

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT...

ONE MILLION ARROWS

“*One Million Arrows* is a great wake-up call for parents of this generation. If we want our children to take part in the powerful purpose and unique mission God has designed for them, we’ve got to take responsibility for raising our kids as disciples of Christ.”

—**Josh D. McDowell**, Author and Speaker

“God has called His people to leave a legacy of godliness for the next generation. *One Million Arrows* picks up on that high calling and casts a God-sized vision for parents who long to see their children used by God in mighty ways. I believe it will motivate you to invest in the lives of orphans and it will challenge you to raise your children as ambassadors for Christ rather than casualties of the culture-war.”

—**Dennis Rainey**, President, FamilyLife

“The spiritual and physical needs of children in other countries—especially the orphaned and abandoned—are enormous. However, by investing in them, we can make a great difference in our world. As shown in *One Million Arrows*, many of these children are becoming evangelists and church planters for Christ’s glory. I encourage you and your family to pray and become involved as God leads you.”

—**Franklin Graham**, President and CEO of BGEA and Samaritan’s Purse

“As parents, we need to encourage our teens to stand against the negative media that is constantly trying to influence them. *One Million Arrows* is a must read for parents who aspire to disciple their kids as world changers, recreating culture around them.”

—**Ron Luce**, President and Founder, Teen Mania Ministries

“Every once in a while, an opportunity comes along that’s so big and breathtaking—and so justifiably right—you have to say, ‘Okay, you got me. Where do I sign up?’ Such is the opportunity Julie Ferwerda unpacks in *One Million Arrows*.”

—**Dr. John Hull**, President and CEO of EQUIP & ISS (INJOY Stewardship Services)

“*One Million Arrows* is not just a book...it’s part of a vision that’s already taking place on every continent in the lives of God’s young people. If you’re ready for you and your family to truly make a difference in this world, this book is for you.”

—**Dr. Alvin Reid**, Professor of Evangelism and Associate Dean for Proclamation, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

“As seen in *One Million Arrows*, God is doing something special in this generation—He’s stirring the hearts of our children, urging them to be ready and willing to become part of a mighty movement. Read this book, and embrace the power and phenomenal beauty of parenting your children for a special purpose. May we get our families involved to love those less

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fortunate than we are, and may the seriousness of discipling our children and grandchildren become a reality of doing and not just talking.”

—**Thelma Wells**, Founder, A Woman of God Ministries and National Conference Speaker

“I speak both as a father and a missionary to orphans; *One Million Arrows* deals with the most important issue facing the evangelical world today, and that is making disciples of our own children instead of expecting someone else to do it while we pursue other things. There is no more urgent pursuit, no more essential need than raising our children to know and love Christ.”

—**Clayton King**, Founder and President Crossroads Worldwide

“*One Million Arrows* provides a challenge we all need to hear. If you care about children and if you want them to change their world, this book is a must. Telling real stories about real people, Julie Ferwerda provides practical and exciting ideas about how to position our children above the selfish mediocrity that brands so many kids. This book shows what’s possible with a God who can make all things possible. I love it and want to live it and share it with my friends. Thank you, Julie, for giving parents a challenge and a strategy for raising kids who can change their world for God.”

—**Dr. Steve Stephens**, Author and Marriage and Family Psychologist

“It has been my honor to work with Julie Ferwerda, a follower of Christ whose passion for her faith shines brightly in her writing. I am always on the lookout for books that encourage American believers to remember the world outside their own communities. Julie’s *One Million Arrows* reminds us that being a neighbor to the physically and spiritually downtrodden is a vital part of our personal walk with the Lord. Her book was a blessing to me personally as I consider both the practical application of this aspect of my faith, and how I will instill in my children a fervor to show God’s love to the people outside their own culture.

—**Stephen McGarvey**, Executive Editor, Crosswalk.com and Christianity.com

“Julie Ferwerda’s vision for *One Million Arrows* needs to be heard and caught by the Christian community of the 21st century. She rightly senses that we live in a time of great opportunity for the advance of God’s Kingdom, but it will take daring, commitment, and sacrifice to make it happen—along with the wisdom to start young and focus on the children of this generation. Anyone passionately committed to advancing God’s kingdom should read this.”

