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# **More Balanced Than the Standards: *A Review of the Presentation of Religion in Proposed Textbooks for High School World History in Texas***

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*A report from the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund  
September 2014*



## About the Author

David R. Brockman, Ph.D., is a scholar in religious studies and a Christian theologian. David has 11 years of experience teaching a wide range of courses in undergraduate and seminary settings. He currently serves as Adjunct Instructor in Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where he teaches courses in world religions, Asian religions, and global mysticism. He also serves as Adjunct Instructor at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, teaching courses in Christian theology, world religions, and interreligious dialogue.

David is the author of two books, both published by Palgrave Macmillan: *No Longer the Same: Religious Others and the Liberation of Christian Theology* (2011); and *Dialectical Democracy through Christian Thought: Individualism, Relationalism, and American Politics* (2013). He is also co-editor, with Ruben L. F. Habito, of *The Gospel Among Religions: Christian Ministry, Theology, and Spirituality in a Multifaith World* (Orbis Books, 2010).

In addition to his teaching work, David is a member at St. Luke's in the Meadow Episcopal Church, in the Fort Worth Diocese of the Episcopal Church. He has served on several diocesan boards, including the Commission on Ministry and the Board of Examining Chaplains.

A native Texan, David is the descendant, on one side of his family, of people who settled near Fort Bend before the Texas Revolution. David attended public school in Grand Prairie, Texas.

He and his wife Eleanor, also a teacher, live in Fort Worth with their border collie and parakeet.



## Overview

*[NOTE: This report includes review information about the high school world history textbook from Edmentum. Edmentum withdrew its world history product from consideration by the State Board of Education in August.]*

The Texas Freedom Network Education Fund (TFN) asked me to review world history textbooks (or online textbook packages) from six publishers. Since I am a religion scholar, I focused on accuracy and balance in each textbook's coverage of religion generally as well as of particular world religions. TFN asked me to examine four aspects in each textbook: (1) its overall treatment of world religions; (2) its discussion of "Judeo-Christian" influences on the development of democratic government and law; (3) its coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict; and (4) its presentation of terrorism and radical Islam.

A necessary part of the review process was to examine the state standards for world history instruction with which publishers are expected to comply – the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). I found the world history TEKS to be a mixed bag. On the one hand, I applaud the fact that religion plays a vital role in the TEKS, as befits the role it has played in the story of humankind. Sadly, however, the TEKS do not encourage balance and accuracy in the coverage of world religions. Instead, they are basically oriented towards western civilization, and they privilege Christianity; they tell a triumphalist and at times historically inaccurate story of the rise of the West, guided by its dominant religion.

The good news is that, overall, the six textbooks cover religion with greater accuracy and evenhandedness than do the Texas world history standards. While all six textbooks could improve their treatment of religion, the publishers are to be applauded for treating religion evenhandedly (with some notable exceptions) *despite* what the Texas curriculum standards say.

## The Project

This review was part of a larger effort undertaken on behalf of TFN. I assessed the presentation of world religions in a wide range of social studies textbooks under consideration for adoption by the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE). The assignment covered three textbook categories: sixth-grade world cultures/geography, high school world geography, and high school world history. This document summarizes my findings regarding the third category, high school world history textbooks.

I reviewed world history textbooks (or online textbook packages) from six publishers: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt<sup>1</sup>, McGraw-Hill School Education<sup>2</sup>, Pearson Education<sup>3</sup>, Social Studies School Services<sup>4</sup>, and WorldView Software<sup>5</sup>, and Edmentum<sup>6</sup>. (Edmentum has withdrawn its world history textbook from consideration by the SBOE.) For each textbook, TFN asked me to focus on four focus questions dealing with religion: (1) the textbook's overall presentation of world religions, as well as how it handles (2) "Judeo-Christian" influences on the development of democratic government and law, (3) the Arab-Israeli conflict, and (4) terrorism and radical Islam. I was asked to focus on the degree of balance and accuracy in the textbook's coverage of each question.

Before moving to a summary of what I found in the six textbooks, I should offer some context. I will make clear my own interest in these issues. Then I will discuss the role religion plays in the TEKS with which textbook publishers are expected to comply and note some serious problems in those



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standards. (**Note:** In the following discussion, when I refer to “the TEKS,” I mean the TEKS for world history, §113.42 World History Studies. TEKS numbers, such as “4(A),” refer to items under part (c), “Knowledge and Skills.”)

## My Interest in These Issues

I am a scholar in religious studies and a Christian theologian. In both capacities I have a stake in how religions are presented in public school textbooks here in Texas.

In my capacity as a religious studies scholar, I recognize the profound role religion has played in the story of humankind. Even if one is not personally religious, one cannot understand humanity without understanding the religions of humanity. Religion calls out what is best in humans – for example, our vision of a reality beyond ourselves and our narrow political or economic interests; and our sense that we are accountable to a law higher than our own. And, sadly, religion all too often calls out what is worst in us – our self-righteousness, our prejudice, our intolerance for those who are different. To truly understand the human story, it is necessary to understand the religious traditions that have shaped worldviews and aspirations, motivated people to action (or inaction), transformed the landscape, influenced political and economic institutions – and, yes, often divided people into opposing camps. Consequently, world history textbooks have a golden opportunity to introduce public school students to the ways religious beliefs and practices have shaped the human story and continue to shape it today.

Another reason for my interest in how public school texts present religion comes from my role as a religious studies instructor. I teach a range of undergraduate courses in world religions and Asian religions at Southern Methodist University. Many of my students come from Texas public schools. What they have learned about world religions directly affects their readiness for my courses and thus their performance. Students who bring to SMU a basic familiarity with the beliefs and practices of major world religions are better prepared to tackle the deeper and more complex issues we cover in my courses than are those who must spend time either catching up, or correcting prejudices and misinformation. Students who have a basic familiarity with world religions are also better equipped to handle life at SMU, which is home to an increasing religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity. Their classmate or dorm roommates may well be Sikh or Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist, Christian or Jew, members of some other religious tradition, or have no religious affiliation whatsoever.

Finally, as a Christian theologian, I have a vested interest in seeing that my own religious tradition is presented fairly and accurately in the textbooks. That means highlighting its failures as well as its successes – as eminent theologians from Augustine of Hippo to Martin Luther to Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer have done. And, as a Christian theologian, I am equally interested that my neighbors’ religious traditions be presented fairly and accurately. Christians are expected to speak truthfully (Dt 5:20; Mt 19:18). That must include representing our neighbors’ religious beliefs and practices as they truly are, neither sugarcoating nor slandering them. Indeed, much of my own theological work explores how Christians can deepen their own faith by respecting and learning from the witness of their non-Christian neighbors.<sup>7</sup>

Some Americans are quite legitimately wary of any instruction about religion in the public schools. One writer recently noted that teaching “about” religion can too easily become religious instruction, even indoctrination, in the dominant religion: “If we teach religion, whose religion? It’s



nearly always the dominant religion that is ‘taught,’ with token references to other religions thrown in.”<sup>8</sup> While I agree that such an approach to the teaching of religion violates the basic right of citizens to be free from government establishment of religion, I believe that there is a right way to teach religion in the public schools. When religions are presented fairly and accurately, warts and all, and when this applies to the majority religion as well as others, then public schools can cover religions without infringing on our right as citizens to be free of government attempts to establish one religion over others.

## **The Role of Religion in the World History Standards**

I applaud the SBOE for giving religion generally, as well as the major world religions, a major role in the world history TEKS. Along with political, legal, economic, and cultural topics, Texas students are to “examine the history and impact of major religious and philosophical traditions.”<sup>9</sup> TEKS 23(B) requires that students be able to “identify examples of religious influence on various events referenced in the major eras of world history.” Students are also required to learn the basic characteristics of at least some major world religions. TEKS 23(A) specifies that students be able to “describe the historical origins, central ideas, and spread of major religious and philosophical traditions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and the development of monotheism.”

The TEKS also address the role of religions in other aspects of world history. TEKS 1 includes several religion-related “turning points in world history,” including “the spread of Christianity,” “the development of the Islamic caliphates,” and the Reformation. TEKS 3 and 4 mention the development of monotheism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and the interactions between Islam and Hinduism. TEKS 6 mentions Maya, Aztec, and Inca cultures, though not specifically their religions. TEKS 9(A) includes the role of religion in the American and French Revolutions, while 14(A) involves the development and impact of radical Islamic fundamentalism. TEKS 20(B) specifies that textbooks must “identify the impact of political and legal ideas” in the Ten Commandments and Justinian’s Code, among other documents, while 22(B) mentions a “Judeo-Christian legal tradition”; 25(D) addresses a similar religious influence on law and government in the Muslim world. 20(C) requires textbooks to “explain the political philosophies of individuals,” two of whom, Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin, are religious figures. Finally, TEKS 25(C) requires that students be able to “explain the relationship among Christianity, individualism, and growing secularism.”

In short, religion plays a vital role in the TEKS, as befits the role it has played in the story of humankind.

## **Imbalance and Inaccuracy in the TEKS**

Quite appropriately, the TEKS describe world history as “a survey of the history of humankind.”<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the standards in fact describe a course in western civilization, with other civilizations tacked on.<sup>11</sup> This is clear from the Introduction: “Traditional historical points of reference in world history are identified as students analyze important events and issues in western civilization as well as in civilizations in other parts of the world.”<sup>12</sup> The western civilization slant is borne out in the content of the standards themselves. For example, of the 14 “History” items, 1-14 under “Knowledge and Skills,” nine have Europe and the Americas as the sole or main focus.<sup>13</sup> The first three “History” items, covering the period 8000 BCE to 600 CE, discuss African and Asian developments along with western. However, in the items covering the period 600 CE through World War II (items 4 through 12), the focus remains



firmly on the West: the fall of Rome, feudalism, the Renaissance, the Reformation, European expansion, the Industrial Revolution, European scientific advancements, the American and French Revolutions, and the two World Wars. True, these standards do mention Asian and African events, but they are clearly sidebars to the main story in the TEKS. The rest of the world only returns to center stage in the last two “History” items, 13 (the Cold War) and 14 (Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism), and here, principally as sources or zones of conflict. It is with good reason that historian David C. Fisher describes the current TEKS as world history clothes on a western civilization body.<sup>14</sup>

Also testifying to this western civilization slant is the predominance of the West’s dominant religious tradition, Christianity, in the TEKS. In the 14 “History” items (TEKS 1-14), Christianity and related terms show up eight times; by contrast, Islam (and related) are mentioned six times, Judaism (and related) twice, Hinduism only once (and only in connection with Islam). Buddhism, Confucianism, and Sikhism do not show up at all in the “History” items.<sup>15</sup> The prevalence of Christian terms reflects a sharp slant toward the West.

