

## Public School Textbooks

August 17, 2011- ELHM treasurer & board member has recently conducted research on the use of public school books in our ministry. The following is his report. Please note that as of this date, ELHM is no longer accepting donations of Public School textbooks.

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**From:** Gary McPherson  
**To:** ehodges169@aol.com  
**Sent:** Sun, August 14, 2011 11:13:58 PM  
**Subject:** Major Bias and Errors in Secular Textbooks

From all I can find, as an ambassador for Christ, ELH Ministries should not send secular textbooks from the public schools.

Below is just a little of the research I have been doing. I have underlined key points to help speed your review.

**I recommend communicating to literature gatherers to stop collecting secular public school textbooks.**

Gary McPherson

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Professor Paul Vitz of New York University has carried out a careful, scholarly study of the textbooks most widely used in schools throughout the country. His conclusion: Virtually all of them exhibit a strong bias against traditional religion and morals.

Professor Vitz examined social studies textbooks from Grades 1-6, selecting all texts adopted by the states of California, Texas, Georgia, and Florida. This came to ten series of books, accounting for an estimated 75% of texts used in the country. Since other states often look to California and Texas for guidance in selecting their own texts, the books examined are likely to be representative of the nation as a whole.

School children are introduced to American history in Grade 5. Of the ten series of books studied by Professor Vitz, not one notes the importance of religion in American history. In fact the whole topic of Christianity is ignored.

In Grade 6, children are introduced to world history, going back to the ancient Egyptians. Four of the ten books in the study make no mention at all of Jesus' life. In those that do, several give more coverage to Mohammed's life than to Jesus'. For instance, in one text

the life of Jesus gets 36 lines, while the life of Mohammed gets 104 lines. In another, Mohammed, the rise of Islam, and Islamic culture get an 11-page section, plus other scattered coverage. The rise of Christianity receives only a few lines on one page. The problem is not that great religious figures are totally avoided: only Jesus is.

Crucial religious events like the Reformation are likewise studiously ignored. Or, if mentioned, the fundamental basis of the conflict - i.e. religious differences - is omitted. Likewise, important religious leaders such as Joan of Arc are covered in an entirely secular manner, without any mention of religion.

Christianity is ignored, but certain non-traditional religions receive relatively frequent mention. The Greek and Roman religions are part of six stories. Two stories are attributed to Buddha. American Indian religion is also featured positively in five stories and one article, often with a minor spiritual or occult emphasis. One 55-page story features a white American girl on a ranch in California who seeks to find her "Indian Heart". The girl makes several animal fetishes and seeks ways to commune with animal spirits. Another story, called "Medicine Bag", features an Indian occult medicine bag passed on from father to son.

There is not one reference to marriage as the foundation of the family. Indeed, the words "marriage" or "wedding" do not even occur, not once, in any of the books. Neither do the words "husband" or "wife". Not one of the many families described in these books features a homemaker - that is, features a wife and mother as a model. Yet there are countless references to mothers and other women working outside the home in occupations such as medicine, law, transportation, and politics.

The most common ideological slant is a feminist one. There is hardly a story that celebrates marriage or motherhood as a positive and enriching way of life (except a few that feature ethnic mothers). No story shows any woman or girl with a positive relationship to a baby or a young child. Biographical stories concern either women who were explicitly feminist, such as Elizabeth Blackwell, a leader of the women's movement, or are stories of female success in traditionally male occupations.

If you are white, hold to a Protestant form of Christianity, and live by the traditional (that is, biblical family ethic), your beliefs and way of life are not represented in the textbooks your own children are nurtured on in the public school classrooms of this country.

<http://www.cai.org/bible-studies/eliminating-christianity-school-textbooks>

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In 8th grade U.S. History books, Educational Research Analysts found 103 factual errors.

In 8th grade U.S. History books approved for California middle schools, they found 427 factual errors.

Thomas B. Fordham Institute examined six widely used high school U.S. history texts and six world history texts. They concluded that none is distinguished or even good and five earned failing marks.

American Textbook Council stated that in the last five years, all the textbook publishers “have allowed the errors to remain.”

Two major weaknesses exist in secular history textbooks—the “dumbing down” of the text itself as publishers adjust to “short attention spans and non-readers” and the “increasing content bias and distortion.”

