



Mapping America™

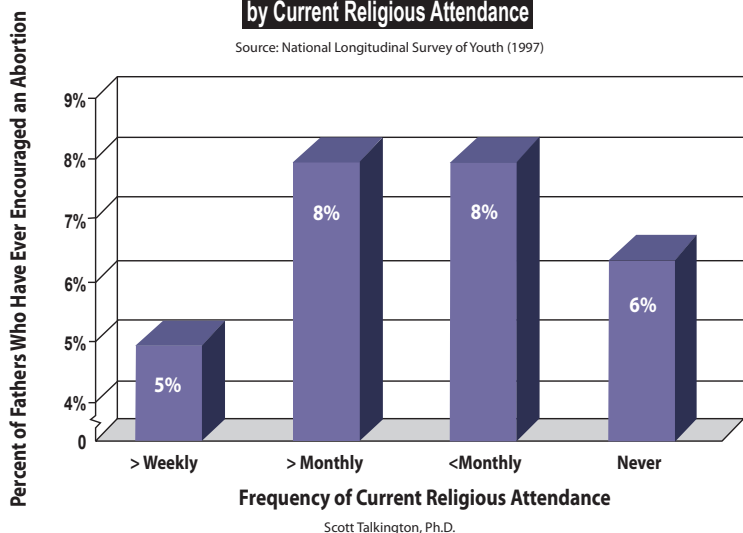
Marriage, Religion, and the Common Good – Number 107

“Fathers Who Have Ever Encouraged an Abortion” by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

“Fathers Who Have Ever Encouraged an Abortion”

by Current Religious Attendance

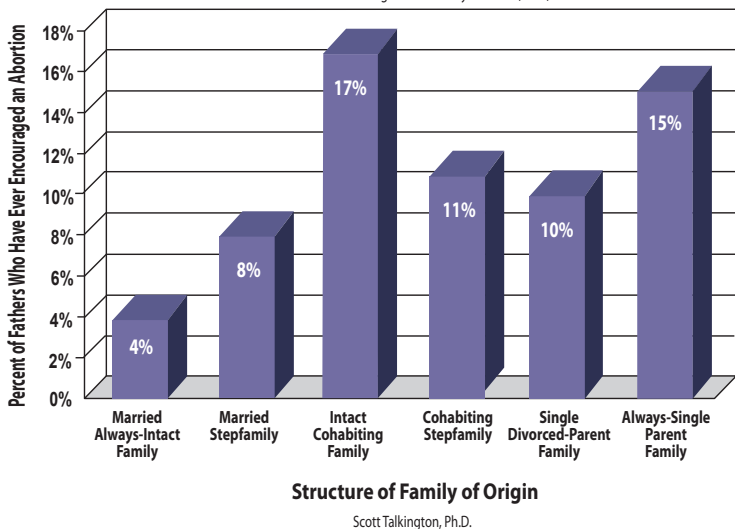
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



“Fathers Who Have Ever Encouraged an Abortion”

by Structure of Family of Origin

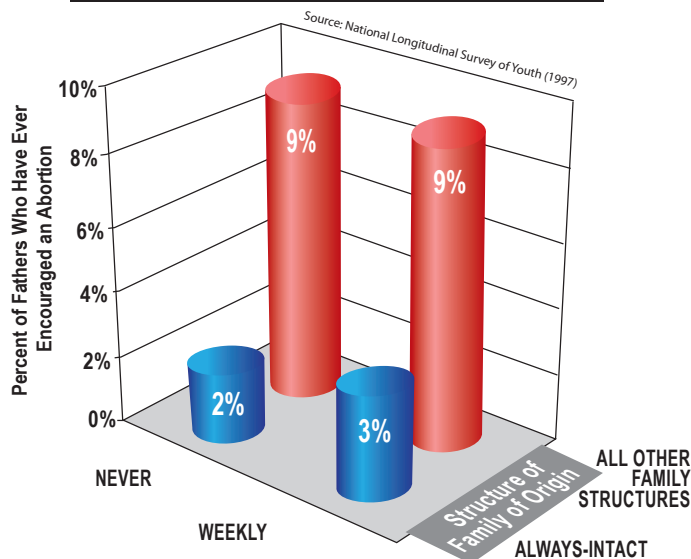
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



“Fathers Who Have Ever Encouraged an Abortion”

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 fathers who have encouraged an abortion 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 (high vs. low).

