

Releasing the Violence Trap

By Barrington H. Brennen, December 12, 2006

In a previous article, I suggested that parents are creating a violence trap for their children to fall into by the way they parent them. They are not teaching their children how to be critical, independent thinkers capable of original thought. I purported that when parents do not teach these skills, their children cannot govern their lives intelligently and independently; thus, they are easily overcome by negative external forces. They become trapped with feelings of inadequacy which lead them to frustration and often violence. My pivotal point is that today's parents do not have the educational and philosophical foundation nor the how-to-knowledge to teach these skills to their children. Their parents left them grossly inept to train post-modern children.

How can you transmit to others what you do not know or have? Or how can you transmit to others what you have been told if you have never been given the rational and philosophy behind it. How can you intelligently transmit to others values you were taught if you have not internalized them? To internalize means to critically examine, synthesize, and accept the principles, religious or social values taught and integrate them in your own life without reservation. This can only occur when parents themselves understand the principle of education—to teach others so they too can teach others. When this is absent we are raising at-risk children who are irrational or potentially violent. This is what I call the violence trap.

RELEASING THE TRAP

Now that we have so many of our youth trapped in a life of anger and violence, is there something we can do? Yes we can. It might take a generation or two, but it is a doable if the church, school, and government create synergies for change. Here are a few of my suggestions on how we can work together to release this violence trap.

- 1) As a nation, we must first accept that the problem is extremely serious. All stakeholders including politicians, pastors, educators, and parents have to accept the fact that if we do not do something now to stop this state of social illiteracy, we will be selling our country to the dogs. We will produce more and more angry, frustrated, irrational human beings who see violence as the way of living.
- 2) We must understand that releasing the violence trap is an educational process. This educational process must start first with parents, then other community and church leaders. The government will need to implement mandatory parenting training programs for parents whose children are violent, trouble makers, or continually rebellious.
- 3) The educational process should involve the following: (a) Teaching parenting skills to current and potential parents. For a select period (perhaps three to five years) all persons getting married or having children should be required attend a five-hour

national parenting seminar. This seminar should be prepared by a central body to ensure consistency and continuity of the educational process. (b) Teaching anger management and conflict resolution skills to parents, teenagers, church and community leaders. This should be required for all parents with troublesome children, violent teenagers, and adults. (c) Requiring parents who are getting divorced with minor children to attend six hours of counseling. This will assist in the post divorce adjustment and the prevention of the parental alienation syndrome that occurs with custody battles and the negative post-divorce treatment of children.

- 4) We must utilize the media to educate the nation. The government can air national parenting or conflict management seminars on all radio and television stations and networks at the same time every day for three to six months. Every radio or TV station one turns to must be broadcasting the information the same time for about ten to fifteen minutes. This will certainly captivate everyone's attention. Parenting material can be printed in the newspapers and posters and handouts can be disseminated so that everywhere our society will be literally saturated with the same message. In addition, the showing of meaningful instructional videos and movies throughout the community and in churches can be an effective tool for transformation.

IT IS POSSIBLE

Dear reader, I believe that we can reduce the violence in our society. My suggestion is that this effort must have national scope. Now is the time to be serious about national building and take a honest look at what is happening in our society. Remember, the problem of violence will not go away if we bury our heads in the sand. I truly believe that the crime level in our country can be reduced at least seventy-five percent. We can make it happen. Are you ready for the change?

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