

# already gone

*Why your kids will quit church  
and what you can do to stop it*

KEN HAM & BRITT BEEMER  
WITH TODD HILLARD



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First printing: May 2009

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Master Books®, P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638.

ISBN-13: 978-0-89051-529-7

ISBN-10: 0-89051-529-8

Library of Congress Number: 2009900148

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

Cover Design: jdausa.com, photo provided by potthaststudios.com

Interior Design: Diana Bogardus

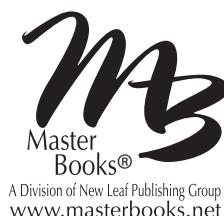
Photo credit, p. 162–164: Dan Clymer, Restoration House Ministries

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## **Dedications**

My parents, Elvin and Margaret Beemer, always told me they would rather see a sermon than hear one. My good friend Harold Anderson endured many challenges in recent years, but as each obstacle arose, his faith soared. I want to acknowledge and dedicate this book to Harold and to his enduring faith.

— *Britt Beemer*

I praise the Lord for the godly legacy of my parents who trained me to stand uncompromisingly and unapologetically on the authority of the Word of God. This book is not only a challenge from the authors, but from godly parents concerning what each one of us are doing toward preserving that godly legacy for subsequent generations.

Special thanks to my dear friends Jon and Sue Jones for allowing me sanctuary in their home to write my section of this book. . . .

And for the AiG donor who provided the funds for this valuable research.

— *Ken Ham*

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# Introduction

*The large wooden doors shut behind me with a creak and a heavy thud. Outside, the incessant river of life continues to flow as millions of people jam the sidewalks and rush toward red double-decker busses. Beneath the streets, the London Underground moves the masses by the hundreds of thousands — like blood pulsing through the arteries of this vibrant, thriving society.*

*But inside, I can hear each of my careful footsteps echoing in the dim quiet. I inhale deeply, taking in the aroma of ancient stones and old books. I see rows and rows of ornate pews — seating for more than 3,000 — yet I am ushered into the small foyer area where around 30 chairs are set up and where I join a handful of elderly people with their heads bowed. Humbly and faithfully, those beside me say their prayers and listen to a brief message by a man who speaks of hope — but whose tired eyes seem to feel none of it.*

*It is Sunday. For hundreds of years the faithful have been walking through the heavy wooden doors on this day, at this time, to gather together and share in the timeless rituals of worship, prayer, and proclamation*

*that made this country the bastion of Christendom for centuries. But this morning I realize that I'm part of a funeral. But it is not the funeral of an individual; it is the funeral of an institution. Within months, the older generation will likely disband and the doors of this church will be shut and locked. The candles will never again be lit. The resounding anthem of the great hymns of our spiritual forefathers will never again echo in its passages.*

\*\*\*

Since 1969, 1,500 churches in England have heard that final *thud* as their doors were shut after their final service after hundreds of years of active life.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the great churches still stand — grand buildings that just 60 years ago were the hub of vital and vibrant activity. Before World War II (and certainly during those turbulent years), churches such as the one I visited that day were the center of community and spiritual life. But now, the communities' life, such as it is, takes place outside of those buildings. Inside, many of them have become musty, dusty, and dark. The Victorian Society of the UK summarizes the situation in a publication entitled *Redundant Churches: Who Cares?*

Invariably, it seems, churches become redundant. The country changes around them and for one reason or another they find themselves bereft of the worshippers needed to keep them going. Many, if not most, of the buildings seem eventually to find new uses, but it is not easy to generalize about how often these uses preserve their architectural and historic interest.<sup>2</sup>

It's not a small concern. Not far from the famous Westminster Abbey in London I found a sign that read: "Advisory Board for Redundant Churches."

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1. The Victorian Society, No. 26, November 2007, <http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/publications/redundant-churches-who-cares/>.

2. Ibid.

“Redundancy.” The dictionary defines that word as “exceeding what is necessary or natural . . . needlessly repetitive.” That is a disturbing term to describe a former place of worship, don’t you think? Who cares about “redundant churches”? It seems not many these days. There are not many left to really care — except for those who see them for their “architectural” and “historical” value. Now emptied of their intended function, many also see the real estate value of these “needlessly repetitive” buildings. A special government agency oversees the distribution and preservation of these buildings. What does that sound like in formal language?

The Redundant Churches Fund has as its object the preservation, in the interests of the nation and the Church of England, of churches and parts of churches of historic and archaeological interest or architectural quality, together with their contents, which are vested in the Fund by Part III of the Pastoral Measure 1983 (1983 No.1).<sup>3</sup>

In other words, if what’s left has some value physically, it is sold or it is preserved. The rest is abandoned or bulldozed. What has become of the buildings worth keeping?

Other former places of worship have been turned into museums, clothing shops, music stores, liquor stores, nightclubs, and tattoo and piercing studios. One is even now used as a Sikh temple, and some have been converted into mosques.

Hundreds of these churches have ended up in the hands of private owners who convert them into offices or renovate them for use as personal homes or cottages.

It would be something of a relief if these former churches simply represented a shift from traditional worship toward more contemporary worship facilities, but that’s not the case. The decline of the Church has followed the plummeting spirituality of a nation that has lost its roots — its foundation. England, the country that was once a cornerstone

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3. [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1994/Uksi\\_19940962\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1994/Uksi_19940962_en_1.htm).

of western Christianity, is now, by and large, a wasteland of lost souls where the word “God” has many different definitions, with so few these days who would even think of “God” as the Creator God of the Bible.

According to a recent English Church Census:

- Regular churchgoers (of all denominations) amount to 6.3% of the total population.
- The proportion of churches per individuals is now one church to 1,340 people; the size of the average Sunday congregation, however, is 84.
- Between 1998 and 2005, there was an overall decline in regular church attendance of 15% — and the trend continues.
- 40% of regular churchgoers attend evangelical churches, but even these groups are seeing their numbers decline.<sup>4</sup>

All in all, only 2.5 percent of the population is attending Bible-based churches.

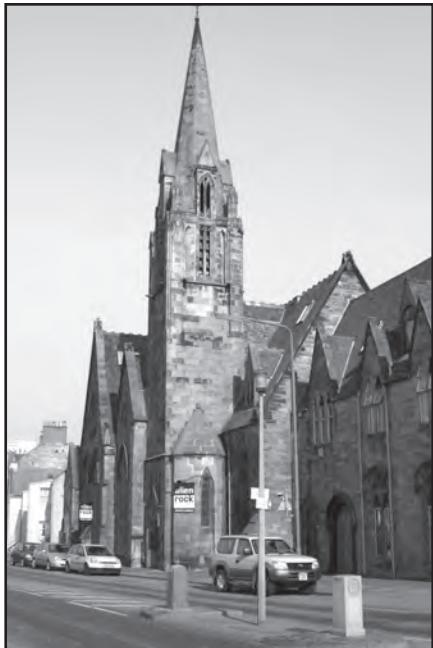
One United Kingdom news source in 2003 stated:

Holy Week has begun with an expert prediction that the Christian church in this country will be dead and buried within 40 years. It will vanish from the mainstream of British life, with only 0.5 percent of the population attending the Sunday services of any denomination, according to the country’s leading church analyst . . . only 7.5 percent of the population went to church on Sundays and that, in the past 10 years — billed by the churches as the “Decade of Evangelism” — church attendance dropped by an “alarming” 22 percent.<sup>5</sup>

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4. 2005 Evangelical Alliance, [http://www.eauk.org/resources/info/statistics/2005\\_englishchurchcensus.cfm](http://www.eauk.org/resources/info/statistics/2005_englishchurchcensus.cfm).

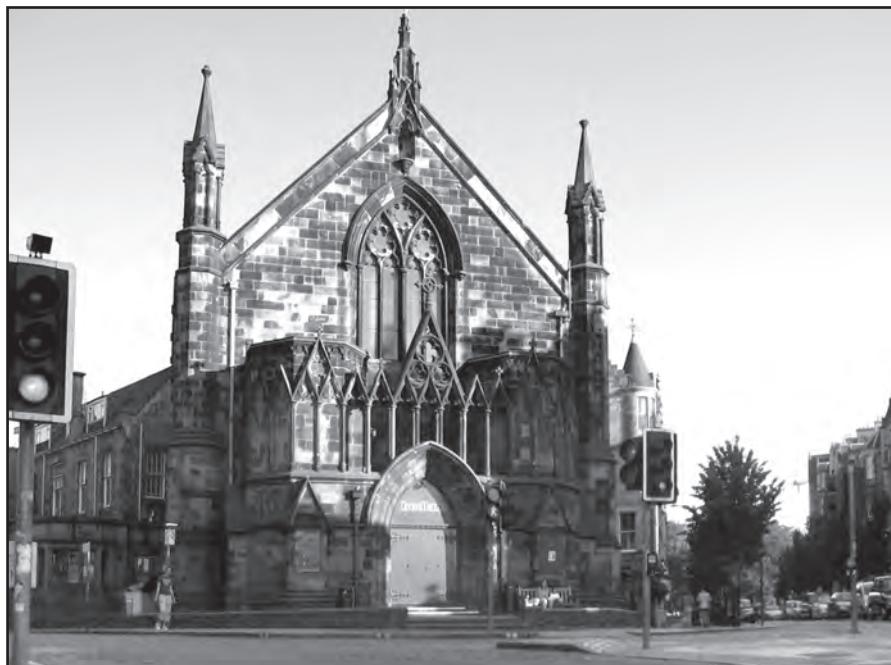
5. Ibid.



