

GEORGE BARNNA

# revolutionary PARENTING

What the Research Shows Really Works

BARNNA 

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*Revolutionary Parenting: What the Research Shows Really Works*

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## TALK ABOUT PRODUCT OVERLOAD.

Did you know that if you took all of the books available today on parenting and divided them by the number of days in a year, you'd discover that there has been an average of ten new parenting books produced every day of the year for each of the past twenty-one years? That's more than 75,000 different parenting books currently at your disposal. That sure seems like overkill, don't you think?

On the other hand, you can argue that such a vast quantity of parenting books would not have been produced unless there was a market for them. While few of those publications have reached best-seller status, we might safely assume that enough of them have been profitable to entice publishers to continue releasing new titles in this category.

But why, with the glut of such books—some of which have penetrated deeply into our culture—do we need yet another take on parenting?

That's a great question—and one that I struggled with for a long time while pondering the offer to write this book.

## FIVE POPULAR CATEGORIES

En route to arriving at a satisfactory answer, I examined the titles and subtitles of the hundred best-selling books on parenting. You know, you can get a pretty good idea of the content of parenting books simply

by exegeting the titles! The experts writing these hundred books, I learned, suggest that good parenting—or, at least, survival as a parent—encompasses five dimensions.

According to these experts, a great parent needs certain *personal attributes*, such as patience, love, a positive attitude, and self-confidence. Secondly, some of the popular volumes spell out *imperative parental practices*, describing the importance of playing with children; establishing parental authority and control; meting out discipline and punishment; resolving conflict with the child; developing an emotional connection; utilizing drugs and vaccinations to foster physical and mental health; and praying together. A third category says mandatory *parenting philosophy and perspectives* include coming to peace with one's own past as well as knowing how to plan for effective parenting. Some of the requisite *child-rearing skills*, a fourth category, include the use of logic, creating efficient developmental systems, communicating effectively, and being well-organized. And last, what parent doesn't want to produce *tangible outcomes* in the child's life? The hot books suggest that such results include articulation, generosity, contentment, independence, a love of learning, physical fitness, and cultural sensitivity.

Doesn't it make you tired just reciting everything the experts say you must master?

But my exploration of what has been written about parenting—yes, I did dig beneath the titles—identified a significant weakness in the literature. Virtually every book is based upon personal observations, experiences, or assumptions. Very little of the content is based on objective, projectable research.

## NO EVIDENCE DEMANDED

Most of these guides promote a particular point of view or parenting strategy, even though that approach has not been empirically tested or validated through some type of scientific process. Many of these authors are smart people, but by sharing their personal experience—and pretty much basing their exhortations on that limited scope of reality—here’s what we get: *the isolated leading the desperate*.

For instance, parenting books typically ignore the *motivation* for engaging in parenting. The implied motivation is that parents should raise their child simply because the child exists and the parents are responsible for that reality. There is rarely any recognition of the fact that the child is a special gift and that raising children is a responsibility assigned to parents by God. As such, parenting bears an innate importance and an irrefutable connection to parenting principles furnished by God.

Another example: Few books acknowledge that God has designed every human being as a unique individual, eliminating the possibility of effective one-size-fits-all parenting strategies. While it is a natural temptation to want a standardized checklist of actions that produces predictably favorable results, the individuality of each person suggests that such a simple tool is not likely to be effective.

Another distinctive of many parenting books is that they offer advice without much relationship to the real-world results their advice generates. Many of the books I’ve examined recommend strategies that may be innovative but are disconnected from any evidence that their approach produces desirable development in a young person.

Perhaps authors don't produce evidence because it's not demanded of them. Parents, faced with three dominant models (described below) competing for their acceptance, just are too busy to bother. Each of these alternatives has its own appeal and weaknesses.

## COMPETING MODELS

One unavoidable influence on parenting behavior is that of societal norms, traditions, and expectations. Because we live within the context of these forces, they have a powerful impact on what we perceive effective parenting to be. Many of these cultural factors are low profile or practically invisible; we practice them simply because we see or experience these elements so frequently in the media or in our daily excursions. Adopting the parenting habits and patterns driven by cultural forces might be described as *parenting by default*.

