



# Epsilon Clue

All the etcetera that's fit to read.

```
static inline void
block_sigchld(sigset_t *sigmask)
{
    sigset_t new_sigmask;
    SYNC_TRACE(7)
    fprintf(stderr, "Blocking SIGCHLD.\n");
    sigemptyset(&new_sigmask);
    sigaddset(&new_sigmask, SIGCHLD);
    sigprocmask(SIG_BLOCK, &new_sigmask, sigmask);
}
```

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## Hemorrhaging Catholics in Brazil

Posted on October 8, 2011 by arensb

The AP [reports](#):

At the start of the last decade, millions of Brazilian Catholics joined flashy Pentecostal congregations expanding in the world's biggest Catholic country. Now, Brazil's Getulio Vargas Foundation finds, the country's Catholics are still leaving the church and at a higher rate than ever, but many younger parishioners, like Maragato, are simply becoming nonreligious.

Color me surprised. I knew (and the article confirms) that Latin America is considered a Catholic stronghold, one of the last places where you'd expect religion, especially Catholicism, to decline. Heck, even in the US, it appears that one reason religion hasn't declined more precipitously than it has is that it's being propped up by immigrants from the south. But according to the article, a study has found that 68% of Brazilians were Catholic last year, compared to 90% thirty years ago.

The article suggests several reasons for this decline, including a burgeoning middle class, which certainly goes well with the common notion that as the more well-off people are, the less they need to turn to religion.

This is also in part a self-inflicted wound:

Marcelo Neri, the author of the study, also said he thinks the Catholic decline was sparked by a "female revolution."

The foundation study discovered that Catholic women, instead of giving up entirely on religion, are largely going to traditional Protestant denominations such as the Presbyterians or Methodists, which are viewed by many as less patriarchal.

This is the point, I think, at which any decent consultant would say that the franchise needs a reboot to remain relevant for modern audiences. Make Jesus a woman, or change the setting from Jerusalem 2000 years ago, to Sao Paulo in 2010. Maybe add a shootout at the last supper. Add corporate sponsorship and tie-ins; instead of bread and wine, have priests turn Big Macs and Coke into Jesus' flesh and blood. Don't worry about continuity: the fans will [retcon](#) it easily enough.

But of course the Catholic church is nothing if not reactionary. Change of any kind terrifies them. And so they'll continue to lose the younger generation, the one that lives in this century instead of the fourteenth.

For lifelong Catholic Leila Ribeiro, the church's misfortunes mark a break from generations of church tradition. [...]

"I was brought up with the notion that religion is passed from mother to child, but I fear for what will happen to the church in his generation," she said, looking toward her son. "If the Catholic faith isn't spread within the family, how will it grow?"

Well, they *could* provide some evidence that their claims of magic people, of a candyland in the sky, and so on, are actually, you know, true. But they've been trying that for 2000 years now without success, so I wouldn't bet on it happening any time soon.

**Update, 12:49:** [More support](#) for the "self-inflicted wound" hypothesis, courtesy of the Washington Post. Not in Brazil this time, but in the US:

New research by the Barna Group finds they view churches as judgmental, overprotective, exclusive and unfriendly towards doubters. They also consider congregations antagonistic to science and say their Christian experience has been shallow. [...]

"Churches are not prepared to handle the 'new normal,'" said Kinnaman. "However, the world for young adults is changing in significant ways, such as their remarkable access to the world and worldviews via technology, their alienation from various institutions, and their skepticism toward external sources of authority, including Christianity and the Bible."



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