

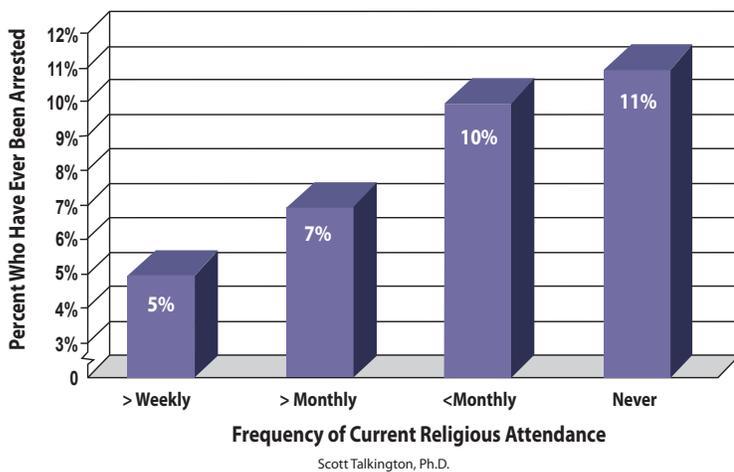


Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good – Number 102

# “Ever Been Arrested” by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

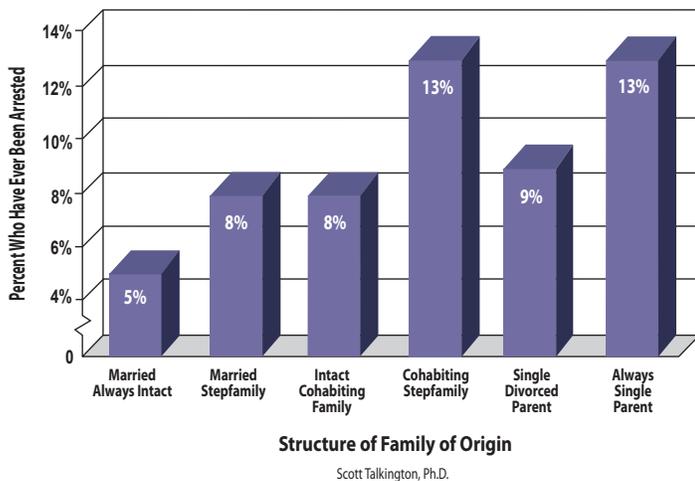
“Ever Been Arrested”  
by Current Religious Attendance

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



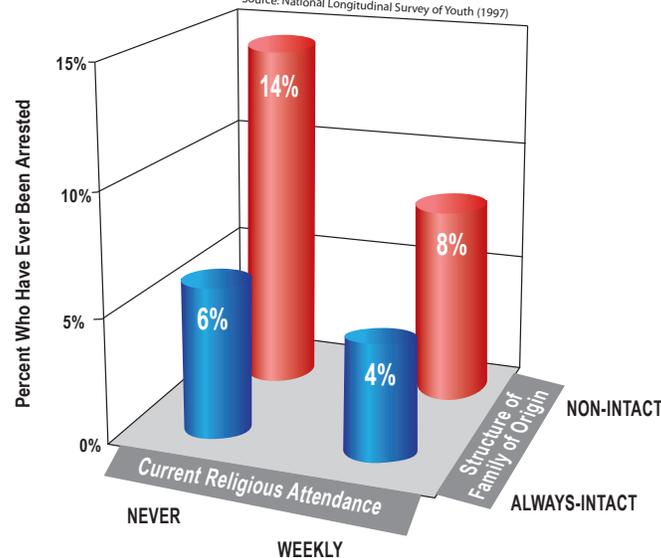
“Ever Been Arrested”  
by Structure of Family of Origin

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



“Ever Been Arrested”  
by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin Combined

Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

This chart looks at youths who have ever been arrested at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. all other family structures\*) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

The always-intact married family that worships weekly;

The always-intact married family that never worships;

All other family structures\* that worship weekly;

All other family structures\* that never worship.

(\*The non-intact group consists of individuals in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)

## “Ever Been Arrested”

### by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that youths who did not grow up in always-intact married families and never attended church are most likely to have ever been arrested..

**Description:** Examining **structure of family of origin**, only 5 percent of youths who grew up in an intact married family had ever been arrested, followed by youths from married stepfamilies and families with intact cohabiting partners (8 percent), single divorced parent families (9 percent) and cohabiting stepfamilies and always single parent families (13 percent).

Examining only **current religious attendance**, 5 percent of youths who currently attend weekly religious services have ever been arrested, followed by those who attend one to three times a months (7 percent), those who attend less than once a month (10 percent), and those who never attend church (11 percent).

Examining **current religious attendance and structure of family of origin combined**, only 4 percent of youths who currently attend weekly religious services and who grew up in an always-intact family have ever been arrested, followed by youths who never attend church but grew up in an always intact family (6 percent), those who grew up in all other family structures but currently attend church weekly (8 percent) and those who never attend church and grew up in all other family structures (14 percent).

### Related Insight from Other Studies

The effects of family structure can be seen in the Oregon Youth Study, a longitudinal survey. Compared to boys living with both biological parents, boys living in single-mother households had higher odds of being arrested by age 14 (208 percent higher) and of being arrested by age 17 (128 percent higher). This survey also showed that boys living in stepfamilies had greater odds of being arrested by age 14 (210 percent higher) and of being arrested by age 17 (139 percent higher) than did boys in households with both biological parents.<sup>1</sup>

One study found an inverse correlation between church attendance and religious influence and the kind and rate of offenses committed.<sup>2</sup> Those who attended church frequently or who claimed considerable religious influence had considerably lower odds of being a frequent offender, compared to the individuals who attended church less frequently or not at all. Another study found that states with more religious populations tended to have fewer homicides and fewer suicides.<sup>3</sup>

Another study looked at African-American men in prison against a matched control group who were not in prison, and found that those who eventually ended up in prison typically did not go to church (or had stopped going) when they were about 10 years old.<sup>4</sup>

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

*Dr. Fagan is senior fellow and director of the Marriage and Religion Research Institute (MARRI) at Family Research Council.*

*Scott Talkington has been Research Director for the National Association of Scholars and Senior Research Fellow at George Mason University School of Public Policy since 1998.*

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1 Coughlin, Chris and Samuel Vuchinich, "Family Experience in Preadolescence and the Development of Male Delinquency," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58(2) 1996, pp. 491-501.

2 Sloane, D.M. & Potvin, R.H. 1986, 'Religion and delinquency: Cutting through the maze', *Social Forces*, vol. 65, no. 1, pp. 87-105.

3 Lester, D. 1987, 'Religiosity and personal violence: A regional analysis of suicide and homicide rates', *The Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 127, no. 6, pp. 685-686.

4 Parson, N.M. & Mikawa, J.K. 1990, 'Incarceration and nonincarceration of African-American men raised in Black Christian churches', *The Journal of Psychology*, vol. 125, pp. 163-173.

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FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL  
801 G STREET NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20001  
800-225-4008  
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