The second set of influences that shapes our parenting choices and behaviors is that derived from personal experience and outcomes. Doing what comes naturally or what we've learned from past endeavors, we raise children in relation to the insights gleaned in the trenches. This trial-and-error process might be considered *experimental parenting*.

The third approach available to parents, which creates the greatest emotional tension in the parenting marketplace of ideas and practices, comes from the application of biblical commands, principles, and narratives. In this parenting model, God's Word provides the perspective and the marching orders on how to raise a young person. The goal of such

child rearing is to raise children who make their faith in God, and relationship with Him, their highest priority in life, and proceed to live as intentional and devoted servants of God. The role of parents is to guide the child to understand the principles and outcomes that honor God and advance His purposes. Success in this venture is measured by transformed lives. I have labeled this one *Revolutionary Parenting*.

I bet you can guess which of the three I am promoting.

Our research conducted for this book indicates that few parents are purists—that is, few parents draw only from the well of standards and practices associated with just one of those three platforms. Most American parents concoct their own unique mixture of parenting ideas and routines, based on a rather general idea of what they are seeking to achieve. The research suggests that most parents talk a better parenting game than they play, largely because they have such vague notions about the process and product. Yet the research also reveals that it is possible to perform one's parenting functions at a very high level of personal competence and productivity—if a particular set of parameters are in place. We'll get to those.

So to get back to our earlier question: Do we need another parenting book? I believe the answer is yes.

## **TOWARD SPIRITUAL CHAMPIONS**

A good researcher identifies the assumptions and hypotheses underlying his study because those elements invariably shape the nature and outcomes of the research. Here's how



I studied the practices of those who have successfully raised spiritual champions.

In 2003 I wrote *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* almost by mistake. It was an attempt to discover what Christian churches were doing that was effective in helping children become serious followers of Jesus Christ. It became a surprise best seller and has apparently helped tens of thousands of churches to understand that people's lives are shaped primarily when they are very young, making ministry to children the single most influential ministry any church engages in.

By spiritual champions, I mean individuals who have embraced Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord; accept the Bible as truth and as the guide for life; and seek to live in obedience to its principles and in search of ways to continually deepen their relationship with God. Spiritual champions live in ways that are noticeably different from the norm—even when compared to the average churchgoer.

For instance, they possess a biblical worldview that shapes their decision-making process because they accept scriptural principles as true and significant. As an integral part of that worldview, they contend that there are moral absolutes that are relevant to our lives and have dramatic consequences if compromised. They believe that they have been created by God to serve Him in specific ways; acknowledge the continual spiritual war between God and Satan in which both of those supernatural powers can influence their choices; and believe that our lives should reflect the character of God. Spiritual champions donate unusually gener-

ous amounts of time and money to spiritually driven causes. They carefully screen the media they ingest and have a deep and intense commitment to their relationship with God and other Christians. On a daily basis they strive to change the world in small but life-impacting ways, whether it is done through feeding the hungry, counseling the bereaved, encouraging the confused, protecting the environment, or other means.

In the context of current American life, spiritual champions lead a Revolutionary existence. Their life perspectives are uncommon, their relationships are unique, and their emphasis on the centrality of their faith in God is stunning. Without a doubt, their lives are the product of unusual but intentional preparation.

But one of the lessons that emerged from the research on which my earlier book was based was that churches alone do not and cannot have much influence on children. In fact, the greatest influence a church may have in affecting children is by impacting their parents.

The facts have been indisputably clear: In assessing the impact of churches, schools, and parents, it is the latter who have the most dramatic personal influence on a child. Yet we also learned that most parents are not prepared to be effective in their roles. They often lack the self-confidence needed to fully invest themselves in the process. Consequently, they seek individuals and organizations to help them handle the burden of shaping their child's life in positive ways.

Remember all those parenting books I alluded to earlier?

They haven't helped much. The typical American parents—even after taking in parenting books and articles, workshops, radio programs, and countless conversations—remain stymied as to how to succeed. They are all too happy to pass off their kids to paid professionals—teachers, pastors, baby-sitters, and coaches.

## KEY ASSUMPTIONS

So we crafted a discovery process whose results were intended to help the average parent make the most of his or her window of opportunity.

