

SEMINAR ON SEXUAL APOLOGETICS

STEVE WILLING

AGENDA

- Introduction: The Top Ten Myths of the Sexual revolution
- **Week 2: Why sexual apologetics? The state of the Church**
- Week 3: Defending Biblical sexuality to professing believers
- February 1: no meeting
- Week 4: Scientific basis for the Genesis paradigm
- Week 5: Victims of the sexual revolution
- Week 6: Homosexuality, Transgenderism, and other variants
- Week 7: How we got here, where we're headed, what we can do

RESOURCES

- Weekly notes and PowerPoint at www.swilling.com
- Contact: steve@willing.org
- Christian Medical & Dental Association (cmda.org)
- National Review (nationalreview.com)
- Breakpoint (breakpoint.org)
- The Public Discourse

A top-down view of a desk with a silver laptop on the left, a white coffee cup on a saucer on the right, a small potted plant in a woven basket in the upper center, and a pair of glasses on the right. A thin red horizontal line is drawn across the text.

WHY SEXUAL APOLOGETICS?



POLITICS MARCH 29, 2021

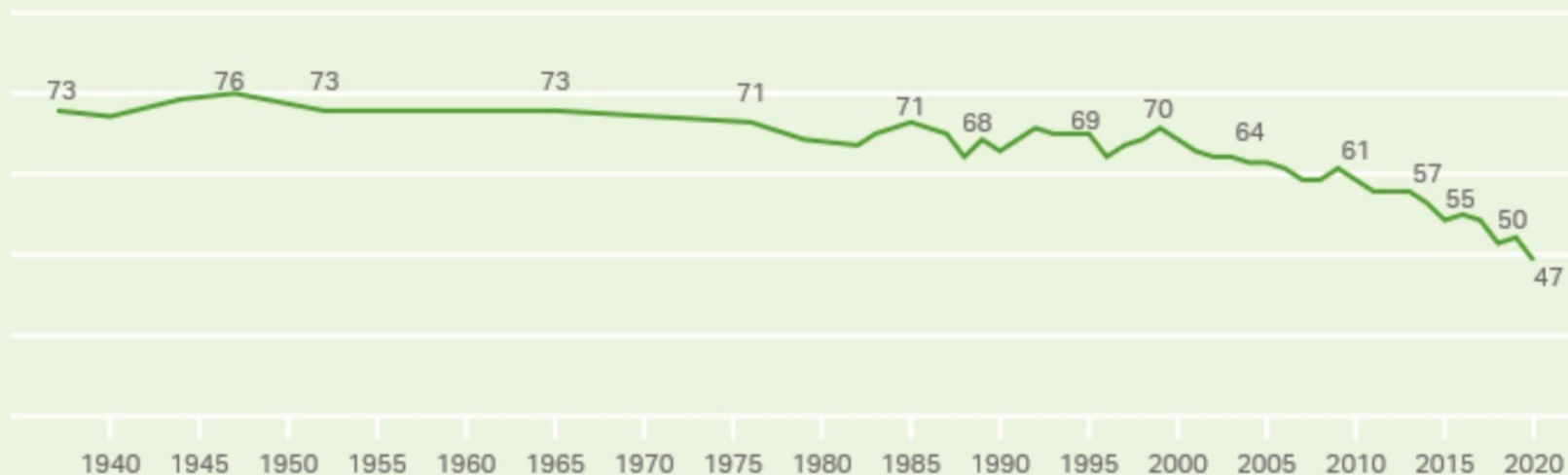
U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time

