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## The Bible and Public Schools: Report on the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools (NCBCPS)

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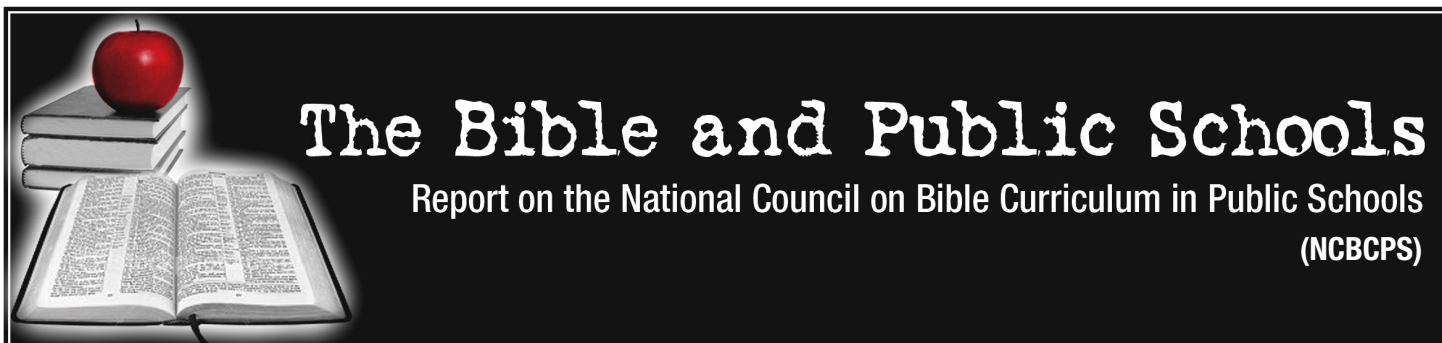
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A REPORT BY MARK A. CHANCEY FOR THE TEXAS FREEDOM NETWORK EDUCATION FUND

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## About the Author

Dr. Mark A. Chancey teaches biblical studies in the Department of Religious Studies in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. He attended the University of Georgia, where he earned a B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Religion (1990) and an M.A. in Religion (1992), and Duke University, where he received a Ph.D. in Religion with a focus in New Testament studies and early Judaism (1999). His research interests include the Gospels, the Historical Jesus, archaeology and the Bible, and the political and social history of Palestine during the Roman period. He is a member of the Society for Biblical Literature, the Catholic Biblical Association, the American Academy of Religion, and the American Schools for Oriental Research.

## INTRODUCTION

In May 2005, Texas Freedom Network provided me with a copy of the curriculum of the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools (NCBCPS), *The Bible in History and Literature* (Ablu Publishing, 2005), to evaluate whether it is nonsectarian in nature and thus appropriate for public school usage and also to assess its overall quality. The contents of the curriculum are apparently not widely known, and I was unable to locate any other lengthy and detailed review of it by a biblical scholar.

I write from the perspective of someone who is a proud product of public schools and who has fond memories of reading Job and Genesis in my high school English class. I was first introduced to the academic study of the Bible at a public institution, the University of Georgia, and am a staunch supporter of public schools. I am also a professional educator who specializes in biblical studies and a person of faith who currently attends a United Methodist Church. This background and my experiences inform my belief that Bible courses taught in a nonsectarian manner by academically qualified teachers can be an enriching part of a public education.

The courts have clearly ruled that public school courses on the Bible, when taught from a nonsectarian perspective, are legal and appropriate.<sup>1</sup> The NCBCPS curriculum does reflect occasional efforts to be nonsectarian. It nowhere explicitly urges students to become Christians, and a book enclosed on CD-ROM offers perspectives from multiple religious traditions.<sup>2</sup> Page 13 of the printed curriculum advises, “As you think about the various interpretations of scripture, it is often helpful to discuss them with your parents and/or your family’s pastor, priest, rabbi, or other spiritual

advisor.” Some passages and assignments reflect sensitivity to the differences between Judaism and Christianity. Page 134, for example, recommends studying the Psalms from a Jewish point of view, and on at least three different occasions the text recommends consulting a Jewish person about Jewish beliefs and practices (pp. 108, 115, 147). The book sometimes adopts a literary approach, with an emphasis on familiarity with well-known biblical stories and passages. In both the curriculum and other NCBCPS materials, teachers are urged not to impose religious beliefs upon their students.

In my professional judgment as a biblical scholar, however, this curriculum on the whole is a sectarian document, and I cannot recommend it for usage in a public school setting. It attempts to persuade students to adopt views that are held primarily within certain conservative Protestant circles but not within the scholarly community, and it presents Christian faith claims as history:

***The Bible is explicitly characterized as inspired by God.***

***Discussions of science are based on the claims of biblical creationists.***

***Jesus is presented as fulfilling “Old Testament” prophecy.***

***Archaeological findings are cited as support for claims of the Bible’s complete historical accuracy.***

Furthermore, much of the course appears designed to persuade students and teachers that America is a distinctively Christian nation — an agenda publicly embraced by many of the members of NCBCPS’s Board of Advisors and endorsers.

The issue at stake here is not whether individuals or groups should hold such beliefs, but whether such positions should be presented as fact in a public school setting. The obvious answer — both constitutionally and ethically — is “No.”

Many of the sources the curriculum uses are nonacademic in nature. The curriculum includes several bibliographies of scholarly books that serve as recommended readings but often reflects little familiarity with the sources themselves.<sup>3</sup> On multiple occasions, it directs teachers and students to resources and Web sites that explicitly advocate sectarian claims — though the readers of the curriculum might not realize this until they consult those resources.

The curriculum also does not sufficiently make clear its dependence on its sources. In fact, it often cites no sources at all. When the curriculum does cite secondary sources, it does not explicitly state when it, in effect, reproduces them on a word-for-word level. Such verbal similarities extend for lines, paragraphs, and even pages at a time. In one unit, 20 pages are virtually identical in wording to uncited articles posted online. All in all, the wording of nearly 100 pages of the curriculum — approximately a third of the book — is identical or nearly identical to the wordings of other publications, many of them not cited.

In addition, the curriculum contains numerous factual errors and vastly oversimplified (some might say misleading) presentations of complex issues. Many of these problems are reproduced from the curriculum’s sources, though others seem to have been introduced by its authors. A casual perusal might not uncover these problems, but a detailed study makes them clear. It would be

unreasonable to expect teachers without advanced training in biblical studies to recognize all of this curriculum’s errors — but it is not unreasonable to expect a curriculum to be free of them.

The curriculum costs \$150 if purchased from the Council’s Web site, \$169.99 from Amazon.com. It is considerably more expensive than many textbooks on the market.<sup>4</sup>

## OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

According to one report, the curriculum is based on a course taught in the 1950s in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg (N.C.) school district.<sup>5</sup> The Web site of the NCBCPS claims that it is used in 308 school districts in 36 states, including 14 districts in Louisiana, and that more than 175,000 students have taken courses utilizing it.<sup>6</sup> A May 1, 2005, *Dallas Morning News* article reported that an estimated 49 school districts in Texas have adopted the NCBCPS curriculum;<sup>7</sup> by early July, the Council's Web site claimed 52 Texas districts. The Council's president has said that 1,000 high schools from Alaska to Florida use the curriculum and that it has been accepted by 92 percent of the school boards that have considered it.<sup>8</sup> These numbers cannot be verified because the Council has apparently not publicly released a list of districts that have adopted the curriculum.

The curriculum (p. 1) identifies its objectives as:

- 1) to teach students about the "literary forms" of the Bible and its use in literature, art, and music;
- 2) to strengthen awareness of the Bible's influence on "history, law, American community life, and culture";
- 3) to demonstrate the influence of the Bible on the Founding Fathers of America;
- 4) to foster a greater understanding of the Middle East; and
- 5) "to inform the students of the importance of religion in world and national history, without imposing the doctrine of any particular religious sect."

According to the Council's Web site, "The program is concerned with education rather than indoctrination of students. The central approach of the class is simply to study the Bible as a foundation document of society, and that approach is altogether appropriate in a comprehensive

program of secular education."<sup>9</sup> Taken at face value, these goals are all quite laudable.

The 2005 edition of the curriculum appears to be a teacher's guide rather than a student textbook. It is designed for a two-semester course and consists of eighteen units, each outlining multiple lessons: an introductory chapter, nine units on the Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament, one unit on the Dead Sea Scrolls and archaeology, one on the "Inter-Testamental Period" [*sic*], four units on the New Testament, one on "The Bible in History," and one on "Biblical Art."<sup>10</sup> It includes lesson plans; background material apparently intended for lecture content; suggested readings, videos, and resources; visual aids; recommended activities; and quizzes and worksheets. The curriculum has 290 numbered pages, five unnumbered prefatory pages, and an additional sixteen unnumbered pages consisting of reproductions of paintings and accompanying commentary. It is amply illustrated, with photographs of works of art, archaeological sites, artifacts, and manuscripts. Visually, parts of the curriculum materials are very appealing. An enclosed CD-ROM contains a 1969 book, *The Bible Reader: An Interfaith Interpretation*, which has commentary from Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish perspectives and often serves as recommended reading for the teacher.<sup>11</sup> The curriculum also frequently advises teachers to incorporate exercises and readings from another textbook, *The Bible As/ In Literature*, a resource that in and of itself would provide a strong and appropriate foundation for a course.<sup>12</sup>

The curriculum does not explicitly identify its authors. Presumably, the Council's president, Elizabeth Ridenour, bears considerable responsibility for its content. A letter on page 9 from Tracey Kiesling, a Texas high school teacher, says that she (Kiesling) helped develop the

curriculum's structure. I will hereafter refer to its writers simply as "the authors."

A supplemental book, *Public Schools — Bible Curriculum — The Bible — A Foundation Document of Society — It's Our Constitutional Right*, contains testimonial letters from educators in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and Brady, Texas; correspondence from the National Legal Foundation (founded by Pat Robertson) about the curriculum's legality; an excerpt from the 1995 statement from the Department of Education, "Religion in the Public Schools: A Joint Statement of Current Law"; and similar resources.

Some of the curriculum's pedagogical components are quite helpful, such as its map exercises, reading comprehension questions, quizzes, and recommendations of classic musical works inspired by biblical stories. Creative activities include preparing foods associated with the Jewish festival of Passover when the Exodus story is studied (p. 91-96) and writing a monologue describing Job's feelings as he suffers (p. 157). Teachers might be reluctant to follow other suggestions, such as devoting 8-10 class periods to watching Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* (p. 98) and 2-4 classes to viewing *Ben Hur* (p. 215).



## THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON BIBLE CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (NCBCPS)

According to its Web site, Elizabeth Ridenour founded the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools in 1993 in Greensboro, North Carolina.<sup>13</sup> Ridenour, who serves as its president, attended East Carolina University and has been a paralegal and a real estate broker. The Web site does not mention any academic preparation in education or theological or religious studies on her part. She is a member of the Council on National Policy, an “umbrella organisation [*sic*] of right-wing leaders who gather regularly to map strategy, share ideas, and fund causes and candidates to advance agendas of which council approves.”<sup>14</sup> The eight-member Board of Directors for NCBCPS includes Steve Crampton, chief counsel of American Family Association Center for Law and Policy; Mike Johnson of the Alliance Defense Fund; and Ben Kinchlow, former host of CBN’s *The 700 Club*. None of the NCBCPS board members is known to be a biblical scholar.

