



The Benefits of Religious Worship

Positive Outcomes Associated with Weekly Worship

December 14, 2011

U.S. federal surveys repeatedly show the benefits of weekly religious worship of God (one of the five main institutions or tasks of society). Worship's rewards flow over to all the other major institutions of the nation: to the family, to education, to the marketplace and income, and to government.

Furthermore, the more frequently people worship, the more they profit. If the social sciences say anything clearly about God, it is that the more people take heed of Him, the more He takes care of them. Those who do not worship at all, or who worship less than weekly, miss out on a variety of benefits.

The rewards of worship are myriad and can be seen across all sorts of outcomes, including grade point average, sexuality, family strength, charitable activity, psychological well-being, and a significant decrease in a variety of social ills. Adolescents who worship regularly are (understandably) more likely to do so as adults and this faithfulness to their beliefs will have major impact later on: Their children, in a decade or two, will reap the rewards of this adolescent religious commitment.

What follows are graphics that show the national picture for those who worship at different levels of frequency. They are derived from our largest national surveys on these issues, including the General Social Survey, the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, the National Survey of Children's Health, and the National Survey of Family Growth. These graphs originally appeared in the Marriage and Religion Research Institute's Mapping America productions.

We hope that the findings shown here encourage our readers, in this holiday season, to worship weekly and to reap the advantages that consistent religious practice offers to families, individuals, their communities, and the nation.

MARRI
801 G St, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202.393.2100

marri.us/benefits-religious-worship

Family Strength: The more frequent the religious attendance, the greater the strength of the family.

Family Strengths

- 1 Children's Positive Social Development
- 1 Married People Who are Happily Married
- 2 The Personal Importance of Being Married
- 2 The Personal Importance of Having Children
- 3 Quality of Parent-Child Relationships

Education

- 3 Combined Average in English and Math
- 4 Received a High School Degree
- 4 Students Who Received Mostly A's at School
- 5 Woman Who Have Attained a Bachelor's Degree

Religion

- 5 Attending Religious Services Monthly or More Frequently in Adulthood

Giving

- 6 Percent Who Have Volunteered in Charitable Activities in the Past Year

Attitudes

- 6 I Am Proud of the Work I Do
- 7 Percent Who Are Very Happy

Family Weakness: The less frequent the religious attendance, the greater the weakness of the family.

Family Weaknesses

- 8 Divorce or Separation in Adulthood
- 8 Rate of Adultery
- 9 Women Who Cohabited with Eventual First Husband
- 9 Women (aged 14-44) with Two or More Cohabitations in Lifetime
- 10 Ever Had an Unwed Pregnancy
- 10 Women Who Aborted First Pregnancy
- 11 Average Number of Unwanted Pregnancies

Sexuality

- 11 Sexual Intercourse for High School Girl
- 12 Ever Had Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger
- 12 Females Under the Age of 18 at First Sexual Intercourse
- 13 Cumulative Number of Women's Lifetime Sexual Partners
- 13 Women (aged 14-44) Who Had a Homosexual Sexual Partner in Past Year
- 14 Adolescents Who Have Seen an x-Rated Movie in the Last Year

Education

- 14 Children Whose Parents Were Contacted by School about Children's Behavior Problems
- 15 Expelled or Suspended from School
- 15 Repeating a Grade

Addictive Behaviors

- 16 Sometimes Drinks Too Much Alcohol

- 16 Getting Drunk
- 17 Hard Drug Use
- 17 Ever Smoked before Age 17
- 18 Smoking in Adulthood

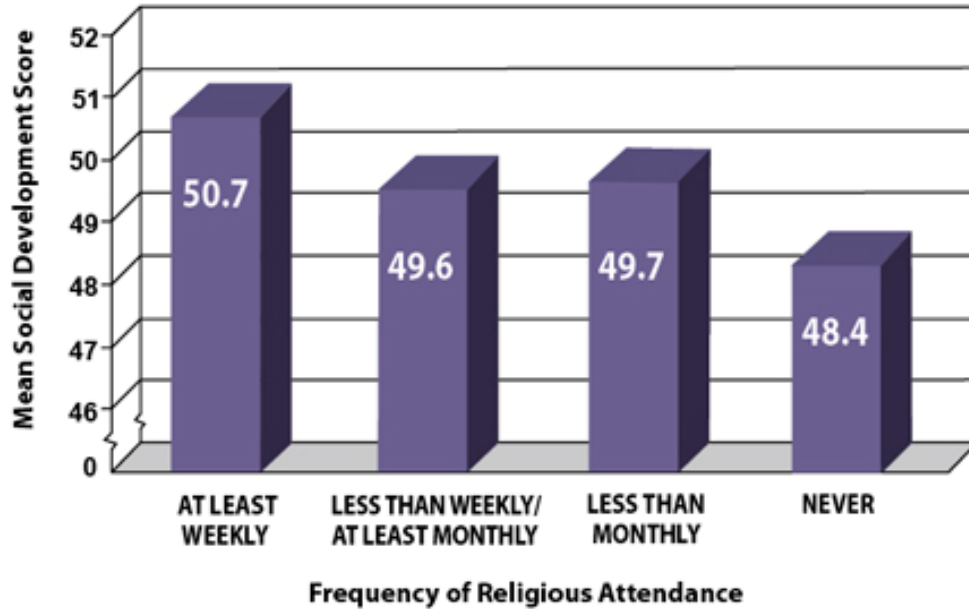
Social Problems

- 18 Behavior Problems
- 19 Running Away
- 19 Theft
- 20 Repeat Shoplifting
- 20 Ever Been Arrested
- 21 Ever Been Picked up or Charged by Police
- 21 Ever Got Into a Fight
- 22 Belief That People Try to Take Advantage of Others

Family Strengths

“Children’s Positive Social Development” by Religious Attendance

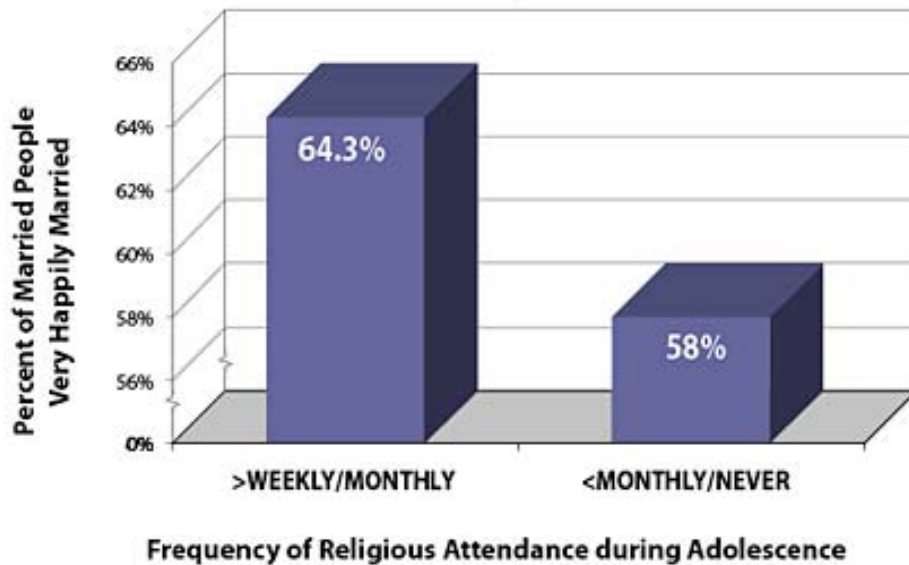
Source: National Survey of Children’s Health



Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Nicholas Zill, Ph.D.

“Married People Who are Happily Married” by Frequency of Religious Attendance in Adolescence

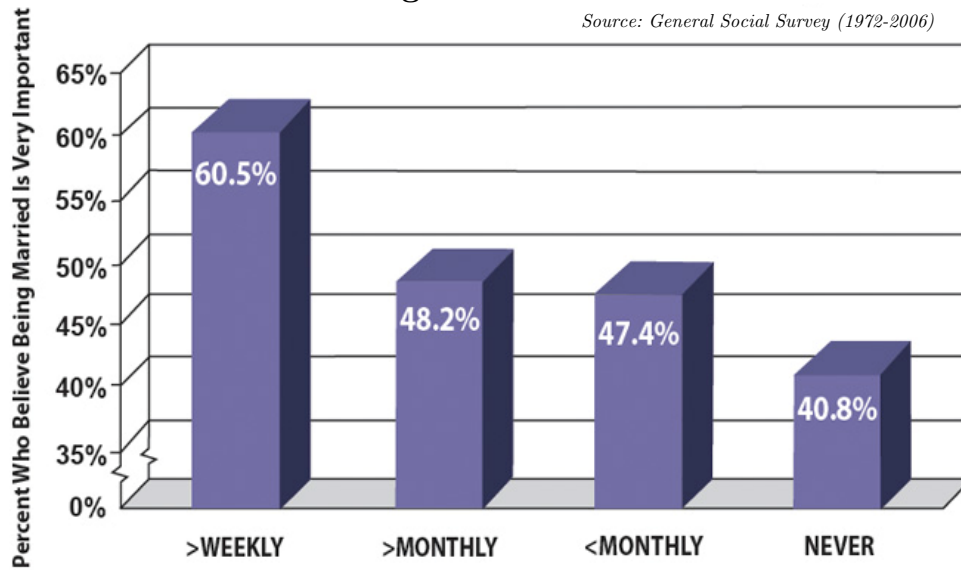
Source: General Social Survey



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

“The Personal Importance of Being Married” by Religious Attendance

Source: General Social Survey (1972-2006)

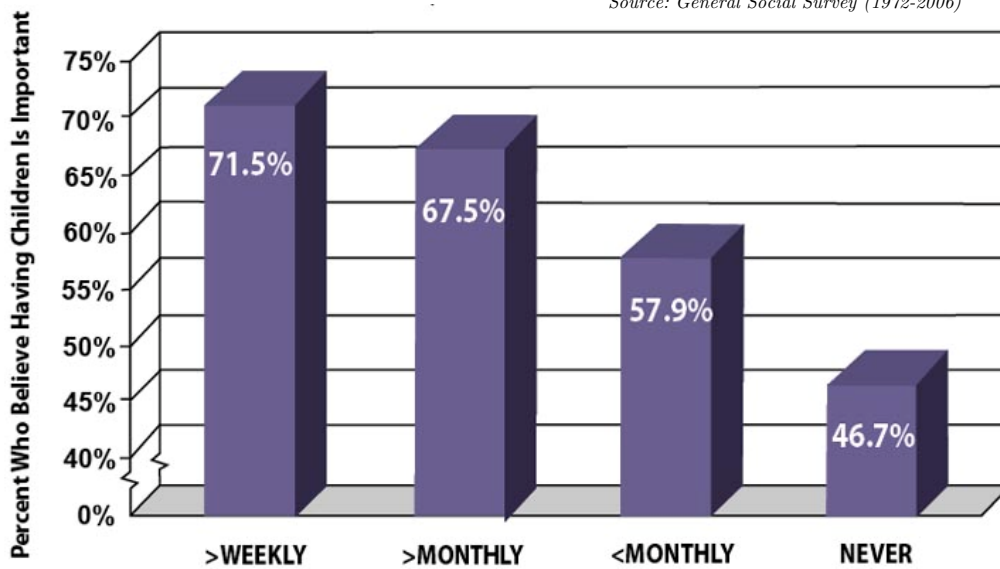


Frequency of Religious Attendance

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

“The Personal Importance of Having Children” by Religious Attendance

Source: General Social Survey (1972-2006)

