking in Adulthood by Religious Attendance and Family Structure in Adolescence



During Adolescence:
Religious Attendance and Family Structure Combined

Source: General Social Surveys (GSS, 1972-2006)

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more frequently vs. less than monthly or never) and family structure (intact vs. non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

Visiting Fellow Althea Nagai provided the data for this chart.

Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents and grew up living with both biological parents are least likely to smoke.

According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 31 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family through adolescence currently smoke, compared to 44 percent of those who attended religious services less than monthly and grew up in a non-intact family. In between were those who attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (42 percent) and those who grew up in an intact family but worshiped less than monthly (36 percent).¹

Other Studies

Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. In a study of Australian twins, Arpana Agrawal of the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and colleagues found that infrequent religious attendance correlated with frequent cigarette

smoking and that “children separated from a biological parent were...more likely to report regular cigarette smoking as adults.”²

Analyzing various degrees of smoking in adolescents, Stephen Soldz and Xingjia Cui of Health and Addictions Research reported that nonsmokers attended religious services most frequently, whereas early escalator smokers attended less frequently and continuous smokers least frequently. They also found that at the sixth grade in school, “quitters and experimenters were more likely to be living with both parents, whereas late escalators and continuous smokers were more likely to be living with a single parent or an extended family.”³

Thomas Wills of Yeshiva University and colleagues also found that adolescents’ religiosity was inversely correlated with tobacco use and that adolescents from intact families were less likely to use tobacco than those from blended and single-parent families.⁴

As the evidence demonstrates, frequent religious attendance and intact families are just what the surgeon general ordered.

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1 This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Surveys, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

2 Arpana Agrawal, et al., “Correlates of Regular Cigarette Smoking in a Population-based Sample of Australian Twins,” *Addiction*, vol. 100 (2005): 1,709-1,719.

3 Stephen Soldz and Xingjia Cui, “Pathways through Adolescent Smoking: A 7-Year Longitudinal Grouping Analysis,” *Health Psychology*, vol. 21 (2002): 495-504.

4 Thomas Ashby Wills, et al., “Buffering Effect of Religiosity for Adolescent Substance Use,” *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, vol. 17 (2003): 24-31.



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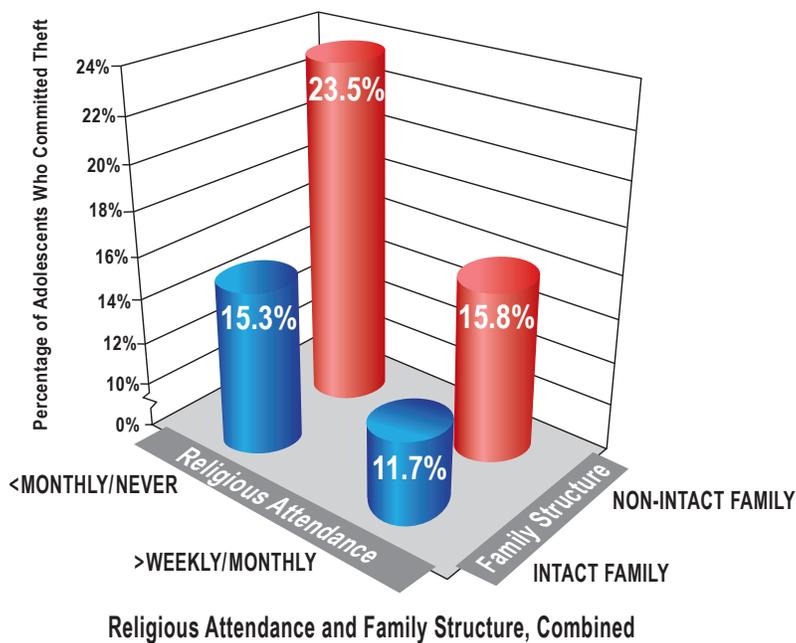
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Religious Attendance, Family Structure, and Theft

Theft by Religious Attendance and Family Structure¹



Adolescents from intact families who worship frequently are the least likely to steal.

This chart depicts the percentage of adolescents in Grades 7-12 who have ever stolen more than \$50 worth of goods, correlated with religious attendance and family structure. Only 12 percent of adolescents who live with both biological parents and worship at least monthly have ever stolen as much. By contrast, 24 percent of adolescents who worship less than monthly and come from single-parent or reconstituted families have stolen more than \$50 worth of goods. In between are those in non-intact families who worship at least monthly (15.8 percent) and those who live with both biological parents and worship less than monthly (15.3 percent). The data are taken from a confidential survey conducted as part of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II.