The Advisory Committee’s more than 50 members include many well-known figures associated with the religious right and conservative organizations, as well as several politicians. Counted among its members are:

- David Barton, founder of WallBuilders, an organization that argues against the separation of church and state; identified as one of the “25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America”;<sup>15</sup>
- Dr. D. James Kennedy, head of Coral Ridge Ministries and founder of the Center for Reclaiming America, an organization that sponsors conferences named “Reclaiming America for Christ”;<sup>16</sup>
- Rabbi Daniel Lapin, founder and director of Toward Tradition, a nonprofit organization devoted to returning America to Judeo-Christian values and “faith-based American principles of constitutional and limited government”;<sup>17</sup>
- Dr. Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta;
- Joyce Meyer, evangelist and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries; identified by *Time* magazine as among the “25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America”;
- Grant R. Jeffrey, of Grant R. Jeffrey Ministries;
- Howard Phillips, chairman of the Conservative Caucus;
- Dr. Marshall Foster, president of the Mayflower Institute;
- U. S. Rep. Sue Myrick (N.C., 9<sup>th</sup> District);
- U. S. Rep. Robin C. Hayes (N.C., 8<sup>th</sup> District);
- eleven politicians serving at the state level, nine in North Carolina, one in Georgia and one in Kentucky;
- U.S. Senate Chaplain Dr. Barry Black;
- Holly Coors; and
- Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Norris.

Endorsements of the curriculum are listed on the Web site and in the supplemental text *Public Schools – Bible Curriculum*. They include:

- American Family Association Center for Law and Policy, founded by Donald Wildmon;
- American Center for Law and Justice, associated with Pat Robertson;
- Concerned Women of America, founded by Beverly LaHaye;
- Focus on the Family, associated with James Dobson;
- National Legal Foundation, founded by Pat Robertson;
- Eagle Forum, led by Phyllis Schlafly;
- Center for Reclaiming America;
- WallBuilders;
- National Association of Christian Educators/

- Citizens for Excellence in Education;
- Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council;
- Joel A. Freeman, president of The Freeman Institute;
- Liberty Legal Institute;
- Texas Justice Foundation;
- Dr. Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University;
- Dr. Gerard V. Bradley, Professor of Law at the University of Notre Dame School of Law;
- Dr. John Eidsmoe, Professor of Law, Faulkner University;
- Rep. Walter B. Jones (N.C., 3rd District);
- Sen. Jesse Helms (former Senator, N.C., retired); and
- Rep. J. C. Watts (Representative, Okla., 4th District, retired).

The religious organizations listed as endorsers are primarily associated with the religious right; Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, mainline Protestant, and mainstream Jewish organizations are absent. The list also includes neither professional societies in the field of religious or theological studies nor biblical scholars currently holding full-time academic positions at colleges, universities, and seminaries, though it does name the following individuals:

- Dr. Roy E. Knuteson, Professor Emeritus (retired) of Biblical Archaeology at Northwestern College (Iowa);
- Dr. J. Randall Price, whose Ph.D. in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Texas-Austin apparently had a biblical studies focus and who is currently pastor of Grace Bible Church in San Marcos, Texas;<sup>18</sup> and
- Dr. Robert Cornuke, president of the Bible Archaeology Search and Exploration (BASE) Institute, who holds a Ph.D. from Louisiana Baptist University.<sup>19</sup>

The Council's Web site provides links to many of the organizations noted above and to others like the Creation Evidence Museum, America's

Christian Heritage Week, and Creation Science Evangelism. The title bar for its bookstore Web page reads: "Keeping Christian Dollars in Christ's Kingdom."

Groups like the NCBCPS have every right to create and promote a textbook, and organizations like those mentioned above have every right to offer endorsements. But for that textbook to be appropriate in a public school setting, its contents must be nonsectarian. The NCBCPS curriculum does not pass this test.

## WHICH BIBLE IN HISTORY AND LITERATURE?

The curriculum's description of the Bible reflects a distinctively sectarian perspective — that of Christianity. The Bible is said to consist of the “Old Testament” and the “New Testament.” The name “Old Testament” is used consistently throughout the text. Since Jews reject the authority of the New Testament, they do not use the term “Old Testament.” Because Jews do not believe in the New Testament, there is nothing “old” about the earlier testament. What Christians call the Old Testament, Jews call the Tanak, Mikra, or simply the Bible. Because these books were written primarily in Hebrew (a few parts are in the related language Aramaic), scholars often refer to them with a theologically neutral name, the “Hebrew Bible.”

The problem is more significant than terminology. Most textbooks end up utilizing one name or another, and at first it might seem that the curriculum's use of “Old Testament” is simply a matter of convenience. This illusion is dispelled, however, in the very first unit. Excerpts from a chart labeled “Introduction to the Bible” (p. 16) read:

There are 66 books in the entire Bible  
 39 in the Old Testament  
 27 in the New Testament

There are two major divisions in the Bible  
 Old Testament  
 New Testament

The divisions within the Old Testament are  
 History  
 Law  
 Poetry  
 Prophets (Major and Minor)

These are the divisions of the *Protestant*

*Christian* Bible; the fact that the Jewish Bible is different is not even mentioned. Though the Christian Old Testament and the Jewish Tanak have the same contents, they are arranged differently. The Tanak has 24 books, as opposed to 39 in the Old Testament, and they are arranged into three divisions, the Torah (Law), the Nebi'im (Prophets), and the Ketubim (Writings), not four, as in Christian Bibles. Some of the books are in a different order; for example, the Jewish Bible ends not with Malachi but with 1- 2 Chronicles. Students who are not already familiar with these significant differences will be unlikely to learn about them from this curriculum.<sup>20</sup> Nor are they likely to learn much about why some books are regarded as scripture and others not (what scholars call the “canonization process”) and how different versions of the Bible developed.

Similar sectarian presuppositions are reflected in Unit 12, “The Inter-testamental Period and Chanukah,” which focuses on Jewish history from 400 BCE to 70 CE.<sup>21</sup> The unit refers to this period variously as “Inter-testamental,” “Intertestamental,” and “Intestamentary.” The phrase “intertestamental,” though once common, is used less often today in scholarly literature because it presupposes the specifically Christian notion of two testaments. Most scholars would use terms like “early Judaism” or “Second Temple Judaism” to refer to this period.

The curriculum is not only generally Christian in orientation; it is specifically Protestant. The King James Version (KJV), a favorite among English-speaking conservative Protestants, is its standard. A statement on the opening page justifies this choice because of the KJV's “historic use as *the* [emphasis mine] legal and educational foundation of America.” Though the same statement notes that school districts and individuals might use

other translations, the translations and editions cited within the curriculum itself are almost always those used primarily in conservative Protestant circles. On page 11, for example, an exercise on the differences between translations directs students to “*The Message Bible, The Amplified Bible, the Moffatt translation, and the Living Bible.*” Teachers are often encouraged to use the background information provided in the *Ryrie Study Bible* and *Thompson’s Chain Reference Bible*.<sup>22</sup> I was unable to find references to modern Jewish or Roman Catholic translations, such as the *Jewish Study Bible* and the *New American Bible*, or to standard nonsectarian study Bibles such as the *HarperCollins Study Bible*, the *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, the *Oxford Access Bible*, or the *Interpreter’s Bible*.<sup>23</sup>

The curriculum’s specifically Protestant nature is also evident in the very first unit, “Introduction to the Bible.” The role of the Bible in Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christian thought receives little attention in this chapter. A section devoted to the history of the translation of the Bible culminates in a discussion of the King James Version and briefly treats early American Protestant translations but devotes few pages to the translations of other branches of Christianity.<sup>24</sup> The “Introduction to the Bible” chart on page 16 says that there are 39 books in the “Old Testament,” which is true for Protestants but not for Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox churches, whose Old Testaments include books that Protestants call the Apocrypha. The chart “Translations of the Bible” on page 56 says of the Vulgate, a fourth-century CE Latin version: “This translation was used primarily by the church” — a statement that ignores Eastern Orthodox churches entirely, with their Bibles in Greek and other languages. Indeed, Eastern Orthodox Christianity is virtually invisible in this curriculum.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, a later unit’s discussion of the Ten Commandments (pp. 99-105) also reflects a primarily Protestant perspective. It rightly notes that for Jews, Exodus 20:2 is the first commandment and Exodus 20:3 the second,

while for most Christians, Exodus 20:2-3 together make up the first commandment. Nowhere, however, is there any discussion of differences in the numbering of the Commandments between the various branches of Christianity, and the list of the Commandments on pages 103-105 follows a standard Protestant enumeration, without noting that the Roman Catholic enumeration is different.<sup>26</sup>

The answer key for a “Word List Exercise” on pages 49-51 provides a succinct example of the curriculum’s explicitly sectarian claims and Protestant nature:

- #1 “Bible — sacred book or collection of books accepted by the Christian church”
- #11 “Scripture — Old Testament and New Testament which makes up God’s written word”
- #14 “Canon — refers to list of individual books judged as authoritative and included in the Old Testament and the New Testament”
- #19 “Inspiration — term for the supernatural guidance of those who received special revelation from God.”

Students who study this curriculum are receiving an introduction to a *specific* Bible — the Protestant Bible. That Bible is presented as the standard; Bibles of other traditions, if they are mentioned at all, are often presented in ways that imply that they are deviations from that Protestant standard.<sup>27</sup>

## THE BIBLE AS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

Traditionally, Jews and Christians have believed their Bibles to be inspired. Groups and individuals are certainly entitled to proudly hold those beliefs and to encourage others to adopt them. A public school course on the Bible should acknowledge and might describe those beliefs. Legally, however, it cannot present those beliefs as factually true; to do so would compromise its nonsectarian nature.

This curriculum goes beyond observing that Christians and Jews believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible. It explicitly and repeatedly *endorses* those beliefs by presenting such inspiration as a fact. Furthermore, the curriculum attempts to persuade teachers and students to adopt views of the Bible that are common in some conservative Protestant circles but are rejected by most scholars (Christian and non-Christian), other branches of Christianity, and Jews. It presents its own sectarian views as objectively true, and in many cases those views are the only ones presented.

Examples of this problem include the following:

- The curriculum matter-of-factly refers to the Bible as the “Word God” [*sic* – apparently the text was supposed to read “Word of God”] (p. 45).
- The exercise noted above defines “Scripture” as “Old Testament and New Testament which makes up God’s written word” (pp. 49-51).
- A paragraph on the gospels directs the reader to “picture Matthew as he begins his inspired book” (p. 212).

In numerous cases, the curriculum presents the Bible’s theological positions as accurate:

- The diagram “The Tabernacle,” reprinted from a Rose Publishing resource, includes “Fascinating Facts about the Tabernacle” (p. 102). Under “What is the Tabernacle?” it reads:

“The Tabernacle and its courtyard were constructed according to a pattern set by God, not by Moses. We study the Tabernacle to understand the steps that the Lord laid out for a sinful people to approach a holy God.”