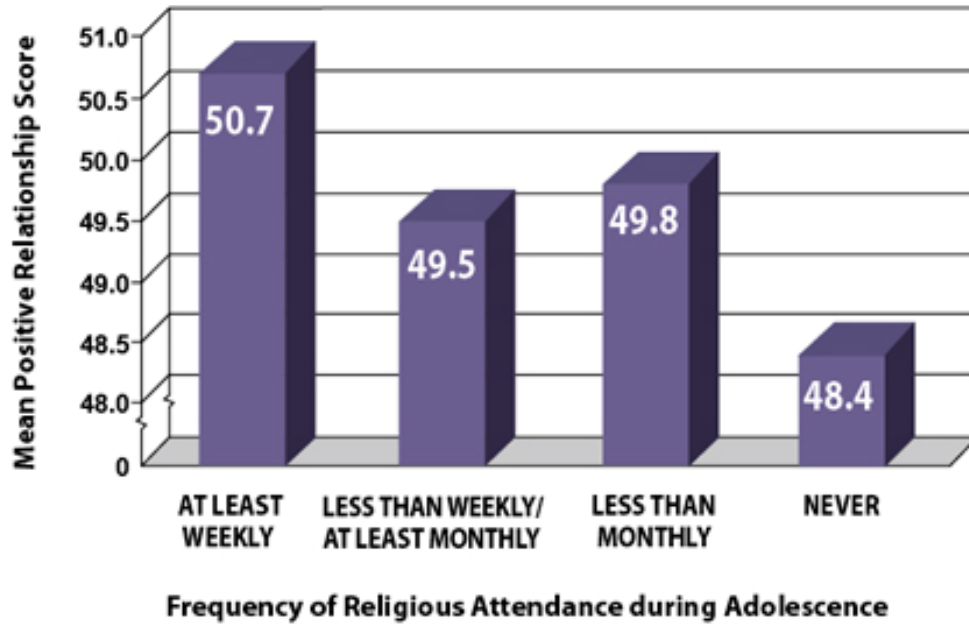


Frequency of Religious Attendance

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

“Quality of Parent-Child Relationship” by Religious Attendance

Source: National Survey of Children’s Health

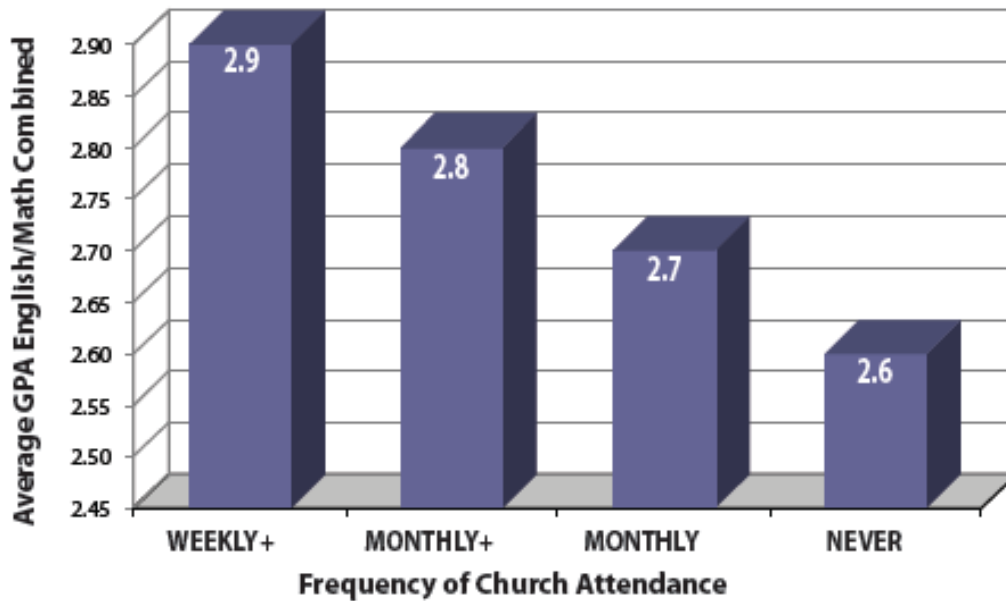


Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Nicholas Zill, Ph.D.

Education

“Combined Average in English and Math” by Religious Attendance

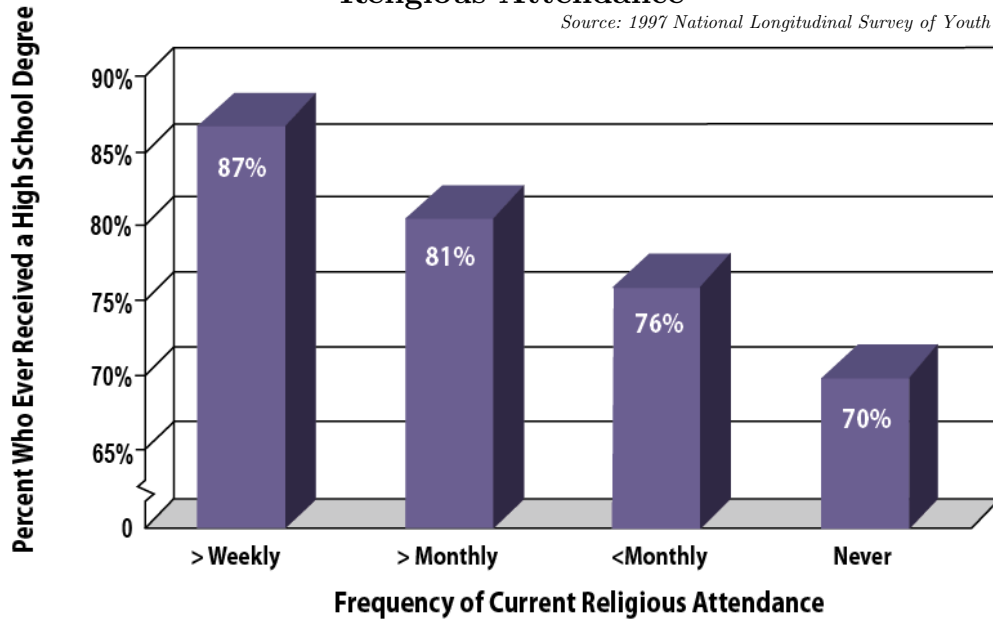
Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health



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

“Ever Received a High School Degree” by Current Religious Attendance

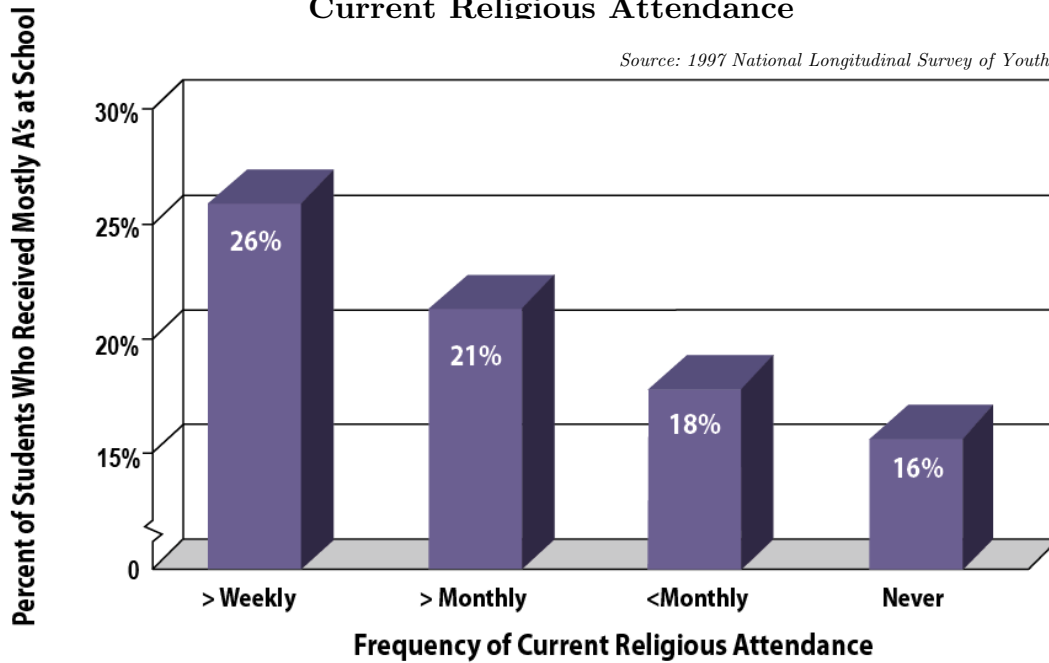
Source: 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth



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

“Students Who Received Mostly A’s at School” by Current Religious Attendance

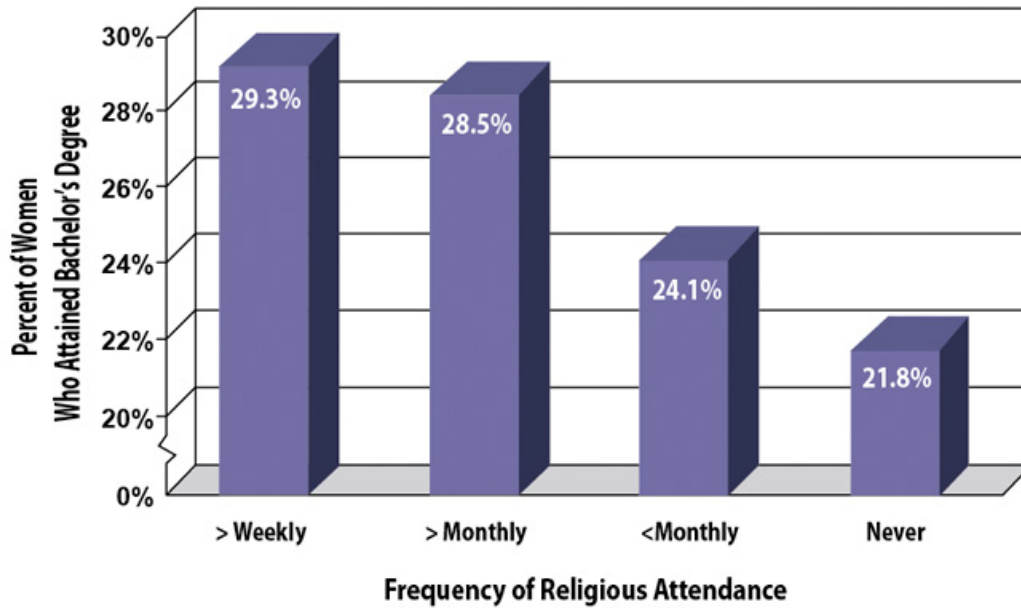
Source: 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth



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

“Women Who Have Attained a Bachelor’s Degree” by Current Religious Attendance

Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)

