

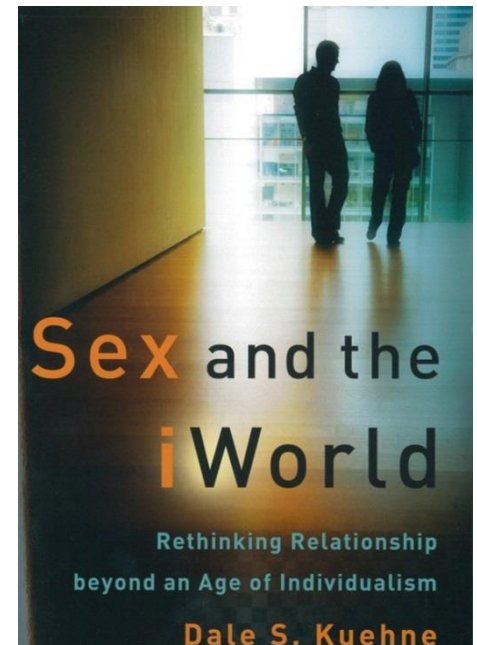
Making Christian Marriage Possible

The Challenge of the i-World

Jonathan Tame, June 2013

The Three Worlds

- t-world: Traditional relationships, stable families, predictable social structure
- i-world: based on individualism: autonomy and freedom of the individual
- R-world: focused on good and right relationships



The road to the i-World



1. **Sexual revolution:** contraceptive pill + legal abortion = sex separated from reproduction
2. gradual shift in gender roles --> more economic independence for women
3. Parallel growth in prosperity & **consumerism**
Choices empower us & define our identity
Cultural phenomenon: Product of materialistic philosophy + commercial strategy
4. **‘Consumerisation’** of relationships/sex/marriage

Individualism

- Before individualism there was *individuality*:
 - prerequisite for relationality
 - ‘not good to be alone’
 - identity via relationships
- Individualism: people uprooted relationally
 - ultimate source of authority re truth, morality
 - autonomous freedom & independence
- Impossible ‘brand’ burden



The i-World

Main narrative

- freedom (from nature, from authority, from want)
- fulfilment (be myself, find myself, create myself)

Main taboos

- criticizing someone else's life choice or behaviour
- coercion or causing harm
- sex without mutual consent