“The tabernacle of the Old Testament was a ‘shadow of things in heaven.’ Hebrews 8: 1-5 tells us that the real Tabernacle is in heaven. This is where Jesus himself is our high priest (Heb. 8:2).”

[The first statement presents a theological view of the Tabernacle as a factual and historical statement. The second statement assumes that the reader is Christian and presents a theological claim of the New Testament book of Hebrews as a factual and historical statement; it also reflects a belief in Christian “replacement theology,” that through Jesus the Jewish tabernacle was replaced by a heavenly tabernacle.]

- “Explain Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount compared with the Old Testament Law studied in Unit 6. How did Jesus ‘fulfill’ the Old Testament law through his teaching?” (p. 214).

[The assignment presents Jesus as the fulfillment of statements in the Old Testament, a Christian theological claim.]

As the rest of the report will indicate, such problems are not limited to the passages noted above; they are present throughout the curriculum.

## THE BIBLE AS HISTORY, THE PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE

This curriculum goes beyond a study of the Bible as literature, a summary of traditional views of the Bible, or a description of the importance of the Bible for the beliefs and practices of various religious groups. It explicitly takes positions on the historicity and dating of biblical events and on the authorship and dating of individual biblical books. While to some people these topics might seem noncontroversial, they are in fact hotly debated in scholarly literature and in classrooms at public and private colleges and universities as well as at Jewish and Christian seminaries. The Bible itself often does not provide enough information to date events, and the authorship of many books is disputed or unknown.<sup>28</sup>

By taking positions on such matters, the curriculum leaves literary analysis behind and makes historical claims. It problematically treats biblical stories as literal history — a position prohibited by the courts. According to one court, “to teach the Bible literally without interpretation is to convey a religious message or teach a religious lesson.”<sup>29</sup> Another court has ruled that Bible courses in public schools “may not be taught ... as if the Bible were actual literal history.”<sup>30</sup>

The curriculum’s typical reader is likely to assume that its positions reflect the scholarly consensus or at least the views of the majority of scholars. Unfortunately, this is often not the case. Its positions almost always, in fact, reflect particular theological (and thus sectarian) claims made within some conservative Protestant circles, claims of early datings of events and books, traditional authorship, and historical accuracy.

Consider the book’s treatment of the Exodus story (p. 88), which recounts the miraculous escape

of the ancient Hebrews from slavery under the Egyptians. It confidently dates the Exodus to 1446 BCE and presents no other scholarly views, such as those that place the Exodus in the 1200s BCE. The date of 1446 BCE is derived by a literalistic reading of a passage in 1 Kings 6:1 — a method that many scholars would greet with skepticism. The curriculum also ignores theories that raise other questions about the historicity of the Exodus.<sup>31</sup>

The curriculum also adopts a tone of assumed historicity when it discusses miracles and divine intervention. Its account of the Exodus is one example; others include its handling of Noah’s flood (p. 60), the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai (p. 99), the destruction of the Tower of Babel (pp. 168-169), and the Resurrection of Jesus (pp. 201-202, 231-233). The courts, however, have prohibited such an approach in public school settings. One court stated that presenting the biblical miracle stories as factual accounts of historical events was “inherently religious instruction, rather than objective, secular education, since much of the Bible is not capable of historic verification....”<sup>32</sup> Another has argued, “This Court too finds it difficult to conceive how the account of the resurrection or of miracles could be taught as secular history.”<sup>33</sup>

Not only does the curriculum treat the Bible as an inspired book and as literal history, it implies that the Bible is completely accurate in its historical claims, claims that this accuracy is confirmed by archaeology and the hard sciences, and argues that the words of the biblical books have been transmitted from the original authors to the present day without error or change. It is thus advocating a specific view of inspiration called “inerrancy,” in which the Bible is believed to be without error.<sup>34</sup> Though inerrancy is a very important theological

doctrine within some conservative Christian circles, it is not held by other Christian groups or in nonsectarian scholarly circles. (Needless to say, Jews do not view the New Testament as “inerrant.”) The curriculum nowhere uses the word “inerrant,” which would be immediately recognizable as sectarian language, but it appears to take this position for granted and represents views associated with it as fact.

The curriculum’s theological agenda is also visible in its presentation of archaeological data. The relationship between archaeological evidence and the historical accuracy of the Bible is complex. Archaeological finds have sometimes corroborated biblical stories, but they have also sometimes called the historical accuracy of the Bible into question.<sup>35</sup> The curriculum unambiguously claims, however, that archaeology consistently confirms the historicity of biblical stories. Its presentation of this issue is often over-simplified or even blatantly misleading, and it presents minority viewpoints within scholarship as the standard and neglects any evidence that does not support its own presuppositions. Examples include:

- “Among all the ancient works preserved extant the Bible exists with a greater number, antiquity, and quality of manuscripts and is corroborated by a greater number of material evidences (artifactual and epigraphical) than any other literary document” [*sic*] (p. 163).
- “Even parts of the Bible which involve ‘the miraculous’ in their interpretation of history sometimes have their own archaeological attestation” (p. 165).

[The subsequent text does not even support this point. It discusses the construction by King Hezekiah of a tunnel during the eighth-century BCE siege of Jerusalem — an event that was indeed remarkable, but not miraculous — as well as the discovery of that tunnel and the uncovering of Assyrian records of that siege.]

- A discussion of the rebuilding of a tower by Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar argues that the earlier tower was the biblical Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9): “During the millennium since God destroyed it, the tower was reduced from its original height...” (pp. 168-169).

[The context of this statement makes clear that the curriculum is not merely referring to the story of the Tower of Babel in a literary sense; it is claiming that the story is historically accurate, including its account of God’s intervention.]

- According to the curriculum, an inscription “confirms the biblical accuracy of one of the most famous stories in the Book of Genesis,” the story of the Tower of Babel (pp. 168-169).

[The inscription in question merely refers to the construction of a new tower on the site of an old tower; it does not confirm the biblical story.]

- “Respected scholar, Dr. J. O. Kinnaman, declared: ‘Of the hundreds of thousands of artifacts found by the archeologists, not one has ever been discovered that contradicts or denies one word, phrase, clause, or sentence of the Bible, but always confirms and verifies the facts of the Biblical record’” (p. 170).

[This quotation clearly illustrates the book’s apparent goal to convince students that archaeology consistently confirms the Bible’s accuracy. It also illustrates how the curriculum represents the authorities it cites. Here Kinnaman is said to be a “respected scholar.” Actually, Kinnaman’s name is largely unknown in contemporary academic circles, and most scholars would reject his theories if they heard of them. Kinnaman argued in his book *Diggers for Facts: The Bible in Light of Archaeology* that Jesus and Paul visited Great Britain, that Joseph of Arimathea was Jesus’ uncle and dominated the tin industry of Wales, and suggested that

he himself had personally seen Jesus' school records in India.<sup>36</sup> According to an article by Stephen Mehler, director of research at the Kinnaman Foundation, Kinnaman reported finding a secret entrance into the Great Pyramid of Giza, in which he discovered records from the lost continent of Atlantis. He also claimed that the pyramid was 35,000 years old and was used in antiquity to transmit radio messages to the Grand Canyon.<sup>37]</sup>

- The Cyrus cylinder, a sixth-century BCE clay cylinder with an inscription, is described in the curriculum as “confirmation of one of the most astonishing events in the pages of Scripture,” Ezra 1:1-3. This biblical passage asserts that Cyrus, King of Persia, announced that the god of the Jews had commanded him to allow captured Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. The curriculum asserts that the inscription proves that Cyrus was a “moderate and God-fearing monarch” (p. 179).

[The inscription on this cylinder does indeed corroborate Ezra's account that the Persian king Cyrus treated some of his subjects well, though it does not mention the Jews, Jerusalem, or the temple. The cylinder also does suggest that Cyrus was god-fearing — but the god it mentions is not the Jewish god but Marduk, a Babylonian god.<sup>38]</sup>

- The curriculum appeals for support to Henry M. Morris's *The Bible and Modern Science* for the argument that archaeological finds never call biblical account into question (p. 179).

[This book is decades old; it was originally published in 1951 and was revised in 1968.<sup>39</sup> All versions of this book are dedicated to proving that the Bible is inspired and inerrant — sectarian claims. Morris is well known for his defense of creation science, and according to the Moody Publishers Web site, he is president of the Institute for Creation Research.<sup>40]</sup>

Nowhere is the poor quality of scholarship, oversimplification of complex issues, advocacy of minority (sometimes fringe) views, and adoption of an explicitly Christian theological viewpoint more evident than in the curriculum's discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Unit 11). The Dead Sea Scrolls are hundreds of ancient manuscripts from approximately 150 BCE to 68 CE discovered in 1947 in caves at Qumran, near the Dead Sea. Many scholars have associated them with a particular Jewish sect, the Essenes. The Dead Sea Scrolls are brought up in the curriculum only to support the view of biblical inspiration described above and to provide background information about the world of Jesus. Very little attention is paid to their significance for understanding Judaism. The curriculum describes the importance of the Scrolls:

They attest as an archaeological record revealing persons and events described in the Bible, that the Bible is a reliable source, if not of greater reliability, as any of the other ancient documents regarded by historians as historical sources, for ancient history (p. 164).

Most scholars of early Judaism and early Christianity will be startled to learn from the curriculum that the “scrolls contain definite references to the New Testament and, more importantly, to Jesus of Nazareth,” that one scroll mentions the crucifixion of Jesus (p. 173), and that some Jews at Qumran accepted Jesus as the Messiah (pp. 174-175).<sup>41</sup> Robert H. Eisenman of California State University, cited in the curriculum, has received attention for similar arguments, but such views have been almost universally rejected in scholarship. Very, very few experts on the Scrolls (Jewish, Christian, or other) hold these positions.<sup>42</sup>

Scholars will be even more puzzled by a particular argument on page 174. After describing a particular scroll that refers to the “Branch of David” and (according to the curriculum) refers to a crucified Messiah, the text argues:



“The genealogies recorded in both Matthew [*sic*] and Luke’s Gospels, reveal that Jesus was the only one who could prove by the genealogical records kept in the Temple that He was the lineage of King David as the ‘Son of Jesse.’ Since the tragic destruction of the Temple and its records in AD 70, it would be impossible for anyone else to ever prove their claim to be the Messiah based on their genealogical descent from King David.... The evidence from the scroll suggests that the Jewish Essene writer acknowledged that Jesus of Nazareth was the ‘suffering Messiah’ who died for the sins of His people.”

#### This argument

- argues for Christian authorship of one of the Dead Sea Scrolls;
- represents as fact a sectarian claim, the Christian theological belief that Jesus was the Messiah;
- ignores the historical problems posed by Matthew’s and Luke’s genealogies, which are quite different from each other; and
- erroneously implies that the Jewish Temple was a vast depository of genealogical records.

Though my own research has focused on the Historical Jesus and early Judaism, I have never before encountered this extraordinarily idiosyncratic theory. To say that it is beyond the bounds of academic scholarship would be an understatement.

