

Macalester Civic Forum

Volume 3, Issue 1

2009

Article 8

RELIGION IN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC SQUARE

Educating the Global Citizen: Redefining the Role of Religion in Public Schools

Aurora Sekine*

*Macalester College

Copyright ©2009 by the authors. *Macalester Civic Forum* is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress). <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/maccivicf>

Educating the Global Citizen: Approaches to Integrating Religious Studies into the Public School Curriculum

Aurora M. Sekine

I. Introduction

“An educated person is familiar with the Bible.” This is the tagline displayed on the website for the Bible Literacy Project. Founded in 2001 by two Christian evangelical activists, Chuck Stetson and Richard Scurry, the Bible Literacy Project leads the current movement to require the academic study of the Bible in public schools across the United States. The project’s founders argue that, “failure to teach about the Bible leaves students in ignorance and cultural illiteracy.”¹ Should cultural and religious literacy, however, be evaluated on the basis of one’s biblical knowledge alone? The current trends in media² as well as in academia seem to affirm this question. In his 2007 book *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know—And Doesn’t*, Stephen Prothero includes a Religious Literacy Quiz, which he believes should test the basic religious knowledge of Americans.³ Composed of fifteen questions in total, nine of the questions rely on one’s familiarity with the Bible, while only two questions are allotted for Islam and one each for Buddhism and “Hinduism,” overlooking the many other religious cultures within the United States, including local traditions and cultures.

Prothero states that the ability to answer these questions is a crucial aspect of being an educated citizen in the United States.⁴ How does answering these questions, however, determine one’s ability to engage in the diversity of religious cultures in the United States? Is educating students in religious foundational texts (primarily the Bible) what pub-

lic schools should emphasize in order to produce students as global citizens?

While I applaud the insistence of Prothero and the Bible Literacy Project for increasing religious awareness in American public life, I argue that we need to move beyond a Bible-centered study of religion in our public schools. The problem of a Bible-centered study of religion is two-fold. First, Christianity is privileged as the normative religion of the West. All other originally non-Christian traditions, consequently, are often lumped together as “world religions,” usually limited to Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism. In her 2005 book, *The Invention of World Religions*, Tomoko Masuzawa writes:

These so-called great religions of the world—though what makes them ‘great’ remains unclear—are often arranged by means of one or the other of various systems of classification...to distinguish the West from the rest, even though the distinction is usually effected in more complicated ways than the still frequently used, easy language of “East and West” suggests. The demarcation, in any event, is articulated from the point of view of the European West, which is in all known cases historically aligned or conflated, though not without some ambiguity, with Christendom.⁵

As Masuzawa suggests, the concept of “world religions” establishes non-Christian traditions as the “other” and in turn reinforces the norm of Christianity in the West.

Second, because of Protestant Christianity’s roots in biblical knowledge (*sola scriptura*) and faith (*sola fide*), a Bible-centered approach favors the study of texts and beliefs. As David Tracy has demonstrated, the centrality of text-centered approaches to religion is apparent in academic scholarship as well. He states:

[W]riting (especially in the form of written texts, whether scriptural, sacred, or religious classical) has often played too central a role in scholarship on religion with unfortunate results, namely, disregard for the fact that many religious traditions (sometimes named primal or indigenous or local) *highlight* material realities other than writing to play the central role in the religion. The result is clear. Many religious traditions in which writing does not play the central role are often, even in major scholarship, misinterpreted as ‘archaic’ or even ‘primitive’ when they are merely different from religions in which writing (especially in the form of written texts) does function as the central material reality.⁶

In this way, a study of religion solely focused on texts, as proposed by Prothero, neglects and estranges many other religious traditions that do not emphasize texts, and therefore gives advantage to a Protestant-oriented study of religion. I propose that we, as scholars of religion, must decouple the study of religion from its Protestant roots by examining not only the texts and beliefs but also the *nonverbal phenomena*⁷ that span from performance to visual culture.

My objective in this essay, however, is not to discuss the issues surrounding religious practice and faith in schools, such as the issues of in-school prayer or the debate over creationism and evolution.⁸ Although these are critical points of conflict in public schools, they present individual issues of the role of religion in school. Instead, I explore *why* religious studies should be included in the public school curriculum and focus my argument on the study of religion as it is developing in U.S. public schools. I suggest that schools should implement a religious studies curriculum that incorporates the study of religious practice alongside the study of sacred and historical texts in order to produce students who are prepared to participate in their local and global communities.

