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PROPHEZINE NEWS BYTES

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IN THIS EDITION...

Only Half Of Protestant Pastors Have A Biblical Worldview

<http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=156&Reference=A>

(Ventura, CA)-In his recently released book and a subsequent research report on worldviews, author and researcher George Barna made waves by citing statistics showing just 9% of all born again adults and just 7% of Protestants possess a biblical worldview. That information pricked people's curiosity regarding the worldviews of the nation's religious leaders, prompting Barna Research to conduct a national survey on that topic among Protestant pastors. The numbers are now in – and the outcome may again shock many people.

Based on interviews with 601 Senior Pastors nationwide, representing a random cross-section of Protestant churches, Barna reports that only half of the country's Protestant pastors – 51% - have a biblical worldview. Defining such a worldview as believing that absolute moral truth exists, that it is based upon the Bible, and having a biblical view on six core beliefs (the accuracy of biblical teaching, the sinless nature of Jesus, the literal existence of Satan, the omnipotence and omniscience of God, salvation by grace alone, and the personal responsibility to evangelize), the researcher produced data showing that there are significant variations by denominational affiliation and other demographics.

"The most important point," Barna argued, "is that you can't give people what you don't have. The low percentage of Christians who have a biblical worldview is a direct reflection of the fact that half of our primary religious teachers and leaders do not have one. In some denominations, the vast majority of clergy do not have a biblical worldview, and it shows up clearly in the data related to the theological views and moral choices of people who attend those churches."

Denominational Distinctions

The survey of pastors included ministers from more than four-dozen denominations, each of which was represented in proportion to the number of churches it has in the U.S. That enabled the researchers to analyze the responses of seven denominational segments more closely. There is considerable variation in the worldviews held.

An example of the gap among churches is reflected in the outcomes related to the nation's two largest denominations, the Southern Baptist Convention and the United Methodist Church. (Of the nation's 320,000 Protestant churches, more than 42,000 of them are Southern Baptist and more than 35,000

are United Methodist; these two denominations alone account for roughly one-quarter of all Protestant churches in the U.S.) The Southern Baptists had the highest percentage of pastors with a biblical worldview (71%) while the Methodists were lowest among the seven segments evaluated (27%).

Among the other segments examined, 57% of the pastors of Baptist churches (other than Southern Baptist) had a biblical worldview, as did 51% of non-denominational Protestant pastors, 44% of pastors of charismatic or Pentecostal churches, 35% of pastors of black churches, and 28% of those leading mainline congregations.

Demographic Differences

The survey brought to light some unexpected differences based on pastoral background. The most intriguing of those relates to theological training. Educationally, the pastors least likely to have a biblical worldview are those who are seminary graduates (45%). In contrast, three out of five pastors who have not attended seminary operate with a biblical worldview (59%).

The largest gap related to gender. Whereas 53% of male pastors have a biblical worldview, the same can be said for just 15% of female pastors. Overall, just 6% of all Protestant Senior Pastors are women.

Another huge gap was based on race. White Senior Pastors were nearly twice as likely as black Senior Pastors to have a biblical worldview: 55% versus 30%, respectively.

Age and experience entered the picture. The youngest pastors in the nation (those under age 40) are more likely to have a biblical worldview than are their older peers (56% versus 50%). Similarly, pastors who have five years or less experience in leading churches have a higher rate of biblical worldview possession (58%) than do other pastors.

Even geography is related to worldview. Fewer than half of all Senior Pastors in the Northeast (43%) and Midwest (49%) have a biblical worldview, compared to majorities in the South (57%) and West (58%). In fact, of the nine geographic divisions defined by the Census Bureau, the one with the highest proportion of pastors giving evidence of a biblical worldview was the Pacific division – California, Oregon and Washington. Although the people in those states are among the most liberal in the nation, nearly two-thirds of Protestant pastors there (64%) have such a moral and spiritual compass in place.