True, the seven religions just mentioned are listed in TEKS 23(A), which mandates coverage of the historical origins, central ideas, and the spread of major religious and philosophical traditions. Yet the list in 23(A) also lacks balance, since it omits primal or indigenous religions. This error of omission is particularly unfortunate, since about 6 percent of the world’s population is made up of adherents of primal religions.<sup>16</sup> That is only one percentage point behind the percentage of Buddhists (7.1%) and far larger than the percentage of Jews (0.2%) – both religions listed in TEKS 23(A).<sup>17</sup> Given that many primal religions are among the longest-lived religious traditions – for instance, the religion of Australian indigenous peoples may go back 10,000 years or more – to overlook them in a world history course is to omit an important part of the story of humankind.

Besides the predominance of references to Christianity in the TEKS, the Christian slant is revealed at several other points:

**(1)** TEKS 9(A) requires an emphasis on the role of religion in the American and French Revolutions; Christianity, of course, was the dominant religion in both instances. However, TEKS 13(E) does not similarly require an emphasis of the role of religion on independence movements in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Those movements were at least as momentous in global impact as the American and French Revolutions, and religions other than Christianity were involved in them (e.g., the Hindu and Jain influence on Gandhi).

**(2)** Christianity is the only world religion for which the TEKS require a discussion of its major divisions. TEKS 4(B) specifies that “the characteristics of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy” be explained. TEKS 5(B) effectively requires coverage of Protestantism, and in even more detail and depth than its sister denominations.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, the TEKS do not require equivalent coverage of the major divisions in, say, Islam (Sunnah and Shia) or Buddhism (Theravada and Mahayana).

**(3)** TEKS 4(A) posits that Christianity was “a unifying social and political factor in medieval Europe and the Byzantine Empire.” The TEKS do not mention that during that time period, Confucianism played a similarly unifying role in China, as did Islam in the Muslim world. Besides lacking balance, 4(A) is tendentious. While Christianity did in some respects act as a unifying factor in medieval Europe, it also acted as a force for disunity, often setting Christians against Christians. Consider, for example, the Investiture Crisis, the Inquisition, the Crusaders’ penchant for attacking heterodox Christians, and the



Western European attack on Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade.<sup>19</sup> This side of the European Christian story is at least as important historically as the Church's unifying effects.

In short, then, the TEKS give the impression that Christianity has played an outsized role in human history, compared to all other religions. While it is true that Christianity is the world's largest religious community, it accounts for just under a third of the world's population as of 2010.<sup>20</sup> Prior to 1600 – that is, for much of the history of humankind – Christianity accounted for far fewer of the world's people and played a much smaller role in the world's story. But that is not the message the TEKS communicate.

Not only does the Christian slant promote imbalance in the treatment of world religions, but it may also foster bad history. Case in point is TEKS 22(B). This standard locates the origins of three key legal concepts – trial by jury, presumption of innocence, and equality before the law – not only in ancient Greece and Rome (which is historically supportable), but also in “the Judeo-Christian legal tradition.” As I discuss under Topic II below, the term “Judeo-Christian legal tradition” is ambiguous almost to the point of meaninglessness; for instance, does it include Catholic canon law, or the tradition of rabbinic commentary on the Mosaic Law? Yet even if we construe it simply as the biblical tradition (the Hebrew Bible plus the New Testament), there is little convincing evidence that these three legal concepts are Jewish or Christian in origin. This situation backs textbook authors into a corner: they must invent implausible connections, make vague gestures toward a “Judeo-Christian” influence, or elect not to comply with 22(B).

One other sign of imbalance in the TEKS is not religious per se, but certainly involves religions. TEKS 13(F) requires that students be able to “explain how Arab rejection of the State of Israel has led to ongoing conflict.” This phrasing suggests that the (mostly Muslim) Arabs bear sole blame for the troubles in the Middle East, and leaves (mostly Jewish) Israel blameless. As Fisher notes, this standard “asserts a singular explanation for a complex historical and political situation.”<sup>21</sup>

In summary, the world history TEKS do not encourage balance and accuracy in the coverage of world religions. Instead, the basic western civilization orientation of the standards, and their privileging of Christianity's role, tell a triumphalist and at times historically inaccurate story of the rise of the West guided by its dominant religion.

I should add that besides being tendentious and historically questionable, this triumphalist story is embarrassing to many Christians, myself included. We know all too well that our religious tradition has not always been a force for good in the West or the world.

## How the Textbooks Perform

The path of least resistance for publishers of world history textbooks would be simply to “write-to-the-standards”—the textbook equivalent of “teaching-to-the-test”; that is, to give the SBOE what it seems to want to hear, instead of sticking to what is historically sound. Sadly, some publishers have done just that in certain instances, as I discuss below, and the results are uniformly unsatisfactory. However, the textbooks I reviewed are much more balanced and accurate than one might expect, given the flaws in the TEKS. In many cases, publishers strive for balance and accuracy in the presentation of world religions *despite* the clear flaws in the TEKS.





That said, these textbooks vary considerably in quality, accuracy, and balance. I summarize my findings below.

**(Note:** The topic numbers that follow reflect their placement in a listing of seven world history focus questions provided by TFN. The four topics I address in this report – focus questions I, II, V and VI – all deal with coverage of religion in the world history textbooks. The other focus questions for world history are covered in an accompanying report authored by Prof. Edward Countryman at Southern Methodist University. In addition, the spelling of certain terms, such as Quran and Muhammad, vary from publisher to publisher. I tried to use a consistent spelling of such terms in my own comments but kept the spelling used by the publishers in passages directly quoted from the textbooks themselves.)

**Topic I.** *In 2010 the State Board of Education adopted a resolution condemning world history textbooks that board members saw as giving more coverage (and positive coverage) of Islam than Christianity. Some suggested that Sharia/Islamic law posed a threat to the United States. Does the textbook provide accurate and balanced historical discussions of the world’s major religions? Do any particular religions appear to be favored or disfavored in the textbook?*

In general, I was impressed with the balance and accuracy of the six textbooks with respect to their presentation of the world’s major religions. Indeed, they are generally much more balanced than is the TEKS. Yet they are not always as balanced and accurate as they should be.

I restrict my comments here to five themes that arose in the course of my review. For a detailed discussion of the good and the bad of each textbook’s approach, please see my detailed reviews.

**(1) Christian slant or bias:** Several textbooks showed signs of a subtle slant toward Christianity or, in a few cases, a pro-Christian bias. This type of imbalance tends to manifest in two ways in the textbooks: (1) in the assumption that students are either Christians or are familiar with Christian terminology; or, more problematically, (2) in painting too rosy a picture of Christianity than is supported by the historical evidence.<sup>22</sup>

**(2) Assumption of a Largely Christian Audience:** Textbooks show a subtle tilt in a Christian direction when the authors fail to define Christian terminology but define terms from other religions: for example, leaving “Catholic” or “Protestant” undefined, while defining “Sunni” or “Shiite.” This suggests that the authors assume that the readers are either Christians or are familiar with Christian language.

Why does this pose a problem? Isn’t it a virtue for authors to “knowing their audience”? True, most Texas high school students will have at least a passing familiarity with key Christian terms. However, given the increasing number of Texas students who come from outside the Christian tradition, authors should not assume that their readers are familiar with key Christian terms and concepts. Moreover, failing to define Christian terms can give non-Christian students a sense of being outsiders, of not being members of “the club.”

There are many instances of this problem in the textbooks. For example, at several points the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt authors use the term “baptize” without definition either in the text or in the Glossary.<sup>23</sup> The McGraw-Hill “World Religions Handbook” mentions Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism, and notes that they have developed “their own individual theologies”; however, the authors do not discuss what characterizes each of those “individual theologies.” By





contrast, the authors are careful to define the major divisions of both Buddhism and Islam.<sup>24</sup> The Social Studies School Service package manifests this Christian tilt in a slightly different way. The authors begin a discussion of the Quran as follows: “You may have heard of the Koran. It is the sacred book of the Islamic religion. It is as important to Muslims as the Bible is to Christians.”<sup>25</sup> Clearly the authors assume that the readers are Christians.

Only the Pearson package appears to be free of this problem. For example, unlike some of their competitors, the Pearson authors do not assume that readers know what a Christian place of worship is called.<sup>26</sup> They also do not assume that readers know what the Bible is, and they take care to distinguish between the Hebrew and Christian Bibles.<sup>27</sup>

**(3) Instances of Pro-Christian Bias:** The most common manifestation of this more serious problem involves errors of omission: the authors paint a more favorable portrait of Christian behavior than is warranted by leaving out evidence to the negative.

The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, McGraw-Hill, and Pearson accounts of Charlemagne’s efforts to spread Christianity gloss over the fact that he forcibly converted many Saxons and made non-Christian practices punishable by death.<sup>28</sup> The Pearson authors, for example, write that “Charlemagne worked closely with the Church to spread Christianity to the conquered peoples on the fringes of his empire”; “During his reign, missionaries won converts among the Saxons and Slavs.”<sup>29</sup> This makes the process of Christianization seem wholly voluntary, which it was most certainly not, and thus paints too rosy a picture of the spread of Christianity in Europe.

The McGraw-Hill textbook’s discussion of the Spanish conquest of the Americas fail to mention the forced conversions of the indigenous peoples to Christianity through, for instance, the destruction of indigenous religious life and under the Spanish *Requerimiento* of 1513.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, this account presents a more positive picture of the spread of Christianity in Latin America than is historically warranted. To their credit, the Edmentum and Social Studies School Service textbooks do mention the forced conversions of Native Americans; indeed, the Edmentum package even mentions the 1513 *Requerimiento*.<sup>31</sup>

In another error of omission, the Pearson text’s account of Nazi Germany presents Christianity in a better light than is warranted. The authors are correct to note that Hitler despised Christianity and that though some clergy supported the Nazi regime or remained silent, others courageously opposed the regime.<sup>32</sup> However, the authors fail to note that the regime could not have remained in power without the active support of millions of German Christians.

