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CHAPTER 1

dead men do tell tales

with Ken Ham

... the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance (Ps. 112:6; NKJV).

legacy (lěg'e-sē) *n*. Something handed down, by one who has gone before in the past, and left to those in the present and future.

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There is a saying, one that we have gathered from the legends of the Wild West, which says "Dead men tell no tales." The saying implies that the knowledge and influence of the deceased goes with them to the grave, never to be heard

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RAISING GODLY CHILDREN IN AN UNGODLY WORLD

from again. I find that not to be the case! Dead men *do* tell tales. If you ever take a walk around the small English town of Bedford, as I have, you will quickly see what I mean.

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Bedford was the hometown of John Bunyan, author of the still very popular *Pilgrim's Progress*, now in its 400th year of printing.¹ The day I walked around the town, I saw reminders of John Bunyan everywhere — the site of the jail where he spent many years imprisoned, the site of the house in which he was raised, his statue in the town square, the church he preached at in later life with a museum of many of his personal items, and the church where he was baptized in 1628. Bedford even has a pub called "Pilgrim's Progress Pub!" (I'm sure John Bunyan would *love* to know he had a pub named after his famous book!)

Something really hit me as I walked around Bedford. As I thought about the life of John Bunyan and how he was persecuted and jailed for preaching the Word of God, I wondered about what happened to those responsible for his persecution and jailing. There was no mention of any of Bunyan's enemies in Bedford. In fact, in the large graveyard of the church where Bunyan rang the church bell as a child, I saw many very old gravestones. It is certainly possible that some of these gravestones stand on the graves of Bunyan's persecutors. However, these gravestones were so eroded that the names had disappeared. Whoever these people were, their memory has all but gone. As I looked at these nameless gravestones, Proverbs 10:7 came to mind:

The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.

Certainly, this is the case in Bedford. The man who stood for the authority of the Word of God is remembered. The memory of those who opposed Bunyan has disappeared into oblivion. Bunyan and his books (particularly *Pilgrim's Progress*) live on in the memories of people all over the world and in the printed pages that still come off the printing presses today. Yes, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

A very similar type of situation exists in the town of Worms, Germany. My wife, Mally, and I walked around this town, finding many memorials

Raising Godly Children.indd 26

to Martin Luther, the great reformer who started the Reformation in 1517.² There were various statues, plaques, and other markers that told the story of Martin Luther. I even had the awesome opportunity to stand at the very place where it is believed Luther stood when he was purported to have uttered these now famous words:

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Here I stand [on Scripture]. I can do no other. God help me! Amen.

I must admit, tingles went down my spine as I stood there and contemplated the life of a man who started a movement that has affected the world for the Lord to this day.

Again, I didn't see any memorials to all of those who opposed Luther. They aren't remembered in Worms; the memory of those who persecuted him is all but lost. Luther — the man who stood for the authority of the Word of God — is remembered, and his legacy continues to have great impact on the world today... even among those who don't know his name. The righteous *shall* be in everlasting remembrance; but unfortunately, the *unrighteous* can still make an everlasting impact as they forge legacies of an entirely different kind.

If you walk the streets of Shrewsbury, England, you will find memorials to another man of great influence — memorials quite similar to those left for Bunyan and Luther. There is a statue outside his school and a sign outside of the home of his birth, noting the date of February 12, 1809. This is the birthdate of Charles Darwin, who at the age of 50 would publish *On the Origin of Species*. Throughout the town a similar pride is felt and is reflected in the names of many locations: Darwin Gardens, Darwin Terrace, Darwin Street, and Darwin Shopping Center.

There are similarities in the memorials to these three men, but the legacies they left behind could not be more different. Darwin proposed that "life" can be explained without God. By concluding that a supposed link between ape and man meant that there is no God (as detailed in his subsequent book, *The Descent of Man*), his ideas left humanity to decide right or wrong on their own, to write their own rules and do their own thing, following whatever seems best in their own eyes.

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The implications of Darwin's legacy are far-reaching. He paved the way for moral relativism, and fueled racism (claiming that blacks, aborigines, and others are inferior, less-evolved races.) His ideas have also fueled the abortion industry, leading to the conclusion that an unborn child is nothing more than a lump of cells (or just an animal) and that a woman has the right to kill it if she so chooses. The ideas of Darwin even paved the way for Hitler, who used them to justify the extermination of those he considered less than ideal — resulting in the mass murder of millions of Jews, gypsies, and others. His ideas have contributed to the erosion of the family, educational institutions, the decay of the legal system, and have led to great compromise in the Church.