The curriculum also advocates a proposal by New Testament scholar Jose O’Callaghan that fragments of New Testament writings were found at the Dead Sea (pp. 176-178). The purported presence of these fragments is then cited as evidence for an early date of composition for certain New Testament books. The curriculum notes that O’Callaghan’s theory is controversial, but its discussion of the theory illustrates once again the problems of selection (topics are brought up primarily in relation to their potential

significance for Christianity, not Judaism) and adoption of minority viewpoints. The majority of biblical scholars (of all confessional backgrounds) have rejected O’Callaghan’s arguments.<sup>43</sup>

The Dead Sea Scrolls are also cited as proof for the accurate copying of the biblical text, which is explicitly described as divinely inspired. A reference on page 172 to a medieval Hebrew version of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament [what scholars call the Masoretic Text], reads:

“How could we be sure that the text in the AD 1100 copy of the Scriptures was identical with the original text as given to the writers by God and inspired by Him? ... How could the Bible have been copied so accurately and faithfully over the many centuries without human error entering into the text?”

Aside from advancing theological claims, the curriculum’s discussion here is problematic in other regards. According to it, the biblical manuscripts found at the Dead Sea were “virtually identical” with the Hebrew manuscripts used by the translators of the King James Version, spelling variations aside. This description ignores the complexity of our data: while it is true that some biblical scrolls found at Qumran were very similar to the Masoretic Text, others were quite different.<sup>44</sup> Elsewhere in this section, the curriculum erroneously refers to the Hebrew manuscripts used for the KJV as the *Textus Recepticus*. The term, properly spelled *Textus Receptus*, refers to the Greek text used for the KJV New Testament; it has nothing to do with Hebrew manuscripts.

A similar claim is later made about ancient and medieval Greek manuscripts of New Testament books (p. 181). While noting “numerous individual differences of spelling, et cetera” between the manuscripts, the text argues that

“this enormous and unprecedented number of manuscripts provides the strongest evidence possible, allowing scholars to check and trace the origin of the various readings to ascertain *with certainty* [emphasis mine] the original text.”

Approximately 5,500 ancient and medieval Greek manuscripts preserve the books of the New Testament. Some of those manuscripts are comparable in size to a credit card, while others contain the New Testament, the Christian Old Testament, and other books. The wordings of these various manuscripts are often quite different. Different ancient copies of the Gospel of Mark, for example, preserve several different endings at Chapter 16, some that include sightings of the resurrected Jesus and some that do not. Many scholars specialize in comparing the different manuscripts in an attempt to determine the original text of the New Testament. Few, if any, however, would repeat the curriculum’s boast that scholars have established the original text with certainty.<sup>45</sup>

In light of the above discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that the goals for Unit 12 (pp. 160-161) include:

- “Describe the impact of this discovery [the Dead Sea Scrolls] on those who do not accept the authenticity of the Bible.”
- “Determine the evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls confirming the claims of Jesus as the Bible describes him.”
- “The student will determine evidence from the scrolls that demonstrate a link between Judaism and Christianity.”

## THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

The curriculum's discussion of scientific issues also appears designed to support the theological claim that the Bible is completely accurate. It cites no scientific literature. The section titled "Science and the Bible" (pp. 259-263), with its subsections "Hydrological Cycle of Weather" and "The Complexity of Weather Patterns," argues that biblical writers accurately described the Earth's water system and wind patterns. The relationship of some claims (i.e., that the earth is perfectly sized, tilted, and situated in the solar system to sustain life) to the study of the Bible in history and literature is not clear, though it is important to note that similar claims are often made in "creation science" literature.<sup>46</sup> This section is based on a book by evangelist Grant R. Jeffrey, *The Signature of God*. The cover of at least some editions of this book proclaims it as "Documented Evidence That Proves Beyond Doubt the Bible is the Inspired Word of God."<sup>47</sup> Jeffrey's biography on his Web site notes no scientific training; it says that he earned a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies in the late 1990s at Louisiana Baptist University.<sup>48</sup> Louisiana Baptist University is not accredited by the standard academic accrediting agencies.<sup>49</sup>

The curriculum presents an urban legend as a scientific finding, claiming that scientists have confirmed the accuracy of the famous story in Joshua 10 of the sun standing still so that the Israelites would have sufficient time to defeat

the Canaanites. Page 117 suggests that the class "note in particular the interesting story of the sun standing still in chapter 10. There is documented research through NASA that two days were indeed unaccounted for in time (the other being in 2 Kings 20:8-11)." Both this page and page 116 provide the address for a Web page that presents this "interesting story" and NASA's alleged discovery of a "missing day" as facts.<sup>50</sup> Folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand has documented the evolution of the rumor that scientists have found a missing day, tracing it from the original claim made by an army officer in 1890 to the updated version cited above, which emerged in the 1960s in the early heyday of space exploration.<sup>51</sup> Brunvand's study verifies the nature of this claim as an urban legend with no basis in fact, as does a Web page posted on a NASA Web site.<sup>52</sup>

Carl Baugh, a creation scientist, is cited as an expert. Left unmentioned is that his doctorate (in education, not the sciences) was awarded by Pacific International University,<sup>53</sup> a distance-learning program of which Baugh himself is now president and which is unaccredited by the standard accreditation agencies.<sup>54</sup> A recommended link on the NCBCPS Web site leads to the home page of Baugh's Creation Evidence Museum, located in Glen Rose, Texas.<sup>55</sup> This organization believes in a six-day creation, a 6,000-year old Earth, and the simultaneous coexistence of humans and

dinosaurs. It has accepted donations to help fund the construction of a biosphere intended to replicate the atmospheric conditions prevalent before Noah's flood. Its Web site summarizes the contents of one of its videos, *Creation in Symphony: The Model*:

“A full-color illustration of the creation model with special effects showing: The scientific basis for the literal six-day creation. The firmamental canopy of the pre-Flood world and its effects on the environment. The geologic catastrophe of Noah's Flood. The current continuing decay of our ecosphere. The predicted restoration of the earth and the universe.”<sup>56</sup>

The NCBCPS curriculum:

- recommends the use of a “Comparison of Life Origins” poster distributed by the Creation Evidence Museum (pp. 3-4);
- contains instructions to “Read aloud Genesis 6-11. Show creation/flood videos by Dr. Carl Baugh. Two to four class periods” (p. 61); and
- recommends that the teacher “refer to videos here of Dr. Carl Baugh of Creation Evidence Museum. Show the videos and discuss scientific ideas concerning atmosphere, etc. presented by Dr. Baugh” (p. 262).

## AMERICA AS A CHRISTIAN NATION

Almost an entire unit of the curriculum is devoted to depicting the United States as a historically Christian nation — with the strong implication that it should reclaim that purported heritage. One need not even open the book to find this agenda. The cover is decorated not with biblical or archaeological imagery, but with a photograph of the Declaration of Independence and an American flag. The title pages of all but three units depict either the flag, the Declaration, and/or the Constitution.<sup>57</sup> Visually, the curriculum seems to Americanize the Bible and Christianize American symbols.

Unit 6, “Hebrew Law,” not only provides an overview of the Ten Commandments but also presents them as the primary source of American law and implies that biblical laws should be more fully implemented in American society. Its emphasis on the possibility of adopting biblical law has strong points of contact with the sectarian Dominion theology movement.<sup>58</sup> Passages that illustrate this tendency include:

- “American law documents will be examined to determine the relationship of the Hebrew law to American law” (p. 97).
- “Explain what effect there would be on our American way of life if legislators adopted the Mosaic Civil and Moral laws” (p. 97).
- “Read aloud Exodus 20 and assign the Ten Commandments for review work. Discussion will be over the application of the Ten Commandments to American law statutes and documents” (p. 98)
- “To what extent should the principles of the Mosaic Law apply to our society today? Why?” (p. 100)
- “We say in our Pledge of Allegiance, ‘One nation under God,’ and our coins contain

the inscription ‘In God We Trust.’ What does the First Amendment say about church/state relations? ‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof’” (p. 100).

- “Should there be a distinction between civil and moral laws? Should the laws of our society be based on moral values?” (p. 101)
- “Our second President, John Adams, wrote, ‘As much as I love, esteem and admire the Greeks, I believe the Hebrews have done more to enlighten and civilize the world. Moses did more than all their legislators and philosophers.’ Would you agree?” (p. 101).

No one can question the importance of the Bible as a whole and the Ten Commandments in particular for the development of western and American law, and students would do well to be familiar with this important topic. The book’s presentation of this issue, however, virtually ignores all other sources of western law and other influences on the Founding Fathers. In doing so, it vastly oversimplifies a complex issue. Since the Bible is the only influence discussed in any detail in Unit 6, it seems clear what the expected answer is when students are asked to consider Adams’ statement above.

A section entitled “THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE CONTAINED IN KENTUCKY’S CIVIL AND CRIMINAL LAWS AND SIMILARLY IN THE LEGAL CODES OF EVERY OTHER STATE IN AMERICA” compares the Ten Commandments with Kentucky Revised Statutes (pp. 103-105). Some of these comparisons make more sense than others. “Thou shalt keep the Sabbath holy” is compared to Sunday work laws, though the fact that the commandment originally referred to the Jewish Sabbath, not

the Christian Sabbath, is not specified. Other comparisons appear to endorse specific positions on controversial political issues. “Thou shalt not kill” is presented as the foundation for prohibitions of the “performance of abortion on minor.” “Honor thy father and thy mother” is related to laws requiring parental consent for the “performance of abortions on a minor.” “Thou shalt have no graven images before thee” is cited as the foundation for laws about obscenity, pornography, and sexual exploitation of minors. While not defending any of these latter activities, I would note that the original context of this commandment explicitly refers to the manufacture of idols. The leap of logic from a prohibition of idolatry to these particular laws is not explained.

The book relies heavily on the thought of David Barton, a member of the NCBCPS Board of Advisors. Barton is the founder and president of WallBuilders, an organization based in Aledo, Texas, that argues against the separation of church and state.<sup>59</sup> His books include *Original Intent: The Courts, the Constitution, & Religion* and *The Myth of Separation: What is the correct relationship between Church and State?*<sup>60</sup> Barton’s resources are recommended throughout the curriculum, and the NCBCPS sells his products directly from its own Web site. Barton’s video, *Foundations of American Government*, is suggested viewing for students even before they begin reading Genesis (p. 62). This video argues (among other things) that increases in sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancies, divorces, and violent crimes can be attributed to the Supreme Court’s 1962 church-state separation ruling in *Engel v. Vitale*, which struck down official prayer in public schools.<sup>61</sup> Of the curriculum’s 34 footnotes (pp. 288-290),<sup>62</sup> 12 cite Barton’s books.

Much of Unit 17, “The Bible in History,” which emphasizes the importance of Christianity for the Founding Fathers,<sup>63</sup> is based directly on Barton’s arguments (pp. 242-248). Pages 249-258 are an assortment of quotations about the importance of the Bible and Christianity from figures ranging

from George Washington, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Jefferson to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry S Truman, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan. The authenticity of several of this unit’s quotations has been called into question.<sup>64</sup> Those on pages 249-258 are set against a backdrop of an image of soldiers with an early American flag.<sup>65</sup> The unit as a whole echoes the characterization of the King James Version as “*the* [emphasis mine] legal and educational foundation of America” on the curriculum’s opening page.