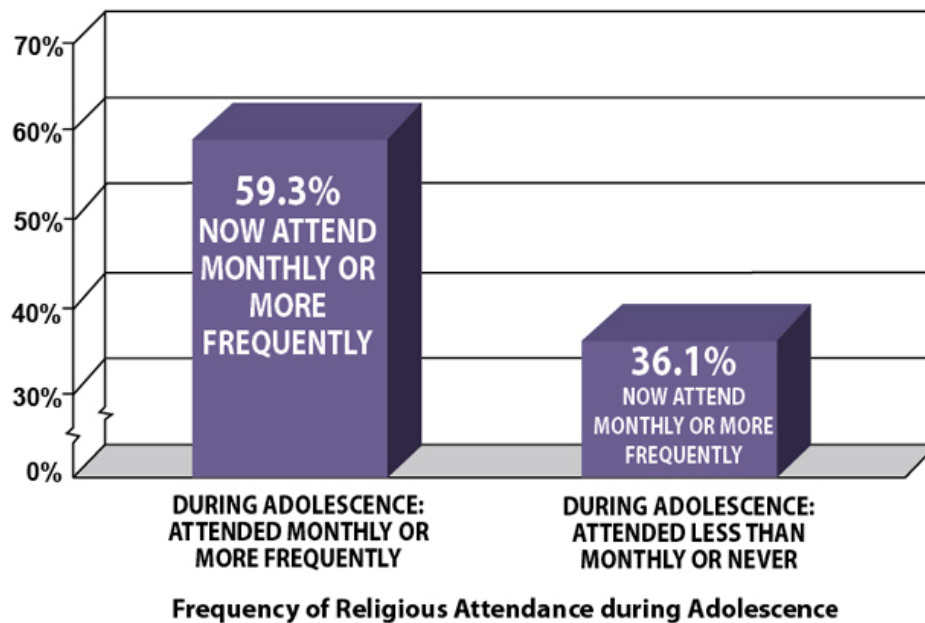


Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

Religion

“Attending Religious Services Monthly or More Frequently in Adulthood” by Frequency of Religious Attendance during Adolescence

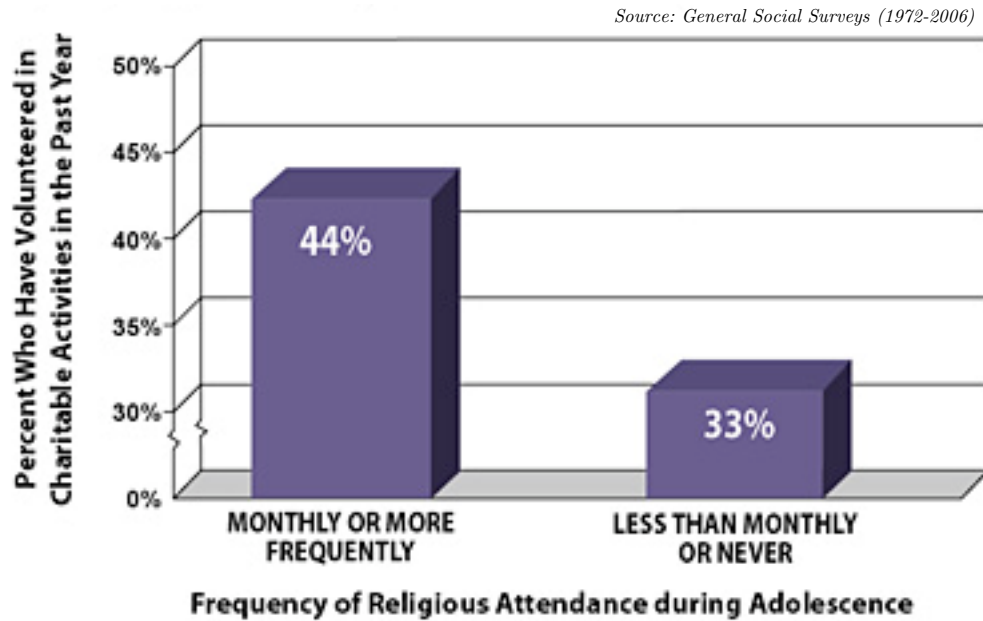
Source: General Social Surveys (1972-2006)



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

Giving

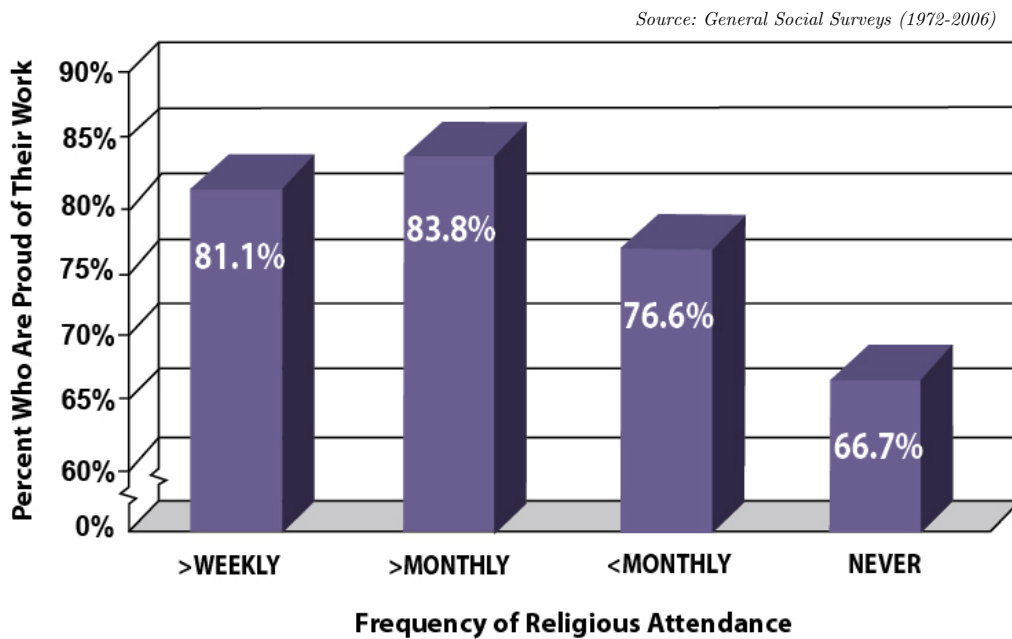
“Percent Who Have Volunteered in Charitable Activities in the Past Year” by Frequency of Religious Attendance in Adolescence



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

Attitudes

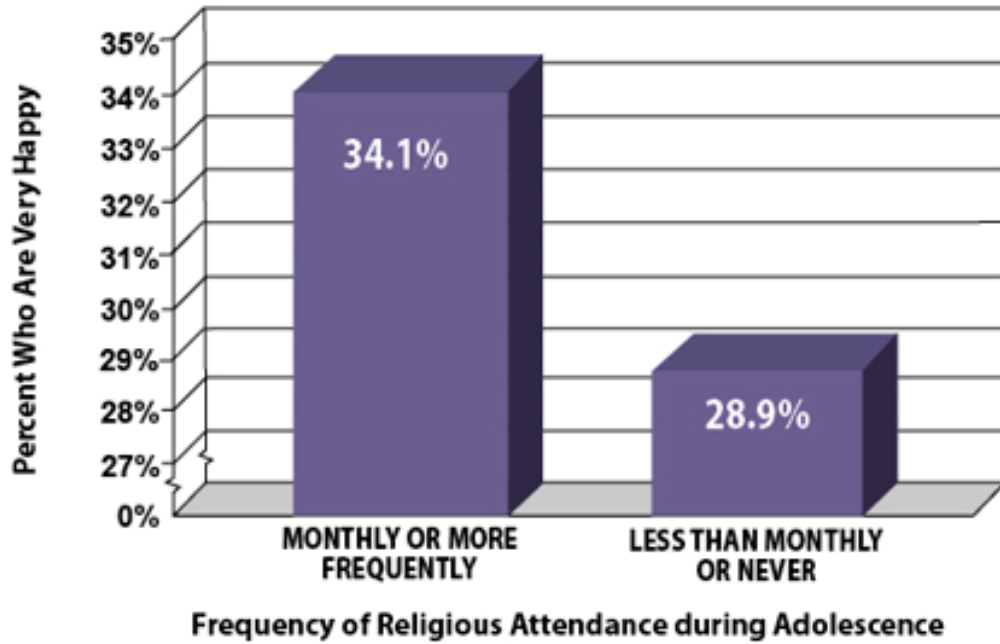
“I Am Proud of the Type of Work I Do” by Religious Attendance



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

**“Percent Who Are Very Happy”
by Frequency of Religious Attendance during Adolescence**

Source: General Social Surveys (1972-2006)

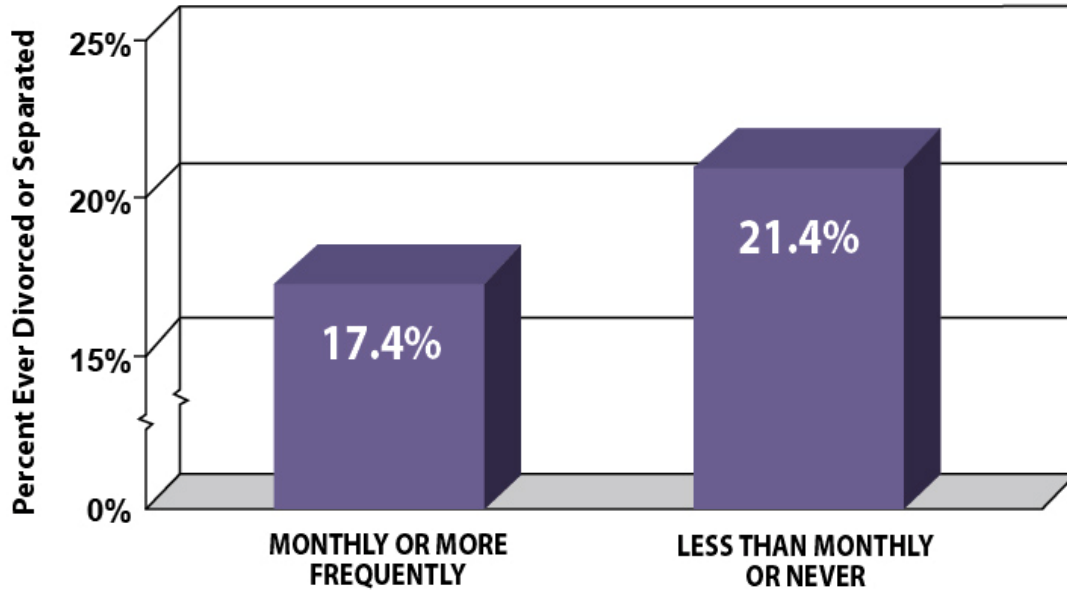


Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

Family Weaknesses

“Divorce or Separation in Adulthood”
by Frequency of Religious Attendance in Adolescence

Source: General Social Surveys (1972-2006)

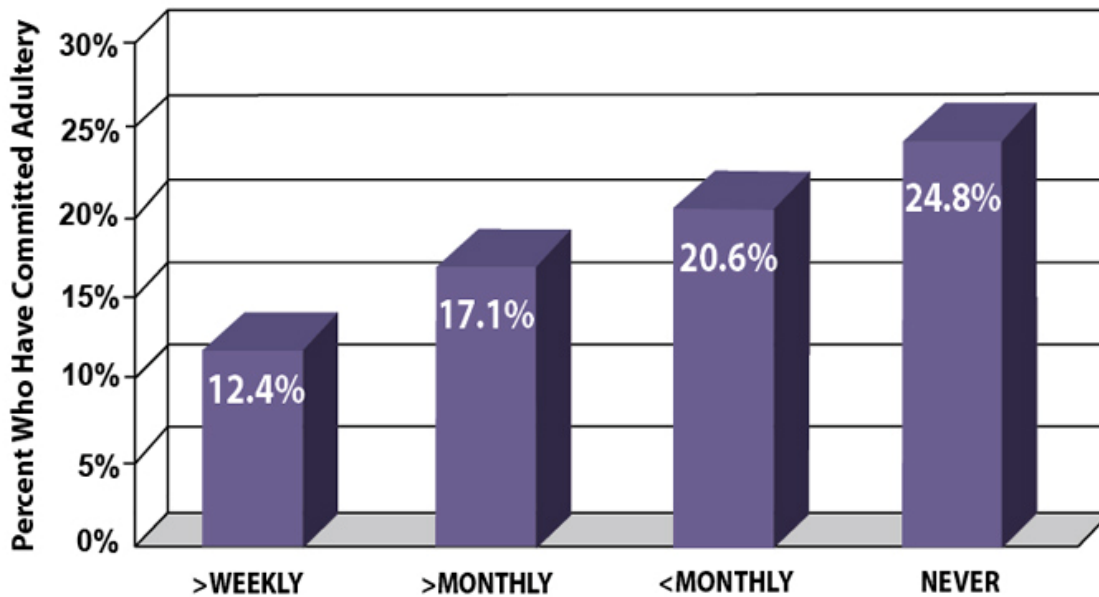


Frequency of Religious Attendance during Adolescence

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

“Rate of Adultery” by Religious Attendance

Source: General Social Surveys (1972-2006)