BY JEFFREY M. JONES

Church Membership Among U.S. Adults Now Below 50%

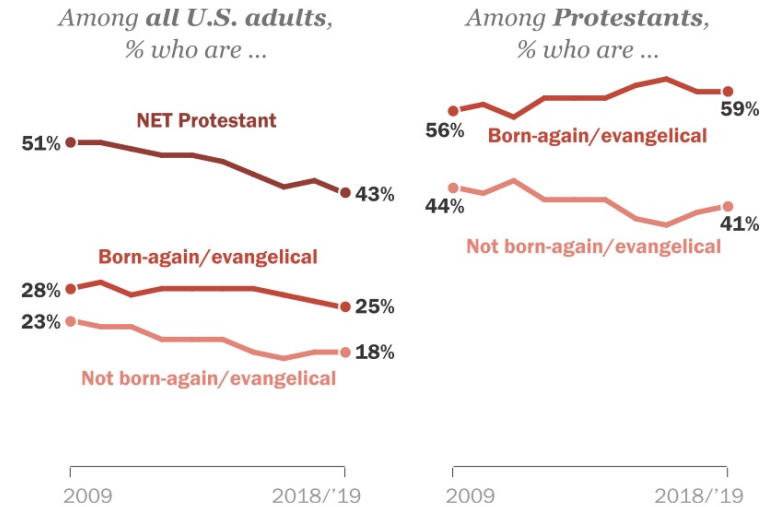
Do you happen to be a member of a church, synagogue or mosque?

— % Yes, member



PEW RESEARCH

Among Protestants, share who say they are 'born-again or evangelical' Christians is as high as or higher than a decade ago



Source: Aggregated Pew Research Center political surveys conducted 2009 and January 2018-July 2019 on the telephone.

"In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

PRRI

TABLE 1. Median Age of Religious Groups

	Median Age
All Americans	47
White evangelical Protestant	56
White Catholic	54
Unitarian/Universalist	53
White mainline (non-evangelical) Protestant	50
Black Protestant	50
Jehovah's Witness	49
Jewish	48
Latter-day Saint (Mormon)	47
Orthodox Christian	42
Hispanic Catholic	42
Hispanic Protestant	39
Unaffiliated	38
Buddhist	36
Hindu	36
Muslim	33

Source: PRRI 2020 American Values Atlas.

WHY?

- Lack of prayer?
- Lack of preaching?
- Too political? (or not enough?)
- Theological liberalism?
- “Millions of years”?
- Pride???

IN OTHER WORDS,



 **The Washington Post**
Democracy Dies in Darkness

🕒 This article is more than **1 year old**

Acts of Faith • Perspective

Christians are part of the same dating pool as everyone else. That's bad for the church.

By Mark Regnerus
September 5, 2017



“It’s not science that’s secularizing Americans, it’s sex” *Mark Regnerus*

ALDOUS
HUXLEY, “ENDS
AND MEANS”
(1937)

“For myself, as no doubt for most of my friends, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom”

ABRAHAM PIPER (2008)

“At first I pretended that my reasoning was high-minded and philosophical. But really I just wanted to drink gallons of cheap sangria and sleep around.”



ROD DREHER,
“SEX AFTER
CHRISTIANITY”,
2013

“When people decide that historically normative Christianity is wrong about sex, they typically don’t find a church that endorses their liberal views. They quit going to church altogether.”

”AMERICAN GRACE” PUTNAM & CAMPBELL, 2010

“Over time, the data showed, attitudes on moral issues proved to be strong predictors of religious engagement. In particular, the more liberal one was on homosexuality, the less likely one was to claim religious affiliation.”

-Rod Dreher

BART CAMPOLO

Son of Tony Campolo



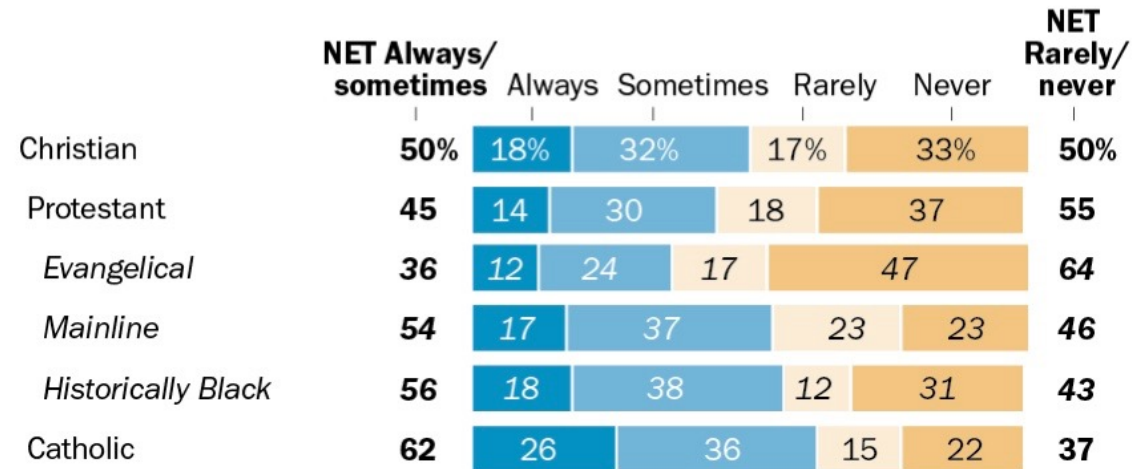
BART CAMPOLO

“As a freshman at Haverford College, he had two gay roommates. At the time, even liberal evangelicals like his dad treated homosexual behavior as a sin, but Campolo couldn’t bring himself to think ill of his roommates. *He instead adjusted his theology to make room for them.*”