In the first part of the essay, I develop my suggestions for approaching the study of religion in public schools by looking at two 2007 publications that support implementing a religious studies curriculum in schools: *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know—and Doesn't*, by Stephen Prothero, and *Overcoming Religious Illiteracy: A Cultural Studies Approach to the Study of Religion in Secondary Education* by Diane L. Moore.⁹ In the second part, I consider a case study of a world religions course in the Modesto City school district in California. I analyze the successes and setbacks of the program in providing a religious studies education and in training students to be responsible global citizens

II. What is a *Global Citizen*?

In using the term *global citizen*, I first invoke the definitions outlined by Macalester College's Institute for Global Citizenship. *Global* explicitly encompasses "the local/urban, national and inter- or trans-national level of analysis and action." *Citizenship* refers "not to legal or juridical membership in a specific national polity, but more broadly to the phenomenon of active engagement in the public life of the local, national or transnational communities within which people live."¹⁰ In order to

educate global citizens, educators must “help students acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to function in cultural communities other than their own, within the national culture and community, as well as within the global community.”¹¹

Further, I build upon the work of Amy Gutmann, whose democratic theory of education¹² suggests that students should be educated as global citizens rooted in democratic values that nurture students’ abilities of critical thinking, rational and coherent argument, and decision-making.¹³ Gutmann’s democratic theory of education recognizes “the importance of empowering citizens to make education policy and also of constraining their choices among policies in accordance with those principles—of nonrepression and nondiscrimination—that preserve the intellectual and social foundations of democratic deliberations.”¹⁴ According to Gutmann, training students in these values is necessary for citizens of a democracy because it provides children and young adults with the tools for successful communication and conflict resolution. “Without this sort of mutual understanding,” Gutmann states, “we could not expect to achieve widespread toleration of dissent and respect for differing ways of life. Nor could we expect minorities to convince majorities, or to be convinced by them, of their point of view.”¹⁵ I argue that this “mutual understanding” should include not only the commonly referenced categories of “racial, cultural, and language diversity,”¹⁶ but also *religious diversity*. In order to enable students to function as effective citizens within local, national, and transnational contexts, schools need to offer a democratic education that fosters religious understanding to prepare students for successful negotiations in domestic democracy as well as foreign policy.¹⁷

III. Stephen Prothero and Religious Literacy

I begin with the more famous of the two scholars: Stephen Prothero. His book, *Religious Literacy*, has appeared on numerous best-seller lists, including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, and he has achieved modest but popular fame with guest appearances on The Daily Show and National Public Radio. I ask whether or not his approach would most effectively develop students as global citizens.

Prothero presents the United States as one of the world’s most “religiously illiterate” nations, as evidenced by student responses to his Religious Literacy Quiz. He outlines the historical context of religious literacy in the United States and expresses nostalgia for the Bible-cen-

tered education of the common school in 19th-century New England.¹⁸ He then addresses the public school's transition to secular education in the aptly titled chapter, "The Fall (or How We Forgot)."¹⁹ He laments the disappearance of biblical education in the "private" space and suggests that we concentrate efforts on the primary venues for education: public schools, colleges, and universities. He suggests a two-fold proposal for making change in public schools, specifically high schools: offering a Bible-as-literature course (Bible 101) and a world religions course (World Religion 101). His approach throughout is rooted in textual, specifically biblical, knowledge, which reinforces the long-standing notion that the study of religion is based on text and theory. This is reflected in his definition of "religious literacy" as "the ability to understand and use in one's day-to-day life the basic building blocks of religious traditions—their key terms, symbols, doctrines, practices, sayings, characters, metaphors, and narratives."²⁰

Although he includes "practices" in the definition, he privileges aspects of religious knowledge related to text, doctrine, and belief. I question Prothero's use of the term "religious literacy" in addressing what he identifies as knowledge of religion based on "terms, symbols, doctrines, practices, sayings, characters, metaphors, and narratives." The term *literacy* itself connotes the ability to decode language, or religion in this case. Will knowledge of religious foundational texts alone fully engage people in the diverse study of religious cultures? Is the ability to "decode religion" what needs to be taught in public schools in order to produce effective global citizens? I propose that we move toward replacing the term *religious literacy* with a term that illustrates a more inclusive approach to the religious and cultural appreciation that should be fostered in public schools.

