

## You + Home + Church + School = Abundance!

In the last issue of *Christian School Comment* I invited Dr. Bob Stouffer, principal of Oskaloosa Christian School in Iowa, to write about the importance of the home, church, and school in child-rearing. In this issue Dr. Stouffer expands the equation and adds a resulting element that we'd all like to see our children experience—spiritual abundance.

I recently read an excellent book called *Church + Home: The Proven Formula for Building Lifelong Faith* by Pastor Mark Holmen (2010, Bethany House). Pastor Holmen rightly calls parents to obey their biblical responsibilities for the education and spiritual formation of their children. No parent should abdicate that responsibility to the church or a Christian school.

I like the title of Pastor Holmen's book, but I am seeking to improve on the contents of his "equation" by adding other extremely important elements. Yes, church and home are important in the spiritual formation of students, but so too are you, individually, and the options for schooling collectively. What is the new and improved equation? You + Home + Church + School = Abundance!

**You** What do you have to do with this equation? Aren't you a part of the home? In a sense, you are a part of the family unit in your home. But I would like you to think more carefully about the education and spiritual formation of your children starting with you. As the teacher and discipler of your children, you must constantly pursue an abiding relationship with God so your knowledge of the Word, your following of the Spirit, and your spiritual growth spill over to your children. You must be nurturing your own biblical worldview; you cannot give to your children what you do not possess. Such seems to be the case with a majority of Americans; only 9 percent have a solid biblical worldview (The Barna Group 2009).

**Home** Once you, individually, are growing in the likeness of Jesus, you are now better able to teach your children to obey everything He commanded (Matthew 28:19). If you have been blessed with a spouse, your children should see the marriage to be God-honoring and Christ-centered. You both present a united front of spiritually leading your children. As married couples openly follow Christ, so their children will typically follow them. Your children spend between 50 and 60 hours awake in your home during a week, and you must not waste a single second of the 18 years they are in your home.

**Church** Home discipling is so much more effective when the church is teaching and reinforcing the same biblical values. You want the people who are making an impact on your children to be spiritually mature, focused on Jesus, and wanting to teach the same things in Sunday school and youth group that you are teaching at home. I am an elder in my church, and I have fought hard to make sure that discipling is primarily the role of the parent. In our

church we're dedicated to a disciple-making approach—life-on-life training with the good, the bad, and the sloppiness of life—instead of a programmatic approach, which tends to have less potential for transformation. Clearly, the church has a role in the academic growth and spiritual development of students, but the sheer quantity of time young people spend at home and at school by far overshadows the time they spend at church.

**School** During the school year a student will interact with educators for 35 to 40 hours a week, including extracurricular activities. Isn't it true that the culture is competing for the minds of our children? Satan would want nothing more than to draw your child's mind away from a biblical worldview toward a more me-centered state of independence from God. You have only to pick up contemporary books and other media to know that students are being educated in nonbiblical worldviews when they are engaging the world. You are not with your children during every minute of the school day, so you must entrust your children's minds to faithful stewards. These people in public schools or Christian schools must not seek to supplant you as parent. How will you prevent such supplanting? Stay very actively involved in knowing the content, methodologies, assessments, standards, benchmarks, and worldviews of every teacher, coach, and director standing in front of your children. No parent should fall asleep at the switch.

**Abundance** The Christian life is about following Jesus Christ every moment of every day. You are the starting point in this equation. You must be spiritually mature. Home must be a place of worship, making Christ preeminent in families. Church is an important part of this formula. Pastors and teachers must be partnering with you. Other than time at home, school hours are, in my opinion, the most influential of a student's time, because young people are not always under your leadership during their home time. If you can get the right combination of these elements, the equation will balance, and you will be blessed by the abundant life Jesus promised. Christians are not promised health, wealth, and prosperity. In fact, Jesus promises you troubles and persecution. But, He said, "Take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, ESV). Your faithful leadership of self, your children at home, your children at church, and your children at school will store up treasures in heaven—a well-rounded education and spiritual discipling for eternity!

### Reference

The Barna Group. 2009. Barna survey examines changes in worldview among Christians over the past 13 years. <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/21-transformation/252-barna-survey-examines-changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years#.VGpAzlF800>.



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