

TEEN PREGNANCY



The False Hope Of Family Planning by Danny Miller

Accepting The Challenge

Let us always keep in mind that teen pregnancy and premarital sex are only symptoms of the deep spiritual void that plagues the youth of our land. America not only has the highest teen pregnancy rate among the developed nations, but we are also a leader in teen suicide, teen homicide, and drug abuse.

Suicide is the number two killer of our nation's teenagers. How many were driven to the end of themselves by heartache or humiliation caused by a broken relationship, an unplanned pregnancy, or an abortion? We, the Church, are responsible to be salt and light in the world—a preserving and illuminating influence. We are the ones who must respond and accept the challenge before us. Let us move out in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus to

resist sexual immorality with all its implications, and reestablish the moral foundations that lead to true freedom and fulfillment. The principles of God are the only answer and He is our only hope.

"THERE IS A WAY WHICH SEEMS RIGHT TO A MAN, BUT ITS END IS THE WAY OF DEATH." (PROVERBS 14:12)

For some quality materials on family life and parent/child relationships, we recommend the ministry of Dr. James Dobson, Focus On The Family, P.O. Box 500, Arcadia, CA 91006-0500.

All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, ©The Lockman Foundation 1977.

"Teen Pregnancy" was reprinted from an article in *Americans Against Abortion* magazine. Issued quarterly in full color, this magazine is a call to Christian involvement to save children's lives by being informed and knowing how you can help others. *Americans Against Abortion* covers pro-life news and current events, highlights personal testimonies, gives a biblical foundation for action, and more. A sample copy is free, a subscription is \$5.00 or whatever you can afford. Write: **Americans Against Abortion, Box 70, Lindale, TX 75771-0070.**

For additional copies of this article order AB#86. A complete listing of all our articles on abortion and related subjects, and the many pro-life materials we distribute is available through our magazine, or write and ask for a free Pro-Life Materials Brochure.

Are You Searching?

If you want to know more about what it means to be a Christian, we have some information we'd like to send you. There is no charge or obligation and we won't give your address to anyone else. Just write to Americans Against Abortion and ask for the free packet, "Walking With Jesus."

For local help or information:

A Word To Parents

You can make sure your children do not fall prey to these immoral influences by accepting your responsibility as the primary molder of their sexual values. We are commanded to "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6) Don't wait until he or she is vulnerable to all sorts of sexual temptation before you talk to them. Begin early in their life to establish an open relationship which will make it easy for them to come to *you* with their sexual questions instead of someone else.

Our children are being brought up in a world where the average viewer of prime time television sees over 9,000 scenes of suggested sexual intercourse or innuendo each year. If we expect to reinforce our child's resistance to sexual sin, it will require that we get beyond our reservations and invest something of ourselves in this critical area of training. If we don't, the family planners will.

Today, the sight of pregnant teenage girls has become all too familiar in most of our communities. Our high schools are filled with many thousands who have pursued acceptance, love, or happiness, through sexual relationships, only to come away empty. Of the little lives created as a result of these relationships, nearly half are ended through abortion. Of those girls who choose not to abort, 90% will keep their child and attempt to raise him themselves. So, at a time when they should be acquiring basic learning skills, making friends, and planning for the future, these young mothers worry about daycare, diapers, and finances.

Each year over one million American teenage girls become pregnant, approximately 80% of them out of wedlock. This year one out of every ten girls between the ages of 15 to 19 will become pregnant. The liberalization of attitudes towards sex has borne nothing but bad fruit. The problem is a serious one with threatening implications for our nation.

For the past 16 years the U.S. Government has been trying to bring teen pregnancy under control, so far, to no avail. In pursuit of solutions, officials have looked to family planning organizations such as Planned Parenthood, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the Center for Population Options, and others who consider themselves experts on the subject. These "experts" have claimed for years that the solution to teen pregnancy is sex education in the schools and more widespread use of contraceptives by young people.

Though some have questioned the role of family planners in the lives of young people who are not even married, our government has given them millions of tax dollars annually and unprecedented access to the minds and bodies of our nation's youth. It has been the hope of our government officials that the services of the family planners would stem the tide of this crisis, but they haven't. As a result, many Americans are beginning to question the notion that contraceptives are the answer, and are concerned that this approach may only be making matters worse. Perhaps the time has come to take a long look at the nature of the teen pregnancy problem, the family planners themselves, and the effects of their programs on our young people and society.

We want to say from the start that we are not opposed to the use of non-abortive contraceptives in the context of marriage. Our subject is teen pregnancy and it is within that context that we write.

Family Planning Values

Presently, the family planners, with Planned Parenthood leading the pack, enjoy a high level of public acceptance. There are over 4,000 government supported family planning clinics in the U.S. The ser-

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vices offered by these clinics may include medical examinations, pregnancy tests, birth control, and sex education presentations to local schools. They have managed to develop and maintain a good public image, keeping the focus on their services and off of their hidden goals for our society.