—**David Guzik**, Director of Calvary Chapel Bible College, & Author of David Guzik’s Bible Commentary

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CHAPTER 1

JULIE FERWERDA

ONE MILLION ARROWS
RAISING YOUR CHILDREN TO CHANGE THE WORLD

In honor of Dr. M.A. Thomas' (Papa's) vision, all proceeds from this book go to international orphan arrow ministries.

PART 1: GATHER

*We will not hide these truths from our children
but will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD.*

*We will tell of His power and the mighty miracles He did.
For He issued His decree to Jacob; He gave His law to Israel.
He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children,
so the next generation might know them –
even the children not yet born –
that they in turn might teach their children.*

*So each generation can set its hope anew on God,
remembering His glorious miracles and obeying His commands.*

*Then they will not be like their ancestors –
stubborn, rebellious, and unfaithful,
refusing to give their hearts to God. (Psalm 78:4-8)*

CHAPTER 1: DETERMINE YOUR COURSE

And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children...Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:5–9

Destiny is not a matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. –William Jennings Bryanⁱ

What were you doing on 9/11?

I'd just cranked up the tunes and hopped on my Nordic Track as part of my normal morning routine, when my husband called from work to tell me to turn on the TV. Watching the events unfold, I don't think I've ever felt as helpless or as horrified as I did that day. The world no longer seemed like the safe, secure place I thought it was only one day before. In the worst way, I wanted to keep my two girls, ages seven and ten, out of school that day to protect them and reassure them until the danger had passed.

For the rest of that day, and many more to come, the surreal sights on TV haunted me. The planes striking the buildings; massive explosions; the sudden, momentary collapse—twice—of 110 floors of elaborately constructed concrete, steel, and glass that took years to erect; and the mountains of debris that smoked and smoldered for many days. But nothing shook me as much as the unforgettable images of human bodies spilling out of the buildings like grains of rice.

Neither those who lived through it, nor those of us who watched the shocking events unfold on TV will ever forget.

One young man I read about, Cary Sheih, a technical consultant from New York, barely made it out alive. Working on a project for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey at his 72nd floor desk, he'd just finished his usual mid-morning PB&J, when he heard an explosion, followed by tremendous building sways and vibrations. At first, he thought it might be an earthquake, so he dashed to the stairwell, where a quick, but calm, evacuation was underway. As people made their way down, some received messages on their cell phones that an airplane had accidentally crashed into the building, but there was no mention of a terrorist attack.

With the heavy, choking stench of jet fuel, descending the tower proved difficult. But if it was difficult for him, he couldn't imagine how difficult it was for the rescue crews he passed, huffing their way up an endless corkscrew of stairs and then hurrying back down, carrying badly injured and burned victims. He recalls, "Sometime around the 30th or 40th floor, we passed the first firefighters coming up the stairs. They reassured people that we were safe and that we would all get out fine. By this point, they were absolutely breathless, but still pushing upward, slowly and unyieldingly, one step at a time. I could only imagine how tired they were, carrying their axes, hoses, and heavy outfits, climbing up all those stairs. Young men started offering [to help] the firemen to carry up their gear for a few flights, but they all refused. Each and every one of them."ⁱⁱ

As Cary neared the bottom, the building began to shake and sway again, the lights flickered out, and eerie sounds of buckling steel accompanied screams of people falling down the stairwell. After being assisted by firemen through darkness to a different stairwell, a panicked Cary somehow made it down the last few flights to safety, where his wildest imagination couldn't have prepared him for what he encountered. The burning trees, wreckage, fireballs, and dust resembled a war zone.

While reading through this and other accounts concerning 9/11, I noticed an inspiring, recurrent theme. While there were many, many heroes and selfless individuals working tirelessly to assist throughout this tragic period, it was the *firemen* who undoubtedly made some of the greatest sacrifices of all, and whose ultimate acts of bravery impacted lives worldwide. While most everyone else scrambled for the exit signs to save themselves (which I'm positive I would

have done, too), these rescue workers fearlessly *headed up into the towering infernos* that day, many likely aware that they might not make it out alive.