In an apparent instance of “writing-to-the-standards,” one Social Studies School Service module twice stresses that the Catholic Church was a unifying element in medieval Europe.<sup>33</sup> This appears to be an attempt to satisfy TEKS 4(A) because the authors fail also to stress *explicitly* that the Church also acted as a force for disunity. This omission is particularly interesting because the same module discusses four marks of the Church’s divisive role: the Investiture Crisis, the Inquisition, the Crusaders’ penchant for attacking heterodox Christians, and the Western European attack on Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade.<sup>34</sup> Yet the authors leave it up to the reader to reconcile the explicit statements about the Church as a force for unity with the evidence that it also played the opposite role. Furthermore, regarding the conquest of Constantinople by Catholic troops in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the authors note that the city was “not a Muslim stronghold.” This is an understatement if ever there was one: Constantinople



was at the time the seat of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, so this is a prime example of Christians making war on other Christians – and thus, again, of Christianity as a force for *disunity*.

Perhaps the most egregious example of pro-Christian bias, as well as “writing-to-the-standards,” crops up in the WorldView package. Following a helpful discussion on the origin, spread, and persecution of Christianity and its accession to the state religion of the Roman Empire, the authors comment: “With the acceptance of Christianity, the beliefs and values of the Judeo-Christian teachings would gain wide acceptance in Western culture. The importance of family life, the value of each individual, and the principle that each person is judged by his or her own actions were stressed. Charity and honesty were virtues to be valued.”<sup>35</sup> Since this phrasing leaves the timing very vague, it allows for the misunderstanding that these values and attitudes arrived more or less automatically with the adoption of Christianity. Certainly a strand of Christian teaching does indeed stress “the value of each individual,” and that notion did *eventually* “gain wide acceptance in Western culture.” Yet such acceptance was uneven and slow in coming – indeed, has not yet fully arrived. As I note in my *Dialectical Democracy through Christian Thought*, medieval Christian society was dominated by an organicist (rather than individualist) view, which valued persons more as members of a greater whole than as individuals.<sup>36</sup> Protestantism went some way toward elevating the value of the individual by stressing personal faith, and the New England Puritans pushed religious individualism through their stress on conversion. Yet even the Puritans had difficulty recognizing “the value of each individual,” as their persecution of dissenters like Roger Williams and various Quakers vividly demonstrates. The enslavement of African Americans and their effective disenfranchisement in the post-Civil War South show how far even a majority Christian society has deviated from recognizing “the value of each individual.”

**(4) Other noteworthy instances of imbalance:** While the Pearson textbook is admirably balanced overall, it stumbles when the authors note that the Quran “sets harsh penalties for crimes such as stealing or murder.”<sup>37</sup> Although this statement is true, the authors’ equivalent discussion of the Jewish Law does not note that it, too, sets harsh punishments (including stoning) for a range of offenses and behaviors.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, students will tend to remember that the Quran is harsh, not the Mosaic Law.

The Social Studies School Service textbook gives a very misleading picture of the Muslim concept of jihad, and thus of Islam itself. In a discussion of the reasons for the success of the Ottoman Turks, the authors write: “For centuries, Muslims had believed in holy wars, or jihads. These were wars of the faithful, the Muslims, against non-Muslim peoples.”<sup>39</sup> Later, the authors write that “Jihads still occur,” and cite Saddam Hussein’s declaration of a jihad against the US-led coalition forces. What the authors do not say in this discussion is that jihad is a much broader concept; it primarily involves spiritual or internal struggle (the “greater jihad”) and only secondarily outward struggle (the “lesser jihad”). By omitting that critical information, the Social Studies School Service authors perpetuate popular misunderstandings about jihad and about Muslims. Worse, in the same discussion the authors also assert that “Much of the violence you read or hear about in the Middle East is related to a jihad.” This effectively blames Islam for a very complex cycle of violence and counter-violence, a cycle driven by a host of factors (e.g., natural resources, population pressures) besides radical Islam.

Sikhism tends to receive far less coverage in these textbooks than do other major world religions. The Edmentum authors mention Sikhs in the discussion of Indian resistance to colonialism;<sup>40</sup> however, they do not include an entry for Sikhism in the Glossary, and I did not find a discussion of Sikhism elsewhere in the text. The otherwise balanced Pearson text gives Sikhism far less coverage than



other major world religions, although the authors do offer readers a basic sense of its origins and core beliefs, including “the Five ‘K’s.”<sup>41</sup> The only other coverage of Sikhs in the Pearson text is negative: the assassination of Indira Gandhi by Sikh bodyguards after the Indian government’s attack on the Golden Temple.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, the Social Studies School Service text’s coverage of Sikhism is extremely limited.<sup>43</sup>

Although the McGraw-Hill textbook generally does a fine job in presenting African primal religions, the chapter on medieval Africa features a very poor choice of video excerpts to illustrate them. The presenter in the video is annoyingly flippant in his commentary and shows his intolerance by referring to “bizarre” rituals and “strange things” in a voodoo fetish market.<sup>44</sup> This video serves only to perpetuate popular stereotypes about African religious traditions.

**(5) Coverage of Primal Religions:** As noted above, one shortcoming of the TEKS is that they omit primal religions from the list of major world religions in 23(A). To their credit, all six textbooks provide at least minimal coverage of primal religions, and some offer extensive coverage.

The Edmentum text discusses ancient Egyptian religion, ancient Roman religion, Shinto, and the religious beliefs and practices of the Olmec, Maya, and North American Indians. Unfortunately, the authors do not extend the same level of coverage to African indigenous religions. The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt text treats Australian aboriginal religion and early Chinese religion. The McGraw-Hill textbook’s “World Religions Handbook” includes a section on Indigenous religions, covering Africa, Australia, Japan (Shinto), and Native Americans. The Social Studies School Service package offers substantial coverage of the religions of the Olmec, Maya, Aztec, and Inca. In one module, the students go to an external site and read excerpts from the *Popul Vuh*, Garcilaso de la Vega’s account of the Inca Festival of the Sun, and a letter from Cortez on Tenochtitlan.<sup>45</sup> The WorldView section on “Faith” discusses the religious beliefs of Ancient Egypt and pre-Columbian Latin America.<sup>46</sup>

The Pearson authors offer the most extensive coverage of primal religions. In their overview of major world religions, they offer a short but informative summary of primal religions (which they call “Traditional Religions”), including a discussion of origins, basic beliefs, and approximate global membership.<sup>47</sup> Later, the authors use the discussion of traditional African religious traditions as a way of introducing primal religion generally. The authors also note, correctly, that Christianity and Islam in Africa have often taken on aspects of traditional religious belief and practice.<sup>48</sup> My only complaint is that this introduction to primal religion does not appear much earlier in the textbook. The Pearson text also offers extensive coverage of the religious beliefs and practices of the Olmec, Maya, and Aztec, the Inca and other Andean cultures, and North American Indians, including the Puebloans and Mound Builders.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, coverage of Shinto is limited to one paragraph, and the discussion of African Diaspora religions (e.g., Vodoun, Santería, Candomblé) is restricted to a single sentence.<sup>50</sup>

In short, then, all six textbooks go some way toward rectifying the imbalance caused by the omission of primal religions in the TEKS.

**(6) Presence or absence of a “World Religions Handbook” feature:** Four of the textbooks – Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, McGraw-Hill, Pearson, and WorldView – include a module that introduces the subject of religion in general and then offers brief summaries of the major characteristics of the world religions.<sup>51</sup> Such a feature gives students a handy guide to this important area of human life and history, and it allows students to compare and contrast religions. It is more difficult for students to keep track of the similarities and differences of the various religions when the authors distribute descriptions



of them throughout the text, as is the case with both the Edmentum and Social Studies School Service products. I recommend that the SBOE require that world history textbooks include a “World Religions Handbook” or similar feature in the next adoption cycle.

Among the four textbooks that offer this feature, there is some inconsistency in the religions covered. All four cover Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, McGraw-Hill, and Pearson cover Sikhism; Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and McGraw-Hill add Confucianism, while McGraw-Hill and Pearson add primal religions. WorldView does not cover Sikhism, but it does cover Daoism, Shinto, and the religions of ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, and of the Maya, Toltec, pre-Inca, and Inca peoples, as well as Japanese Ainu animism.

**(7) Teaching the Cost of Religious Intolerance:** Three of the textbooks, Edmentum, McGraw-Hill, and Pearson, go above and beyond the TEKS standards by teaching a lesson of vital importance to today’s students: that religious intolerance can be costly not only to the victims but to the perpetrators. Both the Edmentum and Pearson texts note how Spain’s execution or expulsion of Jews and Muslims after the *Reconquista* contributed to the country’s economic decline.<sup>52</sup> The Pearson authors note a similar mistake on the part of the Catholic Louis XIV of France. As a result of his vigorous persecution of the Protestant Huguenots, more than 100,000 of them left France for other European countries or the Americas. The cost of Louis’s religious intolerance was high: “The Huguenots had been among the hardest working and most prosperous of Louis’s subjects. Their loss was a serious blow to the French economy, just as the expulsion of Spanish Muslims and Jews had hurt Spain.”<sup>53</sup> Similar lessons emerge from other religious traditions. The McGraw-Hill textbook asks students to consider how the Safavid Empire’s intolerant treatment of non-Muslims might have contributed to its decline by escalating tensions within the empire.<sup>54</sup> The Pearson text notes that while the early Muslim rulers of the Mughal Dynasty in India exercised a policy of religious toleration toward their non-Muslim subjects, later Mughal rulers ended that policy. As a result, they rekindled conflicts with Hindus and triggered a civil war that “drained Mughal resources.” This created a power vacuum that the French and British were able to use to their advantage.<sup>55</sup>

Texas students who learn these lessons will be better equipped to resist the siren song of religious exclusivism.

**Topic II.** *During the debate over new social studies curriculum standards in 2009-10, the State Board of Education voted to revise a proposed standard about the influence of Enlightenment thinkers on revolutions and the development of modern governments since 1750. The board initially removed a reference to Thomas Jefferson from that standard, arguing that Jefferson wasn’t an important Enlightenment thinker. After considerable public criticism, the board voted to add Jefferson back to the standard. However, they removed the reference to the Enlightenment from that standard and added Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, and William Blackstone to the list of influential political philosophers. Elsewhere, the board also adopted requirements regarding Judeo-Christian and biblical influences on the development of democratic-republican government and legal systems – particularly in the United States. Are the textbook’s discussions of these religious influences historically accurate and balanced?*

Three requirements in TEKS are at play here: 9(A), 20(C), and 22(B). All six publishers appear to have struggled to comply with these requirements, and the results of their attempts are very uneven and mostly unsatisfactory. However, this attests less to a problem with the authors than with the requirements themselves. Two of these standards, 9(A) and 22(B), are problematic as written, as I will



discuss below. I will break my review into three parts, one for each TEKS requirement at issue. As a scholar of religions, I will speak only to each text's handling of the *religion* aspect of these requirements.