It was not until becoming a Religious Studies major at Macalester that I first realized the wide spectrum of religious studies that spanned beyond reading certain texts or identifying key beliefs. My study of Japanese Buddhist traditions first exposed me to the heterogeneities of religious studies. To questions arising from my experiences in Japan, most people answer that they have never read any Buddhist sacred texts (sutras). Nevertheless, Buddhism unmistakably dictates many aspects of Japanese culture and practice. My father, although he has never read any Buddhist texts and claims to be an atheist, never misses the annual visit to our family Buddhist temple during the season of *obon*.²¹ According to Prothero's argument, my father would be classified as religiously illiterate because he lacks knowledge of Buddhist

texts and beliefs, but we cannot overlook his practices, which also constitute religious identity. For this reason, a religious studies education focused on the study of foundational texts is not a complete education because it ignores vital aspects of religious culture that define the contexts of religion as it is practiced. Moving away from an approach to make students “literate” in religious texts will also aid in the shift from the Protestant-centered reification of “non-Western” religious traditions as world religions.

By grouping the study of non-Christian religious traditions as “World Religions 101” while devoting an entire course to studying the Bible, Prothero exposes his bias toward Protestant Christianity. He argues that “Christian literacy” is important for Americans because “the United States is the world’s most Christian country,” with the large majority of politicians in Congress identifying with a denomination of Christianity.²² For this reason, he states that, “Christian literacy is more important than other religious literacies when it comes to understanding U.S. politics.”²³ However, public schools need to produce not only students who are able to understand U.S. politics as American citizens, but also students who can negotiate international politics as global citizens. His intentions, however, stem from a vision to improve and enrich the civic life of the people of the United States. He states: “My goal is to help citizens participate fully in social, political, and economic life in a nation and a world in which religion counts.”²⁴ Although his book is successful in alerting Americans to the urgency of acquiring religious understanding, I question whether his proposed method of implementation in public schools would be the most successful in developing students as global citizens.

IV. Diane Moore and the Cultural Studies Approach to Religious Studies

Diane L. Moore’s publication is the lesser known of the two books. She serves as a member of the faculty at both Harvard Divinity School and Phillips Andover Academy, a private secondary school in Massachusetts. As stated in the title of her book, *Overcoming Religious Illiteracy: A Cultural Studies Approach to the Study of Religion in Secondary Education*, she advocates the cultural studies approach—the method by which she trains graduate students at Harvard Divinity School’s Program in Religion and Secondary Education (PRSE).²⁵ Since 1972, PRSE has been training pre-service and in-service teachers in how to navigate

methods of teaching about religion in the classroom. Moore, herself a faculty member at a secondary institution, has developed strategies to maintain an academic focus on religion in order to broaden students' global perspectives and cross-cultural understanding.

Moore's primary focus in teaching about religion lies in a cultural studies approach which she defines as "the employment of multiple lenses to understand the subject at hand, including an awareness of the lenses of the interpreters (authors, writers, artists who are being studied), inquirers (students), and teachers who set the larger context for the inquiry itself."²⁶ This approach shifts the focus from a text-centered technique to a more pragmatic method that includes experiencing religious perspectives from multiple interdisciplinary lenses. Moore states:

A cultural studies approach to teaching about religion is multidisciplinary in that it assumes that religion is deeply imbedded in all dimensions of human experience and therefore requires multiple lenses through which to understand its multivalent social/cultural influences.²⁷

She also highlights the importance of studying popular culture and media, and their role in religious culture, an area often neglected in academic study.²⁸

Moore offers a case study in her course Islamic Cultural Studies at the Phillips Academy. The course emphasizes "diverse political, cultural, religious and social expressions" of Islamic cultures, and considers "gender, modern political conflicts and expressions, art, literature, music, architecture, science, philosophy and religious practices."²⁹ In addition to "contemporary manifestations" of these expressions in various geopolitical locations, however, she also considers the "origins and formative developments" of Islamic cultures. In this way, she offers a synchronic look at religious cultures, introducing the study of current practices and situations, while maintaining the historical, diachronic aspect of Prothero's approach by examining Islamic "origins and formative developments." Moore's cultural studies approach guides students toward a more pluralistic understanding by highlighting the dynamic natures of religion, steering students away from common conceptions of religion as a "frozen"³⁰ presence throughout history.