*A church in the United Kingdom turned into a rock climbing center*

*A church (in John Buyan's home town of Bedford, England) turned into a night club*





*A church in the United Kingdom turned into a theater*



*A church turned into a restaurant in the United Kingdom*





*A church in the United Kingdom  
turned into a Sikh Temple*



Another article in 2004 claimed: “Attendance at Britain’s mosques has outstripped the number of regular worshippers in the Church of England for the first time. . . .”<sup>6</sup> I recently attended a church a couple hours north of London. It was a totally traditional Baptist service, but it was clear that it was a gathering of remnant believers from many backgrounds. It was a refreshing and unique sight to see excited people as the organ blasted out “The Old Rugged Cross”! Certainly, pockets of new life can be found, yet much of it is “imported.” Since 2001, Africa has supplied the single largest pool of new British citizens, and many of the new arrivals bring with them the Pentecostal worship style that has drawn millions of Africans to Christian churches across the continent in the last several decades.<sup>7</sup> Other Bible-believing bodies of worshipers are holding their own and doing their best to reach out to the masses in this nation that now must be considered “post-Christian.”

Empty churches now stand in the cities and the countryside as monuments to the triumph of the new religion of secular humanism. Hollow shells of buildings shadowing streets filled with hollow souls, the disease was the result of a predictable spread of ideas that seemed harmless enough to start with, and then mutated into a plague that killed the soul of an entire nation in two generations — and this same disease is being spread around the world. For instance, a news source in Australia quotes a university professor as saying, “Within the next 10–20 years, most of the main-line churches will be appropriately down on their knees praying for their own survival.”<sup>8</sup>

Across the Atlantic, in the “One Nation Under God,” the seeds of a free and God-fearing nation were planted only 250 years ago. Today, few people are aware of the spiritual epidemic that has wiped out the land of our Christian forefathers. England was the home of our great

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6. “More Moslem Worshipers than Anglicans?” *British Church Newspaper*, February 20, 2004.

7. Associated Press, “Evangelicals Gain Strength in England, April 21, 2007.”

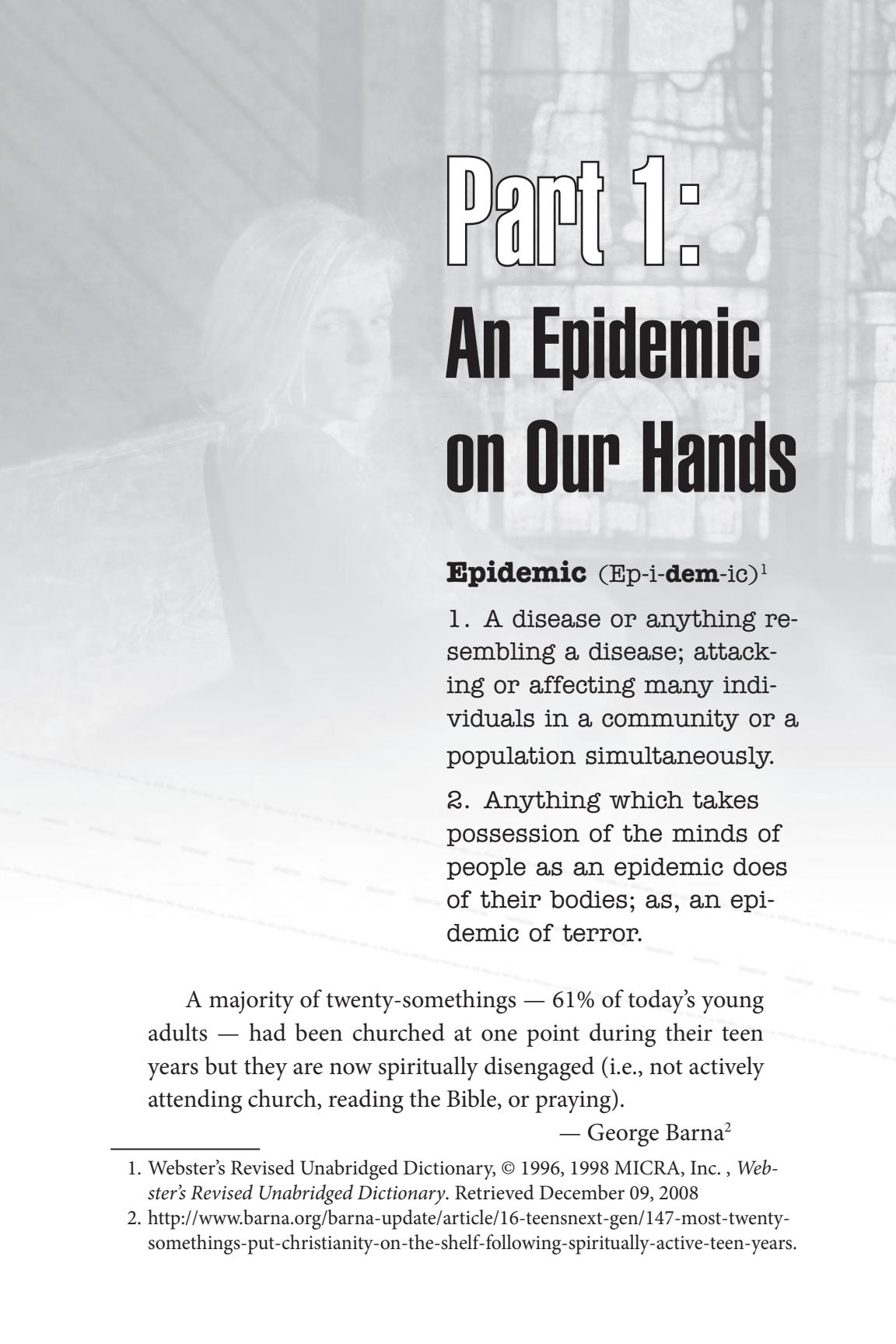
8. Dr. David Tracy, associate professor, religion expert at Melbourne La Trobe University, quoted by Elissa Lawrence, “Losing Our Religion,” *Sunday Mail*, Sunday Extra Section, Adelaide, Australia, December 29, 2002, p. 48.

## 18 • Already Gone

spiritual ancestors — many of the greatest preachers, teachers, and evangelists of the last 200 years.

Few people are aware that the same epidemic has reached our own shores, spreading like an unstoppable virus.

When it comes to churches in America, our research shows that many are *Already Gone*.

A black and white photograph of a woman with long hair, looking over her shoulder over her right shoulder. She has a serious, contemplative expression. The background is slightly blurred.

# Part 1: An Epidemic on Our Hands

## **Epidemic** (Ep-i-**dem**-ic)<sup>1</sup>

1. A disease or anything resembling a disease; attacking or affecting many individuals in a community or a population simultaneously.
2. Anything which takes possession of the minds of people as an epidemic does of their bodies; as, an epidemic of terror.

A majority of twenty-somethings — 61% of today's young adults — had been churched at one point during their teen years but they are now spiritually disengaged (i.e., not actively attending church, reading the Bible, or praying).

— George Barna<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, © 1996, 1998 MICRA, Inc. , *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*. Retrieved December 09, 2008
  2. <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/16-teensnext-gen/147-most-twenty-somethings-put-christianity-on-the-shelf-following-spiritually-active-teen-years>.

# CHAPTER 1



## Already Gone

Guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge” — which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you (1 Tim. 6:20–21).

I dare you. I dare you to try it this Sunday. Look to the right, and look to the left. While the pastor delivers his message, while the worship team sings their songs, while the youth pastor gives his announcements, look to the right and look to the left. Look at the children and look at the teens around you. Many of them will be familiar faces. They are the faces of your friends’ sons and daughters. They are the friends that your children bring home after youth group. They are *your* children . . . the ones who have been faithfully following you to church for years.

Now, imagine that two-thirds of them have just disappeared.

That’s right, *two-thirds* of them — the ones who go to secular school, even those homeschooled or sent to Christian school, the boys

and the girls, the kids who are leaders of the school's Bible club, the kids who sit in the back row with their baseball caps pulled low over their eyes — imagine that two-thirds of them have just disappeared from your church.

Yes, look to the left and look to the right this Sunday. Put down your church bulletin; look at those kids and imagine that two-thirds of them aren't even there. Why?

Because they are *already gone*.

It's time to wake up and see the tidal wave washing away the foundation of your church. The numbers are in — and they don't look good. From across Christendom the reports are the same: *A mass exodus is underway. Most youth of today will not be coming to church tomorrow.* Nationwide polls and denominational reports are showing that the next generation is calling it quits on the traditional church. And it's not just happening on the nominal fringe; it's happening at the core of the faith.

Is that just a grim prediction? Is that just the latest arm-twisting from reactionary conservatives who are trying to instill fear into the parents and the teachers of the next generation? No, it's not just a prediction. It's a reality — as we will document clearly from commissioned professional and statistically valid research later in this book. In fact, it's already happening . . . just like it did in England; it's happening here in North America. Now. Like the black plagues that nearly wiped out the general population of Europe, a spiritual black plague has almost killed the next generation of European believers. A few churches are surviving. Even fewer are thriving. The vast majority are slowly dying. It's a spiritual epidemic, *really*. A wave of spiritual decay and death has almost entirely stripped a continent of its godly heritage, and now the same disease is infecting North America.

