

## Article 12    Education

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Stacey made it clear that doctrine matters and then gave me a not-doctrine. I am speaking about education tonight.

The Southern Baptist faith and message says this about education.

“Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is therefore a part of Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence and should receive along with these liberal support from the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to complete spiritual program for Christ's people.”

***In Christian education, there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility.***

Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the preeminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which that school exists.

Here the BFM 2000 states that, “all sound learning is therefore a part of Christian heritage.”

Shouldn't be any surprise to you then that Stacey would choose a professor of Old Testament as a guy to talk about education because in the opening lines of Genesis begins this. *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

The very beginning of the Christian scriptures lies this genuine truth that the acknowledgement that everything in time and space is created by God.

All human beings and all of their magnificent endeavors derive from that creative act.

***But not only that, but being saved is supposed to also drive us to love to learn.***

The biblical article states, “the new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge.”

Among conversion's natural fruit is this thirst for knowledge.

Since my dad passed away over a decade and a half ago, there'd be unfortunately no way for you to know him. Best man I've ever known, and so I wish you could have known him.

That said, if you watch my brother and I, and you watch our kids, particularly our sons, then you will see a very imperfect sort of expression of who he was. He was a genuine guy that was marked by a lot of great attributes of my brother and I very, very in a veiled way reflect.

Conversion makes learning personal.

Now while you've got to read the biblical text to really know the triune God, you can learn of Him in His wisdom, power, and sovereignty and delight in studying everything else.

Everything reveals God in some way. Thus, the Christians should throw themselves in the pursuit of chemistry, biology, psychology, sociology, the knot theory in mathematics, engineering, the literary brilliance of the Bronte sisters in William Shakespeare, political science, history, theater, medicine, nursing, psychology, business administration, marketing, philosophy, theology, linguistics, and the incomparable music of John Coltrane.

We do this as Christians because the world around us was created by the one who has redeemed us from ourselves and our sin and has given us freedom to live in this world and to take it seriously.

***Salvation changes the sinner's heart and focuses their eyes on almost the limitless beauty found in the world,*** whether it's found on the shores of the Pacific, under the waves of the Pacific, where I like to be, or in the blue sky over the Pacific.

***The grace of Jesus provides us with a pervasive curiosity about the elements of our world.***

The grace of Jesus that saves us trains us to embrace the beauty and even the limitations of our world so that we can live in it and learn about it redemptively.

Also, this article states that, “the cause of education in the kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the cause of missions and general benevolence.”

***A primary task of education is to marry itself to acts of benevolence and focused world evangelism.***

This is not to use one to cheaply sell the other, but it's an acknowledgement. ***First, the world is really complex.*** The world in all of its beauty portrays an almost infinite sophistication.

***Further, it's to acknowledge that the world is broken and dangerous.*** Those who seek to make themselves educated as Southern Baptists cannot close their eyes to cultural realities like poverty, racial discrimination, inequity, the paternalistic disposition that society still seems to have toward the disabled.

All of these realities point to the brokenness of humanity and their need for a kingdom of priests to mediate the reality of God to them.

***And lastly, it's an acknowledgement that the world is lost.*** There is simply no place for any serious thinking Christian to abandon the realities of sin and hell and the desperation that they should invoke in all of our hearts toward the lost.

And to set aside any of these three things is to abdicate the educated mind as a Southern Baptist.

To embrace the sophistication of the world at the loss of the danger and losses of the world is to simply turn one into a cold theorist who will eventually exchange the world's beauty for seeing it as a cumbersome artifact.

To embrace the brokenness of the world at the peril of the lostness of the world is to transform a mind into an empty idealist who drifts at the whim of the most recent cultural intellectual fads.

And to embrace the lostness of the world at the peril of the brokenness of the world and its sophistication is to produce a mind that takes seriously the eternal needs of people without caring at all about their immediate ones.

And such a voice fails to sustain a rigorous testimony to the beauty of King Jesus.

***Finally, the freedom of a teacher should be under the auspices of the reign of Christ.***

Far from being restrictive in its scope, operating under the reign of Jesus is liberating.

Ashford and Bartholomew assert correctly that, “Christ's lordship is as broad as creation and his redemptive mission is likewise cosmic. The absolute sovereign reign of Jesus frees us to listen closely to the world and to engage it unapologetically with the death crushing, sin obliterating reality of Jesus.”

We at California Baptist University pray that as you grow in the grace of Christ, that you'll have a pervasive gospel engineered curiosity to learn more about God and his world. Thank you.