The curriculum suggests that the Founding Fathers intended to found a distinctively Christian nation. Evidence to the contrary and other views are ignored.<sup>66</sup> Findings from an influential article by Donald S. Lutz are presented to show that the Founders cited the Bible more than any other source (p. 248).<sup>67</sup> The curriculum includes a chart from Lutz’s study that compares the percentage of quotations in early American political literature from the Bible and those from Enlightenment, Whig, Common Law, Classical, and other sources (p. 243).<sup>68</sup> The chart is accurately reproduced, though the emphasis of the curriculum is quite different from that of Lutz. In his article, Lutz notes that the influence of the Bible on colonial thought is a topic that merits further study, but his main point is to document the influence of European thinkers such as Locke and Montesquieu. The data for his study came from public political literature from 1760-1805, some 15,000 items total. Though these items include well-known works like the *Federalist Papers*, they also include a wide variety of other materials. In the pre-Revolutionary War period in particular, 80 percent of political pamphlets were reprinted sermons. It is thus not surprising that biblical quotations are so amply represented in the surviving literature from those years.<sup>69</sup> Lutz’s work does demonstrate the importance of the “Judeo-Christian” tradition for colonial thought, but his arguments are far more nuanced than the curriculum’s brief presentation suggests.<sup>70</sup>

Nonetheless, after presenting Lutz's chart, the curriculum states, "In fact, some have even conceded that 'historians are discovering that the Bible, perhaps even more than the Constitution, is our Founding Document'" (p. 243). This quotation originated not with Lutz or other scholars but with journalists.<sup>71</sup> Noting the presence of Leviticus 25: 10 on the Liberty Bell, the curriculum comments, "The symbol most closely associated with the Revolution proclaims that the Bible and civil government were bound together" (pp. 244-245). Page 245 states as fact: "The transcendent values of Biblical natural law were *the* [emphasis mine] foundation of the American republic."

Even something as seemingly uncontroversial as a dictionary recommendation reflects this agenda. The list of study guides on page 5 includes a single English dictionary, the 1828 edition of *Noah Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language*. Contact information for the publisher, the Foundation for American Christian Education (FACE), is provided. A visit to FACE's Web site reveals that this particular edition contains "the greatest number of Biblical definitions given in any reference volume." An advertisement there reads, "This dictionary is needed to Restore an American Christian Education in the Home, Church, and School."<sup>72</sup>

## OTHER ISSUES OF ACADEMIC QUALITY AND RELIABILITY

This book contains a surprising number of basic copy editing errors. Incorrect spellings and typographical errors are abundant, as are errors in capitalization, punctuation and sentence construction. Spellings of names and technical terms vary widely.<sup>73</sup> Factual errors, unsubstantiated claims, examples of faulty logic, and unclear wording are also common. The curriculum repeatedly contradicts itself, sometimes even within a single paragraph.<sup>74</sup>

Examples are too numerous to list, but the following are representative:

- In a comparison of the ancient Jewish and Babylonian calendars, the curriculum states: “Both calendars were based on twelve-30-day months, or a total of 360 days ....” (p. 14).

[In antiquity, some Jews used a 364-day solar calendar but most used a 354-day lunar calendar, with an extra month added some years to bring it in line with the solar calendar. This latter calendar is still used within modern Judaism. There is no reason to believe that the Jewish calendar was ever 360 days long.<sup>75</sup>]

- “From the moment the Samaritan colonists moved into the center of Israel, they found themselves in opposition to the Jewish people who returned from the Babylonian Captivity, which continued into the time of Christ’s ministry” (p. 59).

[The Samaritans were not colonists, though they are believed by some to be the descendents of Assyrian colonists and Israelites. The curriculum does not reflect an understanding of the sequence of historical

events. Assyrian colonists arrived in Samaria after 722 BCE, but the main deportations associated with the Babylonian Exile did not happen until 597 and 587/586 BCE. Jews did not return from the Babylonian Exile until after 538 BCE. Thus, arriving “Samaritan” colonists could not have encountered Jews returning from the Babylonian Exile, which had not yet occurred. It is unclear from the sentence what “continued into the time of Christ’s ministry.” If the sentence refers to the Babylonian Captivity, then it is inaccurate. Perhaps it refers to opposition between Jews and Samaritans.<sup>76</sup>]

- The answer key to a quiz on Exodus identifies a pharaoh in Genesis as “Hyksos” (p. 87).

[“Hyksos” was not the name of a pharaoh; it was the name of an Asiatic-Semitic people who ruled Egypt as the Fifteenth Dynasty. Neither Genesis nor Exodus uses the word “Hyksos.”<sup>77</sup>]

- “Remind the class that there is a word which is common to all peoples in all languages, and that word is hallelujah — Praise the Lord — and that from this word comes the Hebrew title for this Book of Psalms, *Tehillia* — a book of praises to God” (p. 134).

[The claim is unsubstantiated. Do we know if the word “hallelujah” is present in every language in the world? If so, what source can we consult to learn more about this? In addition, the Hebrew title of Psalms is *Tehillim*, not “Tehillia.” The word “hallelujah” is not derived from *Tehillim*. Instead, both words are related to the Hebrew verb “h-l-l,” which means “to praise.”]



- One of the goals of the discussion of poetry in the New Testament is defined as: “To understand, from the verse, why Luke’s Gospel is sometimes called the most beautiful of all books in any language” (p. 138).

[We know that this claim is “sometimes” made about Luke because, in effect, the authors of the curriculum have just made it. But who else has suggested this? How would someone demonstrate that Luke is the most beautiful book ever written? Who would know every language and thus be qualified to make such a claim? What does this statement imply about the merits of other poetic works written from different faith perspectives, in different languages, by people in different cultures?]

- “Read ‘The Magnificat’ [Luke 1:46-55, not 1: 48-55 as specified in the curriculum] and Hannah’s ‘Song’ in I Samuel 2:1-10. Compare and consider the simple monosyllabic words used by Mary to those of Old Testament poetry. How is this typical of the Hebrews?” (p. 138)

[The words in these passages may be monosyllabic (consisting of one syllable) in English translations, but they are quite different in Hebrew and Greek. How English syllabification provides insight into the ancient Hebrew mindset is not explained.]

- “Many mysteries will be solved when the four hundred unpublished scrolls [the Dead Sea Scrolls] are finally published in the next few years” (p. 178).

[The Dead Sea Scrolls have now largely been published.<sup>78</sup>]

- “On December 25, they [the Maccabees] celebrated [the rededication of the temple]

with a feast of dedication which has become known as Hannukkah” [*sic*] (p. 188).

[The temple was rededicated on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the Jewish month Kislev, not the 25<sup>th</sup> day of December.<sup>79</sup>]

- Pharisees are described as a “militant religious group” (p. 188).

[It is unclear what the authors intend by the description of the Pharisees as “militant,” but it is not a characterization with which most scholars would agree.<sup>80</sup>]

- After Rome’s conquest of Palestine in 63 BCE, “the Jewish state was divided into five districts governed by a council known as the Sanhedrin” (p. 188).

[No evidence supports the assertion that the Sanhedrin governed these five districts, which we know about only through the writings of the late first-century CE historian Josephus.<sup>81</sup>]

- “In 32 BC Herod was made King of the Jews” (p. 188; cf. the same date on 193); elsewhere, the curriculum says that Herod was appointed king in 39 BCE and began to rule in 37 BCE (196).

[Herod was appointed king c. 40 BCE and gained control of Palestine c. 37 BCE.<sup>82</sup>]

- A summary chart, “Notes on Leaders of Israel,” describes as one of Herod’s accomplishments: “Good he did: Built a synagogue” (p. 193).

[Herod renovated and expanded the Jewish temple in Jerusalem; he did not build a synagogue. The temple and synagogues were separate and different institutions.<sup>83</sup>]

- Writing about the Herodian king Archelaus, the curriculum says that he “flourished 4 BC-10 AD” (p. 196).

[Archelaus reigned from 4 BCE to 6 CE.<sup>84</sup>]

- A timeline states that the Roman general Trajan destroyed Jerusalem and the Jewish temple in 70 CE (p. 202).

[General Titus, who later became emperor, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple — not Trajan.<sup>85</sup>]

- “Paul wrote Romans through Hebrews (authorship of Hebrews is disputed)” (p. 209).

[This sentence rightly notes that the authorship of Hebrews is disputed but wrongly implies that Paul was probably the author. The book of Hebrews does not identify its author, who remains unknown to this day.<sup>86</sup> Paul has sometimes been proposed as the author, but few scholars hold this position today. Page 241 is clearer on this topic.]

- In a true/false quiz, the statement “A sword pierced Jesus’ side” is designated “T” (p. 233).

[Apparently, the question refers to John 19:34, in which a soldier pierces Jesus’ side with a spear, not a sword.]

## THE CURRICULUM'S USE OF SOURCES

Much of the information presented in this curriculum for lecture preparation is derived directly from other sources of varying academic quality. It occasionally provides inaccurate or incomplete information about the works and individuals it cites. In some cases, the curriculum explicitly adopts the sectarian claims of its sources. It also repeats many of their errors.

A considerable amount of the curriculum's content is reproduced nearly word for word from its sources, often for pages at a time, though the curriculum does not note this. In addition, several units include materials for which no sources are cited, but for which verbatim or near verbatim matches can be found elsewhere. For many pages, an online search of any phrase will produce an exact match.<sup>87</sup>

The problem is greater than occasional paragraphs or unacknowledged quotations. There is very little original material in the sections of this book devoted to lecture content and background information. When the number of pages copied directly from sources with minimal or no rewording and pages identical or nearly identical to uncited sources are totaled, the count approaches 100 — approximately a third of the book. It is quite possible that additional pages not specified below are also directly reliant on other sources.

Proper citation of sources is expected not only in scholarly writing, but also at the high school and college level. Authors must make clear when and how they are using their sources, especially if they are quoting them directly. Otherwise, the reader is left to assume that the words in the text are the authors' own.<sup>88</sup>

Of the pages in the curriculum *not* discussed below, most consist of recommended resources, sample lesson plans, background material,

suggested readings and videos, visual aids, recommended activities, quizzes and worksheets.

Appendix I in this report summarizes the findings described below.

### Unit 1: "Introduction to Bible Study"

A sentence at the bottom of page 47 states, "The information on pages 17-47 is derived from *The Dead Sea Scrolls To The Bible In America* by Dr. Lee Biondi." I was unable to locate a book by this name, but I did obtain Lee Biondi, *From the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Forbidden Book*.<sup>89</sup> This book is a guide to a well-known traveling museum exhibit of the same name of which Biondi is the primary curator. Biondi is a book collector from the Los Angeles area, and he is apparently well-known and respected in antiquities and rare book circles. To my knowledge, he is not a biblical scholar and does not have a doctoral degree.<sup>90</sup>

The brief note on page 47 does not make clear the extent of Unit 1's dependence on its source. It creates the appearance that the authors have merely utilized Biondi's book while writing pages 17-47. In fact, pages 17-47 are a nearly exact reproduction of passages in Biondi; the curriculum simply reprints them, sometimes with minor rewording but more often in their original form. The curriculum itself twice refers to other items in the "exhibit," (pp. 45, 46), though it has nowhere indicated that its discussion is drawn from an exhibit guide.

