



Formation and Family

Michael Goheen
MTC

Willingen Mission Conference 1952

Thus, a fuller appropriation of this new life in Christ will come by prayerful study of the Bible in groups and as individuals, by formation of small prayer groups, *cultivation of the Christian home to nurture children in the faith*, a concentrated effort to minister to the spiritual needs of the younger generation, the nurture of the laity for their witness in the public life of the community, and common worship. Not only will the church be equipped for its mission in the world non-Christian neighbours [will] see evidence of the reality of the Christian fellowship in the church's corporate witness and its impact on society.

The remarkable power of technology to shape worldview along with the enormous amount of time young people spend with its many forms makes the small amount of time they spend in Christian nurture seem almost negligible by comparison. The best preaching, worship, and education programs of a church simply cannot compete with television, movies, the internet, cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, and the ever-expanding list of technologies that shape our vision of the world. If families are not taught to make radical, costly, and time-consuming commitments to nurturing their children, the future of the church as a missional community in the West will be bleak (*Light to the Nations*).

Importance of Issue – High priority!

- Need to attend to family in discipleship
 - Deuteronomy 4.9: Threat to mission of Israel
 - Failure through redemptive history (e.g., Judges 2.10; 1 Sam 2.12ff., 8.4f.)
- Need to attend to our families first
 - 1 Tim 3:4-5: Leadership and managing one's own family well

Training parents

1. Baptism, covenant, Lord's Supper
2. Family worship and prayer
3. Children and worship
4. Play, quality time, activities, family traditions, befriending children

Training parents

5. Discipline, personality differences
6. Instilling compassion, respect
7. Educational options
8. Knowing our culture
9. Technology in the home