



## Teens See Value in Abstinence

Editorial Comment by Warren Krug

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**S**core one for today's teen-ager. While one generation after another has always found it easy to look at the world of adolescents and wonder what's wrong with the younger set, there is some current good news.

As reported in *Beginnings* magazine, a recent study has shown a big drop in the teen birthrate, from 62 births per 1,000 girls (in 1991) to 50 births per 1,000 (in 1995). At the same time, the pregnancy rate dropped from 116 to 93 per 1,000.

What were the main reasons for this drop? Cynics have often told us if the rates are dropping, it is because of the increased use of contraceptives.

But the study, which was peer-reviewed and reported in the *April Adolescent and Family Health* journal gave a different answer. The rates are dropping because of a growing practice of abstinence as well as a decrease in the percentage of married teens.

"It is time for pro-condom advocacy groups to stop lying to the public about the real reason we are seeing such a sharp decline in teen birth and pregnancy rates," Peter Brandt, Director of Issues Response for Focus on the Family is reported as saying. "Abstinence has always been the only sure-fire way to prevent pregnancy and teens are proving they have outsmarted adults on this one."

Abstinence, as compared to contraceptives, has undeniable advantages. It is free; it is 100% effective; it's always available; and for many adolescents it is becoming more "cool."

Of course, for the Christian teen who wants to serve and obey the Lord, it is the only way.

*Beginnings* reports that the Welfare Reform Act of 1966, which included \$50 million per year for abstinence education, expired last year, and debate on its renewal will begin in Congress soon. We pray it will be renewed. And while some churches and denominations have well-planned abstinence programs in place such as True Love Waits, perhaps our Lutheran churches could be doing more along these lines. *LSI*

—Warren Krug, editor