

HomePointe™

Executive Briefing

Spring 2011

This summary of recent news touching family life is a gift to church leaders who wish to create a culture of intentional families. For prior editions of the executive briefing and the latest ideas from a network of innovative churches visit www.DriveFaithHome.com

CHILDREN

The good news about Evangelicalism:

It appears the demise of conservative evangelicals has been greatly exaggerated. According to the Catholic *First Things* journal, evangelicalism is growing and its young more conservative than other groups. "Religion in America is always changing. What has not changed, however, is that religion in the United States remains vibrant and that Americans continue to identify themselves as religious—and to identify with religious institutions—even if those institutions are now more local than they were for the parents or grandparents of the present generation. Those who argue that a new American landscape is emerging—one in which the conservative evangelicalism of the past few decades is losing numbers and influence—are simply ignoring the data."

First Things

<http://www.firstthings.com/article/2011/01/the-good-news-about-evangelicalism>

Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior

"A lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically successful kids. They wonder what these parents do to produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it's like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I've done it. Here are some things my daughters, Sophia and Louisa, were never allowed to do:

- attend a sleepover
- have a play date
- be in a school play
- complain about not being in a school play
- watch TV or play computer games
- choose their own extracurricular activities

- get any grade less than an A
- not be the No. 1 student in every subject except gym and drama
- play any instrument other than the piano or violin
- not play the piano or violin.

...What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you're good at it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences. This often requires fortitude on the part of the parents because the child will resist; things are always hardest at the beginning, which is where Western parents tend to give up. But if done properly, the Chinese strategy produces a virtuous circle. Tenacious practice, practice, practice is crucial for excellence; rote repetition is underrated in America. Once a child starts to excel at something—whether it's math, piano, pitching or ballet—he or she gets praise, admiration and satisfaction. This builds confidence and makes the once not-fun activity fun. This in turn makes it easier for the parent to get the child to work even more."

Wall Street Journal

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704111504576059713528698754.html>

Kids and caffeine

"Most school-age children drink caffeinated drinks, and many of them are imbibing enough caffeine to give adults the jitters. And their sleep is suffering. That's the news from the *Journal of Pediatrics*, which surveyed parents on their children's caffeine habits. It turns out that 5 to 7-year-olds on average drink 52 milligrams of caffeine daily, or the caffeine equivalent of one Coke. That may not sound too bad, but the 228 parents in the new study admitted their 8 to 12-

year-olds drink the caffeine equivalent of almost three Cokes daily. And the more caffeine the kids took in, the less they slept.”

U.S. News & World Report
<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/family-health/childrens-health/articles/2010/12/16/kids-are-getting-amped-on-caffeine-even-at-age-5>

So Young, and So Many Pills

“More than a quarter of U.S. kids and teens are taking a medication on a chronic basis, according to Medco Health Solutions Inc. ... Many medications kids take on a regular basis are well known, including treatments for asthma and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. But children and teens are also taking a wide variety of other medications once considered only to be for adults, from statins to diabetes pills and sleep drugs, according to figures provided to *The Wall Street Journal* by IMS Health, a research firm.”

Wall Street Journal
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203731004576046073896475588.html>

‘King’s Speech’ is heroic epic to stuttering children

“A movie about a stuttering monarch, without sex, car chases or sinewy superheroes, hardly sounds like blockbuster box-office fare. In a less flashy way, however, “The King’s Speech” is about a hero, one who battles an invisible enemy that torments nearly 70 million people around the world. In demystifying the little-understood speech impediment, the award-winning film reveals myths and fascinating truths about stuttering and has won praise from stutterers of all ages.”

Washington Times
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/feb/6/kings-speech-is-heroic-epic-to-stuttering-children>

TEENS

Teens share self-injury videos on YouTube

“In what researchers call an ‘alarming new trend,’ teens and young adults are creating and sharing YouTube videos about cutting, burning or otherwise harming themselves — and even demonstrating techniques, a study says today in *Pediatrics*. Previous research suggests that 14% to 21% of teens and young adults have deliberately injured themselves at least once — using knives to cut their arms or legs, for example, says lead author Stephen Lewis of the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. Some

go on to attempt suicide, the third-leading cause of death for ages 15 to 24. Though it’s unlikely that watching a video would cause an otherwise happy person to begin cutting, Lewis says the videos could ‘trigger’ an urge to harm themselves in young people who have already tried it.”

USA Today
<http://usat.me?43962874>

Study links teenage bullying to social status

“Scientists have confirmed an axiom of teenage life: Kids intent on climbing the social ladder at school are more likely to pick on their fellow students. The finding, reported in [the latest] edition of the *American Sociological Review*, lends an air of authenticity to TV shows like ‘Gossip Girl’ and the 2004 movie ‘Mean Girls.’ More importantly, it may suggest that efforts to combat bullying in schools should focus more closely on social hierarchies.”

Los Angeles Times
<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-he-mean-girls-20110208,0,3724138.story?>

YOUNG ADULTS

Where have all the good men gone?

"Not so long ago, the average American man in his 20s had achieved most of the milestones of adulthood: a high-school diploma, financial independence, marriage and children. Today, most men in their 20s hang out in a novel sort of limbo, a hybrid state of semi-hormonal adolescence and responsible self-reliance. This ‘pre-adulthood’ has much to recommend it, especially for the college-educated. But it’s time to state what has become obvious to legions of frustrated young women: It doesn’t bring out the best in men."

