



Uniting Home, Church and School in Jesus Christ

---

## A CALL TO ACTION

### The Case for Kingdom Education and for Starting Christian Schools Among Churches of the Southern Baptist Convention

*By Edward E. Gamble*

1. The greatest area of need in Southern Baptist life in the last forty years is the discipleship of our children and other new believers. Pastors report that only about 5% of parents are involved in discipling their own children.
2. The format, instructional time, content and student attendance patterns of most Sunday school and youth programs has not delivered and likely cannot deliver the high percentage of well-discipled followers of Christ needed to advance the work of the church. Typically, the serious discipleship training offered in churches reaches only a small percentage of the members and fewer still children and youth. What training is attended by members in any numbers tends to be a recurring evangelistic message. As a result, the extent of discipleship is a mile wide and an inch deep.
3. In spite of an overwhelming emphasis on evangelism and missions, we have failed to reach our own families, our communities, our culture or the world. We are losing ground, not gaining it. Numerous research studies confirm this decline.
4. 90% of Southern Baptist children are receiving 16,000 hours of completely secular training during their 13 years of schooling. This teaching is increasingly hostile to a child's Biblical worldview development. Our culture also bombards children with music, movies, magazines, TV and a host of other messages that promote a perverse and secular worldview. This immersion in worldly ideology is offset by a few minutes or at best a few hours of Biblical instruction each week in church. Very little discipleship training is going on at home.
5. Very few Southern Baptist church members of any age are engaged in any kind of effective outreach or evangelism. Recent Annual Church Reports indicate that nearly 25% of our churches report no baptisms, while 40% report no baptisms of children or youth. Baptisms continue to decline in spite of a major emphasis on church growth and evangelism for the last 2-3 generations. Our growth rate as a denomination does not match our birth rate. While the birth rate nationally was 1.4%, we grew at .49%, or about 1/3 of the birth rate.
6. Evangelism and witnessing are a by-product of discipleship, not the reverse. Undiscipled people do not witness or participate in evangelism.
7. To change this trend, our churches need to focus as strongly on discipleship and teaching as they do on missions (see Baptist Faith and Message, Article XII, Education): *Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate (equal priority) 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.*
8. Our denomination and churches lack a comprehensive, Biblical plan for delivering the first element of the Great Commandment...making disciples who do possess and live out a Biblical worldview). What should be the Southern Baptist plan for addressing this deficiency?

Over →

## General Goals and Requests

1. The Southern Baptist Convention should reassess our lack of emphasis upon, approach to and funding of the education and discipleship of children, youth and their parents. What we have done for the last several generations does not deliver strong disciples in significant numbers.
2. The SBC lacks a broadly accepted, implementable philosophy and purpose of education to shape a Biblical worldview in future generations. Kingdom Education or some other Biblical philosophy should be adopted as the official philosophy of education for the Southern Baptist Convention and aggressively taught to our pastors, congregations and homes.
3. Providing a Kingdom Education for every child should become the primary goal for every family, church, association, convention, seminary and agency in the SBC.
4. Pastors and other leaders should develop clear ENTRY STRATEGIES for re-inserting Jesus Christ, His Word and His Church into the K-12 education of all children, beginning with our own.
5. Christian schools and Christian homeschooling should be given a conspicuous place at the denominational table. They should be an integral part of our overall ministry, just as the Baptist Faith and Message states.
6. We must deliver on the decades-old commitment in the Baptist Faith and Message to:
  - a. Make “education *coordinate* (equal priority) with missions and general benevolence”.
  - b. Provide education with “the liberal support of the churches”.
  - c. Develop “an adequate system of Christian education (and schools) for Christ’s people”.
7. SBACS should become an officially endorsed agency or auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention, working with other entities to help the denomination deliver on the above goals.
8. The Annual Church Report should include information and statistics about day cares, preschools, schools and homeschools that are operating in our churches and denomination.

## Specific Goals and Requests

1. Adopt Christian schools and homeschool networks into the Southern Baptist family of ministries, providing credibility, leadership, resources, support and services to our churches with schools and homeschool networks and those wishing to start them. This adoption should occur at every level of the SBC (NAMB, IMB, seminaries, state conventions, local associations and churches).
2. Work with SBACS to begin planting schools/churches as evangelistic and discipleship missions, especially in the inner city, affluent neighborhoods and other hard to reach communities.
3. Focus on taking ownership on behalf of the church, of the K-12 education of children and youth. Build a nationwide system of Christian schools, owned and operated by the churches and funded by God’s people and our communities. These schools should be accessible to families regardless of their income, just as we currently fund VBS and Sunday School or youth ministry.
4. Create school starter training and teams just as Southern Baptists have done for church planting and promote this new endeavor aggressively within the denomination.
5. Report at the Southern Baptist Convention and state conventions each year on the state of Kingdom Education and Christian schooling within our denomination.
6. Provide training at Ridgecrest, Glorietta and LifeWay and within the states each year for school boardsmanship, Biblical worldview training, administrative training, teacher training, school starter training, fund raising, etc.
7. Conduct an annual offering for Kingdom Education used to support Christian schooling nationally and internationally, especially the planting of or expansion of schools.
8. Mount an aggressive fundraising campaign among businesses, churches, and individuals to create a Kingdom Education Fund to provide financial support from the SBC for children to attend Christian schools.
9. Promote Kingdom Education and our Christian schools through every denominational media outlet.
10. Hold an annual, denomination-wide emphasis on Christian schools, Christian school month or Kingdom Education month. We do this for missions, right-to-life and other critical causes; therefore, it should also be done for the cause of Kingdom Education.