

Study involving condom distribution spurs controversy in 'pro-family' circles

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press - www.abpnews.com

May 29, 2003

Volume: 03-49-3609

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Nashville, Tennessee

WASHINGTON (ABP) – A new study suggests distributing condoms in schools does not increase sexual activity, but some conservative critics say they will continue to oppose condom distribution anyway.

The study, released May 28 in the American Journal of Public Health, compared schools that distributed condoms to sexually active teenagers with schools that did not hand out condoms. It found that teenagers reported similar rates of sexual activity in both sets of schools.

In fact, a lower percentage of teenagers at schools with condom-distribution programs reported having had sex – 42 percent - compared with 49 percent of teens at the non-condom schools.

But critics of school condom-distribution programs said the study doesn't dampen their argument that schools providing condoms encourages teenagers to be sexually active, because condoms can't prevent most sexually transmitted diseases.

"Making condoms available in the schools sends kids the wrong message and gives them a false sense of security that they will be protected by wearing a condom," said Ken Connor, president of Family Research Council in a statement. "Every study out there will tell you the same thing: teens that practice abstinence don't get STDs and they don't get pregnant. That is what we should be teaching them in school."

The study was based on survey data collected in 1995 from 4,166 students then attending high schools in Massachusetts. Fifty of the schools studied did not distribute condoms, while nine did.

In her conclusion, chief researcher Susan Blake argued, "The concerns of the small minority of parents who oppose providing condoms or related instruction in schools were not substantiated" by the study.

However, critics such as Connor noted that the study showed no marked difference in teen-pregnancy rates between the condom-distributing schools and the others. The researchers also could not come to a conclusion on whether the rates of incidence of STDs differed significantly between the two groups.

The study also did not reveal whether rates of sexual activity at schools that distributed condoms were higher or lower after the institution of the condom programs.



Copyright 2002 Associated Baptist Press. All rights reserved.

Go To: [\[ABPNews Home\]](#) [\[What's ABP?\]](#) [\[Links\]](#) [\[Town Hall\]](#) [\[The Stacks\]](#) [\[React!\]](#)

Baptists need new ethical pioneers, ethicist tells history society

By Ken Camp

Associated Baptist Press - www.abpnews.com

May 29, 2003

Volume: 03-49-3610

BELTON, Texas (ABP) – Trails blazed by Baptist pioneers in ethics have grown over from neglect, and new scouts are needed to "beat out the pathways" for this generation, an ethicist told the Baptist History and Heritage Society.

William Tillman, professor of Christian ethics at Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology in Abilene, Texas, participated in a panel discussion on "Frontiers in Baptist Ethics" at the society's annual meeting May 22-24 at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas. The national gathering explored the role of Baptists on the American frontier.

Tillman described two 20th century professors of Christian ethics – Henlee Barnette of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and T.B. Maston of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth – as "scouts" and "pioneers" in Christian ethics who helped Baptists engage the culture.

"We need them, or their kind, more than ever because, as a friend has insightfully observed, the pathways grow over. The frontiers reappear with each succeeding generation," he said.

Tillman observed that Christian ethics is "on the wane" in the Southern Baptist Convention's seminaries and few of the "moderate" seminaries and divinity schools created in recent years have made Christian ethics an educational priority.

"Both Barnette and Maston have understood that the pathways can grow back over," he said. "The basic landscape remains the same. Issues of money, sex and power, which cover the landscape, are ever with us."

Tillman called Maston and Barnette "identifiers of ethical topography" who were able to "communicate the lay of the land" to people in the pews of Baptist churches. They contextualized and interpreted the ethical insights of influential theologians Walter Rauschenbusch and Reinhold Niebuhr for Baptists in the South.

Maston and Barnette influenced generations of Baptist leaders not only through their prolific writing both for scholarly and popular audiences, but also through their seminary classrooms. Maston taught at Southwestern Seminary from 1922 to 1963, and Barnett taught at Southern Seminary from 1951 to 1977.

In another presentation to the historical society, David Stricklin, associate professor of history at Lyon College in Batesville, Ark., described the practically unknown contributions of Martin England on what he called "the far frontiers" of Baptist ethics. England was a Northern Baptist missionary to Burma, a co-founder of the interracial Koinonia Farms in Georgia, and a Southern field representative for the American Baptist Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board.

"His covert assignment was to be a minister to persons who got into various kinds of trouble as part of the struggle for civil rights for African Americans in the South in the 1950s and '60s. He often appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, to visit people in jail, help their families, and do whatever he could to help without calling attention to himself," Stricklin said.