Many of us saw it coming but didn't want to admit it. After all, our churches looked healthy on the surface. We saw bubbling Sunday schools and dynamic youth ministries. As parents and grandparents we appreciatively graced the doors of the church, faithfully dragging our kids with us, as our ages pushed into the 40s and 50s and beyond. But a vacuum was forming: there were the college students who no

longer showed up for the Sunday worship service, the newly married couple that never came back after the honeymoon. . . . Sure, there were exceptions and we were grateful for their dedication. For the most part, however, we saw that the 20- and 30-somethings from our congregations were increasingly AWOL. To be honest, none of us really wanted to admit it, did we? And so we began to justify to ourselves that maybe it wasn't happening at all.

Recent and irrefutable statistics are forcing us to face the truth. Respected pollster George Barna was one of the first to put numbers to the epidemic. Based on interviews with 22,000 adults and over 2,000 teenagers in 25 separate surveys, Barna unquestionably quantified the seriousness of the situation: *six out of ten 20-somethings who were involved in a church during their teen years are already gone.*<sup>1</sup> Despite strong levels of spiritual activity during the teen years, most 20-somethings disengage from active participation in the Christian faith during their young adult years — and often beyond that. Consider these findings:

- Nearly 50% of teens in the United States regularly attend church-related services or activities.
- More than three-quarters talk about their faith with their friends.
- Three out of five teens attend at least one youth group meeting at a church during a typical three-month period.
- One-third of teenagers participate in Christian clubs at school.<sup>2</sup>

That's all well and good, but do these numbers stand the test of time? Is the involvement of churched children and teens continuing into young adulthood? Unfortunately not. Not even close. The Barna

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1. Barna Research Online, "Teenagers Embrace Religion but Are Not Excited About Christianity," January 10, 2000, [www.Barna.org](http://www.Barna.org).

2. [http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article\\_main\\_page/0,1703,A%253D165951%2526M%253D201117,00.html](http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article_main_page/0,1703,A%253D165951%2526M%253D201117,00.html).

research is showing that religious activity in the teen years does not translate into spiritual commitment as individuals move into their 20s and 30s (and our own research, you are about to discover, will illuminate you with reasons as to why this occurs).

Most of them are pulling *away* from church, are spending *less* time alone studying their Bibles, are giving *very little* financially to Christian causes, are *ceasing* to volunteer for church activities, and are *turning their backs* on Christian media such as magazines, radio, and television. What does this look like numerically for today's 20-somethings?

- 61% of today's young adults who were regular church attendees are now "spiritually disengaged." They are not actively attending church, praying, or reading their Bibles.
- 20% of those who were spiritually active during high school are maintaining a similar level of commitment.
- 19% of teens were never reached by the Christian community, and they are still disconnected from the Church or any other Christian activities.

Shortly after Barna blew the whistle on the problem, individual denominations and churches began to take an honest look at what was happening as their children and teens began disappearing into the young adult years. Their findings confirmed the trends that Barna had found. Dozens of groups have looked at the issue from slightly different angles. Each study yields slightly different results, but their conclusions are unanimously startling. For example, when the Southern Baptist Convention researched the problem, they discovered that *more* than two-thirds of young adults who attended a Protestant church for at least a year in high school stopped attending for *at least* a year between the ages of 18 and 22.<sup>3</sup>

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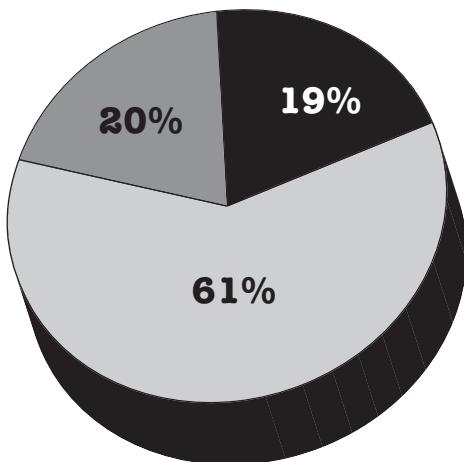
3. [http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article\\_main\\_page/0,1703,A%253D165951%2526M%253D201117,00.html](http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article_main_page/0,1703,A%253D165951%2526M%253D201117,00.html).

## Twenty somethings struggle to stay active in Christian faith.

20% churched as teen,  
spiritually active at  
age 29

61% churched as teen,  
disengaged during  
twenties

19% never churched  
as teen, still  
unconnected



Source: The Barna Group, LTD 2006

There are exceptions, of course. Here and there we find a smattering of churches with vibrant participation from the 20-something age group. In some cities, we are seeing congregations develop that are made up almost exclusively of people from this age group. But unfortunately, these are the exceptions and not the rule. The trends that we are seeing can no longer be ignored. The epidemic is a reality. The abandoned church buildings of Europe are really just buildings, yet they are graphic symbols — warnings to those of us who are seeing the same trends in our local congregations: *we are one generation away from the evaporation of church as we know it.* Slowly but certainly the church of the future is headed toward the morgue and will continue to do so — unless we come to better understand what is happening and implement a clear, biblical plan to circumvent it.

The trends are known; more and more are finding out about them — but the vital question concerns what is the root problem of why this is happening. We need to know why if we are going to formulate possible solutions.

## Who, Why, and What?

I began traveling and speaking in the United States in the 1980s. As an Australian, it didn't take long before I felt I had a good feeling for the pulse of American Christianity . . . and I saw some tremendous needs. At the time, America could rightly be labeled the greatest Christian nation on earth, the center of the economic world — and although the Church was equipped with nearly every conceivable tool and luxury for developing and expressing its faith — I could see that the Church was in great need.

Since moving to the United States in 1987, I have spoken in hundreds of different churches from many denominations, numerous Bible colleges, seminaries, and Christian conferences on American soil. I have talked with the pastors; I've listened to those in the congregations; I have experienced "worship" in almost every conceivable style and form. The ministry of Answers in Genesis is deeply committed to the American church. In fact, the faltering health of the Church in the greatest Christian nation on earth is what motivated my wife and me to move our family to this country in the first place. My wife and I testify that God called us as missionaries to America — particularly the American Church — to call it back to the authority of the Word of God beginning in Genesis.

The Bible calls the Church "the Body of Christ." Today, over 20 years after our move, the statistics prove that His body is bleeding profusely. The next generation of believers is draining from the churches, and it causes me great personal and professional concern. I've sat in the grand, but vacant, churches of Europe. I know where this is headed. Where Europe is today spiritually, America will be tomorrow — and for the same reasons, if the Church does not recognize where the foundational problem lies and address it.

When I began to seriously ponder Barna's numbers, naturally I wanted to find out more. For help, I called on a trusted and respected supporter of Answers in Genesis. As the chairman of America's Research Group, and as a leading marketing research and business analyst expert, Britt Beemer specializes in studying human behavior. Over

the decades he has conducted dozens and dozens of surveys for leading corporations as well as small businesses. He analyzes the marketplace and the clientele, and makes recommendations that keep the companies excelling in a competitive world. When we were considering building the Creation Museum, we asked Britt if we could reasonably dream of 250,000 people visiting each year. Britt did his research and predicted that 400,000 people would visit the museum in the first year! He was wrong by two days. (The 400,000th visitor entered the museum 363 days after we opened.) Needless to say, when we had questions about the epidemic of people leaving church, we turned to him for answers.

Our goal was simple: We wanted to know *who* was leaving, *why* they were leaving, and *what* (if anything) could be done about it. To that end, Britt and his America's Research Group initiated a qualified study with probing questions to get powerful insight into the epidemic the Church is facing. To get to the core of the issues, his team studied *only* those whom we are most concerned about: every person in our sample said *they attended church every week or nearly every week when they were growing up, but never or seldom go today*.

We selected those between 20 and 30 who once attended conservative and “evangelical” churches. We wanted to look at the churches that claim to be Bible-believing congregations with Bible-preaching pastors. According to Barna, about 6 percent of people in their 20s and 30s can be considered “evangelical.” This is about the same as the number of teenagers (5 percent).<sup>4</sup> The results from Britt’s research would undoubtedly have been more drastic if we had considered more liberal congregations. We deliberately skewed the research toward conservatives so that we could all understand that whatever problems showed up would be much worse for the church population in general.

After 20,000 phone calls, with all the raw data in hand, Britt began to analyze the numbers. The things he discovered— as well as the things he *didn’t* discover — began to shed light (in a quite astonishing way) on this monumental problem facing the future of Christianity.

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4. [www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org).