Excerpt from *Manning Up: How the Rise of Women Has Turned Men Into Boys* by Kay Hymowitz

Wall Street Journal
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704409004576146321725889448.html>

Deciding you don't before you say 'I do'

"[Dean] Busby and his team of researchers [from Brigham University in Utah] surveyed more than 2,000 couples, ranging in age from 19 to 71 years, and found that communication, sexual

quality, perceived stability and relationship satisfaction were better for those couples who had waited until after marriage to consummate their relationship. The bottom line from the study seems to be that if you want to give marriage the best chance of survival, it's best to make each other wait. The academics who pioneered the study did so because of a lack of empirical data on how the timing of sex between a couple impacts on the longevity of a marriage."

The Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/health/2011/0201/1224288677056.html>

Review of Premarital Sex in America

"*Premarital Sex in America* tells the definitive story of the sexual and relationship values and practices of unmarried emerging adults. Sociologists Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker draw upon their analysis of nationally representative data and scores of in-person interviews to help shed light on numerous questions about the sex lives of young Americans, including how long their relationships last, how quickly they become sexual, why the double standard is so stubborn, who remains a virgin and for how long, how gender imbalances in college change the rules of mating, the 'price' of sex and its effects on relationship security, how online social networking and porn alter the market in relationships, how emerging adults think about marriage and relationship permanence, who marries early, why the age at marriage is rising rapidly, and how 'red' and 'blue' politics are reflected in our sexual choices."

Youth and Religion

<http://www.youthandreligion.org/sites/youthandreligion.org/files/Premarital%20Sex%20in%20America.pdf>

Love in middle America: It's complicated

"As the decorative plaque that reads 'Family is Forever' and the framed photos in their living room suggest, Julia and Rob, a couple for 12 years with hopes of marriage in the future, want desperately to make a home together. Julia takes business classes online and stays home with their two sons while Rob roofs in summer and busses tables in winter. But with the stress of raising children, an unsteady income, and a history of cheating, within the month after we met them Rob's Facebook status changed from 'in a relationship' to 'single' to 'in a relationship' — and finally settled on 'it's complicated.' Julia and the boys have moved out and back in, and

may be on their way out again. Like many young adults, Julia and Rob want a thriving family life and stable home for their children. Yet they struggle to find that security. And marriage, an institution which might offer some stability, is increasingly elusive."

First Things

<http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2011/01/love-in-middle-america-ldquoits-complicatedrdquo>

MARRIAGE

Reversal on Gay Marriage

"The Obama administration said Wednesday [February 23rd] it believed a federal law defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman violated the Constitution, in a major reversal that could stand as a landmark in changing U.S. attitudes toward gay rights. The Justice Department said President Barack Obama had ordered the department to stop defending the 1996 law in court—an about-face after two years of arguing that the Defense of Marriage Act was constitutional. The decision sets up a new line of conflict with conservatives, while cheering liberals, as the president prepares to start his re-election campaign."

Wall Street Journal

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703775704576162441655208626.html>

How Did this Happen? Why Same-Sex Marriage Makes Sense to So Many

"Why does same-sex marriage make sense to so many people? The momentum toward the full legalization of same-sex marriage seems to intensify with every passing month — or even faster. The moral divide in this nation is now seen most clearly in the distance between those for whom marriage is exclusively heterosexual and thus a settled issue and, on the other hand, those who honestly see the legalization of same-sex marriage as a moral mandate required by justice. ...Same-sex marriage is not an idea that emerged from a vacuum. The project of normalizing homosexuality has deep roots and ideological momentum. The elites, the entertainment culture, the news media, and the educational establishment celebrate all three of these ideas as central to the modern experience and as ideological propulsion into a better future. So, when we wonder how it came to be that so many among us now favor same-sex marriage, we must remember that, to some extent or another, virtually all of us have embraced the

ideas that make such a moral revolution thinkable. And ideas, as Richard Weaver famously reminded us, have consequences.”

AlbertMohler.com

<http://www.albertmohler.com/2011/02/28/how-did-this-happen-why-same-sex-marriage-makes-sense-to-so-many/>

Liberal News Site Says Marriage-Minded Women Should Stop Having Casual Sex

"Be nice, and stop sleeping around. Just two pieces of advice Tracy McMillan gives to female readers of the liberal-leaning *Huffington Post*. (Note: Some coarse language is used in McMillan's piece.) It's always news when someone from the less conservative realm advocates sexual restraint—not because there aren't liberals who practice restraint, but because they rarely advocate it for others."

CitizenLink.com

<http://www.citizenlink.com/2011/02/liberal-news-site-says-marriage-minded-women-should-stop-having-casual-sex/>

DON'T MISS THIS

***Almost Christian* by Kenda Dean**

Be sure to read this excellent book based on the National Study of Youth and Religion. Invaluable data similar to its predecessor, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Kenda Creasy Dean's 2010 release, *Almost Christian*, investigates why American teenagers are at once so positive about Christianity and at the same time so apathetic about genuine religious practice.

KendaDean.com

<http://kendadean.com/almost-christian/>

Also, *Mars Hill* interview with Dean available at:

<http://www.mediafire.com/?nnh2h6ounynlsp>

IDEA BOX

After a Valentine's Day themed sermon in February every couple attending Lake Pointe church was given a free Date Night Kit including a free ART OF MARRIAGE audio CD and corresponding date discussion recipe card. The following week Life Groups launched the full video series in class. The goal of this campaign was to be a counter-attack in the spiritual battle against marriage. Active HomePointe churches can access customizable masters now. Learn more and get other campaign ideas in the *Idea Box* at www.DriveFaithHome.com