He secured a life insurance policy for Martin Luther King Jr. when he was considered a bad risk, and England carried the policy in his coat pocket for months before one of King's aides convinced the civil rights leader to sign it.

In another panel presentation at the historical society's meeting, Rosalie Beck from Baylor University in Waco surveyed the contributions of frontier missionary Mina Everett.

Everett was the first single woman missionary appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board to serve in the western hemisphere, the first paid missionary in Texas to work with Hispanics, the first female missionary employed by the state missions arm of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the first paid woman staff worker for Woman's Missionary Union in any state.

"Mina's employment with the state and Southern Baptist Convention boards ended because of her willingness to speak to mixed audiences in an effort to raise support for and consciousness of missions. Through her time as a BGCT employee, some powerful pastors criticized her 'forwardness' in speaking to both men and women," Beck said. "Mina Everett succeeded

in many areas of her frontier work, but she crashed on the ministry barrier between genders in Victorian Texas."

Portia Sikes McKown from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor detailed Elli Moore Townsend's role in providing educational opportunities for women – particularly poor young women – on the Texas frontier.

Wallace Alcorn, a Baptist educator from Austin, Minn., received the top award in the annual Baptist Heritage Preaching Contest and preached the sermon, "Dissenting Baptists: The Glory of a Hated People," at the historical society meeting.

In addition to recognizing Alcorn, the society also presented to William J. Reynolds its Distinguished Service Award for outstanding contributions to Baptist history. Reynolds is distinguished professor of church music emeritus at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, former secretary of church music at the Baptist Sunday School Board, and a prolific writer of the stories behind gospel songs.

Others honored at the historical society's meeting included:

- Nelda Kent of Glendale, Ariz., curator and archivist for the Arizona Baptist Historical Society. She received the Davis C. Woolley Award for outstanding achievement in state Baptist history.
- James Taulman of Franklin, Tenn, received the Meritorious Service Award for working as managing editor of the Baptist History and Heritage publication and assistant to the society's executive director-treasurer.
- Glenn Jonas of Buies Creek, N.C., professor of religion at Campbell University, received the Norman W. Cox writing award for his article on Albert Henry Newsman.
- Charles Wade, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and Bill Pinson, his predecessor, received the officer's award for their commitment to historic Baptist principles, history and heritage.

The next meeting of the Baptist History and Heritage Society will be May 27-29, 2004, in Vancouver, Wash.

Copyright 2002 Associated Baptist Press. All rights reserved.

Go To: [\[ABPNews Home\]](#) [\[What's ABP?\]](#) [\[Links\]](#) [\[Town Hall\]](#) [\[The Stacks\]](#) [\[React!\]](#)

Birmingham association decides not to adopt new faith statement

By
Associated Baptist Press - www.abpnews.com
May 29, 2003
Volume: 03-49-3611

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) – The Birmingham Baptist Association will not use the more conservative 2000 "Baptist Faith and Message" as its doctrinal guide.

The association's executive committee instead voted in April to continue using the 1963 version of the "Baptist Faith and Message," according to the Alabama Baptist newspaper.

"The Baptist Faith and Message," the Southern Baptist Convention's doctrinal statement, was revised in 2000 to reflect the more conservative views of the current SBC leadership. The new statement has been implemented by the SBC's national agencies but has received a mixed reception at state and associational levels in Baptist life.

The secret-ballot vote by the Birmingham association's executive committee was 59 percent to 41 percent against adoption, said moderator Dan Nichols.

The vote resulted from a motion presented in January by Randy Overstreet, pastor of First Baptist Church of Birmingham. The motion was referred to the executive committee.

"Nobody feels good or bad about what happened," said moderator Nichols, pastor of Walkers Chapel Baptist Church in Fultondale. "We did what we felt was on our conscience and we moved on. There was no animosity. There was no cheering."

Still, Nichols said he expects the issue to resurface in the future.

Overstreet said he is disappointed in the vote but said the process was handled properly. "The association voted on it and we will abide by it," he said.

Members of First Baptist Church voted in January to escrow all but \$100 of the church's funding for the association until a decision was made about the doctrinal statement. Whether or not the church restores that funding "will have to be decided by the church," Overstreet told the Alabama Baptist.



Copyright 2002 Associated Baptist Press. All rights reserved.

Go To: [[ABPNews Home](#)] [[What's ABP?](#)] [[Links](#)] [[Town Hall](#)] [[The Stacks](#)] [[React!](#)]

Research shows subtle shifts in faith, some tarnish on the Bible Belt**By John Hall****Associated Baptist Press - www.abpnews.com****May 29, 2003****Volume: 03-49-3612**

ARLINGTON, Texas (ABP) – While traditional religious indicators were constant during the past decade, an undercurrent of change is affecting some segments of the population, Christian researcher George Barna says.

