



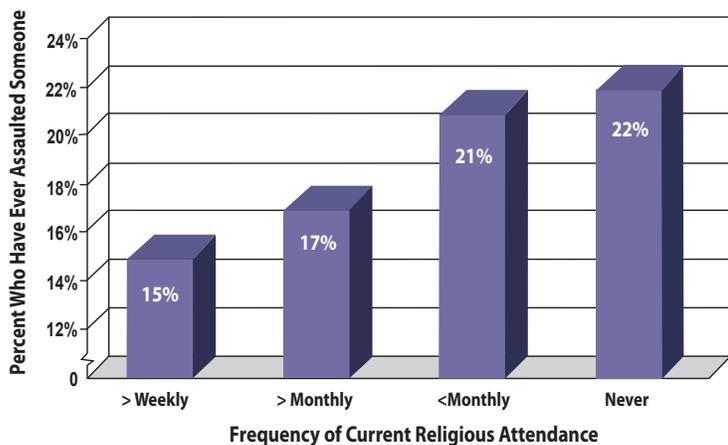
# Mapping America™

Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good – Number 106

## “Ever Assaulted Someone” by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

“Ever Assaulted Someone”  
by Current Religious Attendance

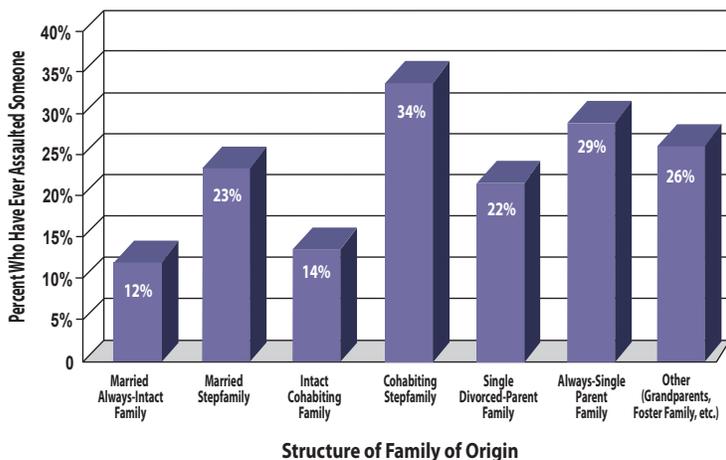
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

“Ever Assaulted Someone”  
by Structure of Family of Origin

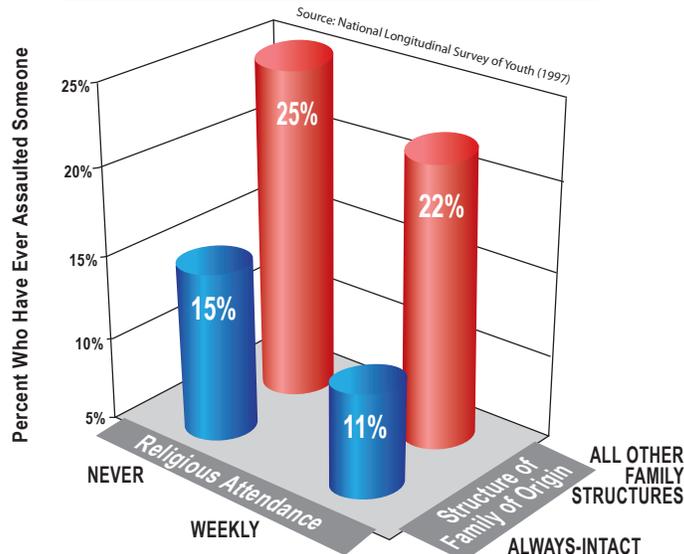
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

“Ever Assaulted Someone”  
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 adults who have committed assault 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.

(\* This 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 Assaulted Someone” by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that adults who grew up in intact families and currently attended weekly religious services are least likely to “ever assault someone.”

**Description:** Examining **structure of family of origin**, 12 percent of adults who grew up with both biological parents married commit assault in their lifetime, followed by those who grew up in an intact, cohabiting family (14 percent), those who grew up in a divorced single-parent family (22 percent), those who grew up in a married stepfamily (23 percent), those who grew up in an alternate family structure [i.e. with grandparents, in foster homes, etc.] (26 percent), those who grew up with an always-single parent (29 percent), and those who grew up in a cohabiting stepfamily (34 percent).

Examining only **current religious attendance**, 15 percent of those who attend religious services at least once per week commit assault. They are followed by those who attend at least monthly (17 percent), those who attend less than monthly (21 percent), and those who never attend religious services (22 percent).

Examining **current religious attendance and structure of family of origin combined**, 11 percent of adults who worship weekly and grew up in intact families have committed assault. By contrast, 25 percent of adults who never attend religious services and come from all other family structures have at some point assaulted someone. Between these two extremes are those who never worship and grew up in intact families (15 percent) and those who attend religious services weekly but grew up in all other family structures (22 percent).

## Related Insight from Other Studies

Data from the 1995 National longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health showed that adolescent children living with their parents in an intact married family were less likely to engage in serious violent delinquency than were their peers in single-parent and stepfamily households.<sup>1</sup>

A study by Christopher G. Ellison of the University of Texas at San Antonio and colleagues found that religious practice is correlated to decreased risk of domestic violence.<sup>2</sup> Another study found that frequent religious attendance in young adolescents correlated with increased likelihood of choosing nonviolent methods to solve hypothetical conflict.<sup>3</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 Demuth, Stephen and Susan L. Brown, “Family Structure, Family Processes, and Adolescent Delinquency: The Significance of Parental Absence versus Parental Gender” *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 41(1) 2004, pp.58-81.
  - 2 Ellison, Christopher G., Jenny A. Trinitapoli, Kristin L. Anderson & Byron R. Johnson. “Race/Ethnicity, Religious Involvement, and Domestic Violence.” *Violence Against Women* Volume 13(11) 2007, pp. 1094-1112.
  - 3 DuRant, Robert, Frank Treiber, Elizabeth Goodman & Elizabeth R. Woods. “Intentions to Use Violence among Young Adolescents,” *Pediatrics* Volume 98(6) 1996, pp. 1104-1108.



FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL  
801 G STREET NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20001  
800-225-4008  
WWW.FRC.ORG

Marriage and Religion Research Institute / Editor: Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. / Managing Editors: Julia Kiewit and Anna Dorminey

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