A. Implementing the Cultural Studies Approach

The second half of Moore's book is dedicated to the implementation of her approach and methodology. She offers six features of the cultural studies approach, including the teacher's transparency in her aims, the awareness of knowledge claims as situated, and the multifaceted approach to studying sources of information.³¹ This approach is innovative in that it articulates both the teacher's ability to be transparent about her aims and the student's part in assuming responsibility for her own learning. The student must recognize her knowledge claims as being products of her culture, background, and beliefs. Moore's approach centralizes the development of self-reflective students (and teachers, for that matter) as it nurtures students' critical thinking skills to examine their own backgrounds and biases and situate their points of view. Teaching students to reverse the gaze to a viewpoint different from their own is imperative in order to eradicate the lingering Protestant Christian norm on which we too often rely.³²

Although Moore's cultural studies approach breaks new ground in secondary school pedagogy, I still question how this can be effectively implemented in the public school system. Her case study takes place at the Phillips Academy, a private secondary school, with an entire department dedicated to Philosophy and Religious Studies. Moore does offer a few suggestions on how to implement a religious studies curriculum in secondary schools, such as introducing religious studies as a component of the multicultural studies offerings, teaming with the school's religious studies program to develop religious studies courses for teachers, and testing teachers' "competency in integrating the nonsectarian study of religion" into the classroom.³³

Moore offers ideal points of departure for developing a religious studies curriculum in public secondary schools. However, the vast majority of public schools in the United States do not have a religious studies department nor do they possess the funding or resources to offer pre-service or in-service training for teachers in "integrating the nonsectarian study of religion into their field." Consequently, I do not anticipate this approach taking hold in the public school system based on Moore's suggestions alone, as they are catered to private and independent schools.

In order for public schools to implement the cultural studies approach successfully, it is necessary to increase government support for the integration of religious studies in other academic disciplines,

such as social studies and communication arts. Schools can accomplish this by providing funding for teacher training programs specific to the cultural studies approach to religion. In accordance with Moore's model of teacher training, these programs should instruct teachers in pragmatic approaches to religious studies, by engaging students through "learning by doing."³⁴ Examples include visiting local places of worship and religious festivals and inviting community members and scholars to speak on issues regarding local religious culture.

Although these are only a few suggestions for such implementation, I maintain that comprehensive teacher training in the cultural studies approach to religious studies is a decisive factor in its success in public schools. Teachers will only have the capacity to teach what they have learned in training, and for this reason school districts should take teacher training seriously. In reality, however, I acknowledge the impossibility of eliminating all personal biases of teachers regarding issues of religious culture. What distinguishes the cultural studies approach is that both teachers *and* students learn to situate their positions in discussion in order to raise consciousness about religious bias, prejudice, and stereotyping. In the following section, I examine the actualization of a required world religions course in a public school district in Modesto, California.

V. A Case Study: Learning about World Religions in Modesto, California

Modesto, California is located in an area often referred to as the California Bible Belt. Although largely populated by evangelical Protestant Christians, Modesto also encompasses a diverse group of Jews, Hindus, Muslims, and Catholics. In fact, the growth of religious culture in Modesto is said to be the cause of the increase in evangelicals Christians.³⁵ Its location in this melting pot of religious cultures made it an ideal place to test the pilot program, as it provides many primary resources for teachers and students to actively explore the different religious cultures within the community.

The data used in this discussion of Modesto was taken from a report published by the First Amendment Center, entitled, *Learning about World Religions in Public Schools: The Impact on Student Attitudes and Community Acceptance in Modesto, California*. It was prepared by researchers Emile Lester³⁶ and Patrick S. Roberts.³⁷ It reflects data collected over a nine-month period in 2006 of interviewing more than 400

students, teachers, school board members, and local religious leaders who were involved with the project.

1. Goals of World Religions Course

Before delving into specific aspects of the program, we must first recognize the goals of the program. In the beginning stages of the world religions course, educators and school board members outlined the following goals for the course: create safer and more inclusive schools and communities, enhance professional success, influence more-informed political decisions, generate more civic discussion about religion, increase knowledge of world cultures and improve test scores, and ensure neutrality and balance materialism. In the proceeding sections, I analyze the successes and setbacks of Modesto's teacher training process and textbook selection.