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To see evolutionary measures and tribal morality being applied rigorously to the affairs of a great modern nation we must turn again to Germany of 1942. We see Hitler devoutly convinced that evolution provides the only real basis for a national policy.³

One of the students involved in the Columbine (Colorado) school shootings wore a T-shirt with "natural selection" written on it. The more students are told they are just animals, and have evolved by natural processes — the more they will begin to act consistently with this view of origins. As generations are trained to believe there is no God, thus no absolute authority, then there is no basis for determining right and wrong — moral relativism will pervade the culture.

The late Dr. Carl Sagan and his wife Ann Druyan wrote an article that appeared in *Parade Magazine*, April 22, 1990, using the fraudulent idea of embryonic recapitulation popularized by Ernst Haeckel (the false idea that when an embryo develops in its mother's womb it goes through a fish stage, etc., reflecting its evolutionary history, until it becomes human) to justify abortion. They claimed the embryo wasn't really human until about the sixth month.

I've heard of girls who were told by an abortion clinic that what was in their womb was in the fish stage of evolution, thus they could abort it. A false view of origins leads to terrible consequences.

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For example, families are breaking apart due to evolutionary views of unborn children as nothing but animals, and subsequent abortions that result. School shootings such as those at Columbine High School are prevalent among secular schools, because students view other students as animals. The ideas of Darwin are having an effect throughout the culture.

This is the Darwinian legacy: A false idea that has led to the destruction of the authority of the Word of God in our modern age. He popularized a philosophy that has convinced others that the Bible is not true, that everything is the result of random natural process, and that we are little more than animals; free to decide as we are bidden to decide.

Two signs outside of the Shrewsbury Unitarian Church speak for themselves. The first proudly proclaims:

Charles Darwin worshiped here when he was young.

The second church sign, permanently etched as a motto to be seen by all who pass by, gives a clear indication of the legacy behind which the legacy of Darwin emerged:

No one has the only truth, this we believe.

Not a Question of "If"

Luther, Bunyan, and Darwin; these three men left two entirely different kinds of legacy. Each legacy continues to impact the world in different ways. Let there be no doubt: *A legacy is a very, very powerful thing*. Let there be no doubt about this either: *You too will leave a legacy*. Truly, it's not a question of *if* you will leave a legacy, it is only a matter of *what kind*. Long after your body is laid to rest, the impact of your life will continue to spread throughout your community and your world. Never forget that your legacy will be felt most strongly by those closest to you: *your family*.

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Your family desperately needs you to stand up and lead, because the world is drawing them in all the wrong directions. Statistics indicate that around 90 percent⁴ of the children from church homes attend public schools in America. Sadly, statistics indicate that seven out of ten of such students will walk away from the church after their senior high years.⁵

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America is said to have been the greatest Christian nation on earth. This country has the world's greatest number of Christian bookshops, Christian radio stations, churches, seminaries, and Christian and Bible colleges. It is inundated with all of the best Christian resources available, yet America is becoming less Christian every day . . . and many Christian parents are heartbroken to see their children move toward the world and away from the church.

Dads and moms are crying out for answers, and teachers are becoming increasingly concerned by the rebellious attitudes, lack of politeness, and vanishing Christian morals they see, even in "church kids." Barna Research found that only nine percent of teens who call themselves "born-again Christians" believe in absolute moral truth.⁶ Family breakups, even among those calling themselves Christian, are startlingly common.⁷

What are the problems? What are the solutions? Are there answers that will deal with the heart of the problems and provide real solutions? Christian and secular books about the family and raising children abound, yet the questions continue. How should children be raised in today's world? How can a family produce godly offspring dedicated to the Lord? What methods of discipline should be used in bringing up children? Should Christian children be kept in public schools to witness to others, or is Christian or home schooling a necessity? How can Christianity be made relevant to the younger generations?

The list of questions goes on and on, and the Christian family of today is deeply struggling to find answers. I believe there are answers — but I want to warn you that they may challenge your comfort zone, and they may go contrary to what is "acceptable" in your community. The answers may be labeled as "offensive" to those who are more worried about political correctness than righteousness.

Before you can even begin to search out and apply the answers, an even more fundamental question must be answered:

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What kind of legacy do you intend to leave? What type of memorials might be left in your remembrance?

Can I humbly suggest that you can leave a memorial that can affect the world as Luther and Bunyan did? Many of you reading this might be saying, "Give me a break! They were great and now very famous men. They deserve such memorials, but I'll never have statues or other memorials built in my memory. I'm not going to be famous like them."