PEW RESEARCH 2020

Roughly one-third of evangelical Protestants say casual sex between consenting adults is always or sometimes acceptable

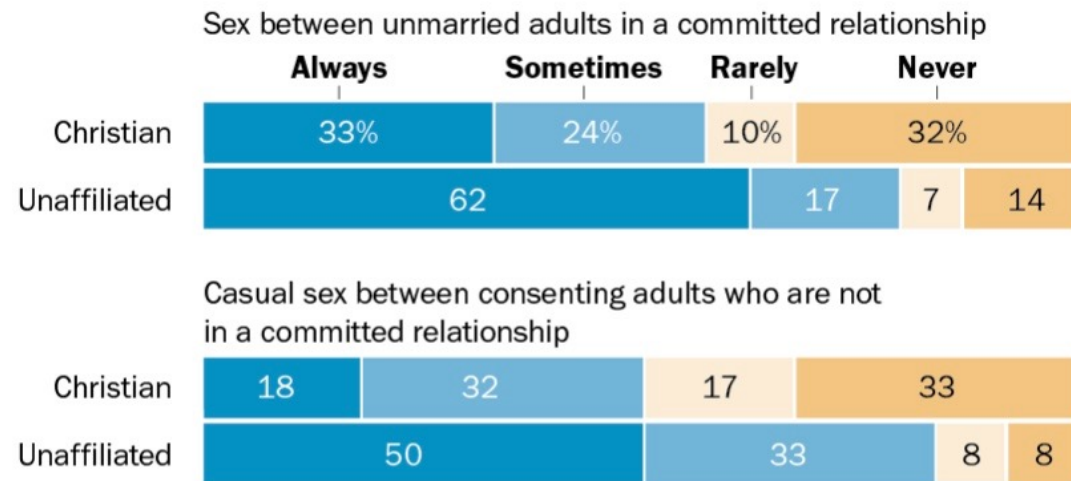
% of U.S. adults who say casual sex between consenting adults who are not in a committed relationship is _____ acceptable, regardless of whether they would do it themselves



PEW RESEARCH 2020

Christians less likely than the religiously unaffiliated to say casual sex, open relationships are acceptable

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following is ___ acceptable, regardless of whether they would do it themselves





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CHURCH LIFE

The Cohabitation Dilemma Comes for America's Pastors

More evangelicals are living together before marriage. Church leaders struggle to respond.

DAVID J. AYERS | MARCH 16, 2021

PCA STUDY COMMITTEE

“Arguably, Christians cannot make a plausible case for the Biblical sex ethic because in many ways we have adapted too much to—or even adopted—the contemporary views of identity and freedom in the way we preach and do ministry.”

PCA STUDY COMMITTEE

“We discern two overarching concerns – concerns which may be expressed as two important tasks for the Church in our time....The two tasks could be called the ‘pastoral task’ and the ‘apologetic task.’...Because both of these tasks...are required, we should give each of them strong attention.”

“The task of apologetics, of defending the truth of Christianity, has at least three main aims...First, apologetics is to provide an answer to the critics of the Christian faith, to those who seek to undermine the rational basis for Christianity or who critique it from the standpoint of another philosophy or religion...The second major aim of apologetics is to tear down the intellectual idols of our culture...**The third, and what I believe is the most valuable, aim of apologetics is to encourage the saints, to shore up the church**