2. Teacher Training Process

Teachers of the Modesto world religions course must fulfill thirty hours of in-service training. Teachers trained during the initial phases of the course accomplished this requirement by participating in sessions led by a variety of community scholars (of religion and history) and religious leaders, also visiting local religious spaces. Among the requirements for the currently revised teacher training process, however, are certain college-level courses relevant to world religions, and video lectures on selected topics, along with the mandatory assigned reading of Huston Smith's *World Religions*.

A large majority of teachers interviewed complained that the in-service training did not adequately prepare them for teaching the world religions course. One new teacher expressed disappointment that the training consisted of "pretty much only videos."³⁸ The training also focuses mainly on the beliefs of the religious traditions. A local rabbi commented on the incomplete nature of the training, as "the experience of being part of a religion involves more than adherences to its beliefs."³⁹

As argued above, successful implementation of the cultural studies approach vitally relies on the adequacy of teacher training. If school districts train their teachers by video lectures and text- and belief-centered instruction alone, teachers will replicate that in their teaching. In order to meet the goals set by the program, students need to

be exposed to the religious cultures of their community through a pragmatic approach: by visiting local religious spaces, talking with religious leaders and scholars of religion, and engaging in active discussion about their experiences and concerns.

3. *Textbook*: The Usborne Book of World Religions

The course utilizes only one official textbook, *The Usborne Book of World Religions*, a 60-page text at a sixth grade reading level. It is published by Usborne Publishing Company, which produces books for young children and pre-teens. According to Lester and Roberts, administrators selected this book for a number of reasons, including the wealth of images, equal coverage of both “Western and Eastern” traditions, and its “positive” take on all religious cultures. Lester and Roberts state, however, that all teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the text because it did not provide students with a thorough overview of the religious traditions. Even administrators on the selection committee for the book expressed doubts about the text, but because of the limited number of religious studies texts for a ninth grade public school audience, there was no other choice.

I identify two primary reasons why the text is not suitable for this course: first, it targets an audience three years younger than the ninth grade students, and, second, it presents religious cultures problematically as “world religions.” Its reification of the “world religions” as Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism forces the diverse religious cultures into monolithic categories that become misunderstood as sharing collective beliefs and practices within each group, when in fact all religious cultures embody unique entities in their respective communities and locations. The text should instead present religious cultures as fluid and plural entities: Hinduisms, Judaisms, Buddhisms, and so on. In addition, the classification of these religious cultures as “world religions” ignores the fact that they are an integral part of local and national communities *within* the United States.

In facing the issue of religious studies textbooks, I suggest that public school educators and religious studies scholars collaborate to create new textbooks. One method is for textbook creators to look at examples of religious studies textbooks that are already in use, such as the Bible Literacy Project’s *The Bible and its Influence*. Acclaimed for its multidimensional and interdisciplinary approach to the Bible, as well

as its overwhelming scholarly endorsement,⁴⁰ this text could be used as a preliminary model for scholars and teachers who are trained in the cultural studies method. *The Bible and its Influence* was edited by two biblical scholars, Cullen Schippe and Chuck Stetson, and includes submissions by more than thirty reviewers and consultants from fields of biblical and religious studies scholarship. The Usborne text, in contrast, was written by Susan Meredith and Clare Hickman, neither of whom are religious studies scholars, and it includes only one outside consultant, Wendy Dossett.⁴¹

The Bible and its Influence presents the Bible as a dynamic text by encouraging students to study its history through multiple lenses. It offers a chapter that explains the current issues of biblical literacy as associated with “democratic freedom” in a volume almost four times the length of the Usborne text. The Usborne text, on the other hand, presents various religious cultures as “frozen” monolithic entities, only spending a few pages per “religion.” Learning from the successes of *The Bible and its Influence*, textbook authors should approach new religious studies texts by incorporating scholarly contributions and reviews, as well as more in-depth study of both historical and contemporary elements of religious cultures. Further, as global citizenship explicitly encompasses both global and local involvement, incorporation of local religious cultures and practices particular to the United States, such as Native American and African American traditions, should also be addressed in the text(s) as well.