A Worldview Is Taught As Well As Caught

Referring to the multi-year research project that formed the foundation of his recent book on the subject of worldview development (*Think Like Jesus*), Barna suggested that people do not get a biblical worldview simply by regularly attending church. "A biblical worldview must be both taught and caught – that is, it has to be explained and modeled. Clearly, there are huge segments of the Christian body that are missing the benefit of such a comprehensive and consistent expression of biblical truth.

"The research also points out that even in churches where the pastor has a biblical worldview," he continued, "most of the congregants do not. More than six out of every seven congregants in the typical church do not share the biblical worldview of their pastor even when he or she has one. This intimates that merely preaching good sermons and offering helpful programs does not enable most believers to develop a practical and scriptural theological base to shape their life. Our research among people who have a biblical worldview shows that it is a long-term process that requires a lot of

purposeful activity: teaching, prayer, conversation, accountability, and so forth. Based on our correlations of worldview and moral behavior, we can confidently argue that if the 51% of pastors who have a biblical worldview were to strategically and relentlessly assist their congregants in adopting such a way of interpreting and responding to life, the impact on our churches, families and society at-large would be enormous."

Research Source and Methodology

The data described above are from telephone interviews with a nationwide random sample of 601 Senior Pastors of Protestant churches conducted in November and December 2003. The maximum margin of sampling error associated with that sample is ± 4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. In addition, telephone surveys were conducted with a national random sample of 2033 adults during September through November 2003. The maximum margin of sampling error associated with that sample is ± 2.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All of the interviews were conducted from the Barna Research Group telephone interviewing facility in Ventura, CA. Adults in the 48 continental states were eligible to be interviewed and the distribution of respondents coincided with the geographic dispersion of the U.S. adult population. Multiple callbacks were used to increase the probability of including a reliable distribution of adults.

"Mainline" churches are those associated with the American Baptist Churches/U.S.A.; United Church of Christ; Episcopal Church; United Methodist Church; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

ARAB MOTHER CRIED FOR MERCY, THEY RESPONDED - AND SHE MURDERED THEM

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com>

Additional details of yesterday's murderous terrorist bombing in northern Gaza that claimed the lives of four Israelis paint a frightful picture of a woman who cried for mercy - and seconds later coldly murdered those who bestowed it upon her.

The suicide attack was perpetrated by a young woman, the mother of two children aged 3 and 1 - the first time that Hamas has employed such a weapon, and the seventh female suicide bomber of the Oslo War. It is now known that she made her way to the checkpoint without arousing suspicion, but when she passed through the electronic door, the alarm sounded, and the guard on duty turned her away. She began to cry that she had a metal implant in her leg, and the same guard then apparently took pity on her, and allowed her in for a body check - and then she killed him.

Brig.-Gen. (res.) Tzvi Poley, who served in the past as IDF Commander in Gaza, said this morning that the attack might have been prevented: "Wherever you have easing of restrictions, you have attacks. If we were just a little less humanitarian, this attack would not have happened - or at least it would have been less costly. It is unacceptable that a terrorist should arrive at the checkpoint and not be checked. Even when a woman comes in crying that her leg hurts, we must not be too humanitarian. We always want to be nice, and good, and sensitive - but not at the expense of our sons. Wherever this happens, the terrorist organizations will see it as a weakness, and will take advantage to carry out attacks."

The results of Arab/PA incitement and hatred for Israel were manifest not only in yesterday's attack, but in the videotape the terrorist mother made before her death. Smiling and cradling a rifle, she said that she had dreamed since she was 13 years old of "becoming a martyr" and dying for her people. "It

was always my wish to turn my body into deadly shrapnel against the Zionists and to knock on the doors of heaven with the skulls of Zionists," she said.

The army is now looking into several difficult questions in the aftermath of the attack. The first critical issue, of course, is how to relate to women at the checkpoints. Col. Yoav Mordechai, head of the Gaza DCO liaison with the PA, says today that the army will have to "reconsider the manner in which it checks Arab women."

Hamas terrorist leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin said yesterday that Hamas will continue to use women terrorists for suicide attacks. He said that "jihad [holy war] is an imperative for Muslim men and women," and that "resistance will escalate against this enemy until they leave our land and homeland."

