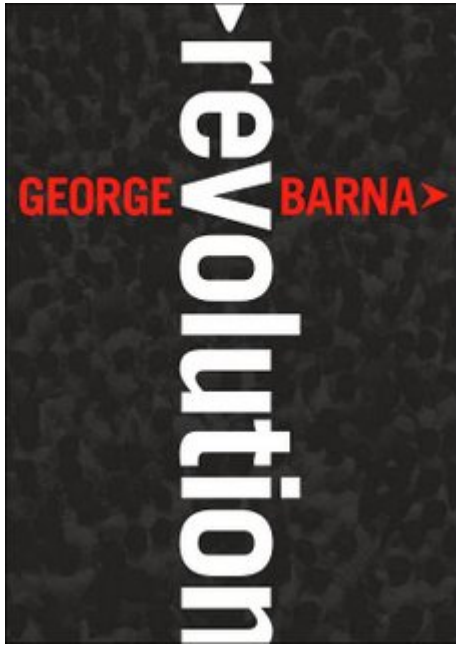


[I'm Sick Of Naysayers Predicting The Church's Decline](#)



Friday, May 16, 2008

By now you've probably heard about the slow-building mass hysteria that's affecting church leaders nationwide because of George Barna's 2005 book entitled [Revolution](#).

Most pastors I know across the country that have read it have commented that what has caused them to lose sleep is his claim that we pastors had better start firing up our resumes.

In Revolution Barna predicts,

"As we entered the twenty-first century, the local church was the focus of most people's spiritual lives. About 70 percent of all Americans relied upon some local congregation to be their dominant source of spiritual input and output...I have concluded that by the year 2025...only about one-third of the population will rely upon a local congregation as the primary or exclusive means for experiencing and expressing their faith..." (Page 48-49)

I wasn't a math major in college, but I'm pretty sure that's

more than a 50% drop in church participation nationwide in 19 years. That's a startling prediction.

Fortunately we know we can trust Barna. He has a proven track record predicting future trends. If you doubt this I'd suggest you rummage through your local discount bookstore and find another book by Barna: **The Frog in the Kettle: What Christians Need to Know about Life in the Year 2000.** His predictions in that book, made over sixteen years ago, are just as accurate as the ones made in his latest one.

For instance, most of us have all kinds of extra time on our hands thanks to Barna's prediction that,

[Genetic advances will provide us with the gardener's dream -- a self-weeding lawn -- by 1993. \(p. 59\)](#)

Just like you, for years now I've watched the dandelions on my lawn just disappear overnight. Just disappear. I always wondered how that happened.

Elsewhere in *The Frog and the Kettle*, **Barna predicted with deadly accuracy the number one societal problem in America today: *the hostile take over of entry-level jobs in the fast-food industry by robots,***

[...Robots will be developed which will perform basic, routine functions both in business \(burger flipping, hospital orderly functions\) and at home. \(p. 58\)](#)

Finally, the most upsetting prediction Barna made in *The Frog and the Kettle* has to do with the same prediction Barna made in *Revolution*: church participation will decline! Sixteen years ago Barna predicted,

[By 2000...less than 40 percent of the population will even associate](#)

themselves with a protestant denomination. (p. 117)

Again, let me remind you that I am not a mathematician, so you will have to take what I am about to say with a grain of salt, but didn't I just quote something from Revolution (released 2005) that read, something like, "As we entered the twenty-first century ...about 70 percent of all Americans relied upon some local congregation to be their dominant source of spiritual input and output"?

Wasn't that, by Barna's own acknowledgement, more than a 30% increase between 1990 and 2000 instead of a decrease?

This lack of predictive accuracy troubled me deeply until I stumbled upon the fine print at the bottom of the last page of Revolution. It read, "This book was written on Opposite Day."

Those of you with first graders know what Opposite Day is all about. It's the one day of the year when people say one thing, but mean the exact opposite.

When I read the fine print it all made sense. I get it now.

Revolution must have made wild-eyed predictions because it was written on "opposite day."

Barna warns pastors that our churches will implode before our very eyes, but what he's really saying is that our churches are going to explode.

Get it now?

Churches won't implode in the next 19 years like he says in Revolution. Barna's actually encouraging us by saying our churches will see an exponential increase in participation by 2025!

Whew. That's opposite day for you!

Not coincidentally, this blog was written on opposite day as well.

Drop whatever you're doing and go buy Revolution. It is well worth the money and time. One can never get enough pessimism about the future of the bride of Christ!!!