



The Purpose of Education

Thaddaeus Elliott
Justice and Peace Policy Fellow

What is the purpose of education? For many, it is economic advancement. We pursue education to get better employment opportunities, which (theoretically) lead to better earnings and a better quality of life. But education serves a greater function in society than that. Writing for the Pictorial Review in 1930, Eleanor Roosevelt [claimed](#) education had two objectives: to produce well-informed and intelligent citizens and to press upon them the “the realization that we are all responsible for the trend of thought and the action of our times.” In an [essay](#) he wrote for the Morehouse Maroon Tiger in 1947, Martin Luther King, Jr. posited that the purpose of education was not only to build intelligence, but also good moral character. As “[w]e are prone to let our mental life become invaded by legions of half-truths, prejudices, and propaganda,” King proclaimed that education “must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction.”

With these words in mind, I reflect on my own education and the educators who not only nurtured my mind but my character as well. My eighth-grade US History teacher, Ms. Ellison, stands out as the exemplar. For Ms. Ellison, history was not a series of past events and dates to commit to rote memory. It was our prelude with throughlines to our present problems. Like Ms. Roosevelt, Ms. Ellison believed it necessary to study the figures in our history who not only made a “constructive contribution,” but also “those who held us back, in order that we may know what qualities of mind and heart formed the characters which have left a mark on their time,” because they have also marked our time for better and for worse. She didn’t teach to instill shame or to be “woke.” She taught us the truth—both good and bad—so that we would hopefully become the good citizens who could make America the beacon it could be and not stay stuck in what it was. Ms. Ellison’s lessons were a labor of love not just for the well-being of her students, but for this nation.

Unfortunately, our public education system and educators like Ms. Ellison are being encumbered by legislation and education standards being [introduced and approved in many states](#) as part of an [anti-multiracial democracy agenda](#) concocted by minds fueled on half-truths, prejudice, and propaganda. I've read their arguments of why "multiculturalism" will be the death knell of America as we know it, which reminded me of 1 John 4:5-6: "They are from the world. So they speak from the world's point of view and the world listens to them." (CEB) I was then unnerved thinking of the number of people who have been enraptured by white Christian nationalism to the extent they proclaim the world's point of view as God's point of view. They would be swayed to support the agenda that seeks to change curriculums, ban books, abolish affirmative action and diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, and distort truth.

I believe it incumbent upon those of us who proclaim to know and be from God to confront and dismantle white Christian nationalism and the threat it poses to the liberty of a true multiracial democracy by ensuring that our public education system fulfills its purpose of building up good citizens with strong, well-informed minds and the moral character to recognize the Spirit of Truth from the spirit of error.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thaddaeus Elliott is the Justice and Peace Policy Fellow at the Washington, DC office of the United Church of Christ.

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