The [American Textbook Council](#), found in their review that world history textbooks “provide unreliable, often scanty information.” Gilbert Sewall, of the American Textbook Council, accuses the publishers of academic irresponsibility:

A study of middle school physical science textbooks (commissioned by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation) resulted in 500 pages of scientific error and imprecision in 12 middle-school textbooks used by 85% of students in the U.S. John Hubitz, the lead researcher, concluded that “none of the 12 most popular middle school physical science texts was acceptable.”

Hubitz, a nationally recognized expert on science instruction and physicist at North Carolina State University, conducted a follow-up study of the 5 physical science textbooks used specifically in North Carolina’s middle schools. He concluded that the books “contain factual errors and irrelevant information” that make the books “inadequate” to meet the basic needs of middle-school students.

AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education Seminar emphasized that the inadequacy of math and science textbooks continues to be a major concern.

Sometimes these weaknesses amount to just sloppy editing: a 2008 review of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math book published by Macmillan disclosed 89 factual errors in the student book and teacher’s manual.

Pamela Winnick, an attorney and journalist, complains about science textbooks used in American classrooms that “a sloppy way with facts, a preference for the politically correct over the scientifically sound, and sheer faddism characterize their content.

In other words, textbooks often are not written at all; they are compiled by teams of people with various purposes and goals. In fact, many textbook errors result from the limitations of these people.

Tobin and Ybarra explain, “In many cases, those at the keyboards have little expertise in their assigned areas. They may work inside the publishing company; they may be contract writers; or they may be staff at any number of textbook developing agencies that hire young writers to produce less expensive volumes.

However, in the 1980s and 90s, these companies began to buy out each other in an effort to eliminate the competition. By 2004, there were only four major publishers, but a recent acquisition has now reduced that number to three multinational megapublishers that dominate the entire field of textbook publication: Pearson (a British company which now owns the Scott Foresman and Prentice-Hall imprints), Education Media and Publishing Group Limited (an Irish/American parent company for Houghton Mifflin and Harcourt, which includes Holt, Rinehart, and Winston), and McGraw-Hill (the only solely American-owned textbook corporation which also owns Macmillan).

*Testimonial from a textbook salesman:*

*As a member of the senior sales representative board of Glencoe McGraw-Hill, I attended several new product development workshops. One in particular, the unveiling of Glencoe's new Earth & Physical Science textbook gave me the occasion to recognize the fact that as a Christian I could no longer represent Glencoe with their science products. During the rollout of this new edition of Earth & Physical Science, it was also announced that*

*Glencoe was beginning to work on a major revision of Biology, Dynamics of Life. I mentioned the debates that were taking place in many states concerning intelligent design and the fallibility of evolution. When I asked the editors and product manager if Glencoe would give any attention to these issues in their new textbooks, the senior vice-president and director of the editorial staff stood up in the meeting and stated, “Glencoe will never give place to ‘pseudo-science’ in any of their science textbooks.”*

*During my last national sales meeting with Glencoe, the president, Mr. Terry McGraw, addressed the entire company. He gave a charge to the sales force that our role in the company exceeded the capacity of sales representatives. We were told we needed to envision ourselves as “change agents” influencing the direction that academic instruction would take in the future. He challenged us to help our young people become educated in their roles as “global citizens.” He also heavily stressed the need to bring “character education” to the public schools. Social Studies, Language Arts, Science and Health curriculum—all were being driven to integrate content and questions that challenged students to critically consider a “new morality.” Naturally, I was concerned. Whose morality and principles of character should our public school teachers support? The values of parents, church, and community—or the “character education” espoused by a secular, humanist publisher?*

During my first two years in the textbook business, I worked for McDougal Littell, the secondary school division of Houghton Mifflin companies. At a national sales meeting for a new product, *The Language of Literature*, one of the national consultants provided the model sales presentation of the book to the sales team. He was delighted that the authorial team had included selections of literature that represented many homosexual authors. This would allow the teacher to use discretion in addressing sexual “diversity” in a positive light.

[http://www.christianvssecular.com/textbook\\_trap/history\\_errors.htm](http://www.christianvssecular.com/textbook_trap/history_errors.htm)