Our assumptions were simple:

- First, it is important to raise children to know, love, and serve God with all their hearts, minds, strength, and souls. We are spiritual people and must be raised with our spiritual needs and potential in mind.
- Second, parents do not have complete control of the shaping of their children, but they do have substantial influence on who the children become.
- Third, there are undoubtedly some common factors that are pertinent to the child-rearing efforts of parents who successfully raise children to become spiritual champions.

Our objective was to amass a body of knowledge that could be absorbed and applied by all parents who are comfortable with my assumptions to help them maximize their parenting potential.

## THE RESEARCH PROCESS

To reach the goals I established for this book, The Barna Group embarked on several distinct but interrelated lines of nationwide, projectable research.

First, we conducted a series of national public-opinion surveys related to parenting experiences and observations. These were nationwide telephone surveys among parents of children under eighteen, in which we inquired about the challenges, successes, and failures of parents.

Second, we explored the existing literature on parenting practices, particularly those works related to incorporating a significant spiritual dimension into the process. This provided us with various elements thought to be of significance in raising children to be faith Revolutionaries.<sup>1</sup> Related primary research then delved into those factors more deeply to examine them more fully.

The third aspect of our research was to comb through more than ten thousand personal interviews we had conducted during the past several years to identify people in their twenties who were leading “transformed” lives. To us, living a transformed life meant more than simply being religious or active in a church.<sup>2</sup> We wanted young adults whose faith was robust: In addition to being active in church life, they were engaged in spiritual activities apart from the control or management of their churches, and they had significant personal faith lives that were mature and still in active development. We created standards related to behavior and belief in the areas of corporate and personal faith. The goal, of course, was to find out what had happened during their

formative years that led them to become irrepressible followers of Christ.

We then interviewed these people again, using a long, highly focused questionnaire to glean insights into their upbringing. After we completed each interview we asked for permission to speak to their parents. The intention was to have the parents of these transformed young people describe what they believed they had done that resulted in the emergence of a devoted and mature follower of Christ.

By conducting research among these two generations—the change agent and the changed agent, if you will—we had access to two unique perspectives on the parenting process. As it turned out, there was tremendous consistency between what the parents said they did and what their spiritually transformed children remembered experiencing.

## **BRAKES ON THE PROCESS**

After it was completed, the research went untouched for about a year. There were several reasons for this. First, the sheer volume of books already written on parenting—their previously noted weaknesses notwithstanding—diminished my sense of urgency to add one more tome to the list.

Second, I was reluctant to cast myself in the role of “parenting expert.” The research would provide a unique angle on what might increase the odds of growing a spiritual giant, but the thought of being perceived as someone who had the magic formula for producing such a child was personally uncomfortable.

Third, that discomfort was magnified by some parenting issues that arose with my own children while I wrestled with the viability of converting the research findings into a book. If I was already struggling with the idea of being seen as an “expert parent,” my obvious failings in certain situations with my daughters seemed to verify my lack of qualifications for writing this book.

Finally, my preliminary analysis of the findings showed that there would be no easy, five-step formula to emerge from this work. Knowing that Americans want quick, simple answers to complex questions, I felt that the research might not gain a fair hearing from the public for whom it was intended. Never one to waste personal resources on dubious ventures, I figured this project might not deserve the investment of energy and other resources necessary to generate such a book.

But, as you can tell (since you’re holding this book in your hands), something happened to trump all of those objections.

## **EQUIPPING THE FRONT LINE**

It started with a sense that the Kingdom of God would be better served by the presence of this book than by its absence. Why? Because parenting occurs on the front lines of the spiritual battle that defines our daily existence and purpose.

Thanks to my research related to child development and spiritual growth, I have become convinced that the spiritual war occurring in individual lives is pretty much won or lost by the age of thirteen. What parents do with their youngsters prior to the teen years is of paramount importance to the

Kingdom of God on earth. Not to get dramatic, but I sensed an obligation to offer even a minute amount of assistance to the beleaguered parents of our country.