4. Success in Cultivating Civil Respect for Religious Liberty

Despite certain setbacks regarding teacher training and textbooks, Modesto’s world religions course succeeds in a number of ways. According to student interviews, the course strengthened general respect for religious liberty under the First Amendment. Furthermore, it stimulated active respect and the initiative to take a stand against instances of religious insult and discrimination in their school. When asked whether students would respond to incidents of religious intolerance in school, either by standing up to the insulter or comforting the victim, students responded consistently that the course was influential in their decision to respond. In terms of comforting victimized students, one student states:

If a person took it the wrong way, I would go say something. It's not polite to talk about a person's religion because that's what they believe in, and you have your religion and other people have theirs so there's no reason to insult their religion.⁴²

Another student expresses previous action against religious insults:

I've tried to defend. I don't want to get too much mixed up in it because I know if I do, a lot of things can happen. But I do try to step up for that person because I believe in my own religion a lot, and I know what that feels like.⁴³

In the larger picture, students who establish active respect for religious liberty at the secondary level will be able to take this with them into their local and global communities. Active respect for liberty is a critical aspect of what it means to be global citizen, according to former Secretary General of the United Nations and '61 Macalester graduate, Kofi Annan: "Thinking and acting as global citizens [means] understanding the need for all peoples to seize common opportunities and defend against shared threats."⁴⁴ Annan's statement echoes Gutmann's notion of fostering "mutual understanding" to achieve and embrace religious understanding.

Although the Modesto City program experienced certain setbacks, it continues to make headway in establishing religious studies as a required part of public school education and fostering an active respect for religious freedom. Teachers and school board members continue to adjust and negotiate aspects of the course, such as course length and teacher training, to better achieve the course goals.

VI. Conclusions

Steven Prothero and Diane Moore both offer approaches to incorporating a religious studies education in schools. Although Prothero recognizes the need to educate students in religious understanding, his text-based proposal hints at a nostalgia for a Protestant Christian biblical education. Moore, on the other hand, advances a more pragmatic method; however, she does not adequately adapt her approach for public school implementation. The study of the world religions course in the Modesto City school district addressed practical issues that arose in the actualization of the program. Modesto's project is a cornerstone in the study of religion in public schools, as it has been successfully

operating for over eight years with minimal opposition from parents and community members.⁴⁵ Other school districts seeking to establish a religious studies curriculum should use this study as a guide, adopting successful elements⁴⁶ and learning from its inadequacies in order to educate students who are able to participate responsibly in their local, national, and transnational communities.

As public schools begin to tackle the question of what constitutes a successful religious studies education, I propose that they enter into dialogue with the larger field of religious studies and scholars of religion. Diane Moore and Harvard Divinity School's Program in Religion in Secondary Education furthers this dialogue between secondary and higher education, between teachers and scholars of religion. The academic field of religious studies has been in flux over approaches to the study of religion, from emphasizing texts and beliefs, to redefining religious studies, to addressing the significance of practice. Introducing a public school perspective into the discussion by sharing and learning through collaborative discourse would benefit both parties. In looking toward the future of this collaboration, we might ask: although knowledge transfer between secondary education and higher education is often depicted as a top-down scheme, how can public schools, such as Modesto, affect the larger academic field of religion and transform the way in which religion is approached in higher education? Further, how will this dialogue between public secondary schools and higher education shape the way we talk about religious cultures in the United States?

Notes

1. Bible Literacy Project, Inc. Accessed online in April 2009 at <http://www.bibleliteracy.org/site/About/index.htm>.
2. For current trends in biblical education in public schools, see David Van Biema, "The Case for Teaching The Bible," *Time* (22 March 2007), online at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1601845-4,00.html>.
3. Religious Literacy Quiz
 1. Name the four Gospels. List as many as you can.
 2. Name a sacred text of Hinduism.
 3. What is the name of the holy book of Islam?
 4. Where according to the Bible was Jesus born?
 5. President George W. Bush spoke in his first inaugural address of the Jericho road. What Bible story was he invoking?
 6. What are the first five books of the Hebrew Bible or the Christian Old Testament?
 7. What is the Golden Rule?
 8. "God helps those who help themselves": Is this in the Bible? If so, where?

Sekine: educating the global
Aurora M. Sekine

9. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God": Does this appear in the Bible? If so, where?
10. Name the Ten Commandments. List as many as you can.
11. Name the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism.
12. What are the seven sacraments of Catholicism? List as many as you can.
13. The First Amendment says two things about religion, each in its own "clause." What are the two religious clauses of the First Amendment?
14. What is Ramadan? In what religion is it celebrated?
15. Match the Bible characters with the stories in which they appear. Draw a line from the one to the other. Hint: Some characters may be matched with more than one story or vice versa.