Other Studies

Though little additional research has been done that correlates these three measures, what studies exist corroborate the direction of these

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

findings. Wendy Manning of Bowling Green State University and Kathleen Lamb of the University of Wisconsin reported that adolescents who were more religious were less likely to be delinquent, as were adolescents who lived with their married parents.²

Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin and Glen Elder of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that adolescents who attended religious services at least weekly and adolescents who are satisfied with their family were less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.³

In another study, Regnerus reported that family satisfaction and religiosity were strong protective factors against adolescent delinquency, although religiosity affected adolescent boys only indirectly through higher levels of family satisfaction.⁴

The available evidence indicates that the dual influence of religious attendance and an intact married family prove to be most effective in reducing theft by adolescents.

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-
- 1 This chart draws on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. This work was done by the author in cooperation with former colleagues at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.
 - 2 Wendy D. Manning and Kathleen A. Lamb, "Adolescent Well-Being in Cohabiting, Married, and Single-Parent Families," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 65 (2003): 876-893. The delinquency measures included stealing something worth more than \$50 and stealing something worth less than \$50.
 - 3 Mark D. Regnerus and Glen H. Elder, "Religion and Vulnerability among Low-Risk Adolescents," *Social Science Research*, vol. 32 (2003): 633-658. The delinquency measures included stealing something worth more than \$50 and stealing something worth less than \$50.
 - 4 Mark D. Regnerus, "Linked Lives, Faith, and Behavior: Intergenerational Religious Influence on Adolescent Delinquency," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 42 (2003): 189-203. The delinquency measures included stealing something worth more than \$50 and stealing something worth less than \$50.



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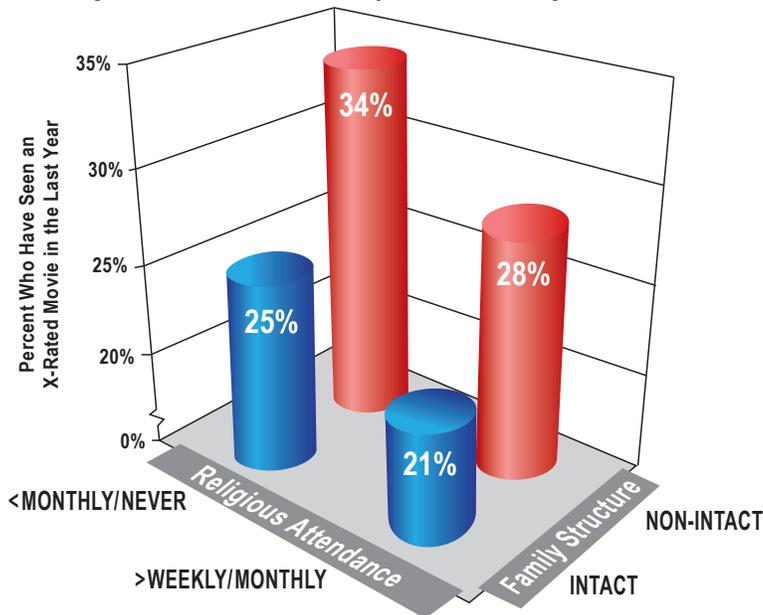
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Intergenerational Links to Viewing X-Rated Movies: Religious Attendance and Family Structure

Percent Who Have Seen an X-Rated Movie in the Last Year by Their Religious Attendance and Family Structure during Adolescence



This chart is taken from a study conducted by Visiting Fellow Althea Nagai, Ph.D. for Family Research Council

Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents and grew up living with both biological parents are less likely to have viewed an X-rated film in the past year.

According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 21 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family as adolescents had viewed an X-rated film in the last year, compared to 34 percent of adults who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in a non-intact family as adolescents. In between were those who lived in an intact family but attended religious services less than monthly (25 percent) and those who had attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (28 percent).¹

Other Studies

Though no corresponding studies have been conducted, there are several studies in related

During Adolescence: Religious Attendance and Family Structure Combined

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

areas which indicate that high religiosity and parental involvement during adolescence encourage the development of a healthy sexuality. Carolyn Halpern of the University of North Carolina and colleagues found that religiosity and parental disapproval of sex during adolescence significantly contributed to young adults' adoption of traditional values regarding extramarital and premarital sex.²

Cristina Lammers of the University of Uruguay and colleagues also reported that adolescents with greater religiosity who live in two-parent homes and believe that those parents care about them are more likely to postpone sexual intercourse.³

Though further research would be instructive, the available evidence suggests that intact families and religious observance during adolescence are strong indicators of a healthy and moral sexuality.