A second motivation was the unsolicited interest in such a book coming from the spiritual Revolutionaries. My book *Revolution* hit a nerve among tens of thousands of people. Some people's response was to see if I could be deported. (Okay, not quite, but it seemed like that was the way some folks reacted.) Others, however, resonated with the theme of that book and wanted to know how to nurture such an intense, full-speed-ahead faith in Christ in their children's lives. This research certainly addressed their issues and would meet an expressed need.

I decided I should simply do my best to be an obedient and responsible servant of God by fulfilling my calling as a leader, writer, and researcher. As always, if I am being faithful to the calling, then the results are up to God.

## WHAT'S COMING UP

In part 1 ("Reasons"), I describe the crisis in American parenting. Most parents are focused on the wrong standards of success and are willing either to settle for what their well-intentioned but ill-informed efforts produce or to deny that there is any problem to address. As a result, our children are suffering in various dimensions of life, but especially in the spiritual dimension. This crisis is seriously undermining the potential of our next generation to become spiritual champions.

In part 2 ("Research"), you will be exposed to survey data,

qualitative information from our in-depth interviews with parents, biblical passages, and interpretive prose. Together we will explore the conditions, priorities, thought processes, values, lifestyles, spiritual thrusts, objectives, and philosophies of parents who have raised spiritual champions. Throughout the book, these child-rearing stalwarts will be referred to as Revolutionary Parents.

In part 3 (“Relevance”), you’ll find a summary of what the Bible says about parents, as well as a personal look at how one father made some changes based on this research.

You need to know from the beginning that I won’t be offering a simple game plan to follow if you, too, want to produce children who mature into twenty-first-century disciples of Jesus. But I do believe that this book contains some of the pieces to the puzzle that will guide your journey toward raising spiritual champions. I learned that every one of the Revolutionary Parents pieced the puzzle together differently; you will have to do so, too. But knowing the pieces, and what the puzzle might look like in the end, is itself valuable as we seek to honor God and advance His Kingdom through our efforts to raise our children.



# > part one REASONS

# ➤ A CRISIS IN AMERICAN PARENTING

**PARENTING IS HARD** work with no guarantees. You probably know people you respect whose efforts in raising their children you have admired—only to find out later that their children did not turn out as expected. Likewise, you may have read some of the acclaimed manuals on how to be an influential parent, only to find that the advice dispensed did not produce the desired outcomes.

This parenting stuff is tricky business. What makes it especially difficult is that the rest of our lives do not stop in the midst of these efforts, enabling us to give our undivided attention and full energy to raising our children. Sadly, helping our kids develop is just one of the tasks in the plethora of responsibilities we juggle every day.

What makes this task most difficult, though, is that for those of us who have decided to follow Christ as our only hope for gaining truth, purpose, direction, and eternal

4 security, there is no obligation that has greater significance than parenting.

None.

If you're like most parents, you feel you're doing an okay job, based on your own standards—and you're likely to believe that you're certainly doing better than most other parents in the country. You do what you can to provide the best for your young ones. You can't be criticized for not trying: You work hard, you provide a good life for your kids, and you are committed to providing them with what you had growing up and more. You involve the kids in a variety of activities, monitor their whereabouts, and take care of their health. Nobody can accuse you of being a slug when it comes to parenting.

As you examine the state of the nation, you recognize that many—maybe even most—children are not as fortunate as yours. Most kids do not have parents who love them and take care of them like you do yours. Most children do not conduct themselves as well as yours. And most children do not have the exposure to religious training that yours receive in church and through other programs and events.

## **YOU GET WHAT YOU MEASURE**

Our conclusions are based on the criteria we have adopted for the assessment of our children's well-being. Think about it. What do we seek to provide for our children? We want them to be happy, safe, comfortable, good citizens, educated, religious, and fulfilling their potential. The criteria parents use to determine the condition of their children are substan-

tial. Most parents would examine the state of their children and conclude they are:

- > Provided with their basic needs: food, clothing, shelter
- > Physically healthy
- > Performing at or beyond their grade level
- > In a secure and comfortable home
- > Monitored and cared for by parents
- > Involved with church services and programs
- > Connected to decent friends
- > Not involved in gangs
- > Not taking drugs
- > Not alcoholics
- > Not out-of-control sexually
- > Not involved in a cult or in satanic activity
- > Not the victim of physical or emotional abuse
- > Without a criminal record or related problems

These measures are meaningful—as far as they go. But here’s the invisible problem that hampers the development of America’s children: We are measuring their well-being based upon the wrong standards. Without realizing it, we have made *ourselves* the judge and jury of what is right and wrong, good and bad, useful and useless in relation to our children’s lives.