### The sample included:

1,000 individuals from coast to coast	balanced according to population and gender	with just over half being aged 25–29	with under half being aged 20–24
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First of all, he *didn't* discover anything abnormal about the group as a whole. There weren't an unusual number of homeschooled, or secular school kids, who were leaving. There wasn't a significant number of females compared to males that had decided to leave. In other words, the 60 percent plus of the evangelical kids who choose to leave the church look pretty much like the 40 percent who decide to

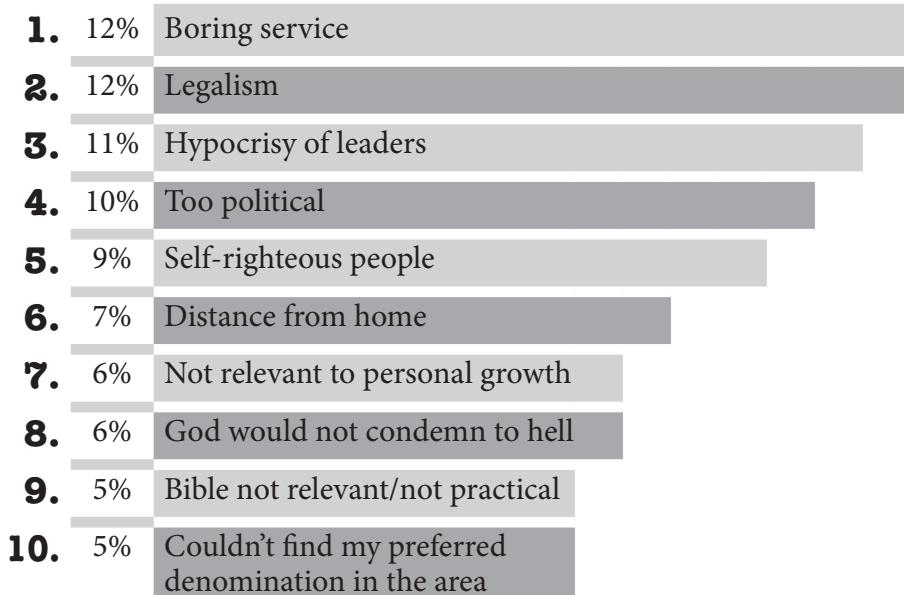
stay — at least on the outside. The breakdown of those who left really fits the profile of the evangelical population in general.

So at first, the *who* question didn't seem to give us many answers. So then, *why*? Why did they leave the church? When we asked them this open-ended question, we got an earful.

At first, we were surprised (and a little disappointed) that there wasn't a single reason. It would have been nice to find a single identifiable virus somewhere. How simple it would have been to stereotype the whole group and point out one germ that had been causing the sickness to spread. But the numbers didn't say that. *A single identifiable culprit didn't appear.*

Other researchers have come to similar conclusions. When LifeWay did their research for the Southern Baptist Convention, 97 percent of the "dropouts" listed one or more specific life-change issues as a reason they left church. The most frequent reason they gave for leaving church was almost an indifferent shrug of the shoulders: "I

## The top 10 reasons were:



simply wanted a break from church” (27 percent). The transition into college and adulthood also affected many: “I moved to college and stopped attending church” (25 percent), and “work responsibilities prevented me from attending” (23 percent). Others simply “moved too far away from the church to continue attending” (22 percent).<sup>5</sup> In all honesty, these kinds of results just seemed too shallow for us at Answers in Genesis. And they seemed too superficial to Britt as well. We have a massive epidemic on our hands, and researchers seemed to be content with answers that sounded like “I just didn’t feel very good,” or “I wasn’t there because I chose to be someplace else.” Too many researchers accept simple, superficial answers. They acknowledge that there is a massive shift taking place in the spiritual lives of young adults, but when it comes to really figuring out what’s going on, they kind of throw up their hands and sigh, “I guess that’s just the way it is!”

End of story? Not hardly. This is precisely why we teamed up with an expert like Britt Beemer who probes, and probes, and probes until he finds the right reasons. We found the real reasons, though some of them will shake many churches to their very core.

Never content with the easy answers that people give to justify their behavior, Britt is an expert in consumer behavior who taps into their minds as he finds out what people really believe in order to reveal what is driving their behavior. Until Answers in Genesis commissioned this study, never before had this type of research been conducted — and our research was formulated to not just deeply probe what people believe but answer the questions in regard to WHY people believe what they do. We can now identify the real answers as well as the causes affecting young people who leave the church.

As Britt studied his data, it was obvious that multiple issues are behind the exodus from church. The *why?* question would prove to be more complicated than many expected. But soon, as the numbers became more clear, patterns emerged, assumptions were destroyed,

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5. [http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article\\_main\\_page/0,1703,A%253D165951%2526M%253D201117,00.html](http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article_main_page/0,1703,A%253D165951%2526M%253D201117,00.html).

and quirky findings surfaced. One of the most important and startling findings turned out not to answer the *why?* question, but rather the *when?* question.

### **Of all the 20 to 29-year-old evangelicals who attended church regularly but no longer do so:**



95% of them attended church regularly during their elementary and middle school years



55% attended church regularly during high school



11% were still going to church during college

I think this is one of the most revealing and yet challenging statistics in the entire survey — and something we didn't expect. Most people assume that students are lost in college. We've always been trying to prepare our kids for college (and I still think that's a critical thing to do, of course), but it turns out that only 11 percent of those who have left the Church did so during the college years. Almost 90 percent of them were lost in middle school and high school. By the time they got to college they were already gone! About 40 percent are leaving the Church during elementary and middle school years! Most people assumed that elementary and middle school is a fairly neutral environment where children toe the line and follow in the footsteps of their parents' spirituality. Not so. I believe that over half of these kids were lost before we got them into high school! Whatever diseases are fueling the epidemic of losing our young people, they are infecting our students much, much earlier than most assumed. Let me say this again:

*We are losing many more people by middle school and many more by high school than we will ever lose in college.*

Many parents will fork out big bucks to send these students to Christian colleges, hoping to protect them in their faith. But the fact is, they're already gone. They were lost while still in the fold. They were disengaging while they were still sitting in the pews. They were preparing their exit while they were faithfully attending youth groups and Sunday schools.

What a reminder to parents (and Christian leaders) to do exactly what God's Word instructs us to do — to "train up a child in the way he should go . . ." (Prov. 22:6). And further, "These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:6–7; NKJV). What a reminder to teach children from when they are born — and a reminder to be diligent in providing the right sort of training/curricula, etc., for children.

Sadly, I think many see children's programs as entertainment, teaching Bible stories, and so on, but when they get older we need to think about preparing them somehow for college — but as our research showed, by then they are already gone! For most, it was basically too late!

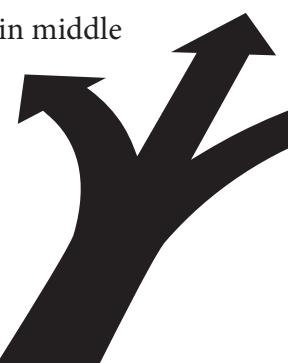
This topic regarding when we begin to lose our kids is where the study began to get very interesting and very illuminating. For example:

**Those who no  
longer believe  
that all of  
the accounts  
and stories in  
the Bible are  
true:**

39.8% first had  
doubts in middle  
school

43.7% first had their  
doubts in high school

10.6% had  
their  
first doubts  
during college



Clearly, there is a slightly delayed reaction going on. The doubts come first, followed shortly by departure. Students didn't begin doubting *in* college, they simply departed *by* college. Again, if you look around in your church today, two-thirds of those who are sitting among us have already left in their hearts, it will only take a couple years before their bodies are absent as well.

The Beemer study has a tremendous amount to offer the churches, the pastors, the parents, and the researchers who are sincerely looking into this problem. Britt's study didn't look just at behavior; he looked at belief. By making correlations between those beliefs and the behavior and intentions of those who have left the Church, the veil was lifted, powerful new insights were revealed, and very surprising results were illuminated. In the pages ahead we will give you the highlights of some of these numbers. But brace yourself, because in many instances the results are shocking, and they point a finger at many well-intentioned, firmly established programs and traditions of churches that are utterly failing the children who faithfully attend every Sunday morning.

You will need to swallow hard and be prepared to consider things very carefully; Be ready to give up long-held, cherished notions in regard to certain church programs of which perhaps you would never have considered the slightest possibility that there was such a serious problem as this research clearly showed.

First, we will investigate key aspects of the epidemic, including:

- the effects of Sunday school
- the two different kinds of kids who are leaving the Church and why it's so important to know the difference
- why the Church has lost its value and is now considered irrelevant

Second, we will investigate the solutions that are within our grasp:

- how to defend the Christian faith and uphold the authority of the Bible from the very first verse

- what it means (and doesn't mean) to live by the Bible
- the revolution that is reclaiming "church" in this culture

Along the way the investigation will be spiced up with a variety of fascinating findings regarding the following:

- music
- friends
- unbiblical church traditions
- teaching
- beliefs about Genesis

If you are a parent, a pastor, or a Christian educator, then this research is for you. Or maybe you are one of the millions of students who are thinking about leaving the Church or have already done so. If so, I challenge you to let the numbers speak for themselves and then be ready to allow God to use you in new ways to make a difference for the sake of the next generation and the Church. Even though the results were obtained in America, because it has had the greatest Christian influence in the world and has been an enormous influence on the world (Christian literature, missionaries, etc.), it is likely that such research would show similar (at best) or much worse results in other countries.

Yes, I challenge you. This Sunday, look to the left and then look to the right. According to our research, two-thirds of the children and teens you see will be gone in a matter of years. *What can be done about it?* Plenty, as you will soon see!

### **Britt's Bit: The AIG-ARG Connection**

On behalf of Ken Ham, I want to thank you for picking up this book. I make my living generating numbers and statistics, and they are an important part of my personal ministry. When numbers and

statistics are interpreted correctly they mean something. They aren't just arbitrary measurements for things that don't matter. Numbers do matter. They represent things that are real, that are measurable, that can be observed, and (in many cases) that can be changed with the right remedies. That's what America's Research Group is all about. At ARG we draw conclusions that are meaningful to our clients. We are behavioral scientists who study human behavior. ARG provides each client a foundation built on practical, useful information that ensures their ongoing success.