**(1) TEKS 9(A):** This standard requires that world history texts “emphasiz[e] the role of the Enlightenment, the Glorious Revolution, and religion” in the American and French Revolutions. The textbooks attempt to comply with the religion element of TEKS 9(A) in different ways, and the results are generally unsuccessful, particularly with respect to a putative role for religion in the American Revolution.

- **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt:** The authors address TEKS 9(A) for the American Revolution in several ways, all of them vague or one-sided. First, they mention that many colonial ministers voiced support for the American Revolution from the pulpit.<sup>56</sup> While that is true, the authors do not also note that many clergypersons (particularly Anglican) as well as many laypersons *opposed* the Revolution. Second, the authors note that religion *indirectly* contributed to the spread of Enlightenment ideals by promoting literacy; this was especially true in New England, where Puritans had instituted public education so that all persons could read the Bible.<sup>57</sup> While accurate, without further explanation this claim fails to show how religion played a role in the revolution itself. Some beneficiaries of both literacy and Enlightenment thought did not join the revolutionary cause. (Benjamin Franklin's son William, a prominent Royalist, is a good example.)

The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt authors are on firmer ground when discussing the role of religion in the French Revolution. They note that widespread anger at the Church's special privileges was a cause of the revolution; and they discuss the anti-clerical measures taken by the National Assembly and by Robespierre, the opposition of many French peasants to such measures, and Napoleon's move to end the persecution of the Church while keeping it separate from government affairs.<sup>58</sup> This strikes me as a fair account of the role religion played in the French Revolution and its immediate aftermath.

- **McGraw-Hill:** The authors stumble quite badly in their discussion of the role of religion in the American Revolution. That influence is addressed in a single sentence: “In the American colonies, the religious revivals of the eighteenth century pushed society toward a vision of independent religious practice and away from centralized authority.”<sup>59</sup> There are two problems here. First, I could find no discussion of these revivals in the section on the events leading to the American Revolution;<sup>60</sup> consequently, the reference will leave readers mystified. Second, while the religious revivals in the colonies did indeed foster an individualistic spirituality, the authors do not explain how this contributed to the rebellion against Britain.

As with the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt text, the McGraw-Hill textbook does a better job of discussing the role of religion in the French Revolution. The authors identify widespread anger at the Church's special privileges as a cause of the revolution. They also discuss the anti-clerical measures taken by the National Assembly and many Catholics' opposition to them, as well as Napoleon's move to end the persecution of the Church while ending special privileges for the clergy.<sup>61</sup> This strikes me as a fair account of the role religion played in the French Revolution and its immediate aftermath.

- **Pearson:** The Pearson package's compliance with the religion element in TEKS 9(A) is limited and uneven. Religion's role is entirely absent in the coverage of the American Revolution.<sup>62</sup> The authors do establish a role for religion in the French Revolution. The authors imply, rather than state



explicitly, that the resentment the middle-class and peasantry felt toward religious officials, who had enormous wealth but shouldered little of the tax burden, was a cause of the French Revolution. The authors mention that the *philosophes* criticized “the idleness of some clergy, the Church’s interference in politics, and its intolerance of dissent.” However, the authors do not connect that intellectual criticism with popular dissatisfaction with the clergy (and the nobility).<sup>63</sup> The authors also note the revolutionary government’s anti-Church measures (including making clergy state employees), as well as the radicals’ efforts to “de-Christianize France” and the lack of support for that move among the general population.<sup>64</sup>

- **Social Studies School Service:** The Social Studies School Service package’s compliance with the religion element in TEKS 9(A) is quite limited and uneven.

Both revolutions are treated in the module “Power Basics World History ELL Readings & Assessments: Revolutions in British America and France.” The role of religion is entirely absent in this module’s coverage of the American Revolution. This module mentions religion only indirectly in the coverage of French Revolution: the authors note that possibly the most important cause of the French Revolution was the resentment members of the Third Estate (middle-class and peasants) felt toward religious officials and the nobility.

A PowerPoint slide presentation on the French Revolution offers more coverage of religion’s role.<sup>65</sup> In one of the “Essential Questions” for the lesson, the authors ask about the importance of several Enlightenment ideas, including religious tolerance, in causing the revolution. Later slides discuss the revolutionary National Assembly’s anti-Church measures and how these measures alienated a significant portion of the population (Slide 23). Though sketchy, this information is accurate.

- **WorldView:** Apart from a passing reference to freedom of religion in the post-revolutionary Bill of Rights,<sup>66</sup> the WorldView textbook package does not address the role of religion in the American Revolution. By contrast, the authors seem to have found it easier to comply with TEKS 9(A) with regard to the role of religion in the French Revolution. They discuss peasant and bourgeois resentment of clergy (and noble) privileges. They also note that Napoleon made peace with the Catholic Church but kept it under government control.<sup>67</sup>
- **Edmentum (Publisher has withdrawn this product from official state consideration.):** In this textbook’s discussion of the American Revolution (A-19), the role of religion is all but absent. The only hint of a religious influence is the authors’ note that the Declaration of Independence agreed with Locke that governments are not created by God. The role of religion receives much more coverage in the discussion of the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>68</sup> The authors note popular resentment of “the power and wealth of the Catholic Church in France” as a major motivation for the revolution. The revolutionary government’s imprisonment and execution of clergy, seizure of Church lands, and other anti-Church measures are also discussed, as well as popular opposition to these measures, especially in the villages. As far as it goes, the information on the French Revolution is accurate.

Two themes emerge from the preceding points. First, the coverage of the role of religion in the French Revolution is quite similar, and similarly successful, in all of the textbooks. Second, coverage of the role of religion in the American Revolution is either sketchy or absent in all the same textbooks. The





two texts that try hardest to establish such a role, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and McGraw-Hill, make vague, one-sided, or unsubstantiated claims. Indeed, the authors of those two packages seem to be “writing-to-the-standards” instead of sticking to what is historically sound. That these two publishers would do such a poor job is disappointing, to say the least.

That said, I believe these problems spring not so much from incapacity on the authors’ part as from the difficulty of meeting this problematic requirement as currently written. The wording of TEKS 9(A) suggests that religion played a role in the American Revolution as important as that played by Enlightenment thought, and textbooks are supposed to “emphasize” that fact. To do so in a historically valid way is not at all easy.

In some episodes of American history the role of religion is relatively clear, straightforward, and easy to establish. For example, Christian teachings were used in arguments both for and against slavery in the antebellum period; and the importance of African-American Christianity and the Nation of Islam to the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and ’60s is equally clear. By contrast, religion seems to have played a less important role in the Revolution than economic, political, and cultural factors, and the role it did play was complex and ambiguous. Note, for instance, the divided loyalties many colonial Anglicans experienced during the revolutionary period.<sup>69</sup> The ambiguity of religion’s role in the American Revolution is further underscored by the fact that two of the revolution’s major voices, Tom Paine and Thomas Jefferson, had unorthodox religious views and wished to keep religion separate from the political sphere. Consequently, a historically accurate picture of religion’s role in the American Revolutionary period is a messy and complicated one. Textbooks that reflect that picture may alienate powerful factions in Texas who believe that the Revolution was a Christian cause. So long as this politicized situation remains, publishers will continue to struggle and textbooks will suffer for it. It is possible to establish the role of religion in the American Revolution,<sup>70</sup> but not through vague claims about religious revivals or ministers voicing support from the pulpit. Public school texts can do better than that.

**(2) TEKS 20(C):** TEKS 20(C) stipulates that texts “explain the political philosophies of individuals such as John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Voltaire, Charles de Montesquieu, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Thomas Jefferson, and William Blackstone.” This wording is quite puzzling: the phrase “such as” suggests that it is purely optional whether textbooks cover all or even any of the individuals listed. If that is the case, then the core requirement is to “explain the political philosophies of individuals.” That, of course, is at best an odd thing to require, without further guidance about what makes *these* individuals particularly worth studying. However, I take it that the TEKS framers want textbooks to cover the political philosophies of at least some of the individuals listed. In line with my focus on religious issues, I will look only at how the textbooks cover the two religious figures, Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin. Also, since the standard uses the phrase “such as,” I assume that a textbook’s failure to cover either of these thinkers is not a strike against it.

- **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt:** The textbook’s “Section on Democracy and Justice” notes Aquinas’ argument that the purpose of law is to protect the common good.<sup>71</sup> While the authors do not discuss John Calvin in this section (his theocratic political notions are covered in the discussion of the Reformation<sup>72</sup>), they discuss instead how Martin Luther’s teachings inspired belief in the individual as worthy of respect and protection, thus placing a new focus on individual rights.





- **McGraw-Hill:** This textbook package briefly discusses the political philosophy of Aquinas and Calvin.<sup>73</sup> I did not notice any errors in the coverage.
- **Pearson:** The text devotes two paragraphs to Aquinas' thought about government and natural law.<sup>74</sup> The authors note that he believed that government should work for the common good and that people are not bound to obey unjust laws. The authors argue that Aquinas' ideas influenced "European philosophers," who in turn influenced the American Founders. While the argument sounds reasonable to me, I will leave the assessment of its accuracy to scholars better versed in Aquinas' political thought and its influence. The discussion of Calvin's political thought is limited to one sentence: "In keeping with his teachings, Calvin set up a theocracy, or government run by church leaders."<sup>75</sup>
- **Social Studies School Service:** The TEKS Correlation for 20(C) shows no entry for Aquinas, and I was unable to locate any discussion of his political philosophy in the Social Studies School Service package. One module on the Reformation offers a discussion of Calvin's religio-political role in Geneva. While the authors do not discuss his political philosophy per se, they do give a general impression of how he intended his moral notions to be enforced by the Genevan Consistory.<sup>76</sup>
- **WorldView:** Two passages in this textbook package briefly mention Aquinas' political philosophy.<sup>77</sup> The "Notable People" entry on John Calvin mentions only that he did not believe that the church should be subordinate to the state.
- **Edmentum (Publisher has withdrawn this product from official state consideration.):** The TEKS Correlation for this textbook package indicates that Edmentum does not attempt compliance with TEKS 20(C).<sup>78</sup> Nonetheless, the authors do offer brief treatments of the political thought of Aquinas and Calvin.<sup>79</sup> I did not notice any problems with that coverage.

Since I found no errors in the presentation of the political thought of Aquinas and Calvin in any of the textbooks, and since treatment of the figures listed in 20(C) is apparently purely optional, I rate compliance with this standard to be acceptable in all six cases.