You are not likely to get the right outcome if you base your actions on the assessment of the wrong things. Yet when it comes to raising our children, Americans have created a matrix of measurements based upon what our society defines

to be significant. We gather the raw data for those indices based upon the best information we are able to capture from the ever-present, omniscient mass media. We analyze what we learn based upon our standards and make corrections as needed. The result, of course, is that our children are constantly receiving “the best care” available.

Think about that process for a moment. We have replaced God with ourselves, usurping leadership over our children’s circumstances. We have ignored God’s Word when it comes to determining how well we’re doing, believing that if our conditions meet the social norms, we’re most likely in compliance with God’s expectations. And we make our judgments and comparisons on the basis of the popular wisdom and criteria dispensed by a mass media that is run for profit by groups of people who have no intention or desire of pleasing God or meeting His standards through the material they produce and distribute. With that in mind, it would not be hard to challenge some of the common thinking about the “okayness” of our children.

For instance, we could note the decline in educational performance: Reading skills are declining, writing skills are abysmal, math ability is below par, and science knowledge is lacking. We could expose the percentages of teens and adolescents having sexual intercourse, smoking, drinking, using drugs, or being victimized by violent crime. Some of the rates of activity in these areas have declined in recent years, but millions and millions of our children remain caught up in such lifestyles. We could harp on the 13 million children who live in poverty, or the 18 million who are being raised by a

single parent. We could highlight the issue of physical health, focusing on the 12 million children who are overweight, or the millions of children (particularly girls) who wrestle with anorexia and bulimia, or the 8 million children who receive subpar health care because they have no health insurance.<sup>1</sup>

But that would be missing the point, too.

### **WHAT DOES GOD MEASURE?**

What *is* the point? That God is the absolute judge of how well our children are doing, that His standards examine the character and faith of our young people, and His ways are often not facilitated by many of the activities we promote or endorse, regardless of our ignorance or good intentions.

You get what you measure. If you want intellectuals, measure their exposure to complex information and ideas, and their performance on sophisticated tests. If you want great athletes, evaluate how committed they are to advanced physical training and how superbly they perform in sporting competitions. If you want relational people, determine how connected and popular they are among their peers.

What does God measure? Our hearts. He created us to love, serve, and obey Him.<sup>2</sup> So He studies the indicators of our devotion to Him. As parents, then, our job is to raise spiritual champions. That does not mean we are supposed to ignore the significance of developing our children's intellectual, emotional, and physical dimensions. But it suggests that we have to see the bigger picture of God's priorities and raise our children in light of His standards, not ours or society's.

## FAILING BY GOD'S STANDARDS

If we were to gauge how well we're doing in this regard, the outcomes might startle you. Consider these findings from a recent survey we conducted among a nationally representative sample of children between the ages of eight and twelve.<sup>3</sup>

- Most of our children are biblically illiterate, which will become clear as you read on. Their ignorance of Bible teachings corresponds to the fact that only one-third (36 percent) of our adolescents fully believe that the Bible is accurate in all of the principles it teaches.
- Few of our children are motivated to share their faith in Christ with others. Less than one out of every five (19 percent) contend that they have a responsibility to evangelize their peers.
- Not even half of our young people (46 percent) state that their religious faith is very important in their lives.
- Few of our children take Satan seriously. Only one-fourth of them (28 percent) completely dismiss the idea that Satan is symbolic, instead believing that the devil is real.
- Salvation baffles most of our young ones. Only two out of every ten reject the idea that good people can earn their way into heaven. And only three out of every ten dismiss the belief that everyone experiences the same postdeath outcome, regardless of their beliefs. In fact, only two out of every ten adolescents (21 percent) strongly disagree with the statement that people cannot know for sure what will happen to them after they die.