Most kids see firefighters as larger than life heroes, which is probably why many of them want to be one when they grow up. Who wouldn't want to be thought of as a hero, especially one that saved lives? I came across a touching book report that was written about 9/11 by three kids: "The firefighters of 9/11 are heroes because they have saved the lives of hundreds of people, while they knew the building could collapse. While you go up a burning, 110-story building you would be very scared, because you'll think of your own life. When you are a firefighter you mustn't think too much about your own life or you may not be able to save lives. Being a hero means saving lives. That's the difference between being a celebrity and being a hero. Why would a celebrity be important to you? It is just someone with a well-paying job. You'll be someone's hero if you help him with his or her life."ⁱⁱⁱ

As I think about what these insightful kids have so magnificently articulated about the qualities of firemen, particularly the 9/11 firemen, I'm deeply moved with admiration and respect. In an emergency, firemen are:

- First responders, well-trained, and ready to save lives, even at the expense of their own.
- Purposeful and deliberate, aware that lives are at stake and time is short.
- Doggedly determined, knowing that the more lives they can save the better.
- Regarded in both life and death as the heroes of this world.

No one involved in 9/11 could disagree with this assessment. Remembering the expressions of both courage and fear etched on rescue workers' faces as they spoke reassuringly to guide many people to safety, Cary Sheih said, "I am so grateful for the courage of the firemen and policemen who gave up their lives to help us down the burning tower. As I relive this moment over and over in my mind, I can't help but think that these courageous firemen already knew in their minds that they would not make it out of the building alive, and that they didn't want to endanger any more civilians or prevent one less person from making it to safety."^{iv}

While they will undoubtedly go down in history as larger than life heroes, we can't forget how human and vulnerable they were, too. I have looked through their pictures online. Most of them were young family men, with their whole lives ahead of them—men who kissed their own babies goodnight on Monday for the last time so that those they helped to safety could kiss their

kids goodnight many more nights to come. They unknowingly said final goodbyes to their own families Tuesday morning so that many others could come home to their families that night.

In the moment of the realization of the grave danger, it had to be a dilemma for the firemen, choosing between lion-hearted courage and paralyzing, self-protective fear. How were they able to do it? Was it because it was their job? Because their buddies were doing it? Because their captain told them to do it? What exactly is it that leads a person to choose a profession where courage must prevail when all pretenses and rewards are stripped away in the face of death?

More than a job identity or a paycheck, more than an obligation or a hope of any kind of recognition, firemen are willing to risk their lives and to face their fears because they are motivated by something far greater than fear.

The Bible refers to this motivating force as *love*! Authentic, selfless love drives away fear (1 John 4:18). And it was the love—not the duty—of those firemen and emergency workers that truly made them heroes of the day, both the ones who died and the ones who worked doggedly through the wreckage, many suffering permanent damage to their lungs and bodies. And that kind of sacrifice, according to Jesus Christ, is love at its very best. “I command you to love each other in the same way that I love you. And here is how to measure it—*the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends*” (John 15:12–13, emphasis mine).

Firemen of Life

So what does all this talk about 9/11 and firemen have to do with parenting? If you’re a follower of Christ and you want to raise children who are also followers of Christ, quite a lot. And if you want to entertain the possibility of raising children who will change the world around them, and even the world at large, everything!

It’s no secret that every day on this earth, countless lives are at stake. People are dying every day who do not know Jesus, and almost just as bad, people are *living* every day who do not know Jesus. I don’t know about you, but I cannot imagine struggling through the hardships, losses, disappointments, and sorrows of this world without the comfort and peace of knowing Jesus and His love. And we know that someday soon, this world, with all its carefully planned designs and elaborate structures, along with all the people who have not put their faith in Christ, will collapse in a catastrophic fire (Zephaniah 1:18).

In other words, time is running out.