**(3) TEKS 22(B):** TEKS 22(B) requires that world history texts "identify the influence of ideas regarding the right to a 'trial by a jury of your peers' and the concepts of 'innocent until proven guilty' and 'equality before the law' that originated from the Judeo-Christian legal tradition and in Greece and Rome."

As with 9(A), the textbooks show signs of difficulty in complying with this requirement. The results of these attempts at compliance are all over the map.

- **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt:** The authors quite reasonably trace trial by jury to ancient Greece, and the presumption of innocence to ancient Rome.<sup>80</sup> However, their attempt to trace equality under the law to the Judeo-Christian tradition stumbles badly. They write: "Because one of Jesus's basic principles was the equality of all people in the eyes of God, equality before the law became a central belief within the Judeo-Christian tradition."<sup>81</sup> I see two problems with this claim. The first concerns the presentation: the authors' wording suggests that belief in equality of all people before God originated with Jesus. In fact, it arguably dates back to Jewish teachings such as the belief that all people have a single progenitor (Gen. 1-2), and the assertion in Leviticus that there is one law for



citizen and stranger alike (Lev. 24:22). Second, the “Because...” language suggests that there is a straightforward chain of causation between, on the one hand, the Jewish and Christian belief in equality before *God’s* law and, on the other, the belief in equality before *human* law. If there is such causation, it is by no means straightforward. In medieval Europe, for example, both peasants and nobles were expected to obey the Ten Commandments (God’s law), but nobles were heavily favored in the medieval justice system. The same can be said of slaves and white masters in the antebellum South. In short, while the ancient Israelite teaching of equality of all people before God’s law may well have influenced our legal tradition, such influence remains tenuous and far from clear, and the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt text does not offer the necessary clarification or explanation.

- **McGraw-Hill:** The authors of this textbook also attempt to link equality before the law to the “Judeo-Christian legal tradition,” but their argument involves the Ten Commandments rather than Jesus’ teachings. They write: “The legal ideas in the Ten Commandments had important implications. ...[T]he ancient Israelites believed that all people were equal before God’s law. The laws against killing, theft, lying, and adultery applied equally to everyone regardless of class.”<sup>82</sup> This argument, like that in the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt text, falls prey to the fact that Christian (and Jewish) belief in equality before *God’s* law has not translated into actual Christian practice of equality before *human* law. As with the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt text, the McGraw-Hill authors do not offer the necessary clarification or explanation.
- **Pearson:** The Pearson authors make a concerted effort to comply with this TEKS requirement, but the attempt is largely unsatisfactory. The authors trace trial by jury and the presumption of innocence to ancient Greece and presumption of innocence to ancient Rome.<sup>83</sup> Interestingly, they establish (briefly but convincingly) the origins of the modern jury system in the secular courts under the English king Henry II – courts that developed as a secular alternative to church courts.<sup>84</sup> The authors’ attempt to trace equality before the law to ancient Greece and Rome is less satisfactory.<sup>85</sup>

However, their attempt to establish a link to the “Judeo-Christian legal tradition” falls utterly flat. In the discussion of law and morality in Judaism, in a caption to a chart, the authors claim: “Over time, the ideas in the Ten Commandments have influenced aspects of some modern legal and political systems.”<sup>86</sup> The associated chart apparently is meant to serve to support this very vague assertion. The chart lists the Ten Commandments; each commandment is accompanied by an “Explanation.” In some cases the “Explanation” entry simply describes the content of the commandment.<sup>87</sup> In other cases it purports to link the commandment to modern legal practice, and here is where the real trouble lies. The chart says that the prohibition against killing is “seen today in laws against killing.” Perhaps it is, but a stronger case needs to be made that it was this commandment, rather than other influences, that “shaped” such laws. The prohibition against adultery is supposedly “seen today in divorce laws,” but the authors do not explain how. Personally, I do not see how no-fault divorce laws common today relate in any way to the commandment against adultery. Unfortunately, the authors do not support these vague assertions in the text. Instead, they let themselves off the hook by mentioning that “some people” claim “Judeo-Christian” origins for the three legal concepts at issue.<sup>88</sup> Of course, “people” make all sorts of claims, some historically supportable, others not. While I acknowledge that the authors should let students know that such a view exists, their failure to provide evidence for or against that view, or to provide alternative accounts, renders this little more than a token gesture wanting in educational content.



- **Social Studies School Service:** The authors approach compliance with 22(B) very differently from the other publishers. According to the Social Studies School Service TEKS Correlation, the main module satisfying 22(B) is “Everyday Life: Ancient Times: Law and Justice.” (I’ll call it “Law and Justice.”) This module traces trial by jury to the ancient Greeks, presumption of innocence to Hammurabi’s Code, and equality before the law to the ancient Romans. The brief discussion of the Mosaic Law describes it as “plac[ing] a much higher value on human life and stress[ing] the importance of a code of moral conduct.” The authors assert that the Mosaic Law’s “influence can be seen in the laws of many nations.” However, they do not offer any evidence to support that claim. They make an equally vague claim about the influence of the Justinian Code. In short, then, the “Law and Justice” module fails to show a “Judeo-Christian” influence on the three legal concepts at issue in TEKS 22(B).

These issues are also addressed in the Social Studies School Service module “What Historical Developments Influenced Modern Ideas of Individual Rights?”<sup>89</sup> Although this module does not explicitly mention 22(B)’s three legal concepts, it addresses the notion of a “Judeo-Christian” influence more thoroughly than does the “Law and Justice” module, at least in terms of the American “Founders.” In this module, the authors write: “(R)eligion was an important part of the Founders’ education. They knew the Bible and its teachings.” This is certainly true, but it applies equally well to most of the Founders’ contemporaries who did *not* believe in trial by jury, presumption of innocence, and/or equality before the law. Furthermore, *knowledge* of biblical teachings does not translate automatically to a *desire to implement* those teachings in law. Perhaps recognizing this fact, the authors later note, also correctly: “The Founders were familiar with the teachings of the Bible, but they also knew that differing religious beliefs had caused serious political conflicts.” Noting that “Christian teachings stressed the dignity and worth of each human being,” the authors then claim: “Much of the Founders’ commitment to liberty and individual rights sprang from their belief in such ideals.” However, they do not demonstrate precisely how that commitment “sprang from” those beliefs. This appears to be nothing more than a fig leaf to cover the TEKS “Judeo-Christian” requirement. It is quite possible to believe in “the dignity and worth of each human being” without being a Jew or a Christian. The atheist Tom Paine is a good example in the Western tradition, but one could cite the Prophet Muhammad or the Buddha as well. The fact that the Founders believed in “such ideals” is not evidence of the influence of the “Judeo-Christian tradition.”

Even more problematically, the authors make the vague and unsupported suggestion that the Founders “may have...drawn ideas about government from the Law of Moses, as set forth in the Bible.” As my colleague and political scientist Emile Lester notes, such claims of religious influence on the Founders must “be well-defined and provide decent evidence for their claim”; this includes specifying which religious concepts influenced the Founders and what ideas or political institutions were influenced by them.<sup>90</sup> The Social Studies School Service does not meet these simple criteria. For one thing, “drawing ideas about government” is vague, and the authors do not specify what parts of the Mosaic Law influenced what “ideas about government.” For another thing, it fails the “decent evidence” test. The main evidence the authors supply is the fact that the Mosaic Law is “one of the earliest examples of a legal code,” and that it “included rules both for public and private morality, and stressed the duties and responsibilities of all people.” However, many other law codes satisfy that description, with the possible exception of private morality – ancient Greek and Roman law as well as English common law come to mind. Finally, the authors fail to show how the Mosaic Law’s treatment of *private* morality influenced the Founders’ notions of government. In short, if the



Mosaic Law did influence the Founders' notions of government, the Social Studies School Service authors do not prove it.

- The **WorldView** package's attempt to comply with the "Judeo-Christian" requirement boils down to citing the Justinian Code as an influence on later legal thought (Ch. A-7 – for the reason, I suppose, that its author was a Christian emperor. While I am certainly no expert on the matter, the claim of substantial influence strikes me as a bit of stretch, since the Justinian Code applied only in the Eastern Roman Empire and not in the Catholic West.
- **Edmentum (Publisher has withdrawn this product from official state consideration.):** According to the TEKS Correlation for this package, the Edmentum authors do not attempt to comply with either the "Judeo-Christian legal tradition" part, or the Greek and Roman part, of TEKS 22(B).<sup>91</sup> Given how other textbook packages have struggled to satisfy this requirement, I am not surprised that the Edmentum developers would opt out. However, the authors do claim that "Justinian's Code became the basis for legal systems in Europe, the United States, and for much of the world."<sup>92</sup> While I will leave this matter to the historians, I believe that this claim is an overstatement, since Justinian's Code had force only in the Byzantine Empire, not in Catholic Western Europe.

In their various attempts to work in a "Judeo-Christian" influence on the Founders' notions of government and law, the authors of the five textbooks that attempt compliance appear to be "writing-to-the-standards," instead of keeping to what is historically sound. And what is historically sound is the lack of significant "Judeo-Christian" roots for the three legal concepts at issue in 22(B).

While I disapprove of the various attempts to comply with 22(B), I sympathize with the plight of the textbook authors. As with 9(A), the problem lies with the standard rather than the textbooks. The problem is twofold. First, the term "Judeo-Christian legal tradition" is itself ambiguous almost to the point of meaninglessness. Is the "Judeo-" element intended to include the various ritual ordinances in the Jewish Law, such as dietary and Sabbath laws? Or the extensive Jewish rabbinical (halakhic) tradition? Regarding the "-Christian" part, is the requirement meant to include canon law, such as that found in the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches? The TEKS leave these questions wide open.

Second, the phrasing of 22(B) is question-begging, in that it suggests that the legal concepts at issue did in fact "originat[e] from the Judeo-Christian legal tradition," as well as from Greece and Rome. Tracing the roots of trial by jury, presumption of innocence, and equality before the law to ancient Greece and Rome is a fairly straightforward task, as several of the textbooks show. It is far more difficult, and perhaps impossible in some cases, to show that these legal concepts arose within either the Jewish or the Christian traditions. Let me take each in turn.

First, as a religion scholar, I cannot see that trial by jury is at all a biblical concept.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the concept arose within a predominantly Christian society does not prove that it is "Judeo-Christian" in origin.