The curriculum does not take advantage of Biondi's helpful discussion of the canonization process and differences between the Bibles of Jews, Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox Christians. Instead, it simply follows the Protestant Bible, a sectarian stance.

#### Unit 4: “Moses in Egypt”

A discussion of “The Date and Pharaoh of the Exodus” identifies its source as “Robert Cornuke, P.h.D.” [*sic*] (87-88). Cornuke, who also sits on the NCBCPS Advisory Board, is the president of Bible Archaeology Search and Exploration Institute (B.A.S.E.). His books include accounts of his search for the Ark of the Covenant, Noah’s Ark, and Mount Sinai (which he and the curriculum [p. 118] place in Saudi Arabia, not the Sinai peninsula); they are popular-level accounts that have not received much attention in scholarly circles. According to its Web site, B.A.S.E. is “dedicated to the quest for archaeological evidence to help validate to the world that the Bible is true, and that it represents an accurate, nonfictional account of God’s will to bring the people of this world back into relationship with Him.”<sup>91</sup>

An endorsement at the NCBCPS Web site identifies Louisiana Baptist University as the school from which Cornuke earned his doctorate; this school is unaccredited by the standard agencies.<sup>92</sup> Though the curriculum presents Cornuke as an academic, the B.A.S.E. Web site says otherwise: “Bob Cornuke does not claim to be an academic, a scholar, or even a scholarly trained biblical exegete. He merely profess [*sic*] to take the Bible and the oldest, earliest extrabiblical witnesses at face value; and then initiate original research and on-site investigation in a manner consistent with his training in law enforcement.”<sup>93</sup>

#### Unit 6: “Hebrew Law”

Unit 6’s discussion of the meaning of the Ten Commandments (pp. 103-105) cites no source, but its wording is identical to that of an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century commentary by Adam Clarke.<sup>94</sup> Explanation of “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” for example, reads:

“Not only Adultery, the unlawful commerce between two married persons, is forbidden here, but also fornication and all kinds of mental and sensual uncleanness. All impure books, songs, paintings, etc., which tend to inflame and debauch the mind, are against this law.”

Readers may judge for themselves how close the curriculum’s discussion is to that of Clarke by comparing it with the online version of Clarke’s commentary or by doing an online search of phrases from the paragraph above. Use of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century source might explain why the curriculum specifies that “Thou shalt not steal” applies to slave trading.

#### Unit 9: “Literature Highlights”

Unit 9 includes a section titled “Shakespeare and the Bible” (pp. 141-142) for which the sources are unclear. The first two lines read “Most of the notes for this come from Carter, Thomas. Shakespeare and Holy Scripture. New York: AMS Press, 1970 [1905].” The impression given is that the curriculum’s authors have based their discussion on Carter’s study.

The content of page 141 and the first half of 142, however, match writing posted online in “Notes on Shakespeare and the Bible” on “Don King’s Literature Page.”<sup>95</sup> King is Professor of English at Montreat College. Page 142 has an oddly placed reference to “Dr. Don King, Editor, *Christian Scholar’s Review* Montreat College, Montreat, NC 28757,” but offers no explanation for why this information is included. The curriculum does not indicate explicitly that it has reproduced King’s material verbatim. Since all of this section appears to have been reproduced from King’s article, there is no indication here that the curriculum’s authors have consulted the source they cite, Carter’s *Shakespeare and Holy Scripture*.

Paragraph 3 on page 142 is identical to sentences found in an article by Arthur L. Farstad, “Shakespeare, the Bible, and Grace.”<sup>96</sup> The curriculum does not cite this source.

#### Unit 11: “The Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Archaeological Finds”

The opening page of this chapter (p. 160) notes: “This unit is predominantly based on the writings of Dr. Randall Price, assistant director of the Qumran Plateau Excavation Project in Israel. Dr. Price holds a Th.M.

in Hebrew and Semitic Languages, a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern and Asian Literature and Languages, and has studied ancient history and archeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This unit also includes the writings of Dr. Grant R. Jeffrey. Recommended Reference: Randall Price. 1996. *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Oregon: Harvest House Publishers.”

Price’s Ph.D. is from University of Texas-Austin;<sup>97</sup> Jeffrey’s, however, is from an unaccredited school, Louisiana Baptist University.<sup>98</sup> This paragraph suggests, perhaps, that Price’s book, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, is the unit’s primary source, with supplemental use of Jeffrey’s writings. In fact, most of the unit (168-179 and 181) relies on Jeffrey’s book, *The Signature of God*; many of the excerpts it prints are also available online.<sup>99</sup>

I could find nothing in Price’s *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls* that corresponds to the material on pages 163-167, which appear to be taken verbatim from some other uncited publication by Price. Footnote 3 on page 164 reads, “For a discussion of the parallels between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament see my book *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (chapter 8).” These pages include lengthy footnotes that interact in detail with reputable scholarly sources, footnotes apparently found in the Price original. They are the only pages in the entire curriculum that actually interact with scholarly literature in biblical studies.

Pages 168-179 and 181 consist entirely of verbatim or near verbatim quotations of Grant R. Jeffrey’s book *The Signature of God*.<sup>100</sup> Five footnotes in this section cite *The Signature of God*, but they provide no page numbers and do not indicate that they are quoting him directly. Jeffrey (and thus the curriculum) argues that Jesus is mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls and that fragments of the New Testament were found in the Dead Sea caves — positions that, ironically, Price treats with skepticism in *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. The unit thus advocates positions rejected by the scholar it presents as its main authority (Price).

### **Unit 12: “The Inter-testamental Period and Chanukah” [sic]**

The wording of the sections titled “Pilate” and “Herod,” which constitute pages 195-196 in their entirety, is identical to that of passages from the articles “Pilate, Pontius,” and “Herod the Great” in *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2001*. No source is cited.

### **Unit 15: “The Final Week of the Life of Jesus”**

Pages 236-237 are entitled “The Pain of Crucifixion.” On p. 237, the source is indicated as an article by William D. Edwards in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Many of the phrases of the Edwards article are reproduced with only slight rewording.<sup>101</sup>

### **Unit 17: “The Bible in History”**

This unit cites David Barton’s books, *Original Intent* and *The Myth of Separation* several times. It does not make clear, however, that much of its discussion is drawn word for word from those books. Barton holds a B.A. from Oral Roberts University; his online biography notes no advanced training in American history or political science.<sup>102</sup>

Pages 259-262 contain a discussion of the Bible and science. Pages 259-260 and 262 are reproduced verbatim from Grant Jeffrey’s *The Signature of God*. A single footnote on 262 refers without comment to this book; it does not provide page numbers or indicate the use of Jeffrey’s exact words.

Page 261 is identical in wording to a passage in Biondi, *From the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Forbidden Book*, page 52, though Biondi is not cited here.

### **Unit 18: “Biblical Art”**

The introduction to this unit, “Religion in Art; The New and the Old” (pp. 264-265) provides, without comment, an Internet address at its conclusion: “(Http://user.1st.net/jimlane/2001arch/1-4-01.html)”. Unfortunately, this address was not functional when the present report was composed. However, a “Google” search of phrases from these pages produced a cached Web page of an article submitted by Jim Lane on January 4, 2001.<sup>103</sup> These

two pages in the curriculum reproduce the wording of Lane's article exactly.

No source is identified for the commentary that accompanies eight reproductions of paintings, and no source is cited for the remainder of this unit's lecture/ background material (pp. 266-285), which consists of biographies of "Leonardo Da Vinci" [*sic*], Caravaggio, Rubens, and Michelangelo. However, the wording of pages 266-285 in their entirety is identical or nearly identical to biographies of these figures posted online at the "Web Gallery of Art."<sup>104</sup>

Readers of this report can evaluate the similarity of the curriculum's content to online material by performing an online search of phrases from the following paragraph (from page 274 in the curriculum), or comparing it with the Rubens biography on the "Web Gallery of Art" Web site:<sup>105</sup>

"At the age of 10, Peter Paul was sent with his brother Philip to a Latin school in Antwerp. In 1590, shortage of money and the need to provide a dowry for his sister Blandina forced Rubens' mother to break off his formal education and send him as a page to the Countess of Lalaing. Soon tired of courtly life, Rubens was allowed to become a painter. He was sent first to his kinsman Tobias Verhaecht, a minor painter of Mannerist landscapes. Having quickly learned the rudiments of his profession, he was apprenticed for four years to an abler master, Adam van Noort, and subsequently to Otto van Veen, one of the most distinguished of the Antwerp Romanists, a group of Flemish artists who had gone to Rome to study the art of antiquity and the Italian Renaissance."

## APPENDIX I

## THE CURRICULUM, ITS SOURCES, AND UNEXPLAINED SIMILARITIES IN WORDING

References below to pages in the curriculum generally refer to those pages in their entirety, unless line or paragraph numbers are provided.

Note: para = paragraph(s)

**Use and Reproductions of Cited Sources**

In many cases identified below, the curriculum's citations are unclear or ambiguous, and the extent of verbal agreement with its sources is not indicated.

<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Sources</b>
17-19, 22-47 line 3 (Unit 1)	Lee Biondi, <i>From the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Forbidden Book</i> (Lee Biondi, 2003, 2004), 13-51
59 (Unit 1)	Grant R. Jeffrey, <i>The Signature of God</i> (Toronto: Frontier Research Publications, 1998), 24-25 <sup>106</sup>
102 (Unit 6)	reproduction of diagram "The Tabernacle" from Rose Publishing
118 (Unit 8)	reproduction of map placing Mt. Sinai in Saudi Arabia, from <a href="http://www.baseinstitute.org">www.baseinstitute.org</a> , adapted from Howard Blum, <i>The Gold of Exodus: The Discovery of the True Mount Sinai</i> (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998)
141-142 para. 2 (Unit 9)	Don King, "Notes on Shakespeare and the Bible," at <a href="http://www.montreat.edu/dking/Shakespeare/SHAKESPEAREANDTHEBIBLE.htm">www.montreat.edu/dking/Shakespeare/SHAKESPEAREANDTHEBIBLE.htm</a>
163-167 (Unit 11)	Unit introduction says it is based on writings of Randall Price. No source is cited for 163-167, but they appear to be a verbatim or near verbatim reproduction of a publication by Price.
168-169 (Unit 11)	Jeffrey, <i>The Signature of God</i> , 30-33
170 (Unit 11)	Jeffrey, <i>The Signature of God</i> , 74-75
171 (Unit 11)	Jeffrey, <i>The Signature of God</i> , 78-80
172-178 para. 1 (Unit 11)	Jeffrey, <i>The Signature of God</i> , 114-125
178 para. 2-179 (Unit 11)	Jeffrey, <i>The Signature of God</i> , 83-86

181 (Unit 11)	Jeffrey, <i>The Signature of God</i> , 100-101
199-200 (Unit 12)	reproduction of maps from Rose Publishing
201-202 (Unit 12)	reproduction of timelines from Rose Publishing
236-237 (Unit 15)	William D. Edwards, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," <i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i> 255:11 (1986) 1455-1463; cf. "Study on the Physical Death of Jesus Christ" at <a href="http://www.frugalsites.net/jesus/welcome.htm">www.frugalsites.net/jesus/welcome.htm</a>
245 para. 2-6	David Barton, <i>Original Intent: The Courts, the Constitution, &amp; Religion</i> (Aledo: WallBuilder Press, 2000), 336, 102-103
246-247	David Barton, <i>The Myth of Separation: What is the correct relationship between Church and State</i> (Aledo: WallBuilder Press, 1992), 90, 129
262 (Unit 17)	Jeffrey, <i>The Signature of God</i> , 143-145
264-265 (Unit 18)	cites <a href="http://user.1st.net.jimlane/2001arch/1-4-01.html">http://user.1st.net.jimlane/2001arch/1-4-01.html</a> . Site is no longer posted; cf. Google cache of a posting at <a href="http://www.humanitiesweb.org/perl/human.cgi?s=h&amp;p=i&amp;a=e&amp;ID=106">www.humanitiesweb.org/perl/human.cgi?s=h&amp;p=i&amp;a=e&amp;ID=106</a> .