I disagree with that kind of thinking. You have no idea how God might choose to use you or your children or your children's children. You must understand that God's Word gives us the foundation from which we can do our best to build the right structure in our families. God's Word (not your own wisdom or strength) is the basis of a godly legacy. The Bible alone is living and active, and able to divide and judge correctly, and its principles can lead to astounding results.

If you are going to leave a legacy like Bunyan or Luther, you are going to have to decide to go against the flow, because the flow of the world today is leading to decay, death, and even hell. Each of us has a personal choice to make regarding the future of our family. Will we lead into a legacy of life and freedom based on the Word of God, or will we lead our families into a legacy of relativism and death, as did Darwin?

The question is not rhetorical, but immensely practical, affecting everything that you might do and everything you might be. The type of legacy you choose will most likely have great impact on your community, your world, and, most graphically, your family. Which will it be? Will *you* lead your family into a legacy of truth, life, and freedom based on the Word of God, or will you lead your family into a legacy of relativism, bondage, and death, as did Darwin? It's a decision each one of us must make. I know, I had to do it myself and it was a critical decision in my ongoing journey for truth and answers.

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When I started high school, I eagerly looked forward to my science lessons. However, I was perplexed when the teacher taught that humans evolved from "ape-men," and that animals had evolved over millions of years. My textbooks laid out what claimed to be convincing proof that we progressed *from molecules to man* without any outside influence. I was further taught ideas on how the universe had formed — but they all involved naturalistic processes. God wasn't involved at all. They claimed that everything somehow exploded out of nothing all by itself, and they made it all sound so "scientific." Everything I was taught about the origin of matter, life, and man conflicted with what my parents had taught me from the Bible. How was I to resolve this?

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I sat down with my father and asked him to help me sort this out. Sadly, at that time there were no books or other resources that we were aware of that dealt with the creation/evolution issue. Certainly, none were readily available to us in Australia at that time. (When I look at all the resources available today, I often think back to this time in my life and realize how blessed people are today.)

From a scientific perspective, my father could not refute the supposed ape-men fossils, or the billions of years of evolution, or the supposed "bigbang" history of the universe. He wasn't a scientist and he didn't understand where these ideas had come from. Although my father had lots of answers in many areas where secular ideas contradicted Scripture, in this area of origins, he just didn't have a defense — he didn't even know where to start.

I completed high school, rejecting molecules-to-man evolution as a philosophy, but I didn't have any solid scientific answers to defend my position. I was concerned about this, but my father's words kept ringing in my ears:

Even if we can't find an answer to explain why the secular idea is wrong, we need to continue to search and wait for the answer.

During my college years while studying for my science degree, I was bombarded with evolutionary ideas in biology, geology, and other subject

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areas. I still had no scientific response to what I was being taught, so I just lived with the dilemma — though I recognized that sooner or later I had to sort this out in some way. As I studied, however, I did observe that my textbooks and professors did *not* have convincing evidence for Darwinian evolution or the supposed billions of years for the age of the earth. I recognized there were numerous assumptions behind the various interpretations of fossil bones and the supposed long ages attributed to them, but I really wanted some answers.

Somehow, a little booklet that dealt with the creation/evolution issue from a biblical perspective came into my possession. As I read through this booklet, one particular section stood out from all the others. The author stated that from a biblical perspective, there could not have been death and bloodshed of animals and man before sin, since this would destroy the foundations of the gospel. As I thought about this something really hit me between the eyes: A Christian can't consistently accept the idea of an earth that is billions of years old (with its supposed millions of years of layers of fossils that we know contain evidence of cancer and other diseases in bones), and accept the statements concerning sin and death in the Bible. Over the years, we have certainly developed such arguments to a much more sophisticated level, but the respect I had for the authority of the Word as instilled in me by my father caused me to recognize the vital importance of this death issue.

This small booklet gave me a number of biblical arguments about why Christians can't accept molecules-to-man evolution and the Bible's record of origins at the same time. For example, Darwinian evolution teaches man evolved from ape-like ancestors, but the Bible teaches Adam was created from dust and Eve was created from his side. Thus, there is no way one can consistently reconcile the Genesis account of the creation of man (if one takes it at face value) with the Darwinian account. These explanations sustained me for some time.

As the years progressed, the Lord confirmed in my thinking that it was important to *wait for answers*, just as my father had trained me. I learned to continue in heartfelt faith, based on what God said in His Word, in spite

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of a lack of understanding. Passages from Job have helped me considerably in dealing with secular ideas and secular interpretations of evidence when they conflict with what the Word of God says:

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Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding (Job 38:4).

