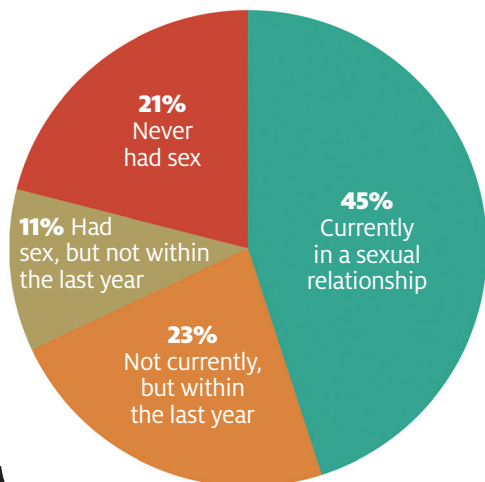


SPOTLIGHT: The Sex Lives of Unmarried Evangelicals

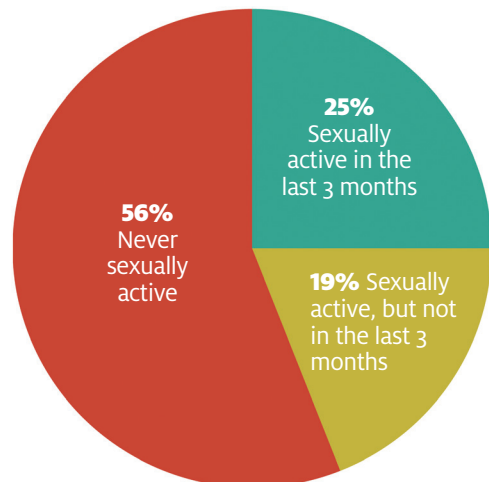
➡ It was the statistic shouted around the church: 80 percent of young unmarried evangelicals have had sex. “Christians are having premarital sex and abortions as much (or more) than non-Christians,” said *Relevant* (a magazine marketed to 20-something evangelicals). “Chastity is not the norm.” But a more recent survey said most unmarried evangelicals have never been sexually active. Who’s right?



National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy/Guttmacher Institute

Which do you believe?

Two different surveys, both working with the National Association of Evangelicals, asked unmarried evangelicals ages 18–29 about their sexual behavior. The results differed dramatically.



Grey Matter Research

Which is right?

Probably both, depending on how you define *evangelical*. The National Campaign survey asked if respondents considered themselves a “born-again Christian, evangelical, or fundamentalist”—31 percent of them said yes. The Grey Matter survey used a six-point test: its “evangelicals” were respondents who attend church at least monthly and hold traditionally evangelical beliefs on salvation, the Bible, evangelism, and active faith—which was only 10 percent of those ages 18–29. In other words: If you call yourself an evangelical but don’t go to church or hold evangelical beliefs, you’re also unlikely to stay chaste.

What makes a difference:



YES

BIBLE READING? Evangelicals who infrequently read the Bible were 70 percent more likely to have been recently sexually active than frequent Bible readers.



YES

CHURCH ATTENDANCE? Evangelicals who attend church less than weekly were more than twice as likely to have been recently sexually active than weekly attenders.



NO

CONVERSION? Of the sexually active singles, 92 percent had sex after becoming “born again.” That’s largely because the average age when evangelicals under 40 became “born again” was 8.