Another dilemma on the IDF scales is the tension between the desire to allow the PA population to live normal lives and the need for security for Israeli citizens. The Erez Crossing will be closed today, and it is not known when it will be re-opened. Nineteen thousand Arab workers and businessmen generally cross the Green Line every day to work inside pre-1967 Israel, and another 5-6,000 are employed in the Jewish-owned businesses in the Erez Industrial Zone.

Defense Minister Sha'ul Mofaz met with U.S. Senators yesterday, and told them that distinguishing between terrorists and the rest of the PA population is "complex," but that in any event, Israel will "continue to act as a humanitarian and democratic state."

The Gush Katif website Katif.net notes that just two days ago,

"the Arab neighborhood Vadi Silka Darom was flooded, and the IDF took great pains to send soldiers and trucks to evacuate the residents to Khan Yunis. Undoubtedly, when it comes to saving lives we must help, but... just an hour later, the terrorists fired two mortar shells at N'vei Dekalim, and eight hours later, the accursed female terrorist blew herself up and murdered four Israelis and wounded ten others.

"We went to the site and saw with our own eyes that the neighborhood that was flooded and evacuated was recently built [illegally] between [the Jewish areas of] the Kisufim Crossing and the road leading to Gush Katif... The ironic part is that two of the newly-built homes were built precisely along the wadi [channel], when any thinking person knows that in the winter the rainwater that gathers there will flood those buildings... Instead of permanently evacuating the illegal neighborhood that is a genuine threat to the travelers on the road, the army comes out with declarations of 'humanitarian evacuation of Palestinian residents from their flooded homes.'"

Three of the four victims of yesterday's terrorist bombing at the Erez Crossing in northern Gaza were buried today:

- * Security guard Gal Shapira, 29, of Ashkelon, was laid to rest in the cemetery in his hometown. He is survived by his parents and sister.

- * The funeral of Sgt. Tzur Ohr, 20, of Rishon LeTzion was held in the military cemetery in Holon. He was the only child of his parents Tal and Adi.

- * At 3 PM in Nahariya, Corp. Andrei Kegeles, 19, was laid to rest. He is survived by his parents and younger brother.

- * The funeral of the fourth victim - Border Guard St.-Sgt. Vladimir Trostinsky, 22, of Rehovot - has not yet been set. He immigrated to Israel six years ago with his mother and younger brother, and his father remained in Russia.

The security forces arrested a terrorist armed with a Kalachnikov rifle and magazines last night in the Shomron. It is assumed that he planned to infiltrate one of the neighboring Jewish communities and commit an attack. Just the night before, Ro'i Arbel of Talmon, father of five small children, including

two-month-old triplets, was shot and murdered by a Palestinian terrorist while on his way home.

ARAFAT'S BILLIONS

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com>

"Yasser Arafat is rich," reports the New York Daily News, "but his Palestinian Authority is going broke." Despite - or because of - Arafat's wealth, PA Economy Minister Maher Masri is quoted as saying, "If this situation continues... we will not be able to provide salaries next month."

The paper writes that though his people have grown poorer, Arafat himself has amassed a fortune estimated by Forbes at \$300 million, putting him in sixth place on the list of richest world leaders. Israel says his real net worth exceeds \$1 billion. Other analysts place the figure at closer to \$3 billion.

The Palestinian Authority has received \$6.5 billion in foreign aid over six years - yet Josh Block of the pro-Israel lobby group AIPAC says that the PA is broke. This, he says, is because Arafat has been lining his pockets - and those of terrorist organizations - with much of the aid money for years. While nearly half the PA-area population is unemployed, Arafat's wife and daughter live in Paris on a monthly allowance of \$100,000. Arafat is said to own a \$55 million cement firm that controls most of the PA cement market, to hold a 23% stake in a \$28.5 million casino in Jericho, and to receive profits from all gasoline imported into the PA. His money is stored in several Swiss bank accounts.

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