Then Job answered the LORD and said: "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:1–6; NKJV).

God aggressively quizzes Job through chapters 38 to 42, asking him questions about various animals and other aspects of the earth and universe that Job cannot possibly answer. "Job, were you there when I made the earth? Do you know this? What about this, Job? Do you understand that? How much do you know about this?" At the end of God's inquisition, Job falls down in dust and ashes, basically saying, "I give up Lord — compared to You I know nothing."

Psalm 147:5 reminds us that "Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite." It is absolutely impossible that we should understand everything . . . yet God *does*, and for the time being, He has given us all the answers we need for a big-picture understanding of life and the universe in His holy and perfect Bible.

My father's words echoed the truth of the Job passages. To this day, I often remember one of the things my father taught me: *If the Bible can't be trusted in one area, how can it be trusted anywhere else?* Dad clearly understood the importance of not compromising God's Word with man's fallible ideas . . . and he taught me to do the same. Looking back on this time, I can't help but think of Proverbs 2:3–6:

Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding (NKJV).

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So, as I prayed for answers, I held to my faith in a vacuum of scientific evidence. Still, I felt the conflict between what I thought was "science" and my faith. (I found out later that there is a big difference between "observational science" which we all agree with, and "historical science" which involves the scientist's beliefs about the past.) I really wanted to honor God's Word and find the answers that would validate what I believed to be true. I needed some scientific answers to sort this out; but where would I find them? While I didn't know it at the time, God was working in a special way to provide them for me.

God heard my earnest prayers. In 1974, during my post-graduate year, I mentioned the creation/evolution issue and my dilemma to a friend. He told me about a book that had been published in America which gave lots of scientific answers concerning geology and Noah's flood. Where would I obtain such a book? I traveled into the city of Brisbane to visit the only Christian bookstore I was aware of. It was on the second floor of an old building — not very easy to find. When I described this book on the Flood to the woman looking after the store, she immediately went and found a copy of *The Genesis Flood* by Morris and Whitcomb. (I still have this first major creation book that began my creation library.)

As I read the book, I found so many answers to questions about dating methods, rock layers, fossils, and many other aspects of the creation/evolution issue. I was so excited! They were answers that made sense and clearly showed that observational science *confirmed* the Bible's account of creation and the Flood. (Even though some of the arguments in this book are now out of date, subsequent research built on this publication has only reinforced the overwhelming evidence that confirms the Bible's account of history in Genesis.) My eyes were opened and I began to understand the nature of the scientific arguments concerning the origins issue for the first time. I clearly

remember smiling and thinking, Once again my father's stand on the Scripture has been vindicated — and once again God's infallible Word has judged the pretense of the evolutionists and the compromise of liberal theologians.

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Almost 30 years later, while visiting a particular tourist attraction in Brisbane, an elderly lady recognized me and approached me. As we talked, I realized that she and her husband had owned the Christian bookstore where I purchased *The Genesis Flood*. I explained to her that this was the first major creation book I had obtained, and that it was an integral part of my journey through life. I shared with her that the Lord used that one book to begin a creation ministry in Australia, then Answers in Genesis in the United States, and now many other parts of the world.

She became very excited and told me that her husband had had a real interest in science, the Bible, and the creation/evolution issue. He had such a burden that he made sure he had a copy of *The Genesis Flood* in his bookshop after he found out about it. That book was there on the shelf waiting for me to purchase it.

Soon, I took the book to my father saying, "Dad, I've found many answers to the creation/evolution issue! Observational science *does* confirm the Genesis account!" To this day, I can still picture that smile on his face as he flipped through the pages. He so loved the Word of God and was so thrilled to have adequate answers to uphold God's Word in Genesis. If my father had compromised his stand on the Word before he had the evidence to confirm its authority, I don't believe I would be writing this book or be involved in active ministry today. Thankfully, my father's faith held, and he chose to act on it. In the process, he began a legacy of worldwide influence that neither of us dreamed possible — not from a no-name bunch of outback Australians at least!

In a public cemetery in the city of Brisbane, Australia, stands a particular gravestone. The marker is not outstanding in any sense; it is not in any prominent place, nor do tourists gather at this spot. Throughout the city of Brisbane there are neither statues nor memorials in memory of the man whose body rests below the marker.