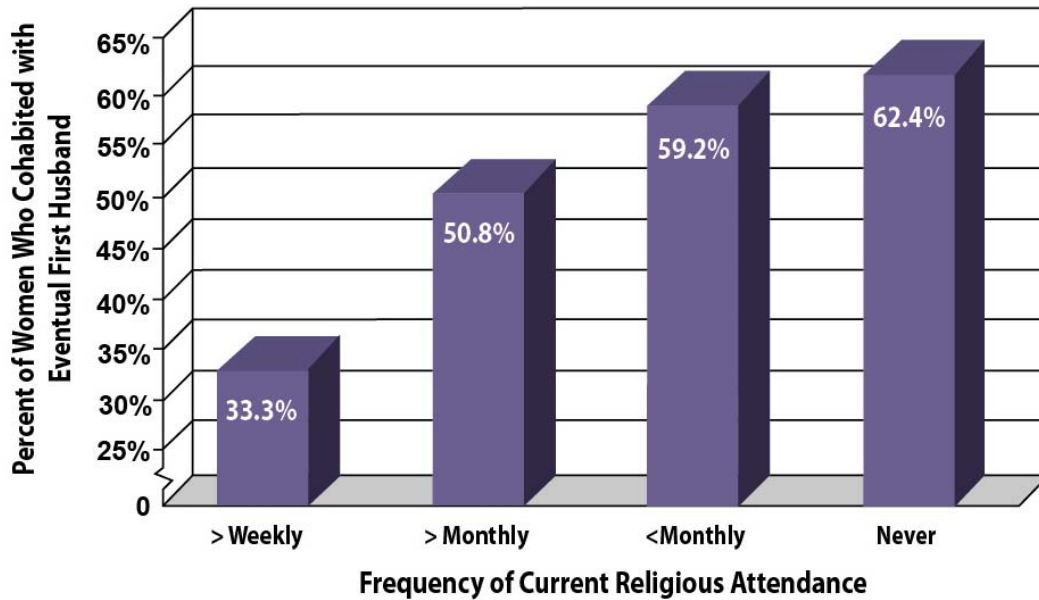


Frequency of Religious Attendance

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

“Women Who Cohabited with Eventual First Husband” by Current Religious Attendance

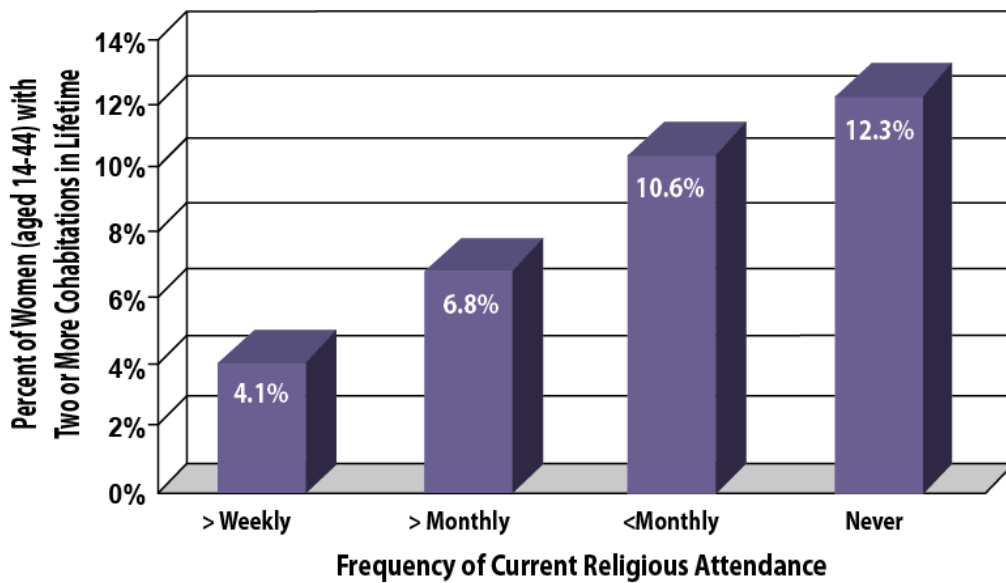
Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

“Women (aged 14-44) with Two or More Cohabitations in Lifetime” by Current Religious Attendance

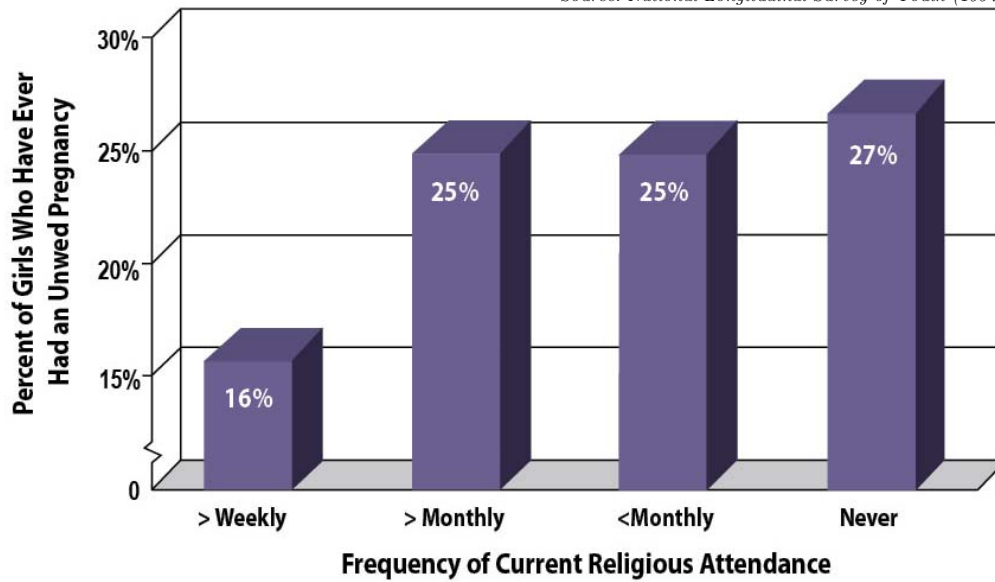
Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

“Ever Had an Unwed Pregnancy” by Current Religious Attendance

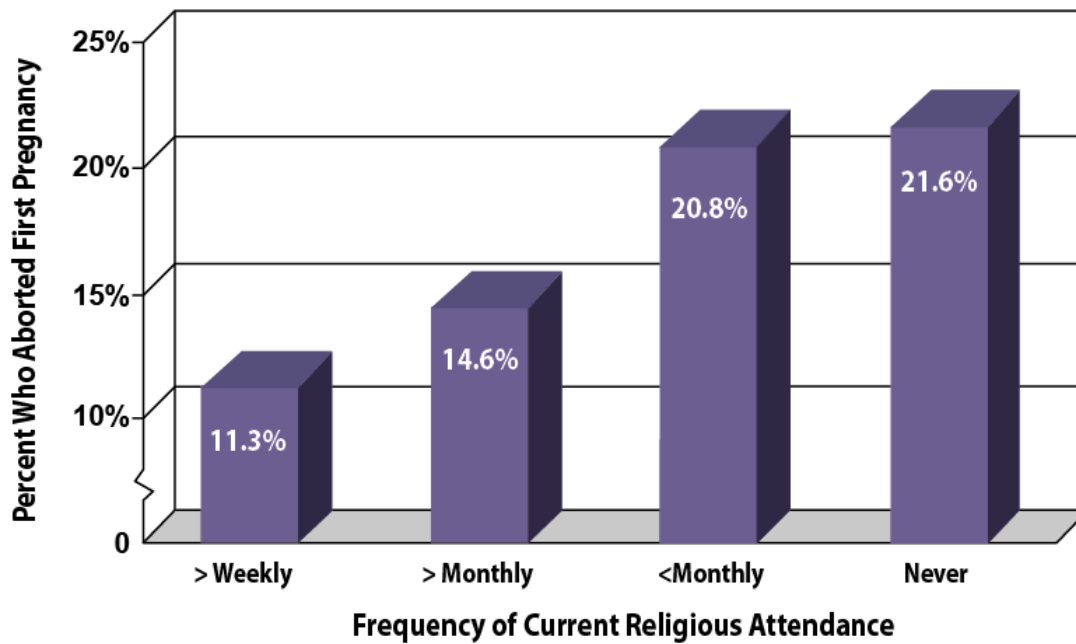
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



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

“Women Who Aborted First Pregnancy” by Current Religious Attendance

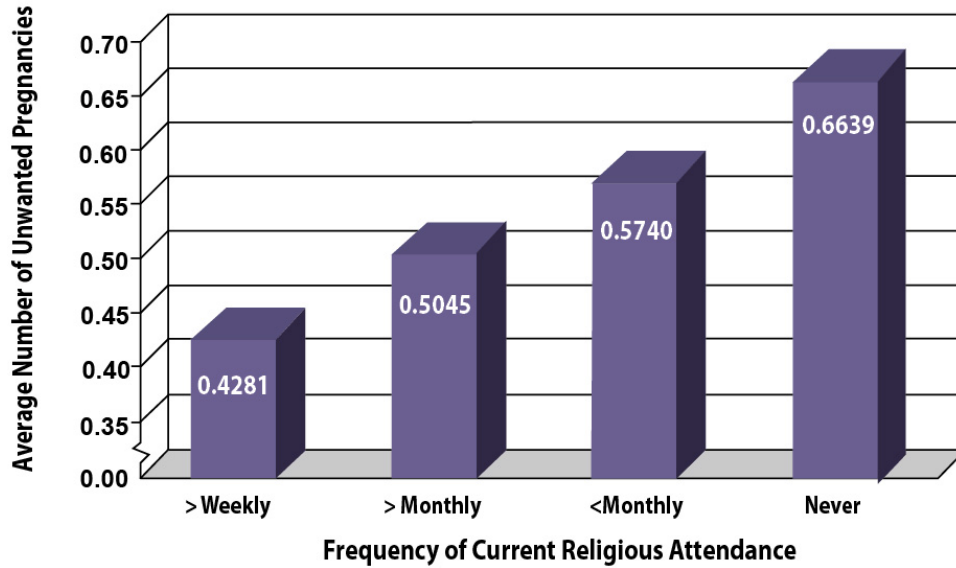
Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

