

Reproducing Christianity

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Three basics displayed in three portraits

Three basics

1. Reproducing converts
2. Reproducing children
3. Reproducing content

Three portraits

1. New Testament church growth
2. Europe's cultural suicide
3. Reproducing Christianity today

New Testament church growth

1. Missionary vision to go to new places and peoples.
2. Multiplying in households and spreading through social networks.
3. Teaching new converts and children.

1. Missionary Vision

- “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Acts 13:2
- “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Acts 16:9
- “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” 18:9-10

2. Multiplying in Households

- **Caesarea:** An angel told Cornelius, “Peter will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved” (Acts 11:14).
- **Philippi:** Lydia was baptized along with “the members of her household” (Acts 16:15)
“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house... he and all his family were baptized ... he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family” (Acts 16:31,33).

2. Multiplying in Households

- **Thessalonica:** “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house.” (Acts 17:6-7)
- **Corinth:** “Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord.” (Acts 18:8) I also baptized the household of Stephanas.” (1 Cor 1:15)
“You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints.” (1 Cor 16:15)

2. Multiplying in Households

- **Ephesus:** “You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.” Acts 20:20
- **Colossae:** “... to the church that meets in your home” (Philemon 2).
- **Rome:** “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus... Greet also the church that meets at their house.” Romans 16:3,5
(Earlier this couple had to leave Rome and moved to Corinth, where they met Paul (Acts 18:2-3). After moving back to Rome, a church met at their house.)

Church as household

- “God’s household, which is the church of the living God” (1 Timothy 3:15).
- “members of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).
- “members of God’s household” (Eph 2:19)
- “God’s family in heaven and on earth” (Ephesians 3:15)
- “household of God” (Hebrews 10:21, 1 Peter 4:17).

Roman Empire decrease

- Abortion: often mother died as well as baby
- Infanticide: leaving baby girls to die
- Homosexuality idealized by many
- Birthrates below replacement level resulted in centuries of decrease.
- Emperors tried to subsidize larger families, but to no avail.
- Imported “barbarians” from beyond the empire’s borders to maintain population.

Christian Increase

- Higher birthrates
- More Christian women and girls survived and had families
- Rescued and adopted babies that were abandoned by others
- Cared for their own sick and pagan sick during plagues, resulting in higher survival rate and more conversions.

(See Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*)

3. Teaching Christian content to converts and children.

- For a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church [in Antioch] and taught great numbers of people. (Acts 11:26)
- Paul stayed [in Corinth] for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18:11)
- Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Modern Europe

- “Is France on the way to becoming an Islamic state?” (Barbara Amiel)
- “The problem is not whether the majority of Europeans is Islamic, but rather which Islam—*sharia* or Euro-Islam—is to dominate in Europe.” (Bassam Tibi)

Eurabia?

“Europe will be part of the Arabic west... Migration and demography indicate this. Europeans marry late and have few or no children. But there’s strong immigration. At the latest, following current trends, Europe will have Muslim majorities in the population at the end of the twenty-first century” (Bernard Lewis).