Second, some scholars have attempted to trace the presumption of innocence to Deuteronomy 19:15. However, this passage states: "A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection with any offense that may be committed. Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained" (NRSV). While this text may imply a presumption of



innocence, it could also simply specify the number of witnesses necessary to confirm a presumption of *guilt*.

Third, the notion of equality before the law could be partly traceable to Jesus' message of equality of all persons before God. However, this is at best a tenuous link. As I have mentioned, even in Christian societies a belief in equality before *God's* law has not always equated to a belief in equality before *human* law. The ancient Israelite teaching of equality of all people before God's law may well have influenced our legal tradition, but that influence is neither straightforward nor clear.

Finally, the hypothesis that the Mosaic Law is at the root of the American founding documents runs up against a very substantial roadblock: the counter-testimony of someone who was actually involved in one of those Founding Documents. Thomas Jefferson passionately and meticulously refuted the notion of a Mosaic influence in his Jan. 24, 1814, letter to John Adams.<sup>94</sup> If there is a Mosaic influence on our founding documents, it is much less straightforward than some proponents (and the Social Studies School Service authors) suggest.

**Topic V.** *Does the textbook provide an accurate and balanced discussion of the modern Arab-Israeli relations and conflict?*

I claim no special academic expertise in the Arab-Israeli conflict; so I will leave questions of accuracy to the historians. Instead, I will restrict myself to the question of balance in the presentation of the conflict. Specifically, do the textbooks give students a sense of the claims, aspirations, and perceived grievances on *both* Jewish and Arab sides?

A good place to begin this discussion is with a quote from the (now-withdrawn) Edmentum world history textbook:

All of the material presented throughout this course (and in any history course) is controversial. However, Middle Eastern conflicts raise tensions elsewhere in the world....[M]any people are sensitive to any presentation of this material....Many people reduce Middle Eastern conflicts into a two-sided struggle: 'us versus them.' In fact, within each country and within each ethnicity, there are many different views, desires, and historical experiences. *Be suspicious of any global claims about one group.* A Yiddish proverb 'Two Jews, Three Opinions' points to the fact that there can be diversity even in small groups. Unity is often a useful political fiction, particularly in the Middle East.<sup>95</sup>

These are sage words indeed. Unfortunately, TEKS 13(F) implies the very sort of global claim about which the Edmentum authors warn us. 13(F) requires that students be able to "explain how Arab rejection of the State of Israel has led to ongoing conflict" – implying that the Arabs alone bear the blame for the continuing conflict in the Middle East. Anyone with even a passing acquaintance with recent news knows that there is a Palestinian side to the story as well as an Israeli side, and that both parties have grievances. Here again, the TEKS fall short, for they make no mention of the Palestinians aside from citing "Palestinian terrorism" along with radical Islamic movements and al-Qaida in 14(A). The TEKS, then, do not foster a balanced presentation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. If publishers do present both sides fairly, they go above and beyond TEKS.



The good news is that four of the six textbooks do just that. The McGraw-Hill, Pearson, WorldView and Edmentum textbooks present both sides with admirable even-handedness. Unfortunately, the treatment of this issue in the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Social Studies School Service texts is incomplete and less balanced than it could be.

- The **McGraw-Hill** text lays out the various obstacles to a comprehensive peace agreement, mentioning not only terrorist activities by Hamas but also Palestinian grievances (e.g., Jewish settlements on the West Bank).<sup>96</sup>
- **Pearson:** The authors introduce the conflict over Israel-Palestine with an intriguing exercise, in which students read two short scripture passages, one from Genesis, the other from the Quran, and both involving the legacy of Abraham. The authors note: “Many Israelis believe that the quotation from the Bible promises Israel to the Jewish people as descendants of Abraham (Abram). Muslims also believe that they are the heirs to Abraham, as stated in the Quran. They, too, feel entitled to the land as part of Abraham’s legacy.” Students are then asked to consider how “the quotes reflect the religious justification for the claims to the same land.”<sup>97</sup> This exercise will give students a sense of the deep complexity of the competing claims at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The balance reflected in that introductory exercise carries into the main text. For example, in the discussion of the 1987 Intifada, the authors note the civilian casualties caused both by the Palestinian suicide bombings inside Israel and by Israel’s military attacks on Palestinian towns.<sup>98</sup>
- The **WorldView** package gives the longest and most detailed discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and overall, it presents both sides evenhandedly. The authors locate the source of the conflict in the rise of the Zionist effort and the mass migration of Jews from Europe to Palestine in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They note the complexity of assigning blame for the resulting conflict: “Tension arose almost immediately between Jewish settlers and the Arab population already living there. Historians disagree as to who was rightfully entitled to the land and which side conducted themselves honorably, but what all agree upon is that as the number of Jews moving to Palestine increased, the tension and conflict also increased.”<sup>99</sup> Writing of the Second Intifada, the authors capture the spiral of violence in which Palestinians and Israelis find themselves caught: “The violence continued to escalate, creating a cycle of Palestinian attacks and suicide bombings, followed by Israeli armed responses and then more attacks.”<sup>100</sup>
- **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt:** This textbook does a good job of laying out the Jewish and Palestinian claims to the land, and it asks students to analyze quotes from a Palestinian writer and an Israeli general about the conflict.<sup>101</sup> Yet the description of the First and Second Intifadas lack a similar degree of balance. For example, while the authors note Palestinian aggression against Israeli civilians, their discussion of the Israeli military response does not mention Palestinian civilian casualties; they note that Israeli forces, searching for extremists, “bulldozed entire areas of Palestinian towns and camps,” but they do not mention the toll on Palestinian civilians.<sup>102</sup>
- **Social Studies School Service:** This textbook package is the least evenhanded of the six. Some sections present both sides fairly. For instance, a module on the Middle East notes: “The Jews saw this area as their homeland from biblical times. The Arabs had lived there for centuries and claimed it as their homeland.”<sup>103</sup> The authors then list the grievances felt by both sides and the military struggles up to 1956. However, imbalance creeps in as the reading concludes: “Israelis and Arabs continued to clash along their borders. Meanwhile, Israel built a successful economy, with modern





cities and farms in former desert areas. Jews from all over the world continued to migrate to Israel.” That’s all true, but what happened to the Palestinians while the Israelis prospered? The authors do not say. Another module covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also begins evenhandedly but quickly loses balance. “The founding and building up of Israel is a story of heroic triumph. It also engendered lasting grievances on both sides of a huge divide,” the authors write. They then ask students to consider whether the Arab-Israeli conflict “has been a big distraction” for *Arab* leaders, “a way to divert the attention of their people from more pressing problems at home?”<sup>104</sup> This is a valid and interesting question, but its very phrasing shows a lack of balance. For some might similarly argue that the conflict has also offered some Israeli politicians a way of maintaining political control and refusing to face the difficult issue of the Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands. The authors do not lead students in that direction.

- The **Edmentum** text (now withdrawn by the publisher) does an excellent job of laying out Jewish and Arab claims to Palestine, the grievances felt by both sides, and the twists and turns of the peace process.<sup>105</sup> Although the authors characterize Hamas as an “Islamic militant group,” rather than a terrorist group per se, they make the extremist and terrorist nature of Hamas quite explicit: “Hamas vows to eliminate Israel and establish an Islamic society in Palestine. Hamas began suicide bombings, with the victims often being women and children.” At the same time, the authors make equally clear why the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza feel resentment toward the Israelis.<sup>106</sup> The authors carry this evenhandedness through to the poignant conclusion of the discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: “Jews around the world feel a passionate connection to a homeland that their families had not seen for thousands of years. It is hard to believe that Palestinians will forget their homeland within 50 or 75 years.”<sup>107</sup>

#### **Topic VI.** *Is the textbook’s discussion of terrorism and radical Islam accurate and balanced?*

This question breaks into two separate but related issues: the coverage of terrorism and the coverage of radical Islam. Since in recent years radical Islamic groups such as al-Qaida and Hamas have frequently used terror to further their ends, there is a tendency in the popular imagination to equate terrorism with radical Islam and radical Islam with terrorism—or even, quite unjustly, to equate Islam *itself* with terrorism. These equations hide the fact that terrorism is a global phenomenon that transcends religious boundaries. Also, by dismissing radical Islamists as mere “terrorists,” we fail to grasp the deep political, economic, and cultural problems that trouble the Muslim world and motivate a comparative handful of Muslims to resort to terror.

Social studies textbooks should work to correct such misperceptions. World history texts in particular should show clearly that terrorism is an ancient phenomenon, dating back at least to the wholesale destruction of men, women, children, and livestock described in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>108</sup> It is also a global phenomenon, used by a variety of groups with no connection to Islam, such as the IRA, the Basque separatist group ETA, Shining Path, Aum Shunrikyo, and the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombers. Textbooks should also help students understand why some Muslims—and non-Muslims—have adopted the route of terrorism, without thereby excusing them for doing so. And in the interests of balance and accuracy, textbooks should make clear that radical Islam does not speak for the vast majority of Muslims worldwide.

In general, I was impressed with how well the textbooks performed in this respect.





- **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt:** This textbook gives readers a solid background to the political and religious developments that led to contemporary terrorism and radical Islam. These developments include loss of political control over historically Muslim lands and an ongoing struggle between modernization and traditionalism. In their discussion of Afghanistan, the authors also offer a helpful discussion of the Taliban's extreme interpretation of Islam and support for global terrorism.<sup>109</sup> The treatment of radical Islamic fundamentalism as a motivator for terrorism is clear and accurate. While the authors are careful to note that radical Islam is a position taken only by "some Muslims," it would help if they stated more clearly that most Muslims do not support radical Islam and its use of violence. A separate section devoted to the problem of terrorism generally underscores the fact that terrorism is not a new phenomenon and does the important work of placing terrorist groups such as al-Qaida in a broader context.<sup>110</sup> For example, the discussion of the Tokyo Subway attacks and the 2001 anthrax incidents in the United States shows that terrorism is not an exclusively Muslim phenomenon.
- **McGraw-Hill:** With one notable exception (discussed below), this textbook gives readers a solid background to the political and religious motivations and developments that led to radical Islam and to contemporary Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. These include the belief that a pure Islamic society will bring prosperity; a desire to drive out Western influences on Muslim societies; and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>111</sup> The authors also note that while radical Islamic fundamentalists "promote their own vision of what a pure Islamic society should be," "(m)ost Muslims around the world do not share this vision, do not support terrorism, and some are terror victims themselves."<sup>112</sup> This is a message students cannot hear often enough.

