

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Evangelism & Missions (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on evangelism and missions reads as follows:

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Matthew 28:18-20: The church, under the leadership of the apostles, is to evangelize all the nations.
- B. Acts 1:8: Evangelism is a task empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- C. Romans 10:8-13: Evangelism is a task aimed at calling people to believe on and follow Jesus.
- D. 2 Corinthians 5:14-20: Evangelism is a task taken up primarily with verbal persuasion.

3. Evangelism isn't...

- A. Your testimony. Your story of how God has saved you and how He is changing you into the image of His Son can certainly accompany speaking the truth of the gospel. In fact, oftentimes your testimony is the “in” you have with another individual, but your story should never take the place of or overshadow the story of what Jesus accomplished on the cross.
- B. Social action. Working to improve society is a wonderful aim but it is not the same thing as speaking the truth of the gospel. Working at a homeless shelter, picketing at an abortion clinic, helping to repair a shut-ins home are all ways to commend and adorn the gospel, but they are not the same thing as sharing the truth about what Christ accomplished on the cross for sinners.
- C. Saving people. We need to be careful not to confuse the act of evangelism with the fruit of evangelism. God calls us to teach the gospel with the aim of persuading people. We are never called upon though to save a person or forgive their sin. Think of evangelism in farming terms. We cast the seed and till the soil, but God is the one who sends the rain showers of the Spirit. Only the Spirit can bring forth fruit.

4. Evangelism is...

- A. “Evangelism is the communication of a divinely inspired message that we call the gospel.” – Ernest Reisinger
- B. “To present Jesus Christ to sinful men, in order that they may come to put their trust in God, through Him to receive Jesus as their Savior and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His church.” – James Packer
- C. “Evangelism is teaching (heralding, proclaiming, preaching) the gospel (the message from God that leads to salvation) with the aim (hope, desire, goal) to persuade (convince, convert).” – J. Mack Stiles

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Education (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on education reads as follows:

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 our 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 co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a 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 pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Proverbs 3:1-4: Knowing and understanding God's truth bring abundant blessing.
- B. Colossians 2:3, 8-9: In Jesus Christ abides all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
- C. 2 Timothy 3:16: The Word of God is inspired and profitable for all things.
- D. James 3:17-18: The intended end of wisdom is godliness and holiness.

3. Let's tease out some ideas that flow out of the above statement on education:

- A. The idea that in Jesus Christ abides all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge is central and foundational to a right understanding of knowledge. One implication of this idea is that for anyone to truly know anything, they must know it in relation to Christ. To put it another way, to have a right understanding of any subject, one's understanding must be connected to Christ. Think about these two questions: Can one really understand that $2+2=4$ apart from Christ? Can one rightly grasp the flow of history apart from the sovereignty of King Jesus?
- B. While there are differences of opinion as to the method of schooling our children there is one idea over which there should be no discussion or debate. Parents are called by God to teach and train their children in the way and the Word of the Lord. It is the responsibility of Christian parents to evangelize and disciple their own children. The ministry of the local church is meant to assist parents in this responsibility, not take their place. See Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & Ephesians 6:4.
- C. The education of the Christian is not a process that should eventually come to an end once that person gets to a certain age or maturity level. Every follower of Jesus should give themselves to the continual study of the Bible and Christian doctrine. Understanding and knowing God and His Word is a lifelong project that one should engage in joyfully. The goal of education should not just be a lot of "head" knowledge, but also the formation of one's character into Christ-likeness.

4. How does the SBC flesh out this understanding of education?

- A. Lifeway Christian Resources.
- B. Seminaries and Bible colleges.

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Stewardship (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on stewardship reads as follows:

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtor-ship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Matthew 6:19-21: We are under obligation to lay up treasures in heaven, not on earth.
- B. Luke 12:13-21: We are to be rich towards God.
- C. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: We are to give to God out of joyful hearts. See chapters 8-9.
- D. James 1:17-18: We are to recognize that every good gift is from God.

3. Let's tease out some ideas that flow out of the above statement on stewardship:

- A. The first line of this statement establishes the fact that God is the source of all material and spiritual blessing. This acknowledgement is based upon the idea that God is the creator and providential provider of all things. While He often blesses and provides through means, He is nevertheless the source of all provision and blessing.
- B. The second line lays out the parameters of our stewardship responsibilities:
 - (1) To the whole world.
 - (2) In defense of the gospel.
 - (3) With our immediate possessions.
- C. Oftentimes when we think of stewardship our minds immediately go to money. The last thing we usually think about is our time. This statement recognizes this tendency which is why it includes the idea that we are to serve God with our talents and time. This needs to be talked about more in our day in lieu of the advancement of technology. To be a little more specific, we should be mindful of how much time we spend on our computers and hand-held devices. We should be grateful for our smart phones but should also recognize that they can present to us a temptation that many of us easily fall into.

4. There is one subject that this statement does not address and that is the subject of what is called the tithe. While it does say that we should give proportionally, no percentage is highlighted. There are varying positions on the tithe represented in the Southern Baptist Convention. They are as follows:

- A. The 10% tithe.
- B. The 10% tithe plus whatever gifts and offering one might give.
- C. The grace gift.

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Cooperation (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on cooperation reads as follows:

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Matthew 28:18-20: The church is called to carry out the great commission by cooperating together.
- B. Luke 10:1-2: The mission of reaching the nations with the gospel requires that God's people work together. This passage highlights those going and those praying.
- C. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13: There is to be unity among God's people. Division destroys the witness of the church.
- D. Galatians 1:6-10: Cooperation only goes so far. No church should cooperate with any person(s) who deny the gospel.