As one among the thousands of other gravestones, this marker is not easy to find. Unless you were specifically looking for it, there would be no reason to even think about searching for it, or to think it should be noteworthy from all the others, but it is noteworthy to me — even more than those of Luther and Bunyan. The words on this gravestone are few and simple:

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In loving memory of HAM, Mervyn Alfred who passed into the presence of the Lord on 9th June, 1995 Aged 66 years "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" Forever Loved

No signs, no statues, no museum. Our dad, together with our precious and godly mother, will be remembered by memorials of a different kind . . . memorials that will stand into eternity, long after the plaques and portraits of others have fallen. Mum and Dad produced six living memorials in their children, and we, in turn, are now creating a godly inheritance to leave to our children. By the grace of God it will be a godly legacy that will teach and remind people for generations to come about the authority of the Word of God and the saving mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A rag-tag bunch we are, dented and tainted by our own sin. We all have our struggles and battles with the old nature, but we praise the Lord for the godly parents to whom we were entrusted to be trained for our ministries in this world and the next.

Understanding the sovereignty of God, I know I would not be in this ministry if it wasn't for the upbringing my parents gave me. They set the example as dedicated and humble Christians who intentionally sought to raise a godly family that would evangelize the lost in an ungodly world. The Answers in Genesis ministry is itself a memorial to my parents and the legacy they began in our lives and in our world.

Please understand that you too *will* leave a legacy to the generations to follow. They may not build memorials to you and it's unlikely that they will place signs outside of the place of your birth . . . but *what you leave behind will forever impact the hearts and souls of those in your family and*

beyond. You will leave a legacy; the only question is what kind of legacy will it be. May you recognize from this day forward one certain thing: The foundation of a legacy worth leaving is made up of a faith in God, and a trust in His Holy Word. All we have to build will either stand or fall on this foundation.

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Consider this question: *What will your children say about you when you die?* When your days are done, what kind of legacy will live on in those you touched? Most importantly, will the Lord say *"Well done, good and faithful servant"*? (Matt. 25:21;NKJV).

Key thoughts from this chapter:

- 1. Everyone leaves a legacy. The only question is *what kind* of legacy it will be.
- 2. A godly legacy is built on the authority and sufficiency of the Bible.
- 3. A godly legacy begins with a decision, and may require waiting for answers to certain questions.
- 4. Leaving a legacy is a big deal. Our children, grandchildren, and the world will be eternally impacted by it.

Questions to consider:

- 1. Has your community been more influenced by legacies like Bunyan's and Luther's, or have the people around you been more influenced by legacies like the one left by Darwin?
- 2. What type of legacy did you inherit from your family?
- Have you ever made a firm decision to leave a godly legacy for your family and your world? If not, please consider doing so now. Your decision *will* make an eternal difference.

Resources and tools:

John C. Whitcomb Jr., and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1961).

38

Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993).

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- Greg Bahnsen, *Always Ready* (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2004).
- Brian Edwards, *Nothing but the Truth* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2006).

Endnotes

- 1. The Pilgrim's Progress was published in 1678.
- 2. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany.
- 3. Arthur Keith, *Evolution and Ethics* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1947), p. 28.
- Daniel J. Smithwick, "Teachers, Curriculum, Control: A 'World' of Difference in Public and Private Schools," Nehemiah Institute, Inc., Lexington, KY, 1999, p. 11.
- 5. T.C. Pinckney, "We Are Losing Our Children," Remarks to Southern Baptists Convention Executive Committee, September 18, 2001.

George Barna, *Real Teens* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), p. 136, states: "If we apply a 'correction factor' to these responses, we would estimate that about one out of three [nearly 30%] teenagers is likely to attend a Christian church after they leave home."

Barna Research Online, "Teenagers Embrace Religion but Are Not Excited About Christianity," January 10, 2000, www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=45&Reference=D – states: "When asked to estimate the likelihood that they will continue to participate in church life once they are living on their own, levels dip precipitously to only about one of every three teens."

- Barna Research Online, "The Year's Most Intriguing Findings, from Barna Research Studies," December 12, 2000, www.barna.org/cgibin/PagePressRelease. asp?PressReleaseID=77&Reference=E&Key=moral%20truth.
- 7. Barna Research Online, "The Year's Most Intriguing Findings, from Barna Research Studies,' December 12, 2000, www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressRelease. asp?PressReleaseID=77&Reference=E&Key=divorce. "Born-again adults are more likely to experience a divorce than are non-born again adults (27% vs. 24%)."



Kenneth Ham, age 8, at Scotsville nea Bowen in North Queensland.