That's why I am such a firm believer in Answers in Genesis. Not only is their ministry important, but AIG is a reminder of what God can do through one person who steps out in faith and allows God to use them to defend and proclaim the truth. Ken moved his family to the United States more than 20 years ago, having started a ministry out of the trunk of his car and a few cardboard boxes in his house. I don't think anyone would have believed (particularly Ken) what God had in store for a ministry of such humble beginnings.

Today, the Answers in Genesis website gets *millions of visitors per year*. Tens of thousands of resources (books, DVDs, curricula, magazines, etc.) move through AIG's warehouse year after year. A small army of trained speakers are reaching tens of thousands of people face-to-face on every continent on the globe except Antarctica. (As far as I know, no one has volunteered to go there quite yet!)

I love keeping track of the AIG ministry and what people say about it. I've been tracking public opinion religiously (pun intended), and I have a deep desire to protect and to equip this ministry. When the Creation Museum opened, it created a national media tsunami, and at least one-third of the comments voiced about the ministry were clearly negative. The naysayers had their day, but they didn't last. Today, only 1/20th of the comments about the museum are negative. I think that is an amazing accomplishment. As I projected, 400,000 people came through those doors in the first year.

I make my living studying human behavior and attitudes statistically, which gives me a unique viewpoint of how and why people act

the way they do. I sincerely invite you to come along with my friend and ministry cohort Ken Ham as he takes you on a personal tour through my numbers. I'll be throwing in my "bit" on a regular basis, giving you my take on the statistics and their importance. As you begin to understand the trends of the past, and see where the Church is at present, you will discover highly practical action points that will make a difference in the future. I believe that if you get a handle on a few of the numbers that describe what is happening in the Church today, you will see the potential for change that resides within you as a pastor, a parent, or a Christian educator. And that's important. The next generation is counting on us.

## CHAPTER 2



# Sunday School Syndrome

*Everything I know I Learned in Kindergarten* — title of a best-selling book for adults.

This Sunday morning a familiar scene will play itself out at churches from coast to coast. Minivans and SUVs will open like pop cans in the parking lots of various denominations, spewing forth their contents of kids. With Bibles in one hand and car-seats in the other, parents will herd their excited children toward the doors. In the hallways, the kids will split up by age and be welcomed into classrooms full of laughter and life and hope. Teachers will embrace these kids as if they are their own for about 45 minutes. They will pour their hearts and souls into the children and teens with the help of videos, various curricula resources, Bible stories, crayons, crackers, CD music, computer graphics, flannel graphs, white boards, cookies, cotton balls, popsicle sticks, prayers, and pipe cleaners. . . . It all looks so safe and so healthy — an inseparable part of the fabric of spiritual life in the western world.

**“Did you often attend Sunday school?”**

In our survey of 1,000 20-somethings who regularly attended church as children and teens, we asked the question, “Did you often attend Sunday school?” In reply, 61 percent said yes; 39 percent said no. That’s about what you would expect, isn’t it? After all, not everyone is committed enough to make the effort to get to Sunday school, right? Only those who are more concerned about the spiritual and moral health of their kids, right? Because we all assume that Sunday school is good for them, correct? The ritual of Sunday school is so interwoven into American church life that it’s hardly worth mentioning, right? Wrong. Our research uncovered something very disturbing:

Sunday school is actually more likely to be detrimental to the spiritual and moral health of our children.

Now before you react to this, please hear us out and consider the research — real research that is statistically valid and gives us a true look at what is going on.

Compared to the 39 percent who do *not* go to Sunday school, contrary to what many of you may believe, the research showed that students who *regularly* attend Sunday school are actually:

	more likely NOT to believe that all the accounts/stories in the Bible are true/accurate.
	more likely to doubt the Bible because it was written by men.
	more likely to doubt the Bible because it was not translated correctly.
	more likely to defend that abortion should continue to be legal.
	more likely to defend premarital sex.
	more likely to accept that gay marriage and abortion should be legal.
	much more likely to believe that God used evolution to change one kind of animal into another.
	more likely NOT to believe the earth is less than 10,000 years old.
	much more likely to question the Bible because they believe the earth is not less than 10,000 years old.
	more likely to doubt the Bible because of the secular dates of billions of years for the age of the earth.
	more likely to have heard a pastor/Sunday school teacher teach Christians could believe in millions/billions of years.
	more likely to question the earth is young and the days of creation are 24 hours each.
	more likely to believe that dinosaurs died out before people were on the planet.
	more likely to view the Church as hypocritical.
	much more likely to have become anti-church through the years.
	more likely to believe that good people don't need to go to church.

Read that list again. No, we don't have it backward. Yes, you're reading it correctly. These results are extremely alarming — in fact, quite

shocking. (I had to look at it several times before I could believe it.) They are so contrary to what we would have assumed that they should feel like a rude slap in the face. And remember, these findings were the result of probing questions by a leading researcher who knows how to gather data and statistically analyze it to give us a true picture of the situation.

This was our most stunning and disconcerting result of the entire survey. First, we found out that we were losing our kids in elementary school, middle school, and high school rather than in college. Then we found out that Sunday school is one of the reasons why. The “Sunday school syndrome” is contributing to the epidemic, rather than helping alleviate it. These numbers are statistically significant and absolutely contrary to what we would expect. This is a brutal wake-up call for the Church, showing how our programs and our approaches to Christian education are failing dismally.

Before we investigate this further, however, I want to say a few words to those of you who are committed to Christian education inside and outside of the church. My hat goes off to you. I thank you. I sincerely commend you for taking action and giving your time, skills, and best efforts to invest in the future generation. We are not questioning your dedication, intentions, or passion. In fact, we believe that your efforts are far too often taken for granted and never thanked enough. We don’t question your integrity and we certainly don’t doubt your sincerity. In our survey, less than half of the students said they came to Sunday school to see their friends. That means that *you* were their contact point. *You* are the ones who are sincerely trying to build a bridge for them into a healthy spiritual adulthood. The problem is that, by and large, what you are doing isn’t working. We need to ask some hard questions here. We need to be willing to swallow our pride, if necessary, as we find the answers. And we will offer solutions — real solutions — if the Church will take these findings to heart and be prepared to face the challenge head-on.

### **Disturbing Details**

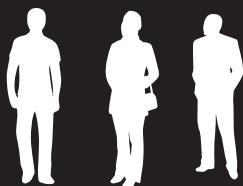
Three out of five individuals in our survey said they “often attended Sunday school.” Of those who attended Sunday school, over seven in

ten *said* Sunday school lessons were “helpful.” Our results, however, disproved that perception.

In many situations, Sunday school didn’t necessarily hurt, but it certainly didn’t help. When asked, “Does the Bible contain errors?” sadly, Sunday school made no difference. (About 39 percent of each group said yes to this question.) When asked, “Do you believe you are saved and will go to heaven upon death?” there was almost no statistical difference — which really is very disconcerting. In most of the categories, there was such a slight difference between the “yes” or “no” answers of these two groups that the “I don’t know” answers became a big factor. The results show that Sunday school is actually having an overall *negative* impact on beliefs, even though these differences were often quite slight in a number of instances. *The obvious conclusion is that Sunday school really had no impact on what children believed in these critical areas.*

For example, when asked if they believed in the creation of Adam in the Garden of Eden, Sunday school had no significant effect on the answers. The same can be said for the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot’s wife. The same can be said of Noah’s ark and the global Flood. Belief in the Tower of Babel was nearly identical. In these areas Sunday school did nothing — it wasn’t a help or a detriment. The numbers indicate that Sunday school actually didn’t do *anything* to help them develop a Christian worldview. In several other areas, as shocking as this sounds, the reality we have to face is that Sunday school clearly harmed the spiritual growth of the kids. Consider these questions:

## **“Do you believe that God used evolution to create human beings?”**

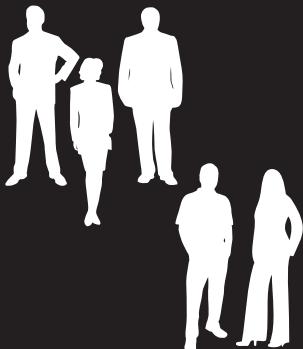


**yes.** 18.5% of those who did not attend Sunday school



**yes.** 24.6% of those who attended Sunday school

## **“Do you believe that God used evolution to change one kind of animal into another?”**



**yes.** 27.2% of Sunday school attenders

**yes.** 18.8% of those who did not go to Sunday school believed in this type of evolution

Toward the end of this chapter, we will give you an explanation as to why we believe such a situation exists.

It's safe to say that Sunday school attendance is tied to higher percentages of belief in evolution. The same can be said about important moral issues.

## **“Do you believe that premarital sex is wrong?”**



47.7% of students who did not attend Sunday school believe that premarital sex is wrong



40.8% of Sunday school attenders believe that premarital sex is wrong

And what about the main issue we are concerned about in this book? Why are our kids leaving the Church?

These next three findings may shock you because you would naturally feel those who attended Sunday school would have deeper religious convictions. However, we found the exact opposite.