### Passages with Unexplained Similarities in Wording to Uncited Sources

#### Curriculum

7-8 (Unit 1)

103-105 (Unit 6) <sup>107</sup>

142 para. 3 (Unit 9)

195-196 (Unit 12)

243 para. 1-2 (Unit 17)

244 para. 2-245 para 1 (Unit 17)

259-260 (Unit 17)

261 (Unit 17)

266-279 (Unit 18)

280-285 (Unit 18)

#### Other Sources

Biondi, *From the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Forbidden Book*, 71-72

Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, the text carefully printed from the most correct copies of the present authorized translation, including the marginal readings and parallel texts* (New York : G. Lane & P. P. Sandford, 1843, first published 1810-1825), 400-407; text available online at [www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarkeexo20.htm](http://www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarkeexo20.htm)

Arthur L. Farstad, "Shakespeare, the Bible, and Grace," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 4:1 (1991): 47-63, specifically 52; cf. the online version of this article at <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1991i/Shake.html>

"Pilate, Pontius," and "Herod the Great," in *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2001* (Microsoft Corporation, 1993-2000)

Barton, *Original Intent*, 225-226, cf. *The Myth of Separation*, 201

Barton, *The Myth of Separation*, 100

Jeffrey, *The Signature of God*, 127-128, 140-142

Biondi, *From the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Forbidden Book*, 52

artist biography entries at [www.wga.hu](http://www.wga.hu); compare with [www.intofineart.com](http://www.intofineart.com)

<http://gallery.euroweb.hu/bio/m/michelan/biograph.html>



## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See the excellent discussions of this issue in the following publications: Charles C. Haynes and Oliver Thomas, *Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public Schools* (Nashville: First Amendment Center, 2001); *A Teacher's Guide to Religion in the Public Schools* (Nashville: First Amendment Center, 1999); *The Bible & Public Schools: A First Amendment Guide* (New York: Bible Literacy Center, Nashville: First Amendment Center, 1999), all available online at the First Amendment Center Web site ([www.firstamendmentschools.org/resources/publications.aspx](http://www.firstamendmentschools.org/resources/publications.aspx)); and the articles in *Spotlight on Teaching* 17 (March 2002), especially David Levenson, "University Religion Department and Teaching about the Bible in Public High Schools: A Report from Florida," available online at the Web site of the American Academy of Religion, the primary American professional society for scholars in all fields of religious studies: [www.aarweb.org/teaching/ris/publications.asp](http://www.aarweb.org/teaching/ris/publications.asp). These resources proved invaluable in shaping my thinking as I wrote this report.
- <sup>2</sup> See discussion under "Overview of the Curriculum."
- <sup>3</sup> One looks in vain, for example, for signs of extensive use of works by Walter Brueggemann (p. 2) or Samuel Sandmel (p. 127), or of the list of works on Shakespeare (pp. 143-144).
- <sup>4</sup> Adam L. Porter's textbook, *Introducing the Bible: An Active Learning Approach* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2004), contains numerous exercises that emphasize transferable skills. The Bible Literacy Project ([www.bibleliteracy.org](http://www.bibleliteracy.org)) will soon release a textbook designed for high school usage. See also Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, 6th ed. (McGraw Hill, 2002); James R. Beasley, Clyde E. Fant, E. Early Joiner, Donald W. Musser, and Mitchell G. Reddish, *An Introduction to the Bible*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001); J. Bradley Chance and Milton P. Horne, *Rereading the Bible: An Introduction to the Biblical Story* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2000); Christian E. Hauer and William A. Young, *An Introduction to the Bible*, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1998).
- <sup>5</sup> Yonat Shimron, "The Bible Returns: Religion's Revival in North Carolina Schools," *Raleigh News & Observer*, January 25, 1998.
- <sup>6</sup> [www.bibleinschools.net](http://www.bibleinschools.net); for a list of the 36 states, see [www.bibleinschools.net/sdm.asp?pg=implemented](http://www.bibleinschools.net/sdm.asp?pg=implemented).
- <sup>7</sup> David McLemore, "Elective Bible Classes Prompt Concern," *Dallas Morning News*, May 1, 2005.
- <sup>8</sup> William Fisher, "Rightists Step Up Drive to Get More Bibles into Schools," IPS-Inter Press Service/Global Information Network, May 5, 2005.
- <sup>9</sup> [www.bibleinschools.net/sdm.asp](http://www.bibleinschools.net/sdm.asp).
- <sup>10</sup> A table of contents from an earlier edition is available at [www.bibleinschools.net](http://www.bibleinschools.net).
- <sup>11</sup> Walter M. Abbott, Arthur Gilbert, Rolfe Lanier Hunt, and J. Carter Swaim, *The Bible Reader: An Interfaith Interpretation*, 2 vols. (London: Geoffrey Chapman and New York: Bruce Books, 1969).
- <sup>12</sup> James S. Ackerman and Thayer S. Warshaw, *The Bible As/ In Literature*, 2nd ed. (Glennview, Ill.: ScottForesman, 1995).
- <sup>13</sup> [www.bibleinschools.net](http://www.bibleinschools.net).
- <sup>14</sup> Fisher, "Rightists."
- <sup>15</sup> David Van Biema et al., "The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America," *Time*, February 7, 2005, pages 34ff.
- <sup>16</sup> [www.reclaimamerica.org](http://www.reclaimamerica.org).
- <sup>17</sup> [www.towardtradition.org/mission.htm](http://www.towardtradition.org/mission.htm).
- <sup>18</sup> [www.worldofthebible.com/ourstaff.htm](http://www.worldofthebible.com/ourstaff.htm).
- <sup>19</sup> For more information on Cornuke, see discussion in the chapter on "The Curriculum's Use of Sources."
- <sup>20</sup> Many textbooks begin with a discussion of this important topic. See the works cited in note 4.
- <sup>21</sup> Many scholars prefer to use the neutral term BCE ("Before the Common Era") instead of BC ("Before Christ") and CE ("Common Era") instead of AD (*anno Domini*, not "annodomini," as in the curriculum, pp. 49-51) since both Christ (from the Greek word for Messiah) and *dominus* (the Latin word for "lord") are theological titles. The NCBCPS curriculum uses the traditional BC and AD.
- <sup>22</sup> See, for example, page 62, which encourages teachers to "give helpful historical and chronological information located in the *Ryrie Study Bible* at the opening of each Bible book." The commentary in the *Ryrie Study Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, various editions) is written from the sectarian perspective of dispensationalist premillennialism, a view of the end times held by some, though not all, conservative Protestants.
- <sup>23</sup> *Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); *New American Bible* (New York: American Bible Society, 2002); *HarperCollins Study Bible* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); *The Access Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); *The New Interpreter's Study Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003).
- <sup>24</sup> The only post-Protestant Reformation Catholic translations mentioned are the 1582 Rheims New Testament (pp. 41-42), and the 1790 Douai-Rheims-Challoner Bible (p. 47). As discussed later in this report, this portion of the curriculum is based on a guidebook for a museum exhibit. The contents of that guidebook are (understandably) limited to discussion of items in the exhibit. The title of this chapter in the curriculum, "Introduction to the Bible," however, implies a considerably broader focus.
- <sup>25</sup> For example, the list of books in the Apocrypha on pages 191-192 is the Roman Catholic version, with no reference to the additional books accepted by Eastern Orthodox Churches.
- <sup>26</sup> Lutherans follow the Roman Catholic enumeration, rather than that of other Protestant churches. On the different enumerations of the Ten Commandments, see Walter Harrelson, *The Ten Commandments and Human Rights* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 40.
- <sup>27</sup> In this report, I often use the term "Bible" to refer to different versions of the Bible, with the exact meaning dependent upon the context of my discussion.
- <sup>28</sup> See the introductory textbooks cited in note 4 above.
- <sup>29</sup> *Wiley v. Franklin*, 468 F. Supp. 133 at 149 (E. D. Tenn., 1979).