We cannot fully understand the threat that the family planners pose to our nation without first looking at their underlying philosophy. It is one which is fundamentally humanistic and scoffs at Christian principles of morality. To them, man is an animal whose sex drives need to be met, and it is up to the individual to decide how to meet them. *They see no reason to discourage homosexuality, bestiality, adultery, sado-masochism, or any other form of perversion. They believe that sex among teenagers is perfectly normal and acceptable and a great deal of their material targeted for young people encourages sexual experimentation and multiple partners.*

The family planners believe the problem is teens having babies—not teens having sex. They counsel young people to participate in "responsible sex," which they define as sex that protects against pregnancy. They do not consider sexual abstinence outside of marriage to be a valid option for today's youth. It happens to be an option that would put them out of business. They survive by creating a demand for their own services and have no intention of losing the 1.5 million teenage customers they "serve" each year.

Family Planning Claims On Trial

The most common criticism of family planning programs for teenagers is that they don't work. These programs have not only failed to reverse the tide of teen pregnancy, they have produced a drastic increase in almost every area they were designed to reduce. The family planners are always quick to point to a lowering of birthrates as evidence that their services are working, and claim that their programs will produce a drop in teen pregnancies, teen abortions, and premarital sex. The facts, most of which come from the family planners themselves, do not support these claims.

In the first ten years of government financed family planning programs, the number of teens served by them increased 400%. During this same period, the number of out-of-wedlock pregnancies doubled among teens 15-19 years old. Many of them became pregnant while participating in family planning programs. One study showed that in 1976, teens who used contraceptives were more likely to become "accidentally" pregnant than non-contracepting teens.

As Planned Parenthood's own magazine acknowledged, "More teenagers are using contraceptives and using them more consistently

than ever before. Yet the number and rate of premarital pregnancies continues to rise." So much for reducing teen pregnancies.

Teen abortions, as well, have increased steadily **despite** the spreading influence of family planning programs. From 1974 to 1982 the percentage of teenage pregnancies terminated by abortion rose nearly 70%. In most of the programs where they have seen a measurable drop in the number of teen births, it has been due to an increase in the number of abortions. In 1976, 50% of the unmarried teens who sought abortions had been using birth control when they got pregnant. So much for reducing the number of teen abortions.

Perhaps the effects of the family planners' programs are most apparent in the area of teen sexual activity. There has been a near doubling in the percentage of sexually active teens since these programs were first initiated. Not only are there more teens having premarital sex, those who do are having sex more often, and with more partners. During the period

between 1971-1976, the number of teenage girls having six or more acts of intercourse per month increased 25%, and the number having sex with six or more **different partners** per month increased 66%. So much for reducing the level of teen sexual activity.

These are not the signs of progress, but of failure. While the family planners have promised us a turnaround in the number of teen pregnancies, teen abortions, and teens who are sexually active, they have instead given us increases in every one of those areas. Some may question, "Just how much are these programs to be blamed for these increases? Perhaps it's merely coincidence."

In a very recent national study, two researchers concluded that "greater involvement in family planning programs appears to be associated with higher, rather than lower, teenage pregnancy rates." They point to figures which show that while family planning clients have fewer live births, they show a **drastic** increase in the number of pregnancies. From this they concluded, "enrollment in a family planning program appeared to **raise** a teenager's chances of becoming pregnant and of having an abortion." (emphasis ours)

Contraceptive Hazards

By encouraging young people to use contraceptives we send them a faulty message. We say that technology and not self-restraint will rid them of the natural consequences of their irresponsible behavior. But reality has a way of catching up with us. **"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this will he also reap."** (Gal. 6:7)



More serious than the risk of pregnancy, contraceptives are themselves oftentimes dangerous and do not protect against sexually transmitted diseases. The *British Medical Journal* reported that teenage women actually risk their health more in taking the birth control pill than by carrying a child. And according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, "there are at least 23 different infections that you can get from promiscuous sex." Many of them are incurable and some can lead to death—not the least of which is AIDS.

Parents, Keep Out!

Because the family planners insist that teenagers are entitled to confidential services, they have fought vigorously in the courts against any laws which require parental permission before a child is prescribed a contraceptive or receives an abortion. They have even fought laws which simply require that parents be notified in such cases. The courts have supported them and now most family planning programs which receive government funds *cannot require parental consent or notification*. Such a policy undermines the authority of parents and allows family planners to bypass them in this very personal area of their child's life and health.

Moral Surrender—The High Cost Of Contraception

One would probably be surprised to learn that we haven't yet exposed the worst effects of the family planning programs. *The highest price we pay by indulging the family planners is not the billions*

of dollars handed to them, but rather the moral decay which comes as a result of their influence.