### **“Do you feel good people don’t need to go to church?”**



**yes.** 39.3% of Sunday school attenders

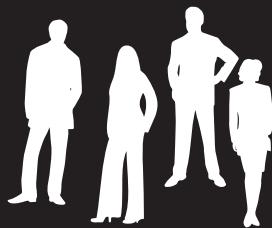
**yes.** interestingly only 28.9% on non-attenders

### **“Do you feel the Church is relevant to your needs today?”**

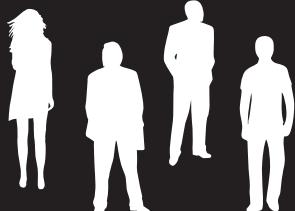


**no.** 46.4% of Sunday school attenders

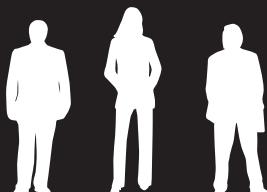
**no.** Only 39.6% of those who did not attend Sunday school felt like church is not relevant to their needs today.



### **“Do you believe that you have become anti-church through the years?”**



**yes.** 39.1% of those who attended Sunday school



**yes.** 26.9% of those who didn't go to Sunday school

This should cause us to gasp. When compared to those who never went to Sunday school, more Sunday school attenders believe that good people don't need to go to church, more feel like the church is less relevant, and more have become increasingly anti-church over the years.

The brutal conclusion is that, on the whole, the Sunday school programs of today are statistical failures.

Ouch!

I know that's going to hurt many of you who are devoted and dedicated to these programs — as well as those of you who are depending on these programs to properly influence your children. I'm sure various Sunday school curricula publishers will want to become defensive about their resources. But listen, if you are depending on these programs to properly teach and influence your children, it is just not happening.

Out of the 1,000 interviews, 606 were former Sunday school students, and the Church failed these people miserably. As children and teenagers they were there almost every Sunday; they were committed and they were present; they heard the lessons and they nodded their heads . . . and it had a nominal and even negative effect on their faith.

If I were a church leader, I would first sit down and cry and pour my heart out to the Lord. And rightly so. I would then find a new Sunday school curriculum that better prepares young people to maintain their faith. These numbers would be telling me that I need to earnestly look at some radical changes, and I would be working hard toward doing what is needed to reverse this situation.

### **Taught but Not Caught**

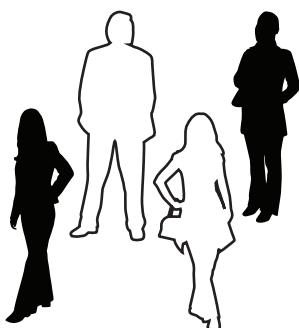
All of these numbers would be a little bit easier to accept if we had surveyed a broader cross-section of Christian churches. If these numbers included all of the nominal, liberal churches (particularly those that don't even claim to stand on the Word of God), then these results would be a little bit more understandable. But they don't. Remember what we said at the beginning about the type of person we identified for this survey. These results have come from the Christian education

programs of the most dedicated, Scripture-affirming churches out there — imagine what the situation must be in the Church as a whole!

Is it a problem of not being taught? Considering these people came from conservative church backgrounds, consider these numbers from our research:

- Of those who attended Sunday school, over 9 in 10 said that their Sunday school classes taught them that the Bible was true and accurate.
- Only 1 in 10 said their pastor/Sunday school teacher taught that Christians could believe in Darwinian evolution.
- One in 4 said their pastors and Sunday school teachers taught that Christians could believe in an earth that is millions or billions of years old.
- Over 4 in 5 said their pastor or Sunday school teacher taught that God created the earth in six 24-hour days.
- Only 1 in 16 said their pastors or Sunday school teachers taught that the Book of Genesis was a myth or legend and not real history.

Actually, as we will explain later on, there is a major problem with *how* they were taught. These people who went to conservative churches heard many of the right things for the most part (though the situation would be much less so on the whole), but did they “hear” in a way that



Further,

- 2/5 said the Bible contains errors.
- Less than 2/5 said they believe all the accounts and stories in the Bible are true and accurate.

equipped them to believe in their hearts what the Bible clearly stated, and were they equipped to be able to defend this teaching in the real world they live in?

Clearly, we do have a problem on our hands. The causes for the problems are many, but one thing is for sure: Sunday school isn't solving it. High school is when we lost nearly half of this group; a big group was lost even earlier in middle school due to doubt in the accounts and stories in the Bible being true. Of those who don't believe all the accounts and stories in the Bible are true and accurate, four in nine said they had their first doubts in high school.

As the astronaut exclaimed, "Houston, we have a problem!" We will look at our "problem" in great detail in the chapters ahead. Several major concerns will become evident: the concern over biblical authority, the history behind our descent into this abyss, and the great disconnect this has caused when people try to make a connection between their spirituality and reality. What are we going to do?

You will see later in the book that much can (and must!) be done. Great debate is raging right now about the future of Christian education programs. What are some of the ideas?

### **1. Should we eradicate?**

This is a very extreme suggestion, but since we have an extreme epidemic on our hands, it needs to be at least discussed. A growing number of people within the evangelical church are suggesting that we do away with children's and youth ministries altogether. Consider these thoughts from the Reformed Baptist Church blog site *The World from My Window*<sup>1</sup>:

It seems as if we are always trying to fix what is broken with youth ministry. Has it crossed anyone else's mind that maybe youth ministry shouldn't be fixed because youth ministry **IS** a major part of the problem?!

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1. <http://theworldfrommywindow.blogspot.com/2006/09/barna-confirms-teens-are-leaving.html>.

. . . Just in case you were wondering. I am not anti-youth or anti-youth pastor. My two brothers function in the role of youth pastors (including the famous Ken Fields). I was a youth pastor for six years and I am greatly concerned with the future of our younger generations.

Is that idea too radical? Could it possibly be an improvement to get rid of Sunday school and youth ministries altogether? That almost sounds blasphemous. After all, aren't our concepts of "church" and "Sunday school" inseparable? Not necessarily. Just because our generation has always done it that way doesn't mean that we have to continue to do it that way. George Barna and Frank Viola note that Sunday school isn't even historical:

The Sunday school is also a relatively recent invention, born some 1,700 years after Christ. A newspaper publisher named Robert Raikes (1736–1811) from Britain is credited with being its founder. In 1780, Raikes established a school in "Scout Alley" for poor children. Raikes did not begin the Sunday school for the purpose of religious instruction. Instead, he founded it to teach poor children the basics of education. . . . The Sunday school took off like wildfire, spreading to Baptist, Congregational, and Methodist churches throughout England.<sup>2</sup>

Part of the concern is that the mere existence of youth ministry and Sunday school allows parents to shrug off their responsibilities as the primary teachers, mentors, and pastors to their family. The other part of the concern is that, again, what we are doing just isn't working. If the existence of our Christian education programs in their current forms are certainly not helping — and in some situations even doing harm — why not dump them altogether?

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2. George Barna and Frank Viola, *Pagan Christianity?* (Carol Stream, IL: Barna-Books, 2007), p. 212.

However, we are not advocating eradication! We want to be solution-oriented, as you will see, so that we can effectively reach these young people with the truth of God's Word.

## **2. Renovate**

This recommendation isn't quite so extreme — and it is one we recommend. Our children need more training, more nurturing, more teaching than ever — but we need to turn things around so Sunday school isn't doing the opposite.

We believe it's possible that the current Christian education programs within the Church don't need to be eradicated, but they certainly need to be renovated. Churches need to appraise the teachers teaching Sunday School and ensure they know how to answer the skeptical questions and know how to teach apologetics — and know how to teach the age group being entrusted to them. It's one thing to tell students what to believe, it's another thing to teach and communicate that in a convincing and gripping way.

Churches need to totally reevaluate the curricula they use (including their VBS programs), and at the very least supplement at all age levels and all years with good apologetics curricula. And we are not just talking about creation apologetics — we mean general biblical apologetics as well. Most church-going adults cannot adequately defend the basics of their Christian faith or basic doctrines, let alone defend the faith against the skeptical questions of this scientific age. How many can really even properly answer questions such as: Where did the Bible come from? What does it mean to have faith? What does it mean that the Bible is inspired? Aren't there other books that some say should be in the Bible? How do you know Jesus is God? — just to name a few. More and more curricula (such as VBS programs and supplemental curricula for different ages) that is apologetic in nature is being produced to begin to fulfill the above need. Some resources are described in the bibliography.

When we talk of "renovating," we mean something much more aggressive than simply "redesigning." A little updating isn't going to do

the job. The entire structure and focus of our programs need to be reconsidered; we need to be willing to make radical changes in the format and the style of these programs to determine how they can be most effective in teaching truth to our children and overcoming the issues that are undermining biblical authority in their thinking and driving them away from the Church.

Let's be honest. Our entire culture (including secular schools) is aggressively teaching the apologetics of evolution and secular humanism. They teach our students how to defend a humanistic worldview, and they model that worldview. They show all the reasons that what they are teaching is supposedly true. The secularists are teaching our children how to defend the secular faith, and connecting it to the real world — and here we are in churches teaching wonderful Bible stories and reinforcing in their minds that they can believe the secularists and that the Bible is not really connected to the real world. No wonder we are losing them. (See the section for the Christian educator in chapter 7 which deals with solid curriculum for more details on the problems with Sunday school lessons.)

Unless the facts behind the Christian faith are clearly and convincingly communicated in a way that students can learn and remember, their faith will not stand the assault of doubt from the world. It's not enough to just tell students, "Believe in Jesus!" Faith that is not founded on fact will ultimately falter in the storm of secularism that our students face every day.

