

Barna Tells Where We Are, The Bible Tells Us What It Means

I Chronicles 12:32

People Are Defined by What They Believe

- George Barna, head of Barna Research Group, has published many interesting statistics concerning the religious climate of our country. Some of his general conclusions include:
 - America is a nation of tremendous faith.
 - Our faith, however, is multidimensional, often outside the boundaries of biblical truth.
 - We live in an age of spiritual anarchy!
 - Yet, we do not care, as long as something is believed that brings good feelings.
- Let's have a closer look.

Barna Results (Among Those Claiming to be Christian)

- Only 43% strongly agree the Bible is accurate in all its teachings.
- Only 43% strongly believe Jesus did not commit sin.
- Only 41% strongly believe Jesus rose from the dead.
- 61% believe the Holy Spirit is not a living being, but 81% believe angels are real.
- Only 50% strongly believe the Bible provides us with absolutes.
- Only 50% strongly believe lying is always wrong.
- Only 31% strongly believe you have a responsibility to share your faith.
- Only 27% strongly believe Satan is real.
- 51% believe good deeds are enough to earn a place in Heaven.
- 41% believe beliefs do not determine whether a person goes to Heaven or Hell.
- Church attendance declined from 49% to 40% between 1991 and 2000; even the events of "9/11" stopped the decline for but a short while.
- Bible School attendance is under 20%.
- 23% believe in reincarnation.

Barna Results Concerning Acceptable Morality

<u>Behavior Considered Morally Acceptable</u>	<i>Mosaics 18-19</i>	<i>Busters 20-38</i>	<i>Boomers 39-57</i>	<i>Elders Over 58</i>
<i>gambling</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>51%</i>
<i>living with someone of the opposite sex without being married, sometimes called co-habitation</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>41%</i>
<i>enjoying sexual thoughts or fantasies about someone</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>40%</i>
<i>having an abortion</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>36%</i>

<i>having a sexual relationship with someone of the opposite sex to whom you are not married</i>	54%	56%	40%	24%
<i>looking at pictures of nudity or explicit sexual behavior</i>	50%	48%	38%	23%
<i>using profanity</i>	60%	49%	30%	20%
<i>getting drunk</i>	50%	48%	33%	15%
<i>having a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex</i>	40%	41%	32%	14%
<i>using drugs not prescribed by a medical doctor</i>	20%	22%	16%	12%

<u>Moral truth...</u>	<i>All</i>	<i>ages 18-35</i>	<i>ages 36-55</i>	<i>ages 56+</i>	<i>born again</i>	<i>non born-again</i>
<i>is unchanging</i>	22%	14%	33%	24%	32%	15%
<i>depends on the situation</i>	64	75	55	61	54	71
<i>don't know</i>	14	11	12	15	14	14

What Does it Mean?

- Traditional doctrinal issues are no longer considered relevant by most.
- We are not speaking to a growing part of our audience (cf. Acts 2 and Acts 17).
- Relativism and individualism are in control of our culture!
- We have strategized for a '50's world.
- We must reawaken in our era both the need for and the appreciation for absolutes (cf. Matt. 5:17-19).
- We must challenge the thinking of our age (II Cor. 10:3-5).
- We must ourselves be sanctified by truth (Jn. 17:17).

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