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- 1 This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Survey, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.
 - 2 Carolyn Tucker Halpern, et al., "Adolescent Predictors of Emerging Adult Sexual Patterns," *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 39 (2006): 926.e.1-926.e.10.
 - 3 Cristina Lammers, et al., "Influences on Adolescents' Decision to Postpone Onset of Sexual Intercourse; A Survival Analysis of Virginity among Youths Aged 13 to 18 Years," *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 26 (2000): 42-48.



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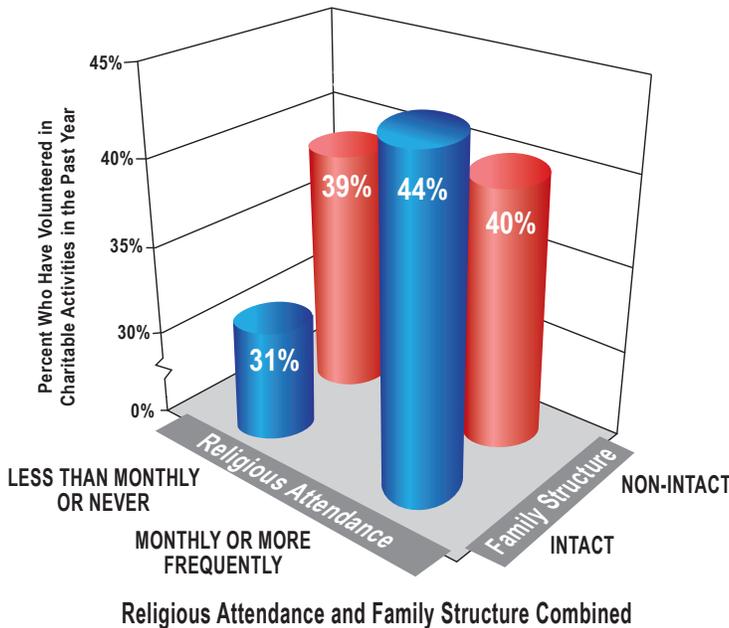
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Intergenerational Links to Volunteering in Charitable Activities: Religious Attendance and Family Structure

Percent Who Have Volunteered in Charitable Activities in the Past Year by Frequency of Their Religious Attendance and Family Structure during Adolescence



This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

This chart is taken from a study conducted by Visiting Fellow Althea Nagai for Family Research Council.

Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents and grew up living with both biological parents are most likely to have volunteered in a charitable activity in the past year.

According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 44 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family as adolescents had volunteered in a charitable activity in the last year, compared to 31 percent of adults who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in an intact family as adolescents. In between were those who lived in a non-intact family and attended religious services less than monthly (39 percent) and those who had attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (40 percent)¹.

As the findings show, family structure during adolescence has no effect on adult volunteerism, but when combined with

adolescent religious attendance, large differences emerge in the patterns of volunteering in charitable activities as adults.

Other Studies

To the best of our knowledge, no other studies have correlated adolescent religious attendance and family structure with adult volunteerism in charitable activities, but some studies have correlated adolescent religious attendance and family structure with contemporaneous volunteerism.

Daniel Lichter of the Ohio State University and colleagues found that “religious attendance increases the likelihood of volunteerism” for males and females in late adolescence and that single-parent families “are negatively associated with later prosocial behaviors,” especially for boys.²

Judith Smetana and Aaron Metzger of the University of Rochester also reported that “middle class African American adolescents’ spirituality and religiosity had a significant influence on their civic involvement” and that their intended involvement in future civic activities was predicted by positive communication with their mothers and fathers.³

As the evidence indicates, adolescents who frequently attend religious services and live in intact families are most likely to volunteer in charitable activities, both now and in the future, while their less religious counterparts are least likely.

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1 This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Survey in 1998. Two samples totaling approximately 3,000 people were used.

2 Daniel T. Lichter, et al., “Helping Others?: The Effects of Childhood Poverty and Family Instability on Prosocial Behavior,” *Youth Society*, vol. 34 (2002): 89-119.

3 Judith G. Smetana and Aaron Metzger, “Family and Religious Antecedents of Civic Involvement in Middle Class African American Late Adolescents,” *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, vol. 15 (2005): 325-352.