Likewise, the McGraw-Hill authors are careful not to give readers the mistaken impression that terrorism is exclusively or even primarily associated with Islam. While the McGraw-Hill authors devote an appropriate level of coverage to Muslim terrorist groups such as Hamas, al-Qaida, and the Taliban, they also discuss several non-Muslim terrorist groups.<sup>113</sup> Nonetheless, despite the generally balanced and accurate coverage of Islamic fundamentalism, the authors make an uncharacteristic gaffe when they write: "Islamic fundamentalism began in Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini."<sup>114</sup> Muslim fundamentalism did not begin in Iran. It dates at least to the writings of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood co-founder Sayyid Qutb in the late 1940s.<sup>115</sup>

- **Pearson:** The coverage of terrorism and radical Islam in this textbook is accurate and balanced. The authors clearly demonstrate that terrorism is a global phenomenon, not just a Muslim one, by covering a wide range of terrorist groups, including the IRA and ETA.<sup>116</sup> The authors also make clear the distinctions between Islamic fundamentalism (or Islamism) and radical Islamists, and they note that "(n)ot all Islamists support terrorism," though "in many places, the movement has fed the growth of terrorism."<sup>117</sup> As befits a textbook to be used by U.S. students, the authors focus on al-Qaida, the 9/11 attacks, and the U.S. response, and the coverage of these issues is accurate and evenhanded.<sup>118</sup> And while I would have appreciated a reminder in this discussion that the Muslim terrorist groups do not speak for the vast majority of Muslims, that issue is treated in the earlier discussions of the modernization-traditionalism debate within Islam.<sup>119</sup>
- **Social Studies School Service:** I find the coverage of terrorism and radical Islam in this Social Studies School Service package to be accurate and balanced, though somewhat brief. One module gives the general outlines of radical Islam, along with a brief account of its roots in the fall of the Ottoman Empire, British and French colonialism after WWI, and the vacuum left by the collapse of pan-Arab



nationalism.<sup>120</sup> The authors touch briefly on the Muslim Brotherhood, Wahhabism, and the radical Islamic regime in Iran. This module also underscores the important and too often overlooked fact that “Islam is not the same as Islamic radicalism, and moderates favoring a more tolerant form of Islam exist throughout the Middle East.” Another module features a video on 9/11 and its aftermath.<sup>121</sup> The video makes clear some of the motivations for radical Islam by vividly contrasting prosperity in the U.S. with poverty in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan. The video describes al-Qaida as “a nationless fanatical group of Islamic militant extremists led by the Saudi businessman, Osama bin Laden,” and it describes the group’s numerous attacks prior to and on 9/11. The video also spends a good bit of time on the U.S. government response, including the invasion of Afghanistan. In addition to explaining the Bush Administration’s rationale for its anti-terrorism methods, the video also notes that those methods had unintended consequences: “The means taken to safeguard the nation ended up dividing the country: the Patriot Act and the torture of Islamic detainees turned many Americans against President Bush.” The most creative lesson on terrorism and radical Islam in the Social Studies School Service package is the module “Middle East Terrorism Policy.” This module helps students trace the roots and development of terrorist organizations in the Middle East and their impact outside that region. Students learn about the origins of al-Qaida and read short primary source articles on the issues surrounding the fight against terrorism. I particularly appreciate the inclusion of some extension activities in the Teacher’s Guide to help students see terrorism as a broader phenomenon, not just one associated only or even primarily with Muslims. Although I would prefer that the authors incorporate these activities into the main exercise rather than leaving them to the instructor’s discretion, the presence of such options should make teachers aware that terrorism is a human phenomenon, not just a Muslim one.

- **Worldview:** This textbook gives readers a solid background to the political and religious developments that led to radical Islam and to contemporary Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. Among those developments, the authors discuss the loss of political control over historically Muslim lands and an ongoing struggle between modernization and traditionalism/Islamic law. The authors also discuss how militant Muslim movements have damaged Arab national economies.<sup>122</sup> Another module provides a helpful, in-depth, and accurate account of al-Qaida’s history and motivations and of the U.S. War on Terror and its aftermath.<sup>123</sup> Nonetheless, the WorldView package does not include a separate section devoted to the problem of terrorism as a global, rather than an Islamic, phenomenon.<sup>124</sup> Accordingly, readers may get the mistaken impression that terrorism exclusively or even primarily involves Muslim fundamentalists.
- **Edmentum (Publisher has withdrawn this product from official state consideration.):** With one important exception, I find the coverage in this package to be superb. Lesson B-14 gives give readers a solid background to the political and religious motivations and developments that led to radical Islam and to contemporary Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. Lesson B-15 includes extended coverage of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the mujahideen resistance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, as well as the United States’ inconsistent responses to these two events.<sup>125</sup> More importantly, the authors describe how the Iranian Revolution and the Afghan resistance movement served to inspire the development of radical Islamic terrorist groups, most notably al-Qaida. The authors’ coverage of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida is particularly strong. They identify the influence of Wahhabism and the Muslim Brotherhood on his thought, and they include a lengthy extract from a 1996 op-ed by bin Laden, in which he lays out his grievances against the Saudi regime and the West. Students will come away from this discussion with a well-rounded picture of the terrorist leader, rather than a two-dimensional personification of evil with a long beard. Lesson B-18 explores



the involvement of the U.S. and Europe in the global war on terror. Besides detailing the human toll of terrorist attacks on the West, the authors also note how the fight against terrorism, and particularly the treatment of captured terrorist suspects, has tested fundamental traditions of individual rights and democracy, such as right to trial by jury, protection against unreasonable searches, and guarantees against cruel and unusual punishment.

Although the coverage of radical Islam and its terrorist activities is excellent, the coverage of terrorism as a global phenomenon falls short. As far as I can see, the only discussions of contemporary terrorism involve radical Islamic terrorism. This can give readers the mistaken impression that terrorism is exclusively or even primarily associated with Islam. Furthermore, the authors do not explicitly mention the fact that most Muslims disapprove of radical Islam and its violent methods.

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<sup>1</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, *Texas World History*, Teacher's Edition (2016).

<sup>2</sup> McGraw-Hill Education, *World History, Texas*. All page number references are to the annotated Student Edition, available through the Teacher Edition.

<sup>3</sup> Pearson Realize, *World History Texas* (2005-12). I use the following citation scheme: Topic number, then Lesson number, then item within the Lesson, then screen number (if applicable). So, for example, "3.2, Text 3: 4" indicates Topic 3, Lesson 2, Text 3, screen number 4. Some items, such as interactive galleries and document-based questions, do not have screen numbers.

<sup>4</sup> Social Studies School Services (Social Studies School Service), *World History, Texas*. The Social Studies School Service package does not use unit, chapter, or screen numbers, so my citations are to the name of the particular module within the package.

<sup>5</sup> WorldView, *World History A: Early Civilizations to Mid-1800's* and *World History B: Mid-1800's to the Present*. In the citations below, I preface each chapter number with "A" for *World History A* and "B" for *World History B* (e.g., B-2 indicates Chapter 2 of *World History B*).

<sup>6</sup> Edmentum, *TX-World History Before 1815* and *TX-World History Since 1815*. In the citations below, I preface each lesson number with "A" for *Before 1815* and "B" for *Since 1815* (e.g., B-2 indicates lesson 2 of *Since 1815*).

<sup>7</sup> See David R. Brockman, *No Longer the Same: Religious Others and the Liberation of Christian Theology* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Annie Laurie Gaylor, "The Dangers of Religious Instruction in Public Schools," *Religion & Politics* January 7, 2014. URL: <http://religionandpolitics.org/2014/01/07/the-dangers-of-religious-instruction-in-public-schools>.

<sup>9</sup> §113.42.b.2.

<sup>10</sup> §113.42.b.1.

<sup>11</sup> David C. Fisher makes the same point in Fisher, "A Missed Opportunity for World History in Texas," in *Politics and the History Curriculum: The Struggle over Standards in Texas and the Nation*, ed. Keith A. Erikson (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), [171-93] 182-89.

<sup>12</sup> §113.42.b.1.

<sup>13</sup> These are items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

<sup>14</sup> Fisher, "A Missed Opportunity for World History in Texas," 182.

<sup>15</sup> Christianity and related terms appear in items 1(C), 1(D) ("Reformation"), 3(A), 4(A), 4(B) ("Roman Catholicism," "Eastern Orthodoxy"), 4(E) ("Christian"), and 5(B) ("Reformation"). Islam and related terms appear in items 1(C) ("Islamic"), 4(D), 4(E) ("Muslim"), 4(F) ("Muslim"), 4(K) ("Islamic"), and 14(A) ("Islamic"). "Judaism" or "Jewish" appear in 3(A) and 4(E); "Hinduism" appears in 4(F).

<sup>16</sup> Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project, "Folk Religionists," December 18, 2012. URL:

<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-folk/>

<sup>17</sup> Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project, "The Global Religious Landscape," December 18, 2012. URL:

<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>

<sup>18</sup> TEKS 5(B) covers "the political, intellectual, artistic, economic, and religious impact of the Reformation."

<sup>19</sup> Fisher makes a similar point: "Christianity certainly did contribute to social and political stability in these areas, but the standard is tendentious rather than pedagogic. Medieval Europe is best characterized in world history during this period as fragmented and disorganized, especially when compared with Byzantium, the *dar-al-Islam*, and the Tang and Song dynasties in China. Indeed, the iconoclasm controversy that divided the church in Byzantium and distanced it from its Western



counterpart suggests the limitations of characterizing Christianity solely as a unifying factor.” Fisher, “A Missed Opportunity for World History in Texas,” 183.

<sup>20</sup> The Pew Research study of global religious affiliation in 2010 showed that Christianity accounts for 31.5 percent, Islam for 23.2 percent. Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project, “The Global Religious Landscape,” December 18, 2012. URL: <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>.

<sup>21</sup> Fisher, “A Missed Opportunity for World History in Texas,” 187.

<sup>22</sup> A third form of pro-Christian tilt results when the authors give Christianity more coverage than other religions. Textbooks that attempt to follow the TEKS closely will inevitably do so. In several of the textbooks I had the impression that Christianity received more space than other religions. However, I did not have time to quantify that impression. I recommend that SBOE reviewers attend to this question in the next social studies textbook cycle.

<sup>23</sup> The references are at pp. 168, 286-87, and 371. Interestingly, they do define holy communion (286).

<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the Glossary in the McGraw-Hill textbook will have entries for the major Christian divisions, but this feature was empty at the time of my review.

<sup>25</sup> Social Studies School Service, Power Basics World History ELL Readings & Assessments: Life in the Islamic World.