The seriousness of that reality raises some questions: What is my family here for? As believers, is parenting a more significant and eternity-impacting role than we've given it credit for? Are we satisfied with happy, well-adjusted, even ambitious kids who happen to love God, or is there something more? When we consider the possibilities, we find that we've been given an invitation into a divine story—into His-story. As this story unfolds throughout the space of our lives, which role will our family accept in this cosmic emergency? Hopefully not the victims. Hopefully not the ones running scared to save ourselves (and I am absolutely not criticizing those who made it out on 9/11—this is for spiritual application only). Hopefully not uninvolved bystanders who are disinterested, unable, or ill equipped to do anything but watch.

I've realized that, in the grand scheme of life, more than just raising my kids to “keep the faith,” I want to raise my kids to save lives. *I want to raise firemen.* Not necessarily the earthly fire-fighting kind, but the heavenly fire-fighting kind. Kids who are well-trained and ready to help save as many lives as possible. Kids who grow up, remembering at the forefront of everything they do, that time is short and lives are at stake, and who will one day be seen as spiritual heroes for helping many to safety.

I want to raise kids who love like Jesus.

Just think what it would be like to have kids who grow up in this self-destructing world with brave faces and hope in their voices, carrying within their hearts the ambition of bringing as many people as possible safely into the Kingdom. I believe that this kind of holy ambition is the secret to life at its best, and I want my kids to experience this kind of life. Jesus said, “If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life” (Matthew 16:25). And therein, we hear the invitation: *Will you raise your kids to be firemen? Will you be a fireman for God's sake?* We may never be called to die for Jesus like so many others in our world today, but we are still called to a holy rescue mission—to live sacrificially for God so that others will be led to safety through our loving assistance.

I recently met two brothers, both firemen of the Kingdom variety, who understand about saving lives by choosing to deliberately head into burning buildings. For them, the rescue mission all started with a small idea and a heart to snatch their fellow teens from a dangerous culture.

At age sixteen, twins Alex and Brett Harris decided to start a little blog in their spare time over the summer called *TheRebelution.com*, with the intent of *starting a teenage rebellion*. “The

word ‘rebelution’ is a combination of the words ‘rebellion’ and ‘revolution,’” explains Brett. “So it carries a sense of an uprising against social norms. But in this case, it’s not a rebellion against God-established authority, but against the low expectations of our society. It’s a refusal to be defined by our ungodly, rebellious culture.” To their astonishment, within a couple years, their site had received over 14 million hits, becoming the most popular Christian teen blog on the web.

As a follow up, they decided to write a book for teens called *Do Hard Things*, exhorting young people not to take the easy way out, but to do those things that seem harder now but have a bigger payoff in the end (as in “delayed gratification”). Since then, God has opened doors for them to speak to thousands of teens nationwide through conferences that are planned, organized, and run primarily by youth.

More than just a website, *The Rebelution* is both a mindset and a movement. “Our goal,” according to the brothers, “is to create a community of young people where thinking deeply is the norm, and where achieving excellence is ‘cool.’ History says young people can be doing big things *right now!* Don’t let the culture’s expectations toward teenagers dictate what you think is possible. The teen years are not a vacation from responsibility. They are the training ground of future leaders who dare to be responsible now.”^v

Whether from media, parents, authority figures, or peers, low expectations have become the rule for this generation, rather than the exception. Not only are kids expected *not* to possess admirable character or useful competence, but also they are expected to do the opposite. *The Rebelution* defies this kind of thinking by calling out youth to return to biblical and historical levels of character and competence as exhorted by Paul in 1 Timothy 4:12: “Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you teach, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.”

Their message, based on their belief that God is raising up their generation for global change, is a passionate call back to excellence, purpose, and significance for young people. It’s not about doing *more* things, or inflicting oneself with toilsome chores; it’s about lifestyle choices that will often take you out of your comfort zone and into places where you are focused on using your abilities and resources to encourage and benefit others...ultimately to save lives.