Europe's spiritual suicide

1. Not reproducing converts
2. Not reproducing children
3. Not reproducing content

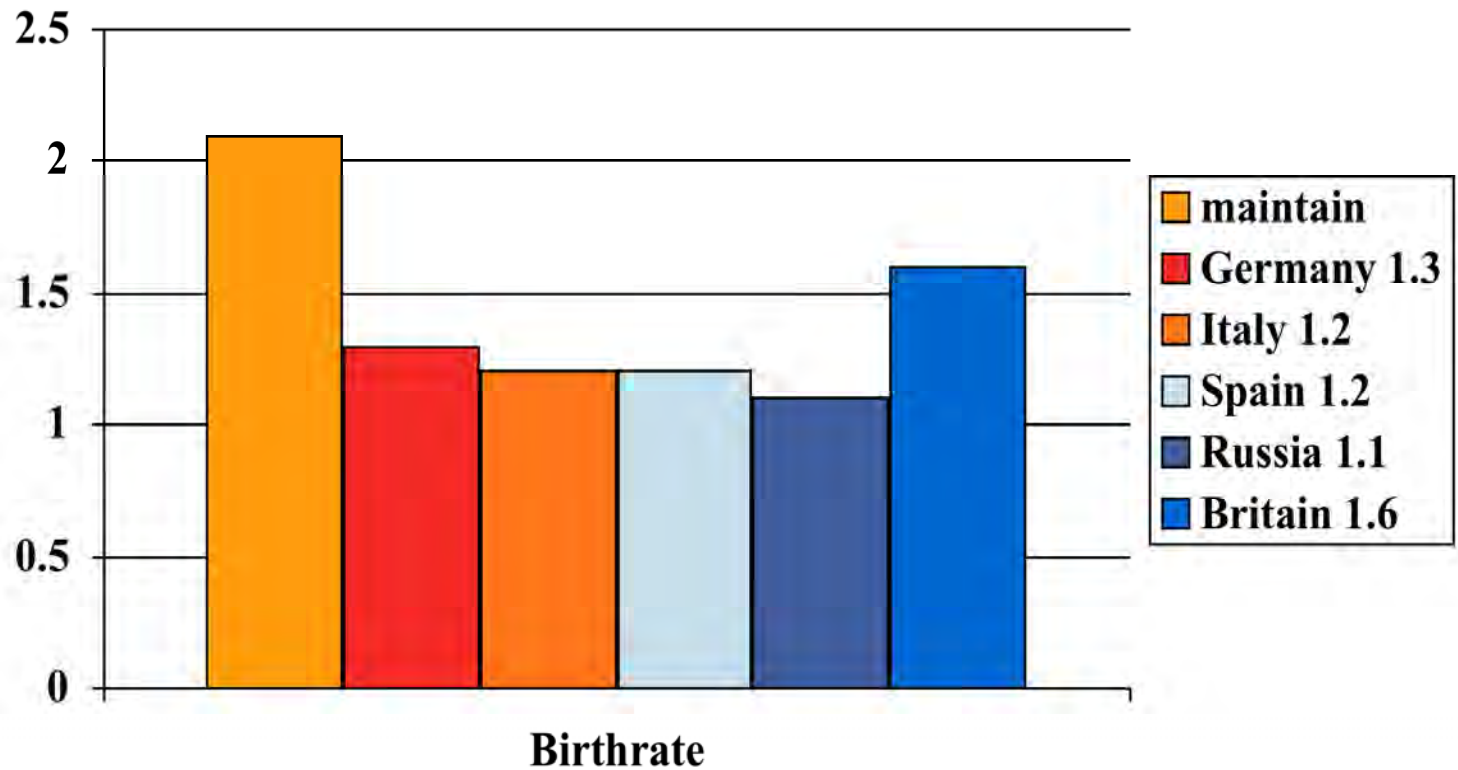
1. Not reproducing converts

- Missionary faith: “Missions are the test of our faith. The test of our real belief is our readiness to share it with all peoples.”
- Religious pluralism negates missions: “In a supermarket society, a rich variety of religions was a welcome addition to the shelves.” (Lesslie Newbigin, missionary in India for 40 years, who retired in Britain)

1. Not reproducing converts

- “What I have been so horrified by is a kind of timidity by Christian preachers and ministers. The kind of attitude that says, ‘Well, I happen to be a Christian, but of course I wouldn't expect you to think that...’”
- “A clergyman among them described missions as theological racism. I was provoked into advising him to beware of theological fornication!” (Newbiggin)

2. Not reproducing children



2. Not reproducing children

- Russia: Projected drop from 150 million to 100 million by 2050. Russia's low birthrate is partly due to two abortions for every live birth. "This is a crisis threatening Russia's survival." (Vladimir Putin)
- Germany is projected to lose the equivalent of East Germany's population by 2050.
- In Europe 75 retirees will be collecting government pension for every 100 workers.
- Solution: more immigrants

2. Not reproducing children

- Canadian birthrate: 1.6
- United States: 2.1
- 1971 was the last year white Americans had enough children to replace themselves.
- Black birthrates have gone even lower.

Two exceptions in the U.S.

1. Immigrants (many of them Christian) have higher birthrates.
2. Some conservative Christians tend to have more children.

3. Not reproducing content

- After 1900 most British homes ceased family devotions.
- **18%** of Europeans consider it important that their children share their faith.
- British church attendance dropped from 60% in 1850 to **8%** in 2000.
- British Sunday school dropped from 55% of kids in 1900 to **4%** in 2000.

Reproducing Christianity

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1. Reproducing Converts

- Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)
- You will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)

2. Reproducing children

“Conservative, religiously minded Americans are putting far more of their genes into the future than their liberal, secular counterparts... In the United States, fully 47 percent of people who attend church weekly say that their ideal family size is three or more children. By contrast, only 27 percent of those who seldom attend church want that many kids.” (Phillip Longman)

2. Reproducing children

“Does this mean that the future belongs to those who believe they are (or who are in fact) commanded by a higher power to procreate? Based on current trends, the answer appears to be yes.” ...When secular-minded Americans decide to have few if any children, they unwittingly give a strong evolutionary advantage to the other side of the culture divide.” (Phillip Longman)

2. Reproducing children

The new neighbor struck up a conversation with a 7-year-old boy next door. “How many kids in your family?” he asked. “Eight,” said the child. “My, that many children must cost a lot of money,” said the neighbor.

“Oh, no sir,” replied the boy. “We don’t buy them. We raise them.”

2. Reproducing children

- I will bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. (Genesis 22:17).
- Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. (Psalm 112:1-3)

2. Reproducing children

- Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. (Psalm 127:3-5)
- The prophet Heman's many children "were given him through the promises of God to exalt him." (1 Chronicles 25:4)

3. Reproducing content

- **Teaching converts:** “Teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.” (Mt 28:19)
- **Teaching children:** One generation will commend your works to another; they will speak of your mighty acts. (Psalm 145:4)

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