R. C. Sproul

ASSUMPTIONS OF THIS SEMINAR

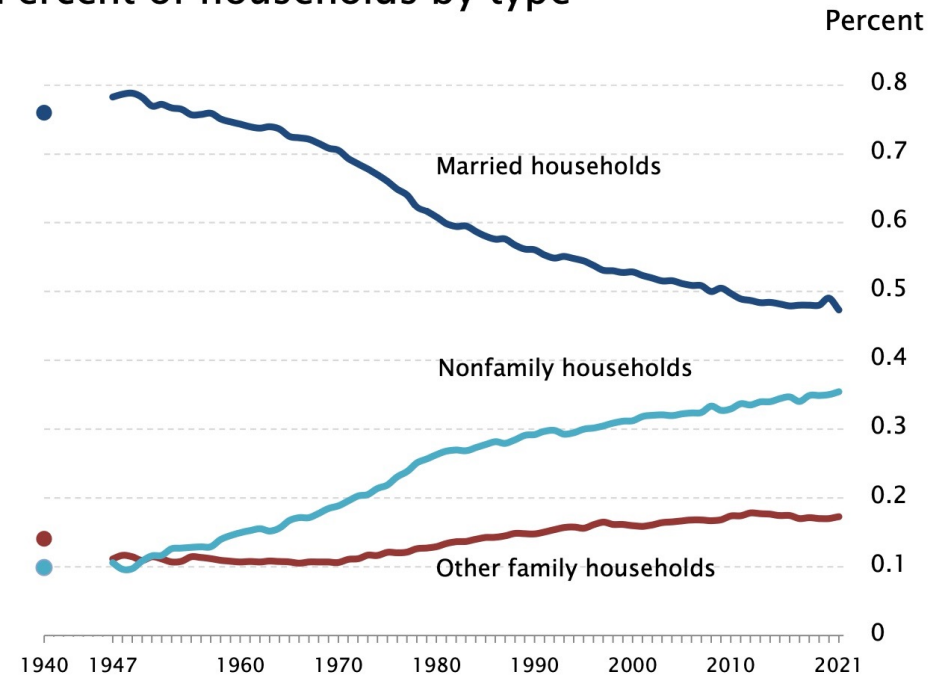
- Dual revelation
- Scripture is authoritative in what it teaches (ICBI 1)
- Emphasis upon consensus of historic Christianity in hermeneutics (ICBI 2)
- Emphasis upon unity and agreement
- Science is trustworthy, but imperfect

MARRIAGE IS IN DECLINE

- In 1970, 89% of American males married by 35
- By 2010, 64% of American males married by 35
- In 1970, 88% of women married by 29
- In 2010, 51% of women married by 29
- Mean age of marriage over 30 in much of Europe

CENSUS BUREAU

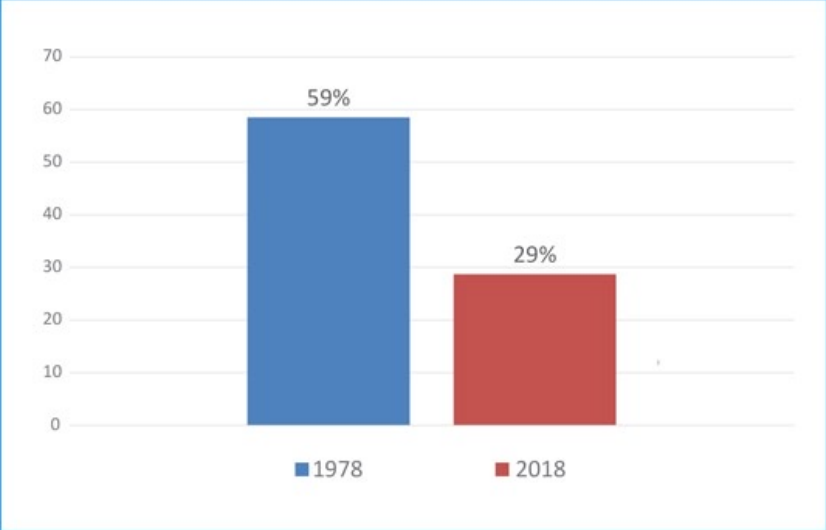
Figure HH-1
Percent of households by type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1940, and Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1947 to 2021.