<sup>26</sup> Instead, they write: “All religions have special structures where religious rituals and worship take place. For Christianity, it is a church. In Judaism, that place is a synagogue. In Islam, it is a mosque” (Pearson, Culture Core Concepts: Religion, 3). In the interests of balance, they should go on to mention Hindu and Buddhist temples and Sikh gurdwaras, but it is at least a step in the right direction.

<sup>27</sup> Pearson, Culture Core Concepts: Religion, 4.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 229.

<sup>29</sup> Pearson, 7.1, Text 5: 2-3. The other instances are: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: 356-57; and McGraw-Hill, Ch. 8, Lesson 4, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 17.

<sup>31</sup> Edmentum A-16; Social Studies School Service Document Based Activities for World History: Using Primary Sources and the Internet: Ancient Americas: The Maya, Aztecs, and Incas: Daily Life and Culture: Religion.

<sup>32</sup> Pearson, 17.8, Text 3: 5.

<sup>33</sup> Social Studies School Service, “Backwards Planning PowerPoints for World History: Medieval Europe,” Introduction and Slide 22. The WorldView textbook makes a similar argument in Ch. A-11, Overview.

<sup>34</sup> These are mentioned in Slides 23, 25, 36, and 39.

<sup>35</sup> WorldView, Ch. A-6, Rise and Fall of Rome.

<sup>36</sup> David R. Brockman, *Dialectical Democracy through Christian Thought: Individualism, Relationalism, and American Politics* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 37-38.

<sup>37</sup> Pearson, 8.1, Text 2: 2.

<sup>38</sup> Pearson, 2.3, Text 3.

<sup>39</sup> Social Studies School Service, “Power Basics World History ELL Readings & Assessments: The Ottoman Turks”

<sup>40</sup> Edmentum, B-7.

<sup>41</sup> Pearson, 9.1, Text 3.

<sup>42</sup> Pearson, 20.1, Text 2: 2-3.

<sup>43</sup> Apart from a mention of Sikh involvement in the assassination of Indira Gandhi, that coverage is restricted to one reading and one activity of the Social Studies School Service module “Power Basics World History ELL Readings & Assessments: India Under Mogul Rule.”

<sup>44</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 13, Lesson 1, Resources.

<sup>45</sup> Social Studies School Service, Document Based Activities for World History: Using Primary Sources and the Internet: Ancient Americas: The Maya, Aztecs, and Incas: Daily Life and Culture: Religion.

<sup>46</sup> WorldView, the Themes section on “Faith” (in *World History A*).

<sup>47</sup> Pearson, Culture Core Concepts: Religion.

<sup>48</sup> Pearson, 8.8, Text 3.

<sup>49</sup> Pearson, 4.1, 4.3.

<sup>50</sup> Pearson, 9.5, Text 2: 2 (Shinto); 11.3, Text 5: 4 (African Diaspora).

<sup>51</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, “Section on World Religions and Ethical Systems” (282-97); McGraw-Hill, “World Religions Handbook”; Pearson, “Culture Core Concepts: Religion”; WorldView, the Themes section on “Faith” (part A).

<sup>52</sup> In Lesson A-16 of the Edmentum text, the authors explore the unintended negative consequences for Spain of the *Reconquista* and subsequent religious persecution. The authors pose the question: “Why was the Spanish economy backward in comparison to the Netherlands, England, and France?” They answer: “The reconquest of Spain from the Muslims had led to the loss of some of its urban trading class, namely Jews and Muslims. During the conquest, many Jews left or were killed



by the Inquisition. When Spain was united in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella decreed that all Jews and Muslims had to leave Spain forever. This loss of a professional class may have helped impoverish Spain.” The Pearson text makes much the same point at 12.1, Text 3: 5.

<sup>53</sup> Pearson, 12.1, Text 8: 2.

<sup>54</sup> McGraw-Hill, Teacher Edition, Ch. 19, Lesson 2.

<sup>55</sup> Pearson, 11.2, Text 3, 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 641-42, 645.

<sup>57</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 645.

<sup>58</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 655, 656, 660, 664.

<sup>59</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 22, Lesson 4, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 21, Lesson 4.

<sup>61</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 22, Lesson 1, pp. 1-2, 5, 7; Ch. 22, Lesson 3, pp. 2, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Pearson, 12.5, Text 3-4 & Primary Source.

<sup>63</sup> Pearson, 12.6, Text 1: 2.

<sup>64</sup> Pearson, 12.7, Text 5.

<sup>65</sup> Backwards Planning PowerPoints for World History: The French Revolution.

<sup>66</sup> WorldView, Ch. A-22.

<sup>67</sup> WorldView, Ch. A-22.

<sup>68</sup> Edmentum, A-20.

<sup>69</sup> See Edwin S. Gaustad, *Neither King nor Prelate: Religion and the New Nation 1776-1826* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), pp. 17-18.

<sup>70</sup> Again, Edwin Gaustad’s work serves as an excellent example.

<sup>71</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 645DJ2.

<sup>72</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 496.

<sup>73</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 12, Lesson 3, p. 3; Ch. 16, Lesson 2, p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Pearson, 7.6, Text 2: 3.

<sup>75</sup> Pearson, 10.3, Text 3.

<sup>76</sup> Social Studies School Service, “Backwards Planning PowerPoints for World History: World The Reformation.”

<sup>77</sup> WorldView, Ch. A-11 and “The Creation of Modern Europe.”

<sup>78</sup> Edmentum TEKS Correlation, p. 15.

<sup>79</sup> Edmentum, A-10, A-15.

<sup>80</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 134, 183.

<sup>81</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 645DJ2.

<sup>82</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 2, Lesson 2, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> Pearson, 5.2, Text 6; 6.3, Text 4.

<sup>84</sup> Pearson, 7.5, Text 2: 4.

<sup>85</sup> Pearson, 5.2, Text 6; 6.3, Text 4.

<sup>86</sup> Pearson, 2.3, Text 3.

<sup>87</sup> One of the descriptions is questionable: the authors describe the prohibition of taking God’s name in vain as meaning “to speak the truth.”

<sup>88</sup> “Some people....trace today’s democratic-republican forms of government to the teachings of these religions, such as ideas about the worth of the individual, the importance of social responsibility, and the concept that all believers were equal before God. They look to Judeo-Christian legal traditions for the origins of such rights and concepts as trial by jury and innocent until proven guilty” (Pearson, 2.3, Text 3: 5).

<sup>89</sup> In the TEKS Correlation, the full title is “We the People Leveled Texts: We the People (Level III): Lesson 3. What Historical Developments Influenced Modern Ideas of Individual Rights?”

<sup>90</sup> Lester adds a second criterion: claims of religious influence on the Founders “should also mention to students when there is evidence that some Founders were reacting against these concepts or fundamentally reinterpreting them concepts in non-religious ways,” and they “should also acknowledge that other Founders were critical of important elements of biblical and historical Judaism and Christianity, and influenced by religious ideas such as deism that differ from biblical and historical Judaism and Christianity.” Emile Lester, “A Triumph of Ideology Over Ideas: A Review of Proposed Textbooks for High School Government in Texas,” Texas Freedom Network Education Fund, September 2014, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Edmentum, TEKS Correlation, p. 16

<sup>92</sup> Edmentum, A-8.

<sup>93</sup> Some non-academic writers have attempted to trace trial by jury to 1 Cor. 6:1-6. (See, e.g., [http://www.christian-attorney.net/christians\\_lawsuits.html](http://www.christian-attorney.net/christians_lawsuits.html).) However, this passage only advocates having disputes settled by “the saints” (v. 1),



not by a jury per se, and certainly not a jury as we know it today. Another possible precedent could be the ancient Jewish practice of having cases decided by elders at the city gates, mentioned in such biblical passages as Dt 21:19 and Ruth 4:1-2. (See Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 31.) That practice resembles modern jury trials in the sense that cases were heard in public and were judged by a group of persons, though not necessarily by one's peers. However, to establish that that practice was the origin for modern trial by jury, one would need to show evidence that the founders of the American legal tradition had this ancient Jewish practice in mind when they made jury trials normative. Neither the TEKS nor the textbooks attempting to comply with it demonstrate such evidence.

<sup>94</sup> Available at <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-07-02-0083>.

<sup>95</sup> Edmentum, B-14. Emphasis mine.

<sup>96</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 34 (New Era), Lesson 4, p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> Pearson, 20.3, "Start Up: Ties to the Land." The two passages are Gen. 15:18 and Quran 22:78.

<sup>98</sup> Pearson, 20.4, Text 1.

<sup>99</sup> WorldView, B-19, Case Study.

<sup>100</sup> WorldView, B-19, Case Study.

<sup>101</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1017, 1020.

<sup>102</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1023-24.

<sup>103</sup> Social Studies School Service, "Power Basics World History ELL Readings & Assessments: The Middle East and Africa."

<sup>104</sup> Social Studies School Service, "History Unfolding: The Way We Saw It in Illustration and Art: The Rise of the Modern Middle East: Israel: Big Issue or Big Distraction?"

<sup>105</sup> Edmentum, B-14 and B-15.

<sup>106</sup> Edmentum, B-15.

<sup>107</sup> Edmentum, B-15.

<sup>108</sup> Dt 2:34.

<sup>109</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1026.

<sup>110</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1087-88.

<sup>111</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 32, Lesson 2, and Ch. 34, Lesson 4.

<sup>112</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 35, Lesson 1, p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 35, Lesson 1, p. 3.

<sup>114</sup> McGraw-Hill, Ch. 32, Lesson 2, p. 7.

<sup>115</sup> See, for example, Albert J. Bergesen, *The Sayyid Qutb Reader: Selected Writings on Politics, Religion, and Society* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>116</sup> Pearson, 21.8, Text 2.

<sup>117</sup> Pearson, 21.8, Text 2: 5.

<sup>118</sup> Pearson, 21.8, Texts 2 & 3.

<sup>119</sup> Pearson, 20.3.

<sup>120</sup> Social Studies School Service, "History Unfolding: The Way We Saw It in Illustration and Art: The Rise of the Modern Middle East: Islam and Islamic Radicalism."

<sup>121</sup> Social Studies School Service, "Turning Points in History Videos: 2001 - Nine/Eleven."

<sup>122</sup> WorldView, Ch. B-19, Overview.

<sup>123</sup> WorldView, Resources/The War on Terror.

<sup>124</sup> If there is such a section, I was unable to locate it.

<sup>125</sup> E.g., the Reagan Administration's Arms-for-Hostages deal with the Khomeini, followed by support for Saddam Hussein's war against Iran.



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