“Average Number of Unwanted Pregnancies” by Current Religious Attendance

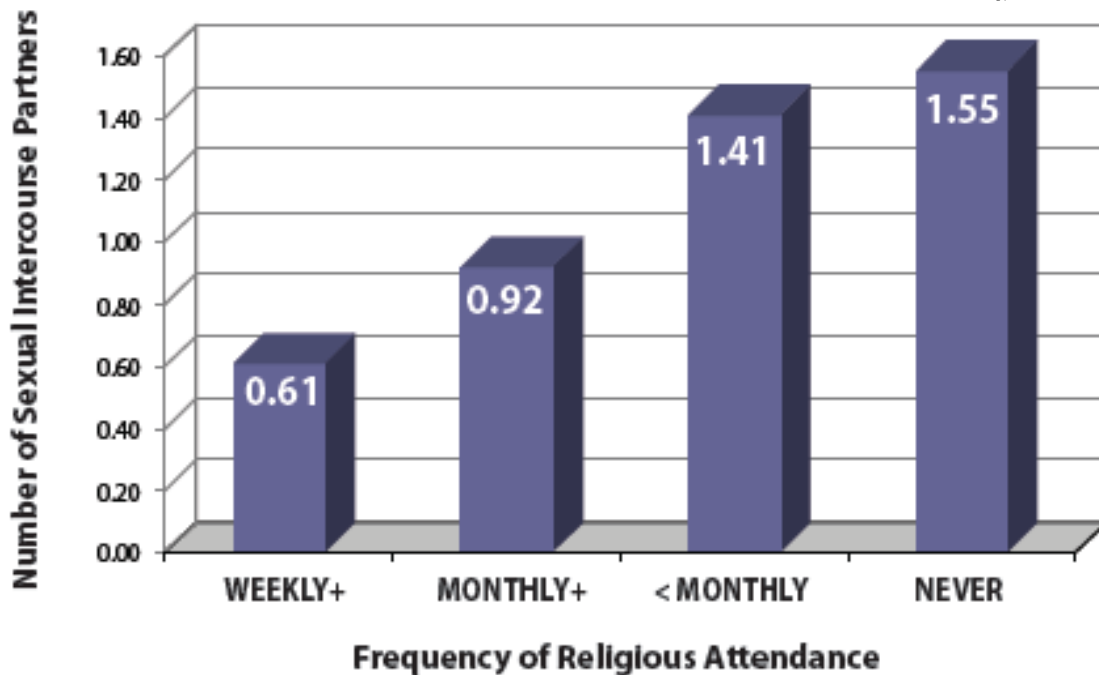
Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Sexuality

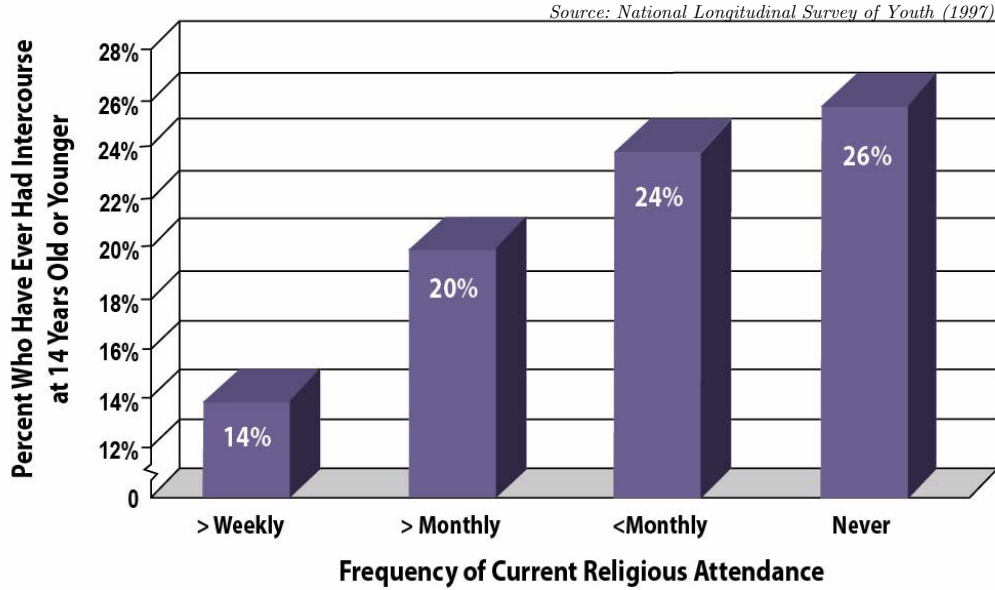
“Sexual Intercourse for High School Girls” by Religious Attendance

Source: Adolescent Health Survey, Wave 1.



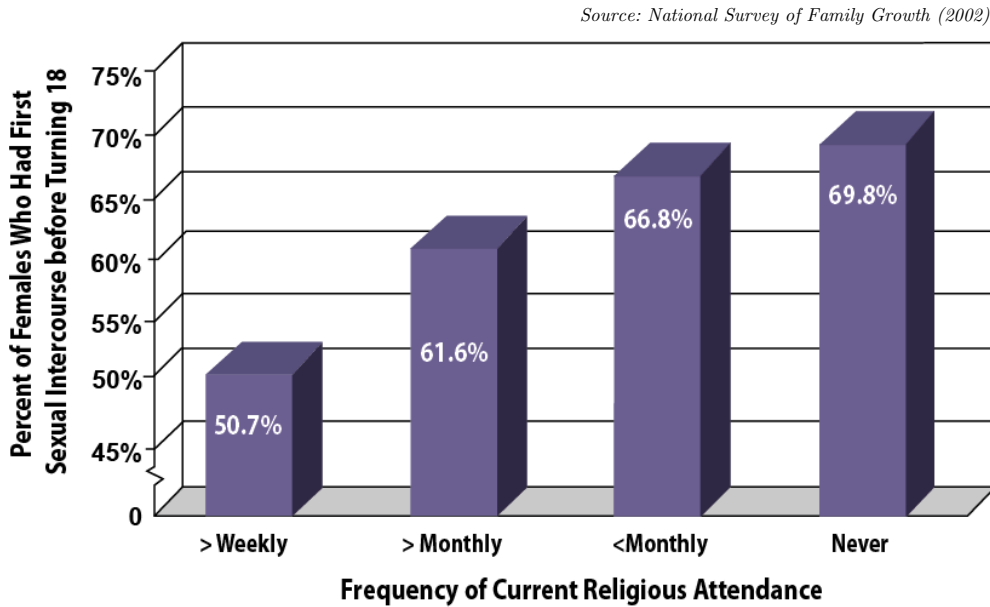
This chart draws on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. This work was done by Patrick Fagan, Ph.D., in cooperation with former colleagues at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.

“Ever Had Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger” by Current Religious Attendance



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

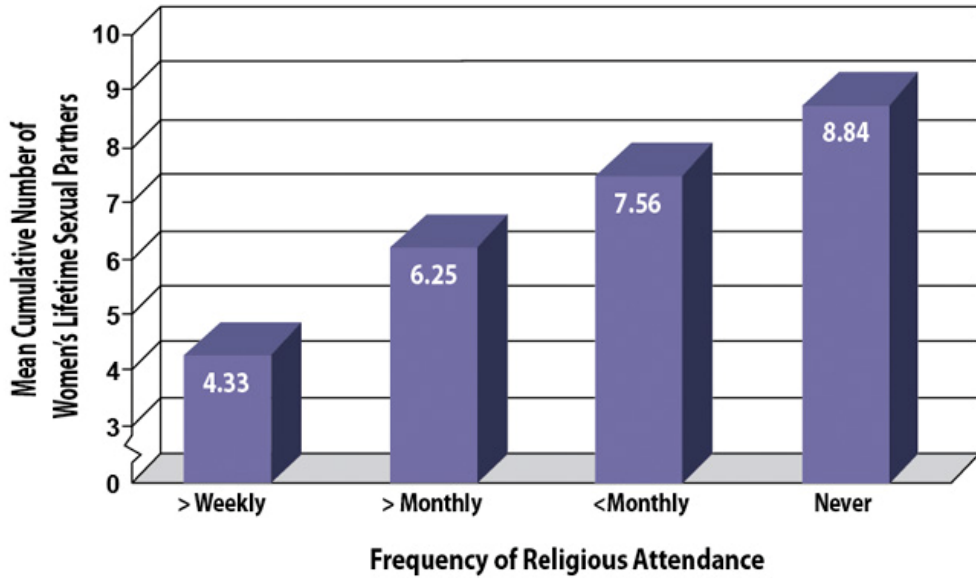
“Females Under the Age 18 at First Sexual Intercourse” by Current Religious Attendance



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

**“Cumulative Number of Women’s Lifetime Sexual Partners”
by Current Religious Attendance**

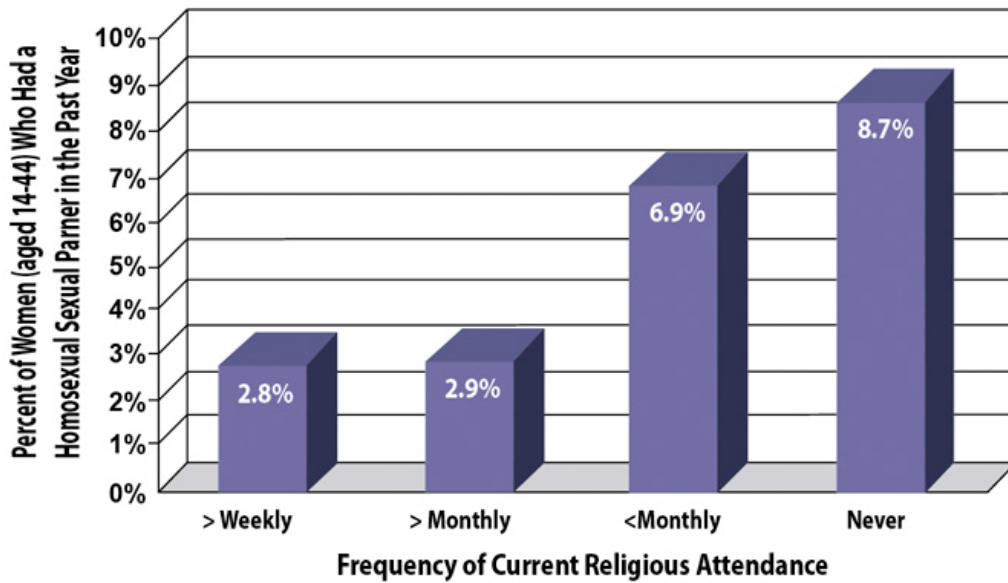
Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

**“Women (aged 14-44) Who Had a Homosexual Sexual Partner in the
Past Year” by Current Religious Attendance**

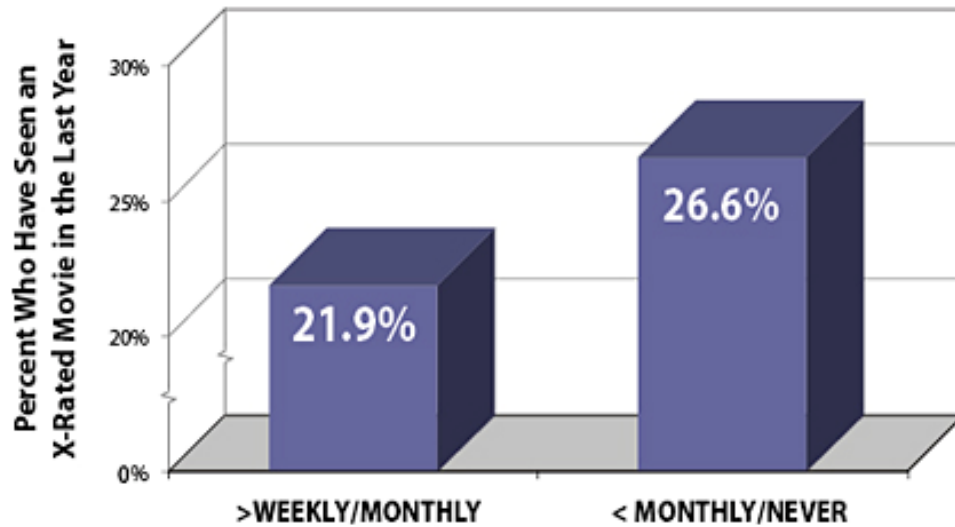
Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