Statistics from the Barna Research Group indicate that during 1993-2003, the percentages of Americans who said they read the Bible, prayed to God, attended church, and attended an adult Sunday school class or small group in the past week remained about the same.

Also holding steady were beliefs in God as the all-knowing, all-powerful creator, the total accuracy of the Bible, and a responsibility to share one's faith. Likewise, the percentage of Americans identified as born-again believers and evangelicals remained constant during the decade.

However, closer examination of the data suggests the South is becoming less of a Christian stronghold, Barna said. Sunday school and church attendance and evangelism are all in decline in the region.

Increased mobility is a large factor in this change, Barna said. As people from around the country move into the South, residents are exposed to more religious options. Some of these other choices are drawing younger generations, he noted.

Additionally, senior adults are dropping out of the church, Barna told a conference in Arlington, Texas. Senior attendance, evangelism involvement and volunteerism are all down nationally.

African-Americans also appear to be less interested in traditional religion. Bible reading, evangelism and a belief in the "biblical God" have all declined among blacks, while the beliefs that Jesus sinned and that Satan is a symbol both increased.

Since 1991, the country's unchurched population has risen from 24 percent to 33 percent, Barna added. Even the spike in church attendance following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks should not be attributed to unchurched people entering sanctuaries, he said, but to believers returning to church.



Copyright 2002 Associated Baptist Press. All rights reserved.

Go To: [[ABPNews Home](#)] [[What's ABP?](#)] [[Links](#)] [[Town Hall](#)] [[The Stacks](#)] [[React!](#)]

Poll shows Christians, nonbelievers not that far apart on some moral issues

By John Hall

Associated Baptist Press - www.abpnews.com

May 29, 2003

Volume: 03-49-3613

ARLINGTON, Texas (ABP) – Christians and non-Christians hold similar moral views on key issues, Christian researcher George Barna says.

One poll from the Barna Research Group indicates 36 percent of American adults believe having an abortion is morally acceptable, while 19 percent of born-again Christians find the act acceptable. Five percent of all adults and four percent of born-again believers said having an affair with a married person is acceptable.

Forty-three percent of all adults believe reading a magazine with sexually explicit pictures is acceptable, compared to 21 percent of born-again Christians who agreed, research reveals. Thirty-six percent of adults believe getting drunk is morally OK, compared to 20 percent of born-again believers who approve.

A fourth of all adults said a sexual relationship with someone of the same gender is morally acceptable, while nine percent of born-again believers gave the same answer, the poll indicates.

While the poll shows some difference between the two groups, Barna said the statistical difference is not substantial. A 20-point difference is needed for people to notice a distinction between the two groups, Barna said, and a much greater separation is necessary to influence society.

Copyright 2002 Associated Baptist Press. All rights reserved.

Go To: [[ABPNews Home](#)] [[What's ABP?](#)] [[Links](#)] [[Town Hall](#)] [[The Stacks](#)] [[React!](#)]

Parents rely on church to develop children spiritually, Barna says**By John Hall****Associated Baptist Press - www.abpnews.com****May 29, 2003****Volume: 03-49-3614**

ARLINGTON, Texas (ABP) - Most parents believe they bear responsibility for the spiritual training of their children, according to researchers, but most spend no time in a typical week doing so and instead rely on churches to fill that role.

The Barna Research Group reports that 85 percent of parents of children under 13 believe they are primarily responsible for teaching their children about spiritual matters, while 11 percent say their church has top responsibility and 1 percent say their school is most responsible.

But fewer than one of every 10 church families prays or reads the Bible together, Christian researcher George Barna noted. And fewer than one of every 20 families has a worship activity together outside the church.

Parents are either unwilling to nurture their children spiritually or don't know how, Barna said during a recent conference at Lamar Baptist Church in Arlington. As a result, Christian parents are "totally dependent" on the church to nurture their offspring, he said. "They've exempted themselves from all responsibility in this."

The research suggests 87 percent of parents are satisfied with the training churches provide. But that may not be a good thing, Barna said, because parents have a relatively low expectation of churches.

Barna challenged churches to support families in spiritual development without allowing them to become reliant on the institution.

He encouraged congregations to focus on ministering to children because two thirds of all Christians are converted before they turn 18 and because children freely invite their friends to church and encourage parents to come into the faith.

Kids develop a sense of right and wrong by the time they are nine, Barna added, and what they believe at 13 is usually what they believe for the rest of their lives.