Adam and Eve	Exodus
Paul	Binding of Isaac
Moses	Olive Branch
Noah	Garden of Eden
Jesus	Parting of the Red Sea
Abraham	Road to Damascus
Serpent	Garden of Gethsemane

4. Stephen Prothero, *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know—and Doesn't* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2007), p. 17.
5. Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 3.
6. David Tracy, "Writing," *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, edited by Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 384.
7. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
8. For more on issues of religious practice and faith in public schools, see Elizabeth Baer's "Working the System: The Role of Islam in Student Negotiations of a Midwestern Charter School" in this volume.
9. These selections in no way mean to represent all approaches to teaching about religion in schools.
10. Institute for Global Citizenship, Macalester College, accessed online in January 2009 at <http://macalester.edu/igc/proposal/definitions.html>.
11. James A. Banks, "Democratic Citizenship Education in Multicultural Societies," *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*, edited by James A. Banks (San Francisco: Jossey-Banks Press, 2004), p. 6.
12. For more on the democratic theory of education, see Ruthanne Kurth-Schai and Charles R. Green, *Re-envisioning Education and Democracy* (Greenwich: Information Age, 2006).
13. Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 50.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
16. Banks, p. 3.

17. For more on the Global Citizenship Education (GCE) movement, both in the U.S. and abroad, see Banks, ed., *Diversity and Citizenship Education*; and Bart van Steenberg, ed., *The Condition of Citizenship* (London: Sage, 1994).
18. For more on biblical education and the common school movement, see James W. Fraser, *Between Church and State: Religion and Public Education in a Multicultural America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
19. For more on the secularization of public schools and specific court cases related to this, see Kent Greenawalt, *Does God Belong in Public Schools?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Joseph P. Viteritti, *The Last Freedom: Religion from the Public School to the Public Square* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).
20. Prothero 2007, p. 12.
21. *Obon* is a Japanese Buddhist holiday to honor the deceased spirits of one's ancestors.
22. Prothero 2007, p. 12.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
25. This program has been suspended starting the 2009–2010 term due to lack of funding. The site states that it hopes to restart again in two years.
26. Diane Moore, *Overcoming Religious Illiteracy: A Cultural Studies Approach to the Study of Religion in Secondary Education* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2007), p. 82.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
30. J. Z. Smith uses this term to describe comparative studies in support of Pauline Christology: "It is, to put matters bluntly, poor method to compare and contrast a richly nuanced and historically complex understanding of Pauline Christology with a conglomerate of 'mystery texts' treated as if they were historically and ideologically simple and interchangeable; to treat the former as developmental and the latter as frozen" (108).
31. Moore 2007, p. 85.
32. James W. Laine addresses this issue in his book introduction to *Religion and Power* (forthcoming) using the term "meta-religion" to define "a truth so taken for granted that its proponents see it as consistent with what is only natural and reasonable."
33. Moore 2007, p. 97.
34. For more on the pragmatic approach to education, see John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: The Free Press, 1966).
35. Emile Lester and Patrick S. Roberts. "Learning About World Religions in Public Schools: The Impact on Student Attitudes and Community Acceptance in Modesto, California" (Nashville: First Amendment Center, 2006), p. 11.
36. Assistant Professor in the Department of Government at the College of William and Mary.
37. Assistant Professor in the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech.
38. Lester and Roberts, "Learning About World Religions in Public Schools," p. 49.
39. *Ibid.*

Sekine: educating the global
Aurora M. Sekine

40. For example, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Ph.D., Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago Divinity School states, "As a university professor, I see the deleterious effects of student Bible illiteracy on a regular basis. I am pleased to endorse this textbook, which provides the background in biblical knowledge required for advanced study of the humanities, philosophy, and political life." Other positive reviews come from Leland Ryken, Clyde S. Kilby Professor of English at Wheaton College and Robert Alter, Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature, University of California at Berkeley (Bible Literacy Project).

41. Lecturer in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at University of Wales-Lampeter.

42. Lester and Roberts, "Learning About World Religions in Public Schools," p. 35.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

44. Institute for Global Citizenship, Macalester College, accessed online in April 2009 at <http://www.macalester.edu>.

45. Lester and Roberts, "Learning About World Religions in Public Schools," p. 56.

46. The study does state, however, that the success of the course is unique to Modesto's community: "While we conclude that Modesto's experience suggests that world religions courses can be successfully implemented in public schools, we are not contending that all school districts should copy the specific course Modesto implement" (59).