“Adolescents Who Have Seen an X-Rated Movie in the Last Year” by Frequency of Religious Attendance During Adolescence

Source: General Social Survey



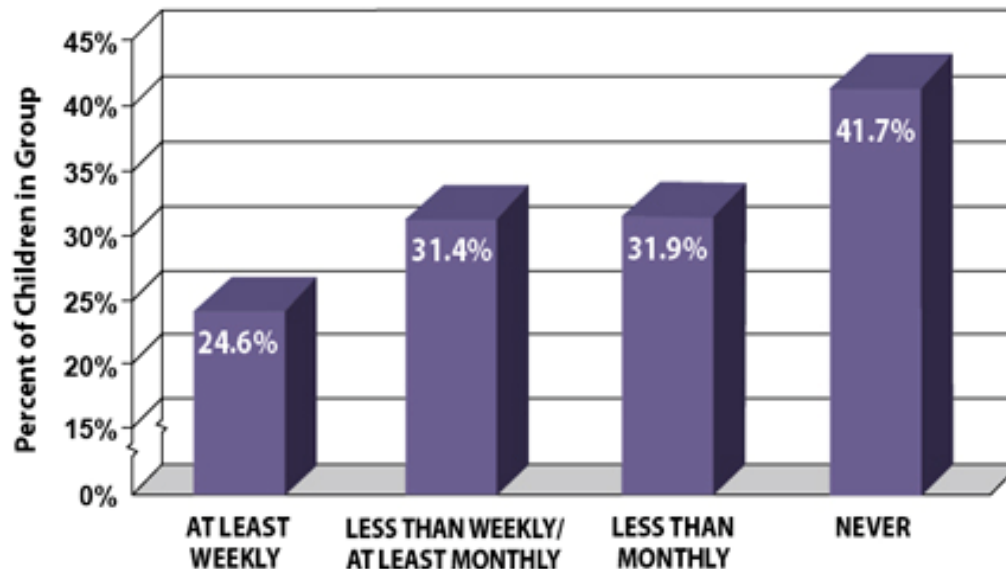
Frequency of Religious Attendance during Adolescence

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

Education

“Children Whose Parents Were Contacted by School about Children’s Behavior Problems” by Religious Attendance

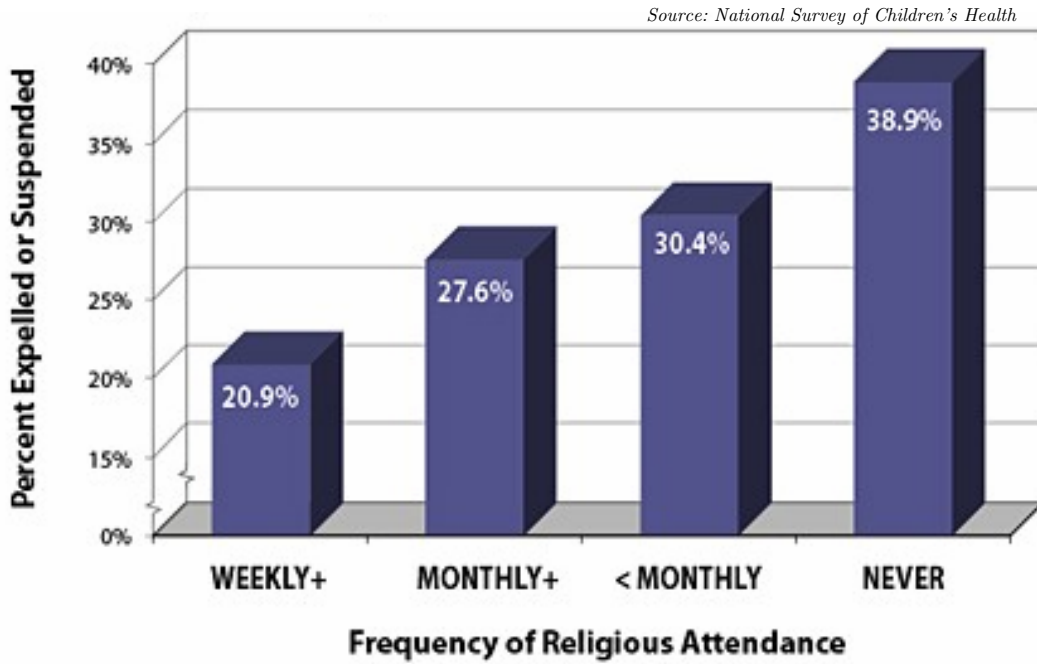
Source: National Survey of Children’s Health (2003)



Frequency of Religious Attendance

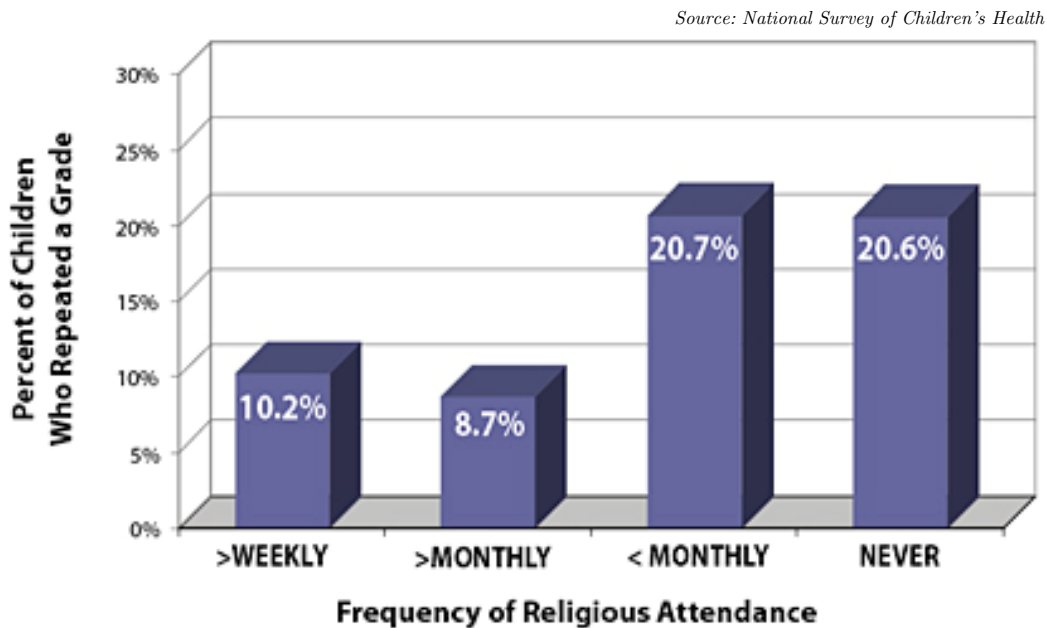
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Nicholas Zill, Ph.D.

“Expelled or Suspended from School” by Religious Attendance



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

“Repeating a Grade” by Religious Attendance

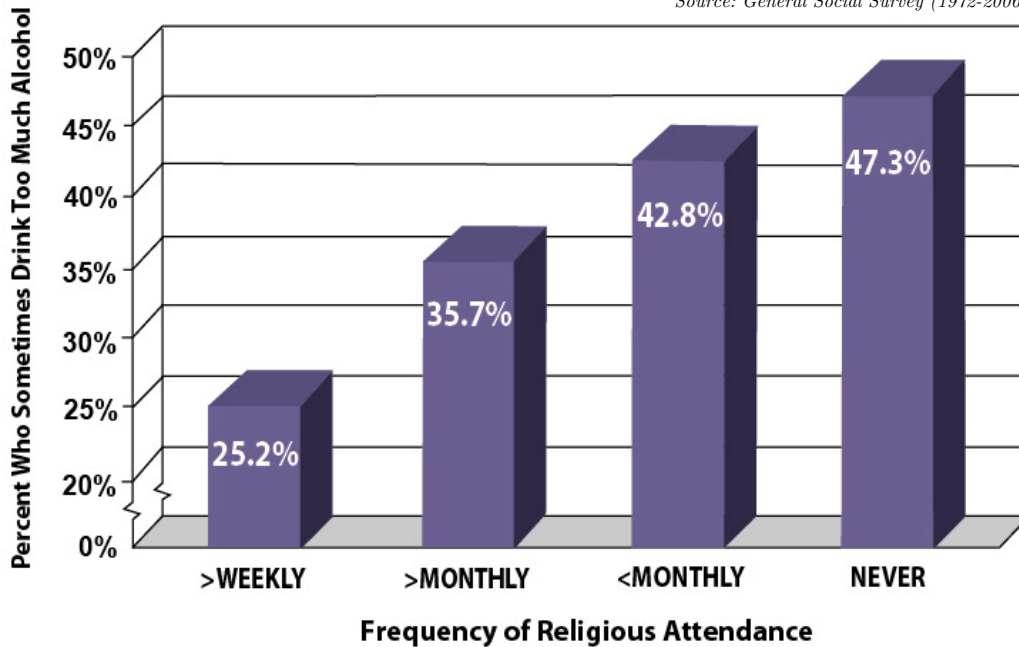


Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Nicholas Zill, Ph.D.

Addictive Behaviors

“Sometimes Drinks Too Much Alcohol” by Religious Attendance

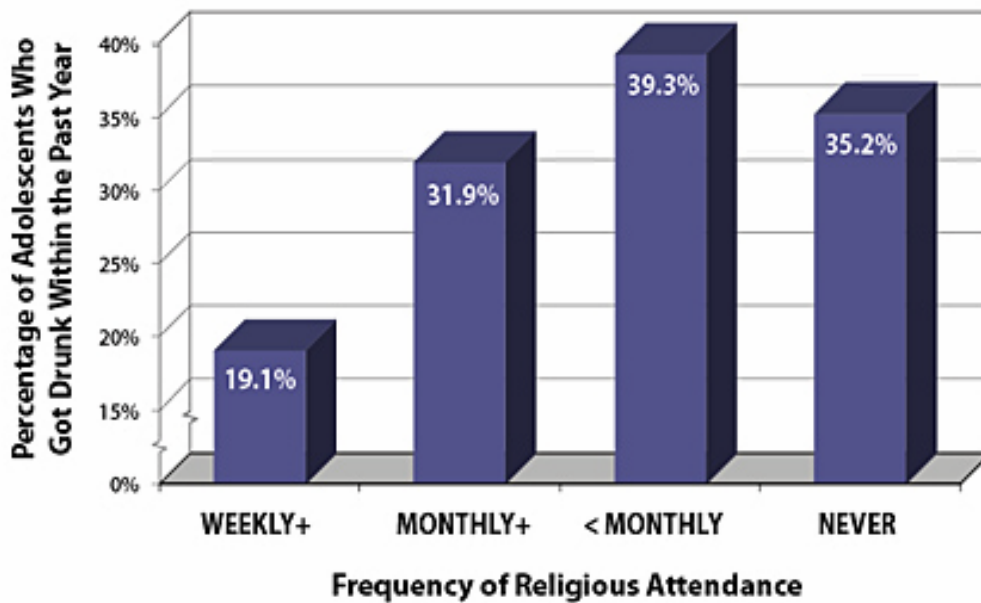
Source: General Social Survey (1972-2006)