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.

(*“All other family structures” includes men 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.)

“Fathers Who Have Ever Encouraged an Abortion”

by Current Religious Attendance and Structure of Family of Origin

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that men who grew up in intact married families and attend religious services at least weekly are less likely to encourage the mother of their child to have an abortion.

Description: Examining **current religious attendance**, only 5 percent of fathers who attend religious services at least once a week are likely to have encouraged the mother’s abortion. Six percent of fathers who never attend religious services, 8 percent of fathers who attend religious services at least monthly, and 8 percent of fathers who attend less than once a month are likely to be the reason the mother obtains an abortion.

Examining **structure of family of origin**, 4 percent of fathers from intact married families ever encourage women to have an abortion. Next are fathers from married stepfamilies, who are twice as likely to encourage women to have an abortion (8 percent), fathers from single divorced-parent families (10 percent), fathers from cohabiting stepfamilies (11 percent), and fathers from always-single parent families (15 percent). Fathers from intact cohabiting families are most likely to encourage a mother to have an abortion (17 percent).

Examining **current religious attendance and structure of family of origin combined**, only 3 percent of fathers who grew up in intact married families and who now worship at least weekly are likely to be the father who encourages a woman to abort his child. Two percent of fathers who grew up in intact married families but never attend religious services are likely to be the father who encourages a woman to abort his child, compared to fathers who grew up in all other family structures and never attend religious services (9 percent) and fathers who grew up all other family structures but attend weekly religious services (9 percent).

Related Insight from Other Studies

According to the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children, a 31-year-long study, 18-year-olds who said religion played an important role in their lives tended to be less supportive of abortion (as well as premarital sex, cohabitation, and divorce) than were their peers who said religion was less important to them.¹

Another study found the responses of men who father a child out of wedlock vary according to the characteristics of their own family of origin. Fathers who had grown up in a family that received welfare were less likely to marry their baby’s mother than their peers whose families had not received welfare. White men were 39 percent less likely to marry their baby’s mother and Black men were 6 percent less likely to marry their baby’s mother.² Additionally, according to the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Men and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Black men who live in the South are more likely to marry the mother of their baby than Black men who live in other regions, in the event of a non-marital pregnancy.³ Broken families are exceptionally likely to be impoverished or rely on welfare.⁴ Additionally, though belonging is higher in the West, the South has a higher index of belonging than both the Midwest and the Northeast.⁵ It may be that welfare and region are, in this case, proxies for family structure, and that broken families of origin contribute to the decreased likelihood that a father will marry the mother of his out-of-wedlock child. This finding dovetails with the fact that broken families of origin contribute to the increased likelihood that a father will encourage the mother of his child to abort it.

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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.

1. L.D. Pearce and A. Thornton, “Religious Identity and Family Ideologies in the Transition to Adulthood,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 69 (2007): 1227-1243.
2. Madeline Zavodny, “Do Men’s Characteristics Affect Whether a Nonmarital Pregnancy Results in Marriage?” *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 61 (August 1999): 764-773.
3. Ibid.
4. Patrick F. Fagan, Andrew J. Kidd, and Henry Potrykus, *Marriage and Economic Well-Being: The Economy of the Family Rises or Falls with Marriage* (Washington, D.C.: Marriage and Religion Research Institute, a project of the Family Research Council, 2011) [database online]; available from <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF11E70.pdf>: 16-20.
5. Patrick F. Fagan, *The US Index of Belonging and Rejection* (Washington, D.C.: Marriage and Religion Research Institute, a project of the Family Research Council, 2010) [database online]; available from <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF10L25.pdf>: 17, Chart 4.

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