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Mapping America
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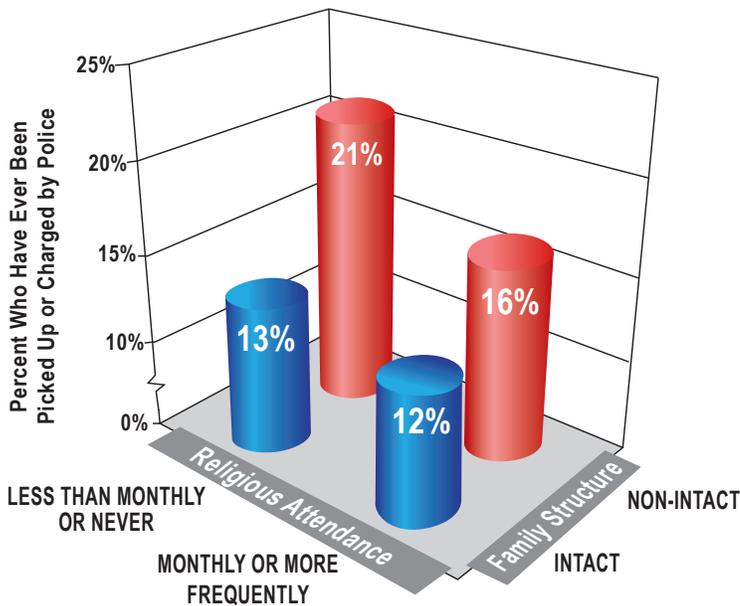
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good

Intergenerational Links to Being Picked Up or Charged by Police: Religious Attendance and Family Structure

Percent Who Have Ever Been Picked Up or Charged by Police by Their Religious Attendance and Family Structure during Adolescence



Religious Attendance and Family Structure Combined

Source: General Social Surveys (GSS, 1972-1987)

This chart groups the data in four categories, with two different configurations for each of two major indicators, frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more frequently vs. less than monthly or never) and family structure (intact vs. non-intact).

The intact category consists of families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category is composed of families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

Visiting Fellow Althea Nagai provided the data for this chart.

Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents and grew up living with both biological parents are least likely to have ever been picked up or charged by police.

According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 12 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family through adolescence have ever been picked up or charged by police, compared to 21 percent of adults who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in a non-intact family as adolescents. In between were those who lived in an intact family but attended religious services less than monthly (13 percent) and those who had attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (16 percent).¹

Other Studies

Though no other studies, to the best of our knowledge, have correlated adolescent religious attendance and family structure

with adult arrests, several contemporaneous studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin reported that adolescents with more religious parents and higher family satisfaction are less likely to exhibit delinquent behavior.²

Wendy Manning of Bowling Green State University and Kathleen Lamb of the University of Wisconsin also found that adolescents who were more religious and adolescents who lived with their married parents were less likely to paint graffiti or signs on someone else's property or in a public place, deliberately damage someone else's property, take something from a store without paying for it, drive a car without the owner's permission, use or threaten to use a weapon to get something from someone, and sell marijuana or other drugs.³

As the evidence shows, religious attendance and an intact family weave a powerful safety net that keeps both adolescents, and later adults, from being picked up or charged by police.

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

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Dr. Nagai is a visiting fellow at Family Research Council.

1 This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Surveys, 1972-1987. The sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979 or 1981.

2 Mark D. Regnerus, "Linked Lives, Faith and Behavior: Intergenerational Religious Influence on Adolescent Delinquency," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 42 (2003): 189-203.

3 Wendy D. Manning and Kathleen A. Lamb, "Adolescent Well-Being in Cohabiting, Married, and Single-Parent Families," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 65 (2003): 876-893.



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The Family is Good for America

And we can prove it.

Mapping America is a weekly chart and commentary series that demonstrates, mainly through U.S. federal survey data, how the intact married family that worships weekly is the greatest generator of human goods and social benefits and is the core strength of the United States.