In many cases, when we look at what is being taught in the Sunday schools, we're just teaching on an inspirational or a moral level. The Sunday sermon usually dishes out more of the same. Neither one is providing the necessary support and education students need. In many cases, they are getting two lessons on a Sunday, and neither are really relevant to them. It's not just the Sunday school, it's the sermon, the VBS, it's most of the teaching programs — they are not helping them in this postmodern culture where it is becoming the norm to attack and marginalize Christians. They are not coping — they are not able to cope — they haven't been trained to cope.

Perhaps you agree with us that it's going too far to eradicate, but hopefully you will agree it's certainly time to renovate. Radical renovation is needed urgently. We are losing the next generation — we are losing the culture.

### **3. Don't delegate**

Listen carefully. We're certainly not saying that Sunday school *can't* be effective in teaching the truth about God's Word. We're just saying that in its current form it *isn't*. If nothing else, a parent should look at this data and feel a rush of sober realization. If you, as a parent, have been putting the responsibility for the religious education of your child on your church's Sunday school, you need to realize that the statistics say the job isn't getting done. As we have seen, in many cases and for many different reasons, it's not helping, it's hurting. So this coming Sunday, don't feel like you have absolved yourself of responsibility when you drop your child at Sunday school. This is your job. Do not totally delegate it to someone else — as, sadly, many parents seem to do.

Deuteronomy 6:4–10 and Ephesians 6:1–4 clearly exhort parents to teach, disciple, and train their own children. Regardless of what's happening in the Sunday school youth groups, pulpit, and Bible studies of your church, the responsibility for ministry to our kids has never been removed from the parents. It's time to pick that ball up again and jump in the game. James H. Rutz, in his thought-provoking book *The Open Church: How to Bring Back the Exciting Life of the First Century Church*, has the heart and the courage to take an honest look at the Sunday school ritual and test its effectiveness:

Take Sunday school for example. God's plan for religious education is Dad. It's a 4,000-year-old plan that's worked like a watch since the days of Abraham. But if your weekly gathering doesn't equip Dad to open his mouth at home and be a teacher of the Word — well, Sunday school is your next best bet. (Programming Dad would be easier.)<sup>3</sup>

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3. James H. Rutz, *The Open Church: How to Bring Back the Exciting Life of the First Century Church* (Auburn, ME: SeedSowers, 1992), p. 19.

I understand what this author is saying, but we would say it is actually a 6,000-year-old plan, going back to the first dad, Adam.

If your parents shirked their responsibility for training you spiritually, you will need to break the chain of biblical illiteracy and spiritual irresponsibility in your family tree. If your church hasn't been stepping up to the plate to equip you, I would suggest a book I wrote with my brother Stephen, *Raising Godly Children in an Ungodly World — Leaving a Lasting Legacy*.<sup>4</sup> Steve and I had a great blessing of being raised by a father (and mother) who took creative and determined responsibility for teaching their kids from God's Word, and living a biblical life. Our father, as the spiritual head of the house, stood uncompromisingly on the Word of God, determined to be equipped to answer the skeptical questions of the age, setting an example for his children that prepared us for the ministries we are involved in today. We would gratefully pass on to you what he passed on to us so that you can pass it on to your kids. Again, don't delegate this. It's one of the most rewarding and important aspects of being a parent. And do it right now. There's no time to waste.

What is interesting to me is that a person who has not heard of the research being reported in this book, and who has never heard me speak on this topic, wrote to my brother Stephen after reading the book referred to above and said:

“I read your book *Raising Godly Children in an Ungodly World*. . . . I thoroughly enjoyed it and felt greatly challenged as a Sunday school teacher. I just realized how many people went through Sunday school in Australia and came out of it, and never come back to church again. It makes me reevaluate the role that I played at our Sunday school, whether I am playing my part right, drawing children to know God or pushing them away from God without even knowing it. Your book came in just as a wake up call!”

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4. Ken Ham and Steve Ham, *Raising Godly Children in an Ungodly World* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008).

## Not a Simple Epidemic

This Sunday, the ritual of Sunday school and teen ministry will again repeat itself. Through the data collected by Britt Beemer in this survey, we now know how typical Sunday school programs have affected our children. The Sunday school syndrome is a serious contributor to the overall problem of students exiting the Church. A true and urgent commitment to address the problem is probably more important than the specific solutions that are eventually implemented. Again, when 60 percent of our kids are leaving the Church, there will be no single solution to the overall problem — there is no single inoculation that will make us immune. The truth of the matter is that the epidemic affects each of us as individuals, because each of us is part of the greater Body of Christ. Together, working as a body, a multifaceted response to the disease can materialize. Lord willing, the mass exodus can be slowed, if not reversed, and be transformed into something new and more powerful than the typical, traditional forms we are now using.

Imagine if we started (in our homes and churches) raising generations of children who stood uncompromisingly on the Word of God, knew how to defend the Christian faith, could answer the skeptical questions of this age, and had a fervor to share the gospel from the authority of God's Word with whomever they met! This could change the world.

In the next chapter, we will look deeper into the lives of those who are leaving the Church. What the numbers taught us about them will be essential as you move into the future and discern what *you* can do to address this problem. Let there be no mistake, it's time to do something — it's time for *you* to do something. If not, you might as well sleep in this Sunday. The statistics show that not going won't hurt your kids one bit. In fact, they might be better for it.

### Britt's Bit: Not by Chance

You have to be careful with numbers. People often say, "You can prove anything you want to with statistics," and they are partially right.

As a consumer researcher, I've seen people use every trick in the book to try to prove their point no matter whether the data supported it or not.

For example, what if a politician told you that "70 percent of students in the country scored above the national average"? Would you believe him? Could you believe him? No way. The law of averages says that half the country will be above average. (The other half, of course, will be below average.)

A news anchor recently said, "Over half of Americans approve of abortion." The truth is, only 38 percent approve of abortion, but 13 percent are still undecided. So by adding the undecideds with those who oppose it, they conclude that 50 percent accept it. A few years ago I was hired to conduct a study of 1,000 consumers across America. When we finished the survey we realized that we had omitted a question that the client really wanted. So, at our expense, we interviewed another 1,000 consumers with the original questions, plus the one new one. Amazingly, when I reviewed all the data from the two different surveys conducted within a week of each other, no answer varied more than 1.8 percent, well within the 3.8 plus or minus statistical error factor.

In this study, when we say that there is a difference between two numbers, we can prove that mathematically. When you hear statistics from other people, you'll just have to be careful and double check to make sure that they aren't twisting or fabricating what they are saying!

## **Appendix 2 — Resources for Upholding the Word**

### ***Books***

- *More Than a Carpenter*, by Josh McDowell (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1977)
- *Always Ready*, by Greg Bahnsen (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 1996)
- *The Ultimate Proof of Creation*, by Jason Lisle (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009)
- *The New Answers Book*, Vol. 1 and 2, Ken Ham, general editor (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007 & 2008)
- *Ask Them Why*, by Jay Lucas (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2007)
- *Nothing but the Truth*, by Brian Edwards (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2006)
- *The Young Earth*, by John Morris (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007)
- *How Could a Loving God . . . ?* by Ken Ham (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007)
- *The Answers Book for Kids*, Vols. 1, 2, 3, and 4, Ken Ham, editor (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008)
- *The Long War Against God*, by Henry M. Morris (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2000)

### ***Online Education***

- Answers Education Online through Answers in Genesis website: [answersingenesis.org/cec/courses/](http://answersingenesis.org/cec/courses/)

## **Websites**

- Answersingenesis.org
- ICR.org
- Creationresearch.org
- Christiananswers.net
- Masterbooks.net

## **DVDs**

- Creation mini-series, Ken Ham (Answers in Genesis)
- How Do We Know the Bible Is True? Brian Edwards
- Creation: Science Confirms the Bible Is True, Jason Lisle (Answers in Genesis)
- God of Suffering, Tommy Mitchell (Answers in Genesis)
- Noah's Flood: Washing Away Millions of Years, Terry Mortenson (Answers in Genesis)
- Demolishing Strongholds DVD Curriculum (Answers in Genesis)

## Appendix 3 — Resources for Parents

- *Raising Godly Children*, Ken Ham (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008)
- *History Revealed Curriculum*, Diana Waring (Answers in Genesis)
- Answers Magazine: [answersingenesis.org/articles/am](http://answersingenesis.org/articles/am)
- God's Design Science Curriculum Set (Answers in Genesis)
- Bring your family to the Creation Museum.
- Answers in Genesis website: [answersingenesis.org](http://answersingenesis.org)
- Genesis: Key to Reclaiming the Culture DVD, Ken Ham
- *The New Answers Book*, Vol. 1 and 2, Ken Ham, general editor (Green Forest, AR: Master Books)
- *The Lie: Evolution*, Ken Ham (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1987)
- Master Books website: [masterbooks.net](http://masterbooks.net)