CENSUS BUREAU

Percent Married Among
18-to 34-Year-Olds: 1978 and 2018



United States[®]
Census
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
[census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

Source: 1978 and 2018 Current Population Survey,
Annual Social and Economic Supplements

PARENTHOOD IS IN DECLINE

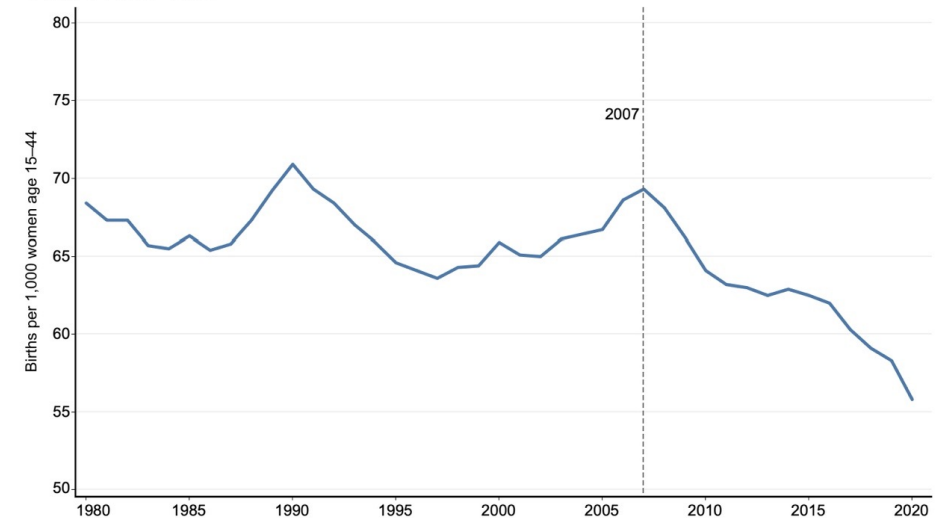
FERTILITY NOW BELOW REPLACEMENT IN
MOST OF THE DEVELOPED WORLD, EAST
AND WEST

The Mystery of the Declining U.S. Birth Rate

By Melissa Kearney, Phillip Levine and Luke Pardue · February 15, 2022
University of Maryland and Wellesley College

TREND IN US BIRTH RATES

YEARLY, 1980–2020



Source: Birth rates collected from CDC Vital Statistics Reports for 2015, 2019, and 2020.

EconoFact econofact.org

BACKGROUND: DRIVING FORCES

- Secularization
- Philosophical materialism
- Moral relativism
- Radical individualism
- Theological liberalism (byproduct of above)

SEX AND MARRIAGE WITHIN THE CHURCH

THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE



MARK REGNERUS

THE ATLANTIC

MARCH 2018

Marriage Has Become a Trophy

A wedding is no longer the first step into adulthood that it once was, but, often, the last.