- > Most of our kids are willing to entertain the idea that Jesus Christ sinned while He lived on earth. Only 44 percent outright dismiss the idea.
- > The majority live for things other than loving God with all their hearts, minds, strength, and souls. Specifically, only four out of ten live with that purpose in mind.
- > Three out of four young people reject the notion that there is no such thing as God. However, not only is that lower than expected based upon adult surveys, but we found that fewer young people today—only 58 percent—believe that God is the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator of the universe who still rules His creation. That result is lower than any we have seen in the last quarter century of survey work. A similar percentage (about six out of every ten) believes that God originally created the universe.
- > Only one-third of America’s adolescents ardently contend that Jesus Christ returned to physical life after His crucifixion and death on the cross.
- > By their own admission, our children are confused theologically. Based on their reaction to statements like “It doesn’t matter what religious faith I follow because they all teach similar lessons,” it’s clear that they do not know what to think about competing worldviews and belief systems.

Add to this last fact that our national surveys of thirteen-year-olds reveal that most of them think they already know everything of significance in the Bible (hence, they are no longer



open to learning or actively studying the Scriptures). Also, most of them have no intention of continuing to attend a church when they are in their twenties and living on their own.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, consider that fewer than one out of every five parents of young children believe they are doing a good job of training their children morally and spiritually. In fact, when we asked a national sample of adults with children under eighteen to rate their parenting performance on fifteen different indicators, we discovered that parents ranked their efforts related to morality and spirituality at the bottom of the list.

What does all of this add up to? A crisis.

For a host of reasons, we are failing to train children to become the spiritual champions that God created them to be.

## **SOLVING THE PROBLEM**

So how do we address this crisis?

Our natural inclination would be to do one of two things. The most common reaction, according to our studies, is for parents to deny that the problem is as bad as the data suggest.

Americans have a tendency to repudiate facts that discredit what they believe to be true. In more than two decades of research regarding America's faith and lifestyles, we have seen this inclination emerge over and over again. The more sensitive people are to the criticism raised, the more likely their initial reaction will be to reject the facts of the argument, if not the argument itself.

The second common reaction is to push the problem

onto someone else. When it comes to the well-being of their children, people might naturally turn such matters over to the government, local schools, or perhaps churches to make things right.

In this case, however, governments are running scared from addressing overtly religious issues, defending themselves against lawsuits for allegedly corrupting the balance between church and state. Schools, as wards of the state, struggle with similar limitations. Conventional churches, which are generally sympathetic to the crisis, are partly responsible for the spiritual problems we've identified, and most of them are in no position—practically or biblically—to provide a solution.

These responses to reality are the catalysts to ineffective parenting. In the introduction, I referred to three styles of parenting: among them were *parenting by default* and *experimental parenting*. Those approaches are driven by the inability to wisely and strategically address the facts. The ones who suffer the most from parental inefficacy are the children.

## **A JOB FOR PARENTS**

Fortunately, the fact that neither government nor schools are the solution to the problem is not a big deal. That's because they are not the ones responsible for fixing the problem.

The responsibility for raising spiritual champions, according to the Bible, belongs to parents. The spiritual nurture of children is supposed to take place in the home. Organizations and people from outside the home might support those

efforts, but the responsibility is squarely laid at the feet of the family. This is not a job for specialists. It is a job for parents.

Recalling the pressures and challenges already burdening most parents, how then can this demanding task be accomplished?

That's the reason for this book. Based upon a nationwide study of children who grew up to be spiritual champions and the parents who raised them that way, we will explore the process that seems to facilitate the emergence of young people who have become fully developed human beings—in the spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual dimensions.

The information learned about this process may not make it any easier to be a parent, but it is sure to make it a more focused and productive experience.

## INTRODUCTION

1. My previous book was entitled *Revolution*. It describes a growing population of Americans, faith Revolutionaries, who have redefined their spiritual existence; they are not committed to going to church as much as they desire to be the church. Their lifestyles change substantially as a result of that commitment. The numerical growth of that group is poised to radically alter the nation's faith environment by 2025. See *Revolution* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2005), or visit <http://www.barna.org>.
2. Throughout this book I use the term *church* to refer to a Christian community of faith. Whether it is a conventional, brick-and-mortar type of congregation or an alternative form of community such as a house church, a cyberchurch, a marketplace ministry, or some other format, each group is built on committed relationships and designed to facilitate worship, spiritual growth, service, and community. This discussion is expanded in the book I cited above, *Revolution*, and in a series of reports and articles on The Barna Group Web site, located at <http://www.barna.org>.