Main challenges

- weaker families
- insecurity
- loneliness / isolation



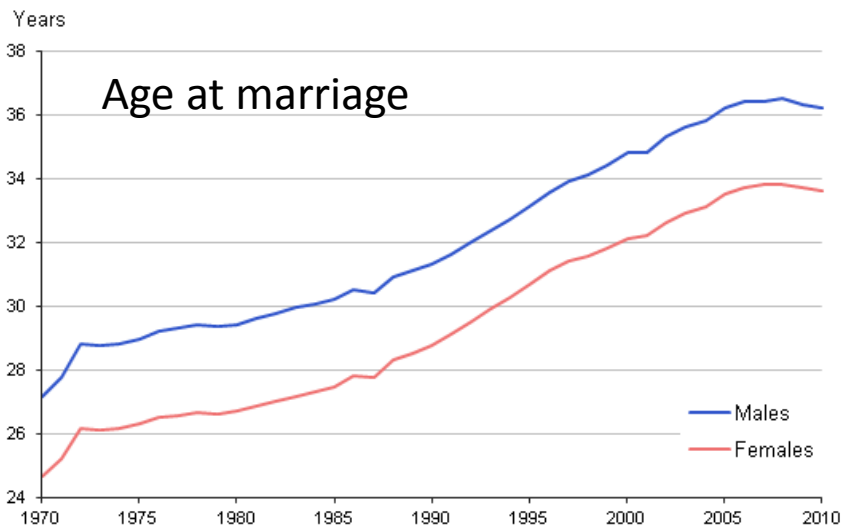
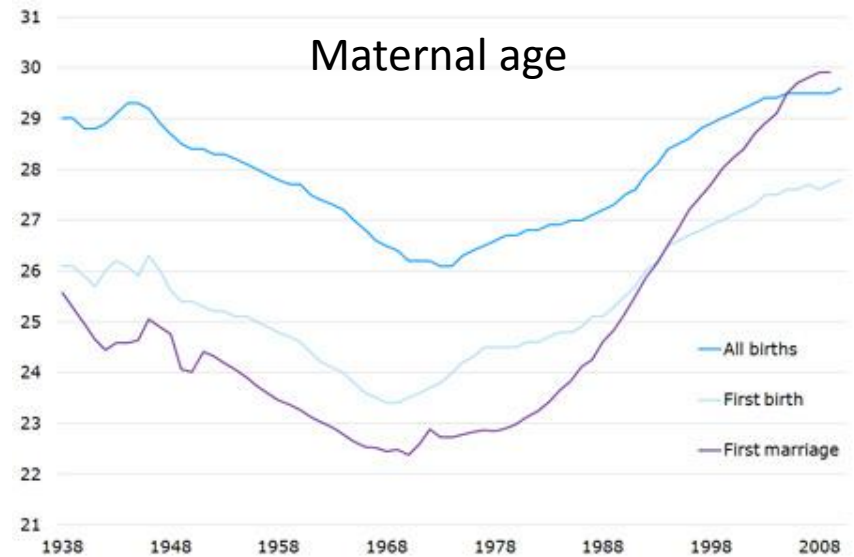
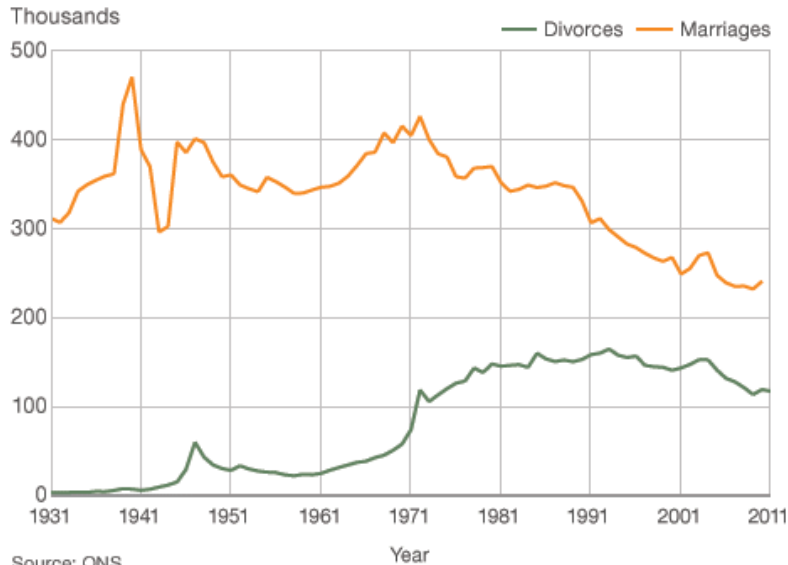
Consequences

- Equating intimacy with sex
- ‘Compound’ family breakdown
- Ambivalence regarding commitment
- Rise in cohabitation
- ££ pressures – house prices, working hours
- Delayed family formation

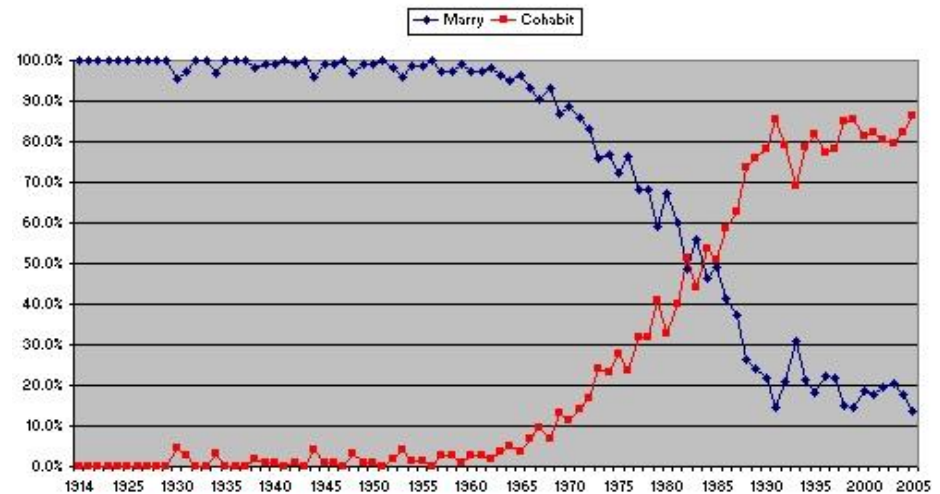


Impact on marriage, family

Divorce and marriage in England and Wales



The change in proportion of first relationship types over time



Relational impact of the iWorld

- 45% of US children are born outside of marriage
- 78% of African-American children born outside of marriage
- Over 50% of women 18 and older are not married.

Causes

- Implosion of Marriage in Middle-Class Families with High School Education
- Recasting the purpose of marriage from family to soul-mate
- Loss of faith in marriage by under 30s