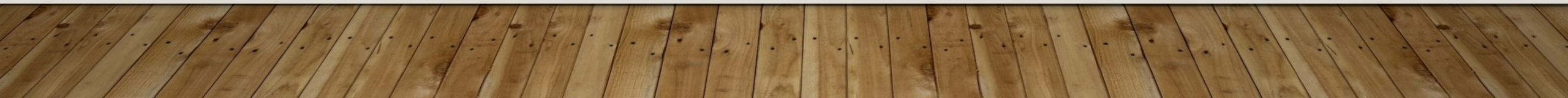
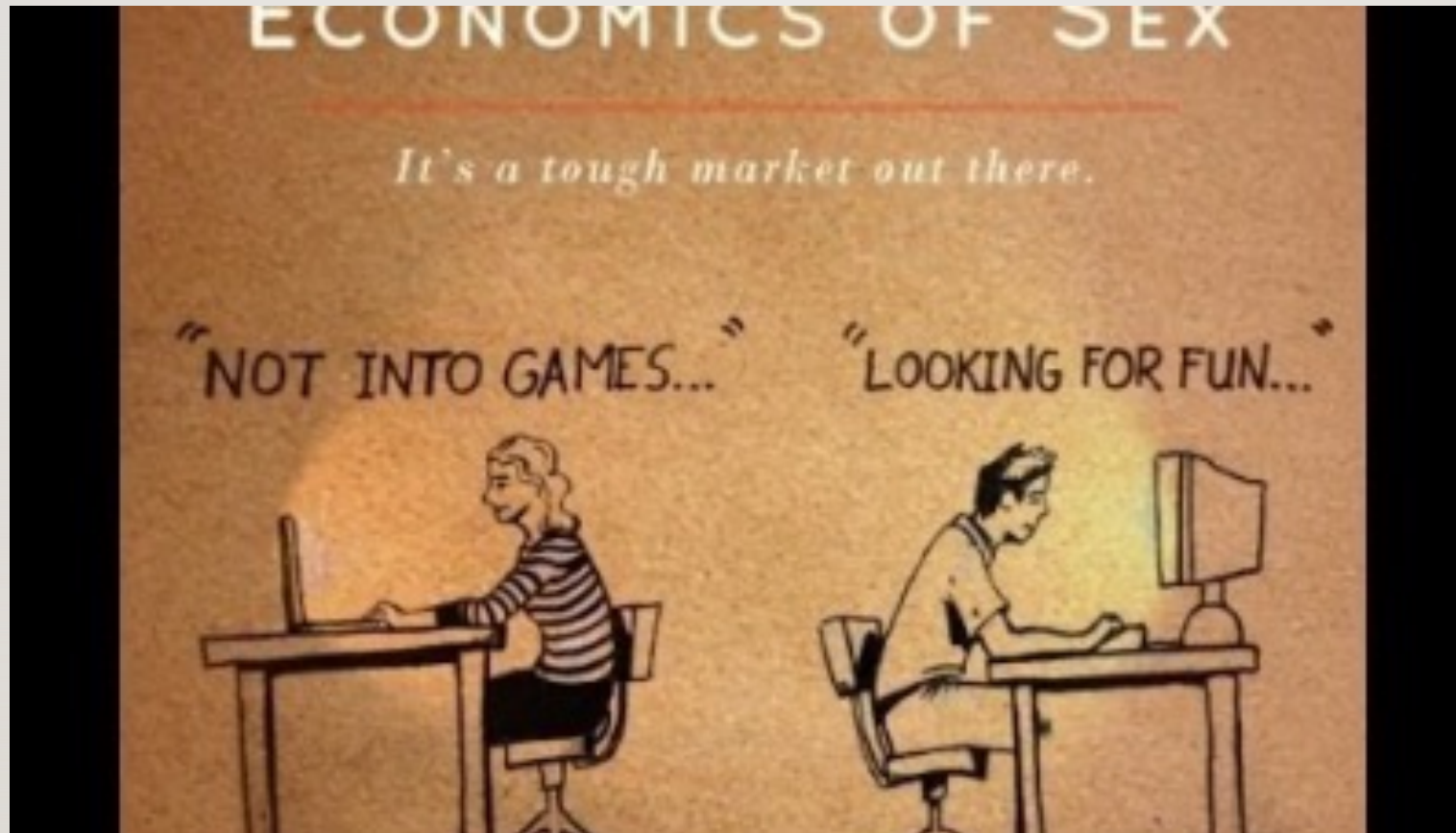
By Andrew Cherlin



MARRIAGE: FOUNDATION OR CAPSTONE?

- Established career
- Financial security
- Extravagant wedding costs

MARRIAGE MARKETS AND SEXUAL ECONOMICS



SO WHAT?

- Loneliness epidemic
- Declining female happiness
- Male underachievement
- Religious disengagement
- Failure of discipleship – losing the young people

SO WHAT?

- Likelihood of marriage is strongly correlated with economic status
- A cause of economic and political polarization:
 - Strong connection between sexual and political liberalism
 - Through marriage, the rich and educated succeed
 - Without marriage, the poor stay poor
- Lack of marriage contributes to social disruption
- Health of the church is highly interwoven with the health of marriages

MASCULINE ACEDIA

“Giving young men easy access to abundant sexual satisfaction deprives society of one of its ways to motivate them to contribute valuable achievements to the culture.”

-Baumeister, 2012

SHOULD WE DO ANYTHING? CAN WE DO ANYTHING?

- Tell stories
- Create marriage-friendly subcultures
- Make the home a haven (in a heartless world)
- Effectively prepare people for marriage
- Help others navigate challenging marriages
- **Actively resist the prevailing cultural narrative**

PCA STUDY COMMITTEE

“Christians cannot speak to the world about sex in a compelling way if we merely answer the story with a list of moral imperatives, however Biblical.”

THE EFFECTIVE APOLOGIST:

- Be courageous yet humble, firm but gentle
- Refrain from judgmentalism
- Emphasize compassion over control
- Work in and through the local church
- Use the gifts you have been given
- Use your platform