“Brett and I firmly believe we are living in historic times,” Alex says. “We further believe that God is raising up a generation of young people who will one day assume positions of leadership in all spheres of life: social, political, and spiritual. This is not a call for the

complacent or the lackadaisical. This is not a call to those who are willing to lower their standards to meet the expectations of their culture. *This is a call to the rebelutionary.*”

Initially I wondered how two kids could possibly have achieved so many bold and bright accomplishments, not to mention how they’ve acquired more wisdom than many adults. Was it handed to them? Do they harbor a special gene pool (their parents might agree with that notion)? Did they turn out like this by chance?

Actually, Alex and Brett would probably be ordinary kids, except for one thing. They had parents who believed in making the sacrifices necessary to raise their kids to make a difference. Kids who, in turn, learned to make sacrifices in order to serve others. They had parents who devoted themselves to raising *firemen*. Keeping this at the forefront of their parenting strategy, Mom and Dad Harris raised kids who understood and accepted the fact that it was going to take a lot of hard work for everyone in order to succeed in this goal. As a result of this mentality, these young men have literally started a *Rebelution* across our nation...and our world.

There are actually two other grown children from the Harris home. One of them, Joshua, became a best-selling author at the age of twenty, with the book *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* (Multnomah 1997). He went on to write more bestsellers, developed purity seminars for young people, and toured as a national conference speaker in front of hundreds of thousands of young people, calling them out of their culture to a lifestyle of purity. At age twenty-seven, he became the senior pastor of a large church, where he still serves today.

In 2002, another brother, Joel, launched the Northwest Academy of Worship Music to help raise up worship leaders and worship teams for local churches in the Portland area, where over 150 students of all ages have been successfully trained. Since 2007, he’s also been using his music skills to lead worship for *The Rebelution Tour*.

As I got to know the Harris family, I saw that “chance” and “opportunity” had nothing to do with their parenting success. “If our teen years have been different than most,” says Alex, “it’s not because we are somehow better than other teens, but because we’ve been motivated by that simple but very big idea filtering down from our parents’ example and training: *Do hard things.*”

With four out of four grown children serving the Lord and significantly impacting their world, it’s obvious that the Harrises are doing something right. And I’ve discovered that this “something” is available to all parents. Throughout this book, we’re going to visit with more

parents like these to find out exactly what they are doing to shape godly kids who are ready and able to help save lives, no matter what their limitations or circumstances. Turning out kids like these is not just possible—it's possible for you and your family with just a few moderate but important lifestyle changes.

Parenting is, really, at the heart of Jesus' command for discipleship. It's teaching our kids to live with Jesus and to love like Jesus. It does require a cost, as anything worthwhile does, but that cost will be far outweighed by the benefits and rewards. God has created our kids with unique abilities, gifts, and desires for a very special purpose. All they need now is to be trained and ready, available for divinely appointed opportunities.

So now it's time to ask: Do we truly want to give our kids the best of everything we have to offer in the short time we have to impact their lives? Do we want our kids to live—and someday die—the spiritual heroes of this world? If we have answered “yes,” then it's time to learn about a vision for our families that's so amazing; it will change the course of history.

My discovery all started on a little trip I took to northwest India.

Chapter 1: Determine Your Course

ⁱ William Jennings Bryan, Famous Quotes & Authors,

http://www.famousquotesandauthors.com/authors/william_jennings_bryan_quotes.html.

ⁱⁱ Cary Sheih, “The Survival Story of Cary Sheih,” newYork-Stories.com, <http://www.newyork-stories.com/cpo/911/detail.php?nr=145&kategorie=911> (accessed March 2008).

ⁱⁱⁱ Friso Paping, Tolga Paksoy, Pieter Heslenfeld, “Lifesaver hero: Firemen of 9/11,”

MyHero.com, http://www.myhero.com/myhero/hero.asp?hero=Firemen_schr_NL_07_ul
(accessed March 2008).

^{iv} Cary Sheih, “The Survival Story of Cary Sheih,” newYork-Stories.com, <http://www.newyork-stories.com/cpo/911/detail.php?nr=145&kategorie=911> (accessed March 2008).

^v Dawn Eden, “Think big! High School Bloggers Tell Peers,” New York Daily News, August 28, 2005.