## CHAPTER 1: A CRISIS IN AMERICAN PARENTING

1. There are an abundance of resources that address these matters. The information mentioned here can be accessed in sources such as the following: *Health, United States, 2005*; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Hyattsville, Md., 2005; *Kids Count*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount>; *America's Children in Brief*, [http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/press\\_release.asp](http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/press_release.asp); *Fifth Grade*, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., 2006; Thomas D. Snyder, Alexandra G. Tan, and Charlene M. Hoffman, *Digest of Educational Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).
2. This expectation can be found throughout the Bible as we study God's relationship with people and the commands and principles He gave us for our benefit. Passages such as Deuteronomy 10:12-13 and Luke 10:27-28 get at this expectation. A more complete discussion of this, in the context of developing a biblical worldview, is contained in my book *Think Like Jesus* (Nashville: Integrity Publishers, 2003), 101–117.
3. This survey included interviews with 608 children between the ages of eight and twelve, drawn from across the nation during July 2006. The findings from this and related studies among adolescents by The Barna Group are drawn from a national

tracking survey, entitled TweenPoll™, discussed in various reports at <http://www.barna.org>.

4. These studies are from the omnibus surveys, part of the YouthPoll™ resource line from The Barna Group. Further results can be found in *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 2003); *Real Teens* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 2002); and at <http://www.barna.org>.

## CHAPTER 2: CONDITIONS FOR REVOLUTIONARY SUCCESS

1. Although we interviewed many parents who raised spiritual champions, we encountered only a few who did so as single parents. Because of the small number of single parents involved in the study, I have chosen not to draw conclusions about the experience of single parents in the child-rearing process. In the future we hope to interview a large enough sample of single parents who have raised extraordinary children to be able to examine them and their experiences more closely.

## CHAPTER 4: REVOLUTIONARY PLANNING FOR SPIRITUAL CHAMPIONS

1. These statistics come from our annual nationwide survey of the senior pastors of Protestant churches, known as PastorPoll™. These data come from the study conducted in December 2002.

## CHAPTER 5: THE RULES OF REVOLUTIONARY ENGAGEMENT

1. OmniPoll™ W-04, a nationwide survey of 1,004 adults, conducted November 2004 by The Barna Group.
2. TweenPoll™, conducted July 2006 by The Barna Group, among a nationwide random sample of 608 children, ages eight to twelve.
3. Various forms of music were cited by Revolutionary Parents as posing problems, but rap music was by far the most commonly mentioned genre. This is because of the profanity and illegitimate themes more frequently found in rap and the dark or vulgar videos that are typically released by rap artists.

## CHAPTER 6: HOW REVOLUTIONARY PARENTS BEHAVE

1. *Baby Busters* is a term used to define the generation born from 1965 through 1983. The phrase was coined in response to the preceding generation, known as the Baby Boomers. After the Boom generation, in which the United States for the first time

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Barna has written thirty-eight books, including best sellers such as *The Frog in the Kettle*, *The Power of Vision*, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, and most recently, *Revolution*. He has taught at several universities and seminaries. He has served as the teaching pastor of a large, multiethnic church, has been a catalyst in several church plants, and currently leads a house church. He is a regularly featured presenter on leadership and ministry development on the international satellite network CCN. He also writes the widely read bimonthly report *The Barna Update*, which is read by more than a million people each year.

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In some countries, a church might have a single Bibleâ€”which they cut apart in order to pass the pages around to the people in the congregation. A person might receive a page to read for a while and then pass it along to someone else in time to get the next page. A typical Christian bookstore in the United States has an overwhelming array of Bibles for sale. There are countless versions, with various types of study aids and other tools, and several different translationsâ€”not to mention the variety of bindings, from hardback to paperback to genuine or bonded leather.