



"The philosophy of the classroom in one generation will be the philosophy of the government in the next."
—Abraham Lincoln

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What 'The Bible and Its Influence' Will Teach

For decades now, the debate over the place of Christianity—and specifically the Bible—in public life has raged without any sign of abating. The battles are commonly over prayer in school (and after school), the words "under [God](#)" in the Pledge of Allegiance, "Christian" [Christmas](#) crèches, and the promotion of Islam and Eastern religions at the expense of Christianity. The liberal media and likewise-liberal National Education Association have thrown their full weight into banishing every hint of Christianity from that most formative of environments of the next generation: public school.

It may come as a surprise, then, to hear that a public school district in Texas is going to allow a "Bible class" titled "The Bible and Its Influence" as one of its electives. The New Braunfels ISD school board voted six to one to approve the new class. According to WOAI.com (San Antonio),

"The Bible is a fundamental document," says Rosalyn Bratcher with the New Braunfels ISD. "It has had a great influence in terms of politics, art, music, literature." The district says this course does not violate the First Amendment. "What makes it compliant is that we are teaching the Bible as a textbook and a document," adds Bratcher.

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And there is the rub—the Bible is not being taught as *true*, but as a "document" that has influenced politics, art, music, and literature. It is not the Word of God, studied for instruction about how to live and come to know the Creator, but an "influential book" to be dissected and deconstructed to further the aims of secular humanists everywhere.

The textbook is filled with statements and exercises that encourage the student to become a judge of the Bible, and thus undermines its authority. It may produce students who are *familiar* with the Bible, but who are not the least inclined to use it as a guide to life. The textbook speaks for itself—notice these statements and assignments (emphasis added throughout):

- "You are going to learn about the language, literary forms, plot lines, characters and contents of the Bible so that you can have a *better understanding of literature, art and culture.*" (p. 8)
- "How do laws such as the Ten Commandments restrict. . . . Especially when people live in groups. . . ?" (p. 19)
- "How might [Genesis 1:28](#) be used to justify **either or** both sides of environmental debates or animal rights legislation?" (p. 31)
- [Notes on an illustration] "Adam is clearly bewildered while Eve is confident and knowing." (p. 36)
- "**Do you think Adam and Eve received a fair deal** as described in Genesis [3]? . . . Most Jewish readings of this chapter reject the idea of a permanent, inherited spiritual disability stemming from the actions of Adam and Eve. . . . Eve did not know good from evil, **how could God blame them for disobeying?**" (p. 38)
- ". . . this one story [Cain and Abel] is the basis of all **human neurosis** - and if you take the fall along with it, you have the total of **psychic troubles** that can happen to a human." (p. 39)
- "Muslims honor Abraham as the first monotheist, worshipper of the one true God they call Allah. . . . This shared respect for Abraham makes the long-standing conflicts among Jews, Christians, and Muslims - from the medieval crusades to today's Middle Eastern clashes - surprising on one hand and understandable on the other. . . . Draft a resolution in covenant language that you think would resolve the conflict." (p. 53)
- "Pick some social ill or problem that you think needs addressing. Then write a 'prophetic' message in the style of one of the three prophets to call attention to the situation. You can use an oracle, a vision, a parable, or even a rant. Try to use language and images that will communicate to an audience of our contemporaries." (p. 123)
- "And **if God allows evil things to happen, can God honestly be described as good?** This puzzle remains essentially **unsolved**, though various believers in various times have developed their own ways of resolving or living with the paradox." (p. 156)
- "From the [Book of Daniel](#), then, come images that are associated with the *so-called* end

times. . . . Try your hand at doing some apocalyptic writing. . . ." (p. 181)

This sampling demonstrates the goals of the authors and the tactics used: to subvert high school students by causing them to question God, the authenticity of the Bible, and the supremacy of Christianity. "The Bible and Its Influence" is nothing more than a Trojan horse - a gift to placate those who insist on having a biblical worldview taught, but one that will steadily erode any vestige of confidence in the Bible within the next generation. It is no wonder that groups such as People for the American Way and the American Civil Liberties Union applaud this new textbook - it may well accomplish what they have been trying to do all along.

In [Matthew 4:4](#) and [Luke 4:4](#), [Jesus Christ](#) answers Satan's temptation by proclaiming that God's spoken word is foundational to living - and living eternally: "It is written, 'Man shall not *live* by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (see [Deuteronomy 8:3](#)). As this nation continues to blaspheme God's instructions to mankind, it will continue to pay the price. With the principles of the Bible steadily disappearing from public discourse, our quality of life will only diminish as we become more focused on the material - the bread - rather than the eternal.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Re-education \(Part 1\)](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Richard Ritenbaugh, after marveling that money spent upon education seems to be inversely proportional to its effectiveness and quality, concludes that re-education is a most difficult (nearly impossible) process. Nevertheless, God Almighty, through the Days of Unleavened Bread, mandates that we must totally unlearn old carnal processes (purging the leaven of sin or hypocrisy) and totally adapt to (or assimilate) new spiritual processes- eating unleavened bread of sincerity and truth - cultivating clear unadulterated discernment. Pure character develops incrementally through systematic re-education, displacing the culture of Egypt (sin and carnality emanating from the world) with God's truth and God's ways of doing things. Like our forebears on the Sinai, we have to be re-educated to trust in God's providence (for protection, food and water) patiently yielding to the tests He has designed for us.

From the Archives: Featured Article

Salt

by Mike Ford

Jesus calls His disciples "the salt of the earth." Do we know what He meant? Mike Ford explains the spiritual side of this common mineral compound.

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