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

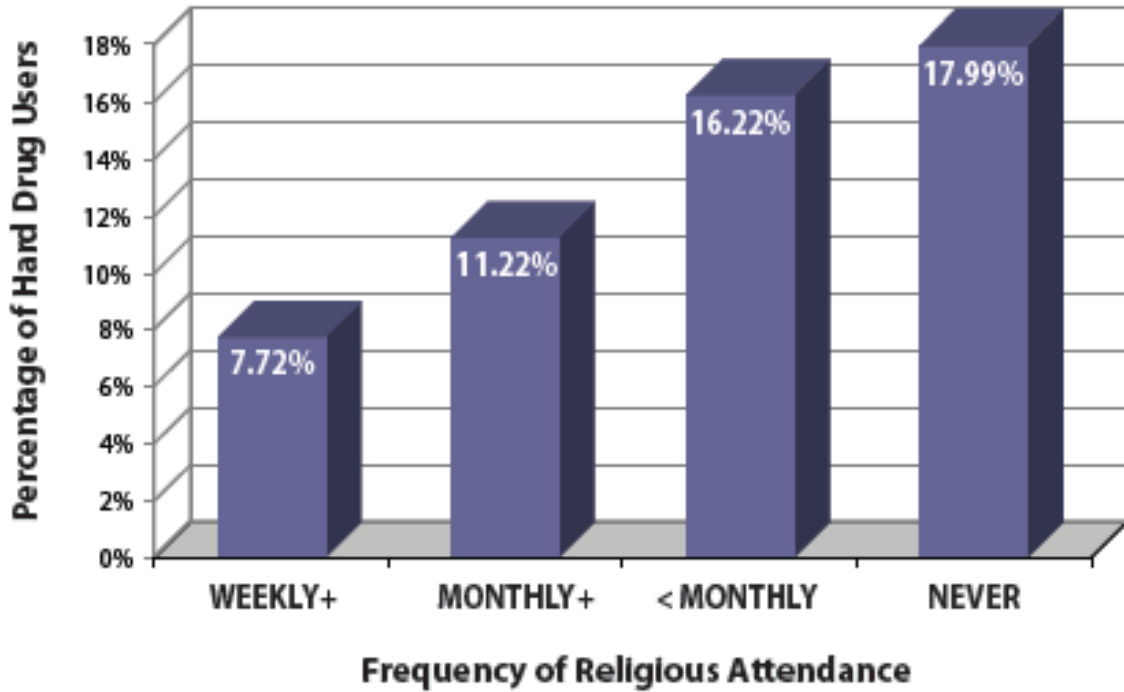
“Getting Drunk” by Religious Attendance

Source: Adolescent Health Survey, Wave 1



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

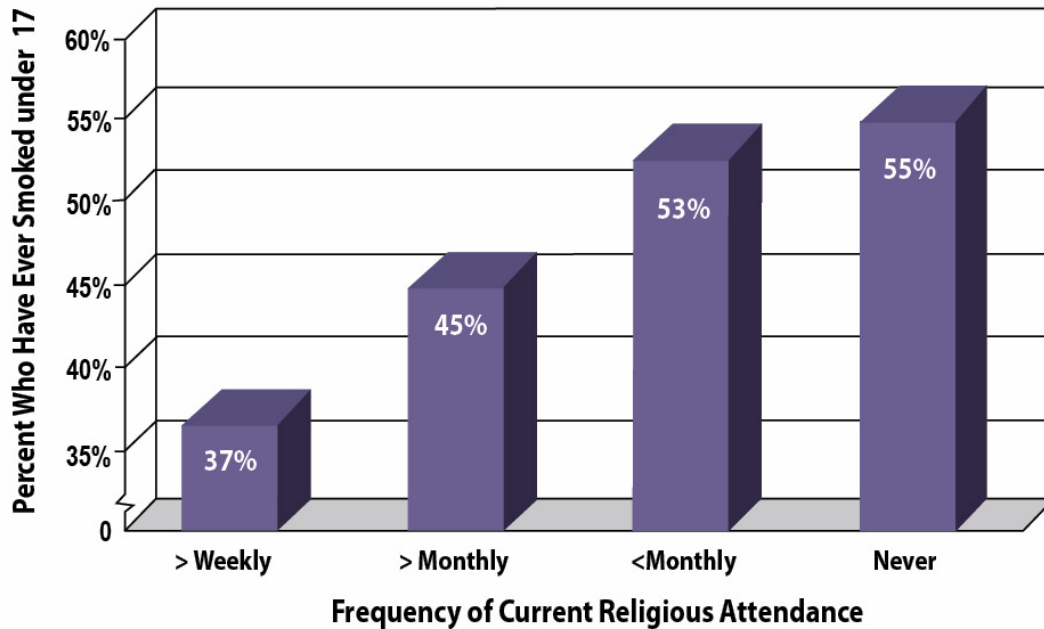
“Hard Drug Use” by Religious Attendance



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

“Ever Smoked before Age 17” by Current Religious Attendance

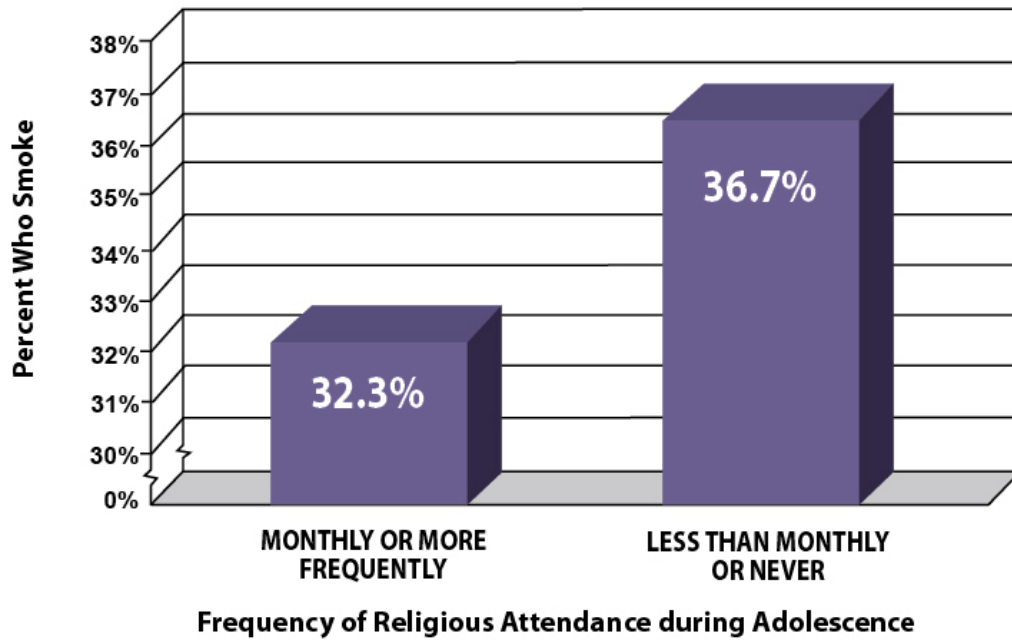
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



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

“Smoking in Adulthood” by Religious Attendance in Adolescence

Source: General Social Surveys (1972-2006)

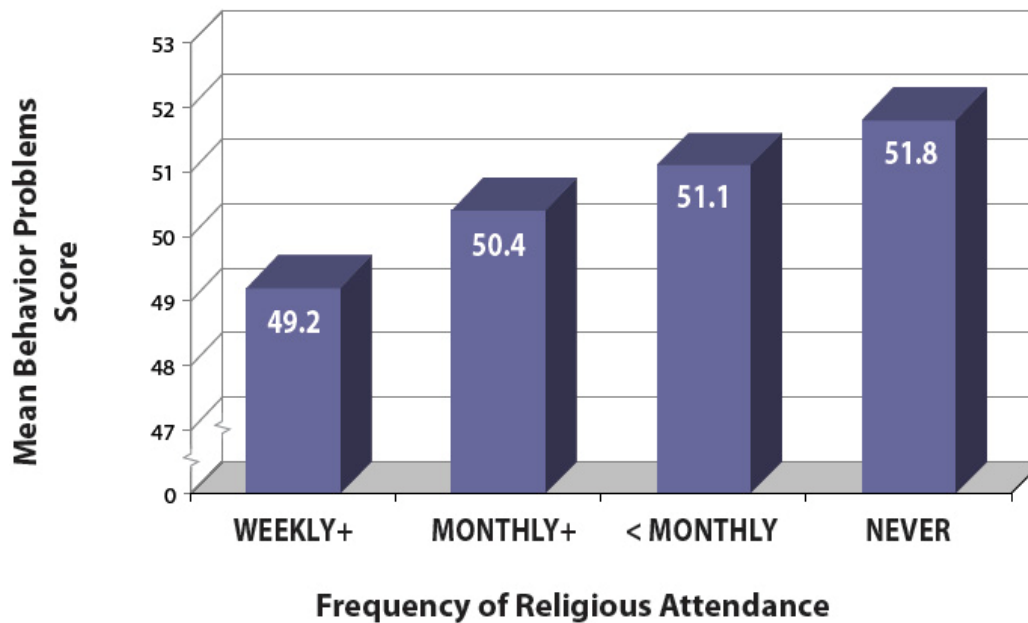


Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

Social Problems

“Behavior Problems” by Religious Attendance

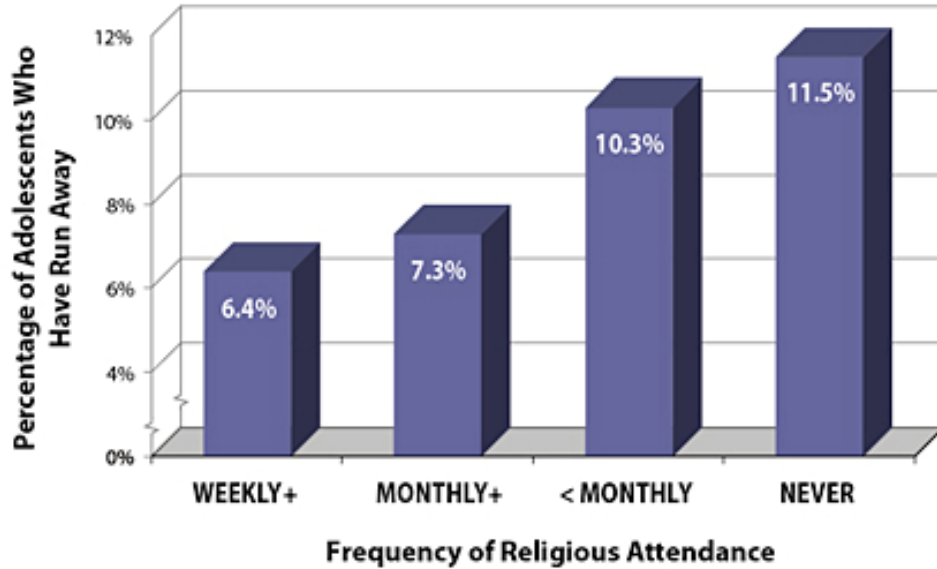
Source: National Survey of Children’s Health



Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. & Nicholas Zill, Ph.D.