- <sup>30</sup> *Herdahl v. Pontotoc County School District*, 933 F. Supp. 582 at 600 (N. D. Miss., 1996).
- <sup>31</sup> See the introductory textbooks cited in note 4 above.
- <sup>32</sup> *Herdahl v. Pontotoc County School District*, 933 F. Supp. 582 at 596 (N. D. Miss., 1996).
- <sup>33</sup> *Gibson v. Lee County School Board*, 1 F. Supp. 2d at 1434 (M.D. Fla. 1998).
- <sup>34</sup> Gabriel Fackre, "Biblical Inerrancy," in Brenda E. Brasher, ed., *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism* (New York and Routledge: London, 2001), 66-70.
- <sup>35</sup> On the relationship between the disciplines of archaeology and biblical studies, see William G. Dever, "Biblical Archaeology," in Eric M. Meyers, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), vol. 1, 315-319.
- <sup>36</sup> K. O. Kinnaman, *Diggers for Facts: The Bible in Light of Archaeology* (Haverhill, Mass.: Destiny, 1940).
- <sup>37</sup> Stephen Mehler, "The Search for Kinnaman's Entrance," *Atlantis Rising* 10 (1997), available at [www.atlantisrising.com/issue10/ar10search.html](http://www.atlantisrising.com/issue10/ar10search.html).
- <sup>38</sup> Translations of the inscription can be found in James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 206-208 and K. C. Hanson, "The Cyrus Cylinder," at [www.kchanson.com/ANCDPCS/meso/cyrus.html](http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDPCS/meso/cyrus.html).
- <sup>39</sup> Henry M. Morris, *The Bible and Modern Science*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968).
- <sup>40</sup> [www.moodypublishers.com](http://www.moodypublishers.com); see also [www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org).
- <sup>41</sup> These claims contradict an earlier statement on p. 25 that the Scrolls do not mention Jesus.
- <sup>42</sup> See the overviews of scholarship in the following articles in Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, "Jesus," 404-408; Craig A. Evans, "Messiahs," 537-542; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "New Testament," 610-612.
- <sup>43</sup> See the articles cited in the previous note and the balanced discussion in Randall Price, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Eugene, Or. Harvest House, 1996), 183-190.
- <sup>44</sup> The discussion in Price, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 145-150 is far more nuanced than that of the curriculum. On the curriculum's use of sources in this unit, see below. On the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for understanding the development of the text of the Hebrew Bible, see also Frank Moore Cross, "The Text Behind the Text of the Hebrew Bible," in Hershel Shanks, ed., *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Random House, 1992), 139-155. The curriculum lists the Shanks volume in the bibliography on p. 161, though its discussion reflects no familiarity with the essays in it.
- <sup>45</sup> See discussions in Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989). Even noted conservative scholar F. F. Bruce did not share Jeffrey's optimism about determining the text of the New Testament with absolute certainty (*The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1983).
- <sup>46</sup> For example, compare the arguments on pages 259-260 to those at [www.creationevidence.org/scientific\\_evid/evidencefor/evidencefor.html](http://www.creationevidence.org/scientific_evid/evidencefor/evidencefor.html).
- <sup>47</sup> Grant R. Jeffrey, *The Signature of God* (Toronto: Frontier Research Publications). The curriculum cites a 2002 edition, but page numbers cited in this report are from the 1998 edition.
- <sup>48</sup> [www.grantjeffrey.com/bio.htm](http://www.grantjeffrey.com/bio.htm).
- <sup>49</sup> It is not accredited by any of the agencies included in the standard reference book, Kenneth A. Von Alt, *2002-2003 Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 2003), nor is it included in the 2002-2003 Survey of Graduate Programs in Religion and Theology, available at [www.aarweb.org/department/census/graduate/default.asp](http://www.aarweb.org/department/census/graduate/default.asp), in David G. Truemper, *Directory of Departments and Programs of Religious Studies in North America* (Valparaiso: Council on the Study of Religion, 2003), or in Jeanne M. Burke, ed., *2005 Higher Education Directory* (Falls Church, Va.: Higher Education Publications, 2005).
- <sup>50</sup> "The Sun Stood Still," [www.geocities.com/Vienna/6595/sunstill.html](http://www.geocities.com/Vienna/6595/sunstill.html).
- <sup>51</sup> Jan Harold Brunvand, *Encyclopedia of Urban Legends* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2001), 265-266 and Jan Harold Brunvand, *The Truth Never Stands in the Way of a Good Story* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 137-148.
- <sup>52</sup> The "Ask an Astrophysicist" section of the Web site of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center explicitly repudiates this story ([http://imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/ask\\_astro/answers/970325g.html](http://imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/ask_astro/answers/970325g.html)).
- <sup>53</sup> <http://paci.edu/index/distance-learning.shtml>.
- <sup>54</sup> It is not accredited by any of the agencies included in the standard reference book, Von Alt, *2002-2003 Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education*, nor is it listed in Burke, *2005 Higher Education Directory*.
- <sup>55</sup> [www.creationevidence.org](http://www.creationevidence.org).
- <sup>56</sup> [www.creationevidence.org/cemframes.html](http://www.creationevidence.org/cemframes.html).
- <sup>57</sup> Title pages for the units on the Dead Sea Scrolls, the "Inter-Testamental Period," and "Biblical Art" are the only ones without such imagery.
- <sup>58</sup> See two articles by Julie J. Ingersoll in Brasher, *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*: "Dominion Theology," 139-140 and "Theonomy," 482-483.
- <sup>59</sup> [www.wallbuilders.com](http://www.wallbuilders.com).
- <sup>60</sup> David Barton, *The Myth of Separation: What is the correct relationship between Church and State?* (Aledo: WallBuilder Press, 1992) and *Original Intent: The Courts, the Constitution, & Religion* (Aledo: WallBuilder Press, 2000).
- <sup>61</sup> For similar arguments, see Barton, *Myth*, 207-216 and *Original Intent*, 242-246. Another David Barton video, *America's Godly Heritage*, was banned from usage in American or Middle Eastern history classes in *Herdahl v. Pontotoc County School District*.
- <sup>62</sup> This count does not include footnotes apparently reproduced from the curriculum's source on pages 163-167.
- <sup>63</sup> On this point, see also pages 46-47.
- <sup>64</sup> David Barton now questions the authenticity of quotations attributed to George Washington and Thomas Jefferson (cited on page 242 of the curriculum), Alexis de Tocqueville and Patrick Henry (p. 249) and Abraham Lincoln (p. 251) in "Unconfirmed Quotations," at [www.wallbuilders.com/resources/search/detail.php?ResourceID=20](http://www.wallbuilders.com/resources/search/detail.php?ResourceID=20).

- <sup>65</sup> Many of these quotations are also highlighted in Barton's books (see, for example, *Myth of Separation*, 245-251).
- <sup>66</sup> For a more balanced discussion, see Mark Noll, Nathan Hatch, and George Marsden, *The Search for Christian America* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1989) and Matthew A. Sutton, "America, as a Christian Nation," in Brasher, *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, 7-12.
- <sup>67</sup> Donald S. Lutz, "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought," *The American Political Science Review* 78 (1984): 189-197. The curriculum provides inaccurate bibliographic information for this article on 242.
- <sup>68</sup> Actually, the curriculum seems to reproduce the chart from Barton's books, not from Lutz's article itself. On the curriculum's use of sources, see the discussion later in the report.
- <sup>69</sup> See also Donald S. Lutz, *The Origin of American Constitutionalism* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 136-149, especially 140 and 142.
- <sup>70</sup> See especially Donald S. Lutz, *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998), xv-xix, xxxv-xxxvi.
- <sup>71</sup> This statement comes from Barton, *Myth of Separation*, 201 and *Original Intent*, 226, which quote Kenneth L. Woodward and David Gates, "How the Bible Made America," in the December 27, 1982 issue of *Newsweek*.
- <sup>72</sup> [www.face.net/websters1828.htm](http://www.face.net/websters1828.htm).
- <sup>73</sup> Thus, we find "matzo," "matzah," and "matsah;" "Chanukah," "Hanukkah," "Hannukkah;" "Wycliff," "Wyclif," "Wycliffe," etc.
- <sup>74</sup> Note, for example, page 26: "After centuries of cruel repression by the Romans, Christianity was officially accepted and adopted during the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine.... In 313 AD the emperors Constantine and Licinius met to co-establish a policy of religious toleration, and although this meeting marked the triumph of Christianity and the termination of imperial persecution, it did not officially establish the Church as the official religion of the Empire(s)."
- <sup>75</sup> Jacob Licht, "Calendar," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1971), vol. 5, 43-54.
- <sup>76</sup> See the discussions in the textbooks cited in note 4.
- <sup>77</sup> James M. Weinstein, "Hyksos," in Meyers, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, vol. 3, 133-136.
- <sup>78</sup> Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 2004).
- <sup>79</sup> "Hanukkah," in R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 300-301.
- <sup>80</sup> Anthony J. Saldarini, "Pharisees," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), vol. 5, 289-303.
- <sup>81</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 14.91 and *Jewish War* 1.170.
- <sup>82</sup> Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996).
- <sup>83</sup> Richardson, *Herod*.
- <sup>84</sup> Lester L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), vol. 2, 366-368.
- <sup>85</sup> Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, vol. 2, 454-461.
- <sup>86</sup> See discussions in the textbooks cited in note 4.
- <sup>87</sup> This statement was accurate when this report was written in June and July, 2005.
- <sup>88</sup> Lynn Quitman Troyka, *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, N. J., 2002), 480-497; Patrick Sebranek, Dave Kemper, and Veren Meyer, "Writing Responsibly," in *Writers Inc: A Student Handbook for Writing and Learning* (Wilmington, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 255-258.
- <sup>89</sup> Lee Biondi, *From the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Forbidden Book* (Lee Biondi, 2003, 2004).
- <sup>90</sup> The "Meet the Curators" link at the exhibit's Web site, [www.deadscrollstoamerica.com](http://www.deadscrollstoamerica.com) lists doctorates for other individuals, but not for Biondi.
- <sup>91</sup> [www.baseinstitute.org](http://www.baseinstitute.org).
- <sup>92</sup> See the references on accreditation cited earlier in this report.
- <sup>93</sup> See the discussion at the "Details Link" at [www.baseinstitute.org/qualified.html](http://www.baseinstitute.org/qualified.html).
- <sup>94</sup> Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, the text carefully printed from the most correct copies of the present authorized translation, including the marginal readings and parallel texts* (New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford, 1843, first published 1810-1825), 400-407; text available online at [www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarkeexo20.htm](http://www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarkeexo20.htm).
- <sup>95</sup> Don King, "Notes on Shakespeare and the Bible," at [www.montreat.edu/dking/Shakespeare/SHAKESPEAREANDTHEBIBLE.htm](http://www.montreat.edu/dking/Shakespeare/SHAKESPEAREANDTHEBIBLE.htm).
- <sup>96</sup> Arthur L. Farstad, "Shakespeare, the Bible, and Grace," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 4:1 (1991): 47-63, specifically 52; cf. the online version of this article at [www.faithalone.org/journal/1991i/Shake.html](http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1991i/Shake.html).
- <sup>97</sup> World of the Bible Ministries, [www.worldofthebible.com/ourstaff.htm](http://www.worldofthebible.com/ourstaff.htm)
- <sup>98</sup> See the earlier discussion in this report.
- <sup>99</sup> [www.grantjeffrey.com](http://www.grantjeffrey.com).
- <sup>100</sup> See the discussion of this book's distinctively sectarian perspective earlier in this report.
- <sup>101</sup> William D. Edwards, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 255:11 (1986) 1455-1463; cf. "Study on the Physical Death of Jesus Christ" at [www.frugalsites.net/jesus/welcome.htm](http://www.frugalsites.net/jesus/welcome.htm).
- <sup>102</sup> [www.wallbuilders.com/aboutus/bio/index.htm](http://www.wallbuilders.com/aboutus/bio/index.htm).
- <sup>103</sup> [www.humanitiesweb.org/perl/human.cgi?s=h&p=i&a=e&ID=106](http://www.humanitiesweb.org/perl/human.cgi?s=h&p=i&a=e&ID=106).
- <sup>104</sup> Cf. artist biography entries at [www.wga.hu](http://www.wga.hu) and <http://gallery.euroweb.hu/bio/r/rubens/biograph.html>; compare with [www.intofineart.com](http://www.intofineart.com).
- <sup>105</sup> <http://gallery.euroweb.hu/bio/r/rubens/biograph.html>.
- <sup>106</sup> Page numbers for the present report are drawn from the 1998 edition of this book; the curriculum cites a 2002 edition. Many of the excerpts in this book printed in the curriculum are available online at [www.grantjeffrey.com](http://www.grantjeffrey.com).
- <sup>107</sup> This reference applies only to these pages' commentary on the Ten Commandments.

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