They often compare U.S. teen pregnancy rates with those of European nations, especially Sweden and Holland. In controlling teen pregnancy, we lag far behind. If one looks closely, however, it is very easy to see why. Like it or not (and the family planners don't), the U.S., unlike many European countries, is still influenced by biblical values. Although moral absolutes are mocked by university professors and the liberal media, *most Americans still believe that some things are right and some things are wrong*. Sex outside of marriage happens to be one of the things most believe to be wrong. This is the obstacle that Planned Parenthood and company face.

They know that to be as successful in birth control as their European models, America will have to become as morally blind as those same nations. The real agenda of the family planners in the U.S. is to institute a new moral code which is, in reality, an immoral code. This approach seeks to animalize human sexuality to the point that morality is no longer a consideration and the "religious hang-ups" of the past no longer interfere.

Presently, American teenagers feel just enough shame about having sex to make the use of contraceptives embarrassing. If they go on a date "prepared," it clearly implies that they were looking for sex. It is this sense of shame that the family planners desire to rid from our young people. Their hope is that sex among teens will become so common and accepted that using any form of birth control will not be embarrassing, but as natural as wearing a seatbelt. **Make no mistake, the contraceptive solution is not free. It can only be properly carried out at the expense of biblical morality.**

School-Based Health Clinics

For years, family planners have wanted to get their "services" to teenagers who may not feel comfortable walking into birth control clinics, and now they have a controversial new approach. Since young people are not coming to them, they have decided to take their services to the young people—in the form of **school-based health clinics**.

Located on high school campuses and staffed with health personnel, they offer a wide range of medical services primarily to inner city kids who often lack quality medical care. They are brought into the communities billed as "comprehensive health clinics," but the *primary* purpose is to provide a captive audience with sex education, contraceptives, and abortion counseling and referrals.

In the Minnesota Legislature, a bill was offered to provide funding to school-based clinics. When pro-family legislators amended the bill to exclude family planning organizations which perform abortions, the sponsor withdrew it. There are over 70 school-based clinics already operating in the U.S. with over 100 more planned in the near future. All of them have the support of pro-abortion family planning organizations.

The statistics often used to support the effectiveness of these clinics are misleading. They point to a reduction in the number of students having babies, but ignore the fact that the number of students getting pregnant has risen. These facts do not support the

Holding Our Ground

Are we willing to surrender the next generation to this "solution" to unwanted pregnancies? If not, we must be prepared to oppose the efforts of the family planners, whether they are appealing for federal funds for national programs, or trying to push sex education in our schools, or infiltrating our communities with "family planning clinics." They must not go unchallenged.

We must insist that the only legitimate place for sex is within marriage and hold those who have occasional custody of our young people accountable to reflect this value. Public school officials do not think twice about telling students to say "no" to drugs, alcohol, or smoking—yet refuse to tell them that premarital sex is wrong. The consequences are just as damaging as any of these other vices, perhaps more so.

Premarital sex not only has physical consequences, but emotional and spiritual consequences as well. There is a loss of innocence, a lowering of self-esteem, and an erosion of character. Adults must not shrink back when it comes to explaining the dangers of teen sex and encouraging them to say "no!"

There is no reason for Christians to be apologetic for insisting on such an approach. A government report has shown that the key factors associated with lower levels of adolescent sexual activity include: parent/child communication, parental supervision, and *faith in God*. The Lord has given us guidelines by which we are to live so that life will be rich and free of unnecessary pain. The young people of today deserve to know the truth and to live by the time-tested values of God's Word.

clinic's claims, but instead are evidence that they rely heavily on abortion to keep students from having babies.

There is also the issue of parental authority. Clinic supporters claim they receive permission from parents before giving children contraceptives or abortion counseling, but the truth is that most clinics send out a *blanket* permission slip to parents at the beginning of the year which allows the child to receive **all** the "health" services the clinic offers. Parents may sign this form so that their child can receive a physical to play on the football team or get an aspirin for a headache. But without realizing it, they have also given permission for their child to receive often dangerous birth control prescriptions, or referrals for abortion.

Be on the lookout for one of these school-based "sex" clinics in your local high school. Check with the principal and find out what is presently being taught about sex, contraceptives, and abortion. Also find out if there are any plans to bring one of these clinics into the school.

Concerned citizens must be in on the ground floor debate as happened in San Diego recently. A reader of *Americans Against Abortion* magazine managed to get on a task force which studied the feasibility of clinics in the local school district. Through his efforts and those of others, the school board voted against the clinics.

If you would like more information and ideas on how to deal with these clinics, write and ask for a School-Based Clinics Info Packet, suggested price \$3.00.