“Running Away” by Religious Attendance

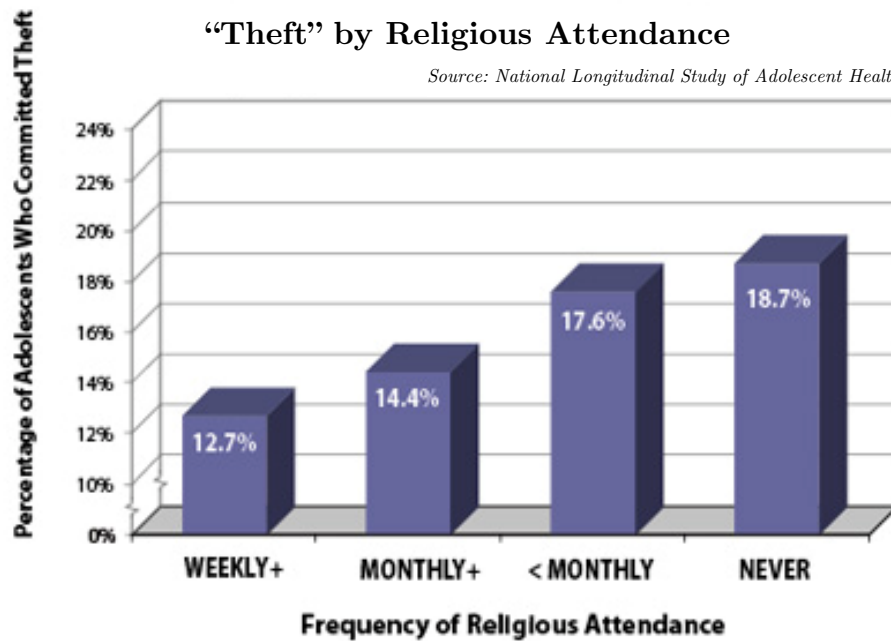
Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health



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

“Theft” by Religious Attendance

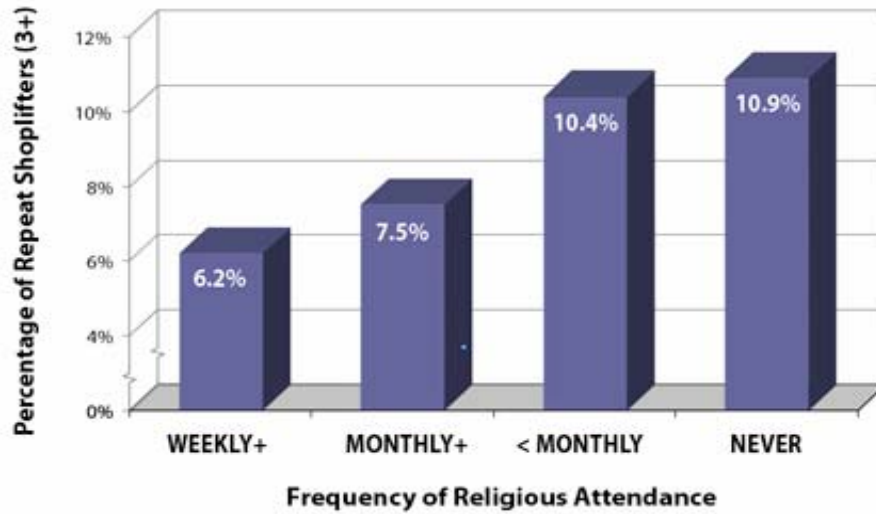
Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health



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

“Repeat Shoplifting” by Religious Attendance

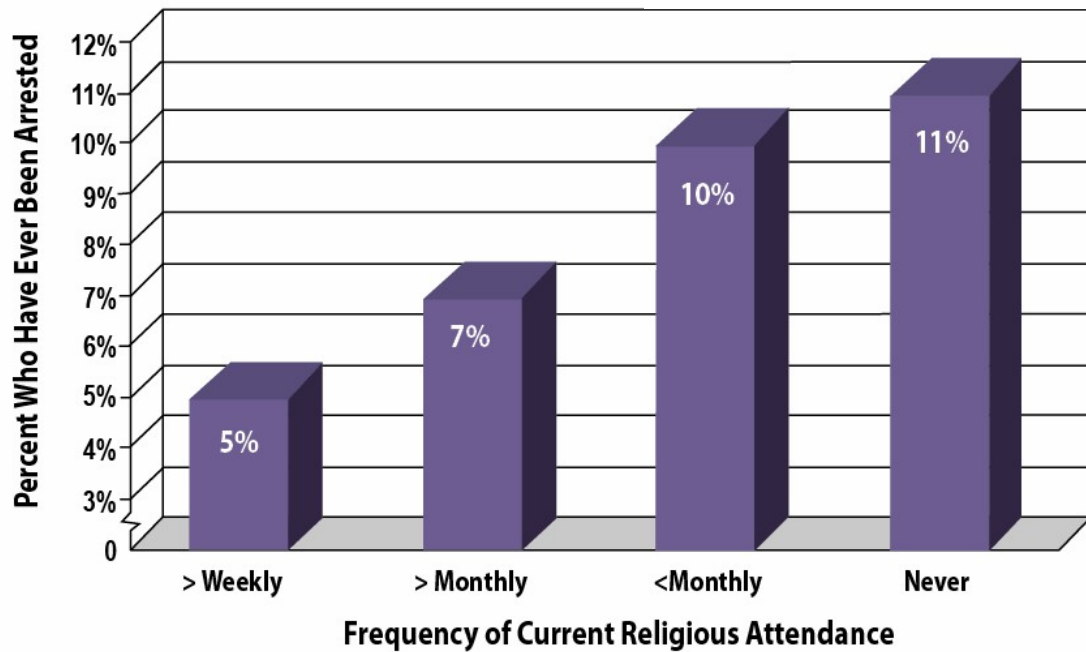
Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health



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

“Ever Been Arrested” by Current Religious Attendance

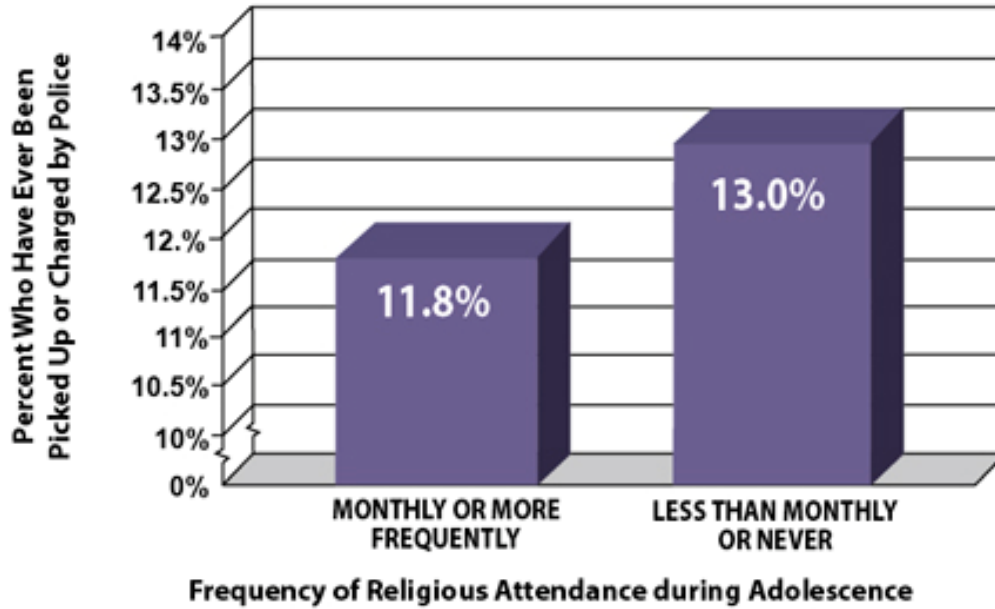
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)



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

“Ever Been Picked up or Charged by Police” by Religious Attendance during Adolescence

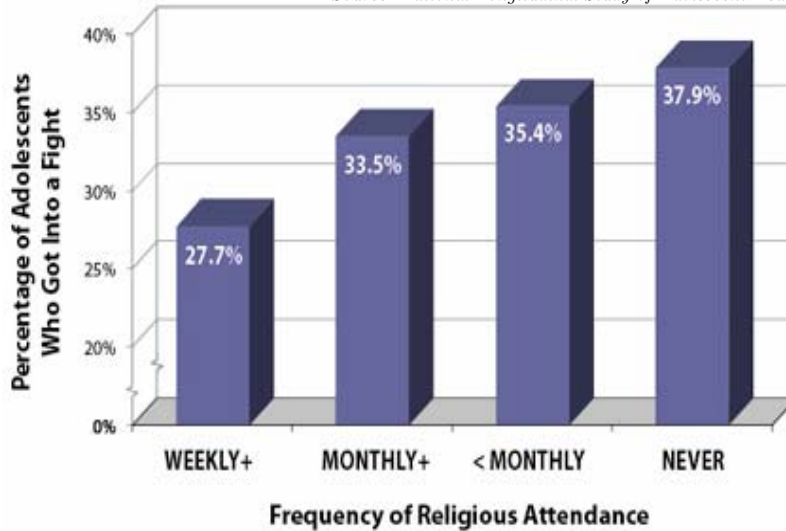
Source: General Social Survey (1972-1987)



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

“Ever Got Into a Fight” by Religious Attendance

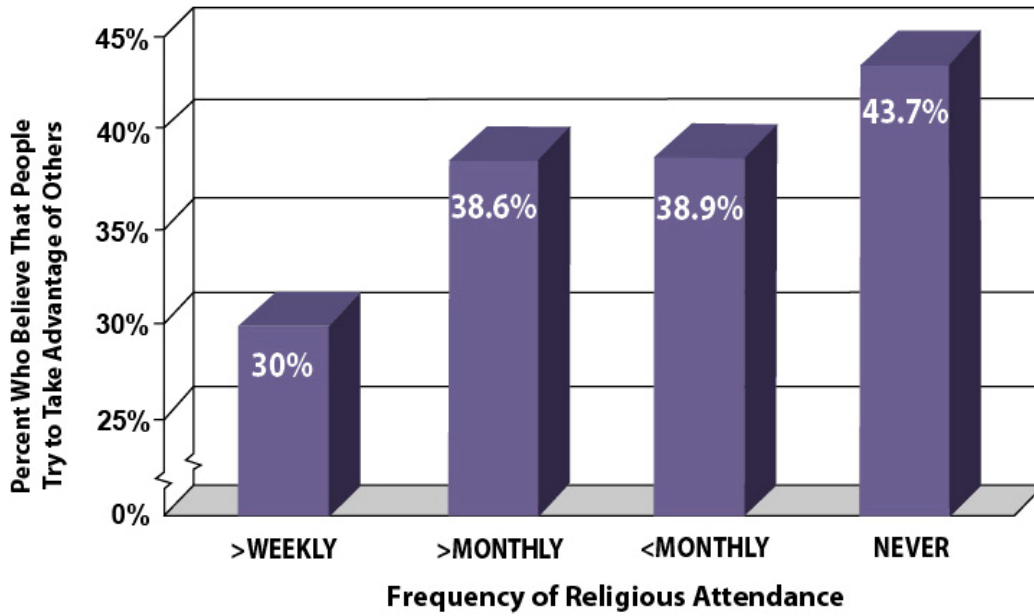
Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health



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

“Belief That People Try to Take Advantage of Others” by Religious Attendance

Source: General Social Survey (1972-1987)



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