

*Comment by Mike O'Brien, SHIC Vice President*

In a recent (2005) study published in *the Journal of Religion & Society*, <http://moses.creighton.edu/JRS/2005/2005-11.html> , author Gregory S. Paul examines statistics from 18 of the world's most prosperous democratized nations, a database of 800 million people, collected in the mid to late 1990's and the early 2000's from the International Social Survey Programme, the UN Development Programme, the World Health Organization, Gallup, and other well documented sources.

His study compares religiosity with dysfunctionality in a nation's population. Religiosity is measured by biblical literalism, frequency of prayer and service attendance, and absolute belief in a creator. Dysfunctionality is defined by indicators of poor societal health such as homicide, suicide, low life expectancy, STD infection, abortion, early pregnancy, and childhood mortality.

It reveals clear correlation between social strife and religiosity. The U.S. is always the most religious, and almost always the most dysfunctional, sometimes spectacularly so. In general, higher rates of belief in, and worship of a creator, correlate with higher rates of homicide, suicide, STD infection rates, teen pregnancy, and abortion.

His conclusion? "The non-religious, pro-evolution democracies contradict the dictum that a society cannot enjoy good conditions unless most citizens ardently believe in a moral creator."