Failing to cultivate the spiritual lives of children and youth will have dire consequences for churches later, Barna warned. "We struggle with ministry to adults," he said. "It's difficult. You know why it's so difficult? Because we didn't do a good job when they were kids. We are reaping what we sowed 20, 30, 40 years ago."



Copyright 2002 Associated Baptist Press. All rights reserved.

Go To: [[ABPNews Home](#)] [[What's ABP?](#)] [[Links](#)] [[Town Hall](#)] [[The Stacks](#)] [[React!](#)]

CBF, Baptist development group bring improvements to Macedonians

By Lance Wallace

Associated Baptist Press - www.abpnews.com

May 29, 2003

Volume: 03-49-3615

ATLANTA (ABP) – A small village in northeastern Macedonia has water flowing again thanks to a collaborative effort between the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and a Baptist environmental-development group.

Another group of Macedonians will be receiving similar help soon.

Earlier this year, CBF missionaries Darrell and Kathy Smith worked the Texas-based Partnership For the Environment to complete a project that restored the supply of fresh water to the village of Turija, 20 miles west of the Bulgarian border. More than 30 years ago, artesian springs supplied fresh water to the community, but when the lines deteriorated and the distribution equipment failed, the village was left without drinking water. "The need for potable water in communities across Eastern Europe is severe," said Terri Morgan, president of Partnership For the Environment. Darrell Smith asked PFE to help restore water service to Turija, and the group agreed to provide technical assistance and engineering aid.

"Collaborating with governments and local businesses, like the Turija municipality and its construction and engineering companies, is an application of the gospel that is deeply gratifying," Morgan said. "The project allowed our board members to utilize their technical expertise in capacity-building with people that are not usually exposed to a Christian witness." The Baptist General Convention of Texas, which houses PFE at its offices in Dallas, was instrumental in guiding and supporting the work early on in the project, Morgan said. "CBF was our first international partner in a specific foreign mission project," she added. Workers assessed the village's needs during the summer of 2002 and gained the approval of local governments and the support of volunteer workers. After an initial engineering review, PFE engineers and advisors made minor changes to the design of the project.

The team then completed the project in four stages: They reconstructed the cap on the springs, replaced the existing water lines, installed an air valve and rebuilt the storage/distribution equipment. "The men of the village worked tirelessly, digging ditches by hand and carrying slabs of broken concrete ...," said missionary Darrell Smith, who has been working in Macedonia since 1997. Because the project was supported with in-kind contributions from the Turija community and outside grant funding, the direct project cost for hardware was less than \$8,000. The entire project was completed for about \$15,000 with the funding provided by PFE and CBF. Next on the agenda for the CBF-PFE partnership is a sewage project in Kamenjane, Macedonia, an area in the western part of the country near the Kosovo border. About 11,000 people live in the area, spread out among five small villages. The current wastewater disposal method consists of rock-lined cisterns, a primitive system that contributes to the spread of disease.

Partnership For the Environment has contributed \$3,000 for the first phase of this project, estimated to cost about \$1.5 million. The financing will be a collaboration between PFE, international donations and local governments. No completion date is set. "The high rate of disease [in Kamenjane] – especially among children – is closely related to a lack of clean water and sanitation throughout the region," Morgan said. "Because the community is Muslim, they face severe discrimination from their own government, even for humanitarian needs. But the opportunity to bring a witness by our actions is a powerful way to demonstrate the love and grace we know as Christians." The region around Kamenjane is newly democratic, "definitely on a learning curve about governance and civil society," Morgan noted. "Part of our project will address the need to establish a civic utility board and professional operations department free from the corruption of the former communist government."

- Photos available from Associated Baptist Press.

abp

Copyright 2002 Associated Baptist Press. All rights reserved.

Go To: [[ABPNews Home](#)] [[What's ABP?](#)] [[Links](#)] [[Town Hall](#)] [[The Stacks](#)] [[React!!](#)]

Correction

By

Associated Baptist Press - www.abpnews.com

May 29, 2003

Volume: 03-49-3616

CORRECTION:

In the May 22 story "Mississippi association may be first to make employees affirm faith statement," there were errors in the name and title of Don Beall. Please replace the 14th paragraph with the following:

Don Beall, director of associational strategy for the North American Mission Board, said NAMB is unaware of any other SBC associations that are using the Baptist Faith and Message as a criterion for employment and associational membership. However, each association is autonomous and precise records of such policies are not kept.



Copyright 2002 Associated Baptist Press. All rights reserved.

Go To: [[ABPNews Home](#)] [[What's ABP?](#)] [[Links](#)] [[Town Hall](#)] [[The Stacks](#)] [[React!](#)]