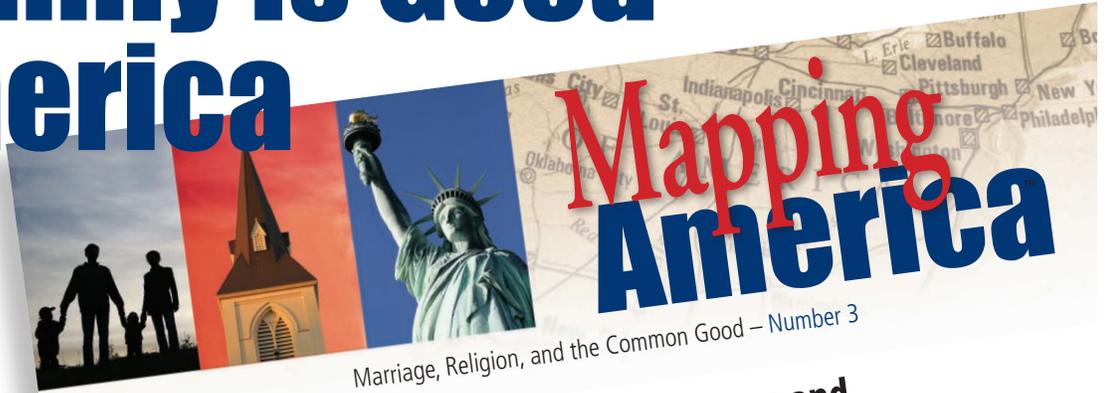
Recent topics have included the correlation of adolescent religious attendance and family structure with grade point average, sex partners, hard drug use, shoplifting, fighting, drinking, and expulsion or suspension from school.

For more information, visit www.mappingamericaproject.org.

Dr. Patrick F. Fagan
Editor, Mapping America



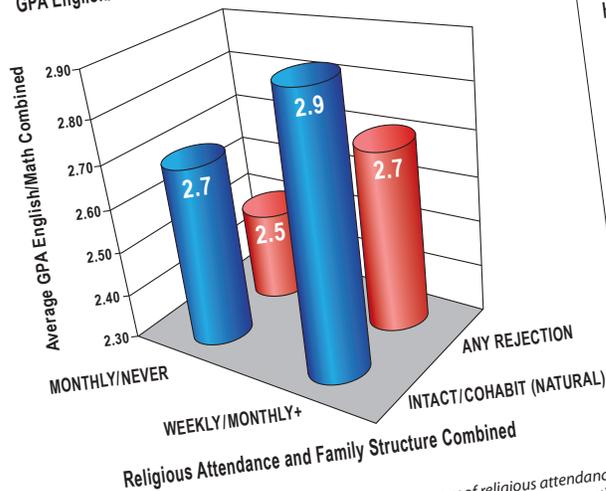
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Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good – Number 3

Religious Attendance, Family Structure and School Performance of U.S. High School Students

GPA English/Math by Religious Attendance and Family Structure



The chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-

categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

based on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health. This work was done by the author in cooperation with the Family Research Council at The Heritage Foundation.

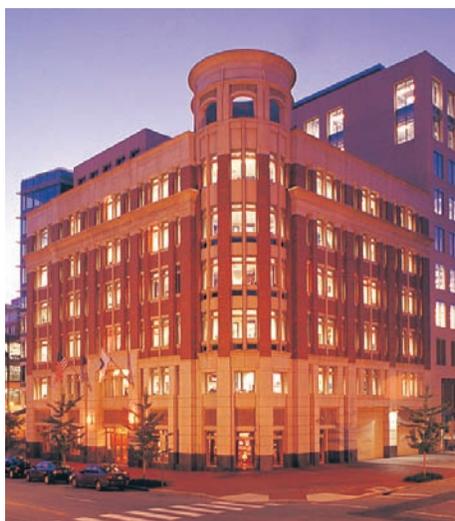
American high school students from intact families that worship frequently have as a group the highest Grade Point Average (GPA) for English and math combined.

Teenagers who live in intact families that worship weekly score a combined GPA of 2.9. Students who worship at least monthly but reside in families not headed by both biological parents score a combined 2.7 GPA, as do students who live in a family with both natural parents but who worship less than monthly. Those who are not living with both biological parents and who worship less than monthly have the lowest GPA (2.5).

Other Studies

Several other studies also report significant correlations among religious attendance, intact family structure, and educational performance. Examining the National Education Longitudinal Study, Jerry Trusty at Texas A&M University and Richard W. Lapan at Baylor University report that students who more frequently [high school seniors] attended religio-





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Founded in 1983, Family Research Council is a nonprofit research and educational organization dedicated to articulating and advancing a family-centered philosophy of public life. In addition to providing policy research and analysis for the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government, FRC seeks to inform the news media, the academic community, business leaders, and the general public about family issues that affect the nation.

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