## Appendix 4 — Resources for Christian Educators

- Genesis: Key to Reclaiming the Culture DVD, Ken Ham (Answers in Genesis)
- History Revealed Curriculum (Answers in Genesis)
- *Noah's Ark, Thinking Outside the Box*, Tim Lovett (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008)
- *Taking Back Astronomy*, Jason Lisle (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006)
- *Answers Magazine*: [answersingenesis.org/articles/am](http://answersingenesis.org/articles/am)
- God's Design Science Curriculum Set (Answers in Genesis)
- Answers in Genesis website: [answersingenesis.org](http://answersingenesis.org) (For the technical minded, see the Answers In-Depth section, Answers Research Journal at [answersingenesis.org/arj](http://answersingenesis.org/arj), and the many technical books available through the website.)
- Demolishing Strongholds Curriculum Set (Answers in Genesis)
- *New Answers Book*, Vol. 1 and 2, Ken Ham, general editor (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007 & 2008)
- *Adam's Wall Chart of World History* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007)
- *Annals of the World*, James Ussher (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003)
- *Chronology of the Old Testament*, Floyd Jones (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2005)
- *Evolution Exposed*, Vol. 1 and 2 (essential for high school students and extremely helpful for educators), Roger Patterson (Answers in Genesis, 2007)
- *Old Earth Creationism on Trial*, Jason Lisle and Tim Chaffey (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008)
- Master Books website: [masterbooks.net](http://masterbooks.net)

## Appendix 5 — Resources for Youth Pastors

- *The Long War Against God*, by Henry M. Morris (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2000)
- Demolishing Strongholds DVD Curriculum (Answers in Genesis)
- *The Great Dinosaur Mystery Solved*, Ken Ham (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1998)
- The Bible Explains Dinosaurs DVD, Ken Ham (Answers in Genesis)
- Best Evidence DVD (Answers in Genesis)
- Bring youth groups to the Creation Museum.
- God of Suffering DVD, Tommy Mitchell (Answers in Genesis)
- Only One Race DVD, Ken Ham (Answers in Genesis)
- *Answers Books for Kids* series (for younger kids) (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008)
- It All Begins with Genesis Curriculum (Jr high and up) (Answers in Genesis)
- Answers for Kids website: [answersingenesis.org/kids](http://answersingenesis.org/kids)
- Genesis: Key to Reclaiming the Culture DVD, Ken Ham (Answers in Genesis)
- *New Answers Book*, Vol. 1 and 2, Ken Ham, general editor (great for teens and up)(Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007 & 2008)
- *Adam's Wall Chart of World History* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2007)
- *Creation: Facts of Life*, Gary Parker (great for teens and up) (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1980)
- *Evolution Exposed, Vol. 1 and 2* (essential for high school students) (Answers in Genesis)
- Created Cosmos DVD (Junior level and up) (Answers in Genesis)

## Appendix 6 — Resources for Pastors

- *New Answers Book* Vol. 1 and 2, Ken Ham, general editor (Green Forest, AR: Master Books)
- *The Genesis Record*, Dr. Henry Morris (commentary on Genesis) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976)
- *Creation and Change*, Doug Kelly (Scotland, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2003)
- *Old Earth Creationism on Trial*, Jason Lisle and Tim Chaffey (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008)
- *Why Won't They Listen?* Ken Ham (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2002)
- Genesis: Key to Reclaiming the Culture DVD, Ken Ham
- Why Won't They Listen? DVD, Ken Ham (Answers in Genesis)
- Creation Mini-series, Ken Ham (DVD set includes Why Won't They Listen? and Genesis: Key to Reclaiming the Culture) (Answers in Genesis)
- *The Annals of the World*, James Ussher — for reference (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003)
- *The Complete Works of Flavius Josephus* — for reference (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008)
- Organize a church trip to the Creation Museum.
- Answers Vacation Bible School sets (available on the Answers in Genesis website)
- Answers in Genesis website: [answersingenesis.org](http://answersingenesis.org)

## **Ken Ham**

The president/CEO and founder of Answers in Genesis-U.S. and the highly acclaimed Creation Museum, Ken Ham is one of the most in-demand Christian speakers in North America. Ham, a native Australian now residing near Cincinnati, Ohio, is the author of numerous books on the Book of Genesis, the accuracy and authority of the Bible, dinosaurs, and the destructive fruits of evolutionary thinking (including his co-authored book on the “races” and racism, *Darwin’s Plantation*, and the bestseller, *The Lie: Evolution*). He appears frequently on American TV (in one year alone: Fox’s The O’Reilly Factor and Fox and Friends in the Morning, CNN’s The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer, ABC’s Good Morning America, the BBC radio/TV, and others).



Ken hosts the daily radio program “Answers . . . with Ken Ham,” heard on more than 800 stations in America (and dozens more overseas) and is one of the editors and contributing authors for AIG’s *Answers* magazine (a biblical worldview publication with over 70,000 worldwide subscribers). The new high-tech Creation Museum near the Cincinnati Airport — which attracted over 700,000 visitors (and several of the world’s major media) in its first two and a half years of operation — was Ken’s brainchild.



## C. Britt Beemer

Britt Beemer holds a BA from Northwest Missouri State University and has an MA from Indiana State University. He worked for Congressman Bill Scherle (R-IA) from 1966–1974. After his work with Congressman Scherle, he was a senior research analyst for the Heritage Foundation. He then began to manage and conduct 14 senatorial campaigns, which included exacting research and demanding strategic planning.

In 1979, Beemer founded America's Research Group, a full-service consumer behavior research and strategic marketing firm. Recognized nationally as a premier marketing strategist, he has gained wide acclaim for his work on how, when, and why consumers select their products and services. His client list represents America's top retailers, leading brands, and smaller entrepreneurial companies. His knowledge of consumer preferences increases monthly as ARG conducts thousands of new interviews.

His work has been cited in the media, including the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, *Investor's Business Daily*, CNN, Fox News, Fox Business News, and many others.

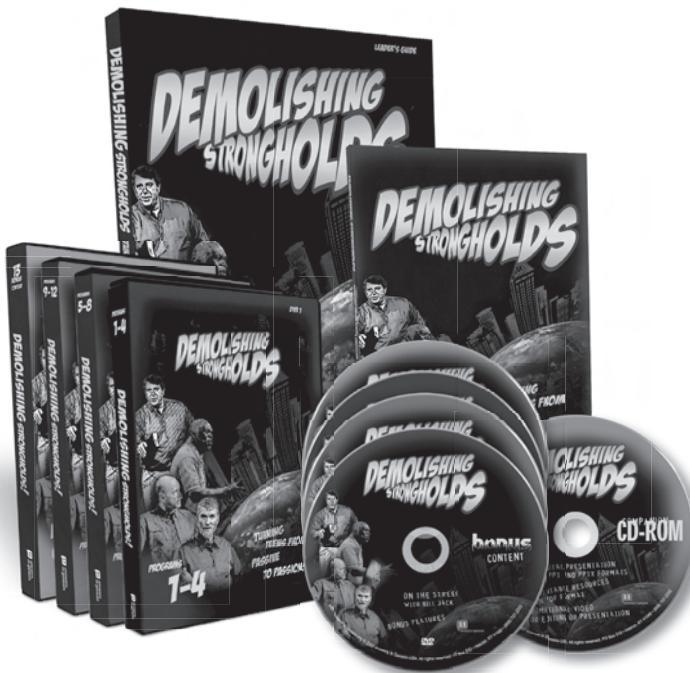
He is the author of *Predatory Marketing*, a book on strategic marketing. His second book, *It Takes a Prophet to Make a Profit*, is about emerging trends of the millennium. *The Customer Rules*, released in 2008, details how customer-focused businesses win.

Britt Beemer's expertise covers each phase of survey research, including questionnaire design, sample construction, and data analysis, but especially interpretation. He serves as the senior director of research at America's Research Group, where he personally reviews all research and prepares and presents each strategic marketing plan.

## **Todd Hillard**

Todd Hillard is a freelance writer from San Antonio, Texas, where he lives with his wife and five kids. A former youth pastor and missionary, he is passionate about taking the dreams and stories of others and bringing them to life on the written page.

Todd was born and raised in the Black Hills of South Dakota. He received his BS in pre-med studies and psychology from the University of Utah and his MA in English from Arizona State University. He and his family lived in Turkey for two and a half years. He has 17 years of pastoral experience and has written more than 12 books.



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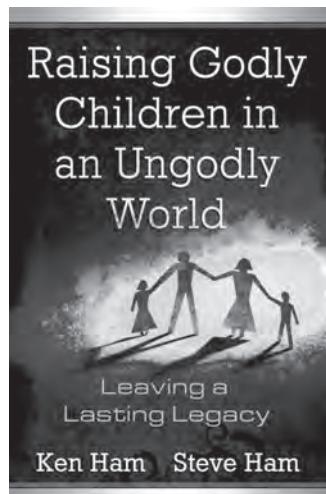
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# Raising Godly Children in an Ungodly World

Ken Ham and Steve Ham

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- Educating children — the Bible offers guidance
- Practical tips for raising spiritually healthy children
- Solutions to the root cause of dysfunctional families
- Discovering biblical authority as a parent
- Discipline — necessary and lovingly administered

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- » The views of 1,000 twenty-somethings, solidly raised in the church but no longer attending - and their reasons why
- » Relevant statistical data effectively teamed with powerful apologetics

The study found that we are losing our kids in elementary, middle school, and high school rather than college, and the "Sunday school syndrome" is contributing to the epidemic, rather than helping alleviate it. This is an alarming wake-up call for the church, showing how our programs and our approaches to Christian education are failing...and our children are paying the price. Though the statistics reveal a huge disconnect taking place between our children and their church experience, *Already Gone* shows how to fight back for our families, our churches, and our world. We can make a difference today that will affect the statistics of tomorrow in a positive and Christ-focused way!



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