3. Let's consider the big ideas teased out in this article:

- A. Organizations that foster cooperation do not elicit any kind of authority over individual churches. This is a distinctly Baptist conviction. Each local church is responsible for governing itself and its ministries. Any cooperation is to be voluntary.
- B. The fourth sentence highlights the nature of cooperation. "It is to be between members of New Testament churches." We will come back to this at the end of our time.
- C. Cooperation can be made across denominational lines when there will be no violation of conscience or compromise made on the Word of God.

4. Consider the following test cases in closing:

- A. Should a Southern Baptist Church cooperate directly with a Mormon congregation in the fight over the sanctity of life?
- B. Should a Southern Baptist Church cooperate directly with a Roman Catholic church in a city-wide evangelistic crusade?
- C. A local church, that supports both the SBC and CBF, takes part in a local gay pride parade. Even though they, in some way still support the SBC, should we cooperate with them?
- D. What if a Southern Baptist Church feels okay with having regular joint services with the local Church of Christ congregation? Should we cooperate with that sister church given their willingness to cooperate with the Churches of Christ?

LBC | Bible Basics 101: The Christian & the Social Order / Peace & War (BFM 2000)

1. The articles in the BFM 2000 on the Christian and the Social Order and Peace and War read as follows:

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war. The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the social order statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Micah 6:8: God's people are to be marked by justice, mercy, and humility.
- B. Matthew 5:13-16: God's people are to be salt and light.
- C. Mark 12:29-31: God's people are to love God and love their neighbor.
- D. James 1:27: God's people are to tease out their faith in tangible ways.

3. Let's tease out a few things on social order:

- A. Southern Baptists believe that God's people have a responsibility to engage all aspects of our society with the truth that Jesus is Lord.
- B. This engagement must be done in wisdom and with good discernment. The way that evil is expressed in society varies by time and location. This means that we must work hard at knowing our Bibles and knowing how to apply them rightly.
- C. In thinking through societal engagement we must be wary of two extremes. The first is engaging the culture to the point that the culture swallows us up. The second is pulling away from the culture that we create our own little "ghettos." A balance must be maintained. If it is not, then our identity as gospel people and the gospel itself will be marred.
- D. It needs to be said that in light of the above article the church should be at the forefront of promoting change in our society. In other words, we need to be pro-active in caring for the poor and unborn, fighting for upright economic principles, etc.

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Religious Liberty (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on religious liberty read as follows:

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the article is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Genesis 1:27: Since God created man in His image, God rules and reigns over man.
- B. Matthew 22:21: We have certain obligations to God as well as to the state.
- C. Acts 4:19-20: Allegiance to God trumps allegiance to the governing authorities.
- D. Romans 13:1-7: God has put the state in place to fulfill certain functions: collect taxes and punish evildoers.

3. In our society religious liberty is being defined in certain ways and along certain lines. The subject before us tonight is what the BFM 2000 says about this issue. Southern Baptists believe that religious liberty means the following¹:

- A. God alone is Lord of the conscience.
- B. Unbiblical creeds and confessions have no authority over the Christian/church.
- C. There is to be no state church and no church state. In other words, the church and state are separate entities that fulfill different functions.
- D. While the church and state are separate from one another, they are to relate to one another in a real yet limited way.
- E. Civil disobedience is sometimes required on the part of the Christian/church.

4. Religious liberty is not just a theoretical issue, but one that is also very practical. Consider the following questions...

- A. Is there anything going on in our day that might require us to practice civil disobedience?
- B. What does religious liberty mean, if anything, for religious movements outside of Christianity?
- C. What should be our response when this liberty is called into question/possibly even taken away?

¹ Taken and adapted from "BFM 2000: *Critical Issues in America's Largest Protestant Denomination*."

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Religious Liberty (BFM 2000)

5. The following quote from Thomas Kidd summarizes well what lies at the heart of religious liberty...

*Early America's Baptists did not expect politicians to do heavy lifting for the church. They just wanted the government to protect religious liberty, **so the church could be the church**. That is why the Baptists were comfortable working even with deists such as Thomas Jefferson. They were not looking for a national pastor. They did not want government hostility toward churches, but they were also not angling for government favors. Civil authorities, they believed, should simply protect "free exercise of religion" for all. They preferred to depend upon the power of God, rather than government, to accomplish the purposes of the Kingdom.*

LBC | Bible Basics 101: The Family (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on the family reads as follows:

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the article is based. Here is a sampling of references:

A. Genesis 1:26-28: God created man and woman and in this creation He established the paradigm for the family.

B. Ephesians 5:22-33: Husbands and wives have certain roles to fulfill in the marriage relationship. These roles are timeless and are based upon Jesus' relationship with the church.

C. Psalm 127:3-5: Children are a blessing from the Lord and are to be treasured.

D. Ephesians 6:1-3: God has established parents as the primary authority over their children.

3. There are a few ideas in this statement that make it unique. Consider the following...

A. This statement establishes the fact that the family unit is to be built upon a heterosexual relationship and not a homosexual one. Procreation, and the reflection of Jesus' love for the church, can only come about as one man and one woman come together in an intimate, committed, and sexual relationship.

B. It therefore, on many levels, stands in direction opposition to the modern day agenda of the LGBT movement.

C. This statement also establishes the fact that men, by their very nature of being the head of their family, are to be leaders. Women, on the other hand, are to have a submissive disposition to their husbands in all things except sin. This is not a popular idea in our day. It is necessary though if the gospel is to be reflected in the home and the Word of God is to be honored. See 1 Corinthians 11:2-12.