

Language and Literature Arts Series
(EMC Paradigm Publishing)

World Adventure Time and Place
(Macmillan/McCraw-Hill)

World Cultures
(A Global Mosaic)

- I. Sensitivity to Military Community—Community standards require a sensitive treatment of the military. EMC Paradigm has material that systematically undermines the concept of military. The attitude of the series can best be shown by their use of the quote on page number 704 in 10th grade Literature: Understanding Literature:

This topic brings me to that worst outcrop of herd life—the military system, which I abhor...this plague spot of civilization ought to be abolished with all possible speed. Heroism on command, senseless violence, and all the loathsome non-sense that goes by the name of patriotism—how passionately I hate them (Einstein).

Negative references to the military looks to death, imprisonment, degradation, and misleadership—inducing great traumatic fear in the young District children (12yrs—7th grade) whose family members may be currently involved in combat situations. These ideas are presented in the 7th grade Literature textbook in the following way:

The Price of Freedom page 809—this story expresses the horror of POW's imprisonment.

Zebra and *The Vietnam War Memorial* pages 8 and 22—stresses death and disability associated to war. The story discussing the Vietnam memorial ends, “The Memorial provides an opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to take an intimate look at the results of war and to reflect upon the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War.” The ending statement leads the reader to see war as only involving death, and then raise the morale question of whether it was appropriate for U.S. involvement in Vietnam. My 12 year old son's Grandpa and Uncle are both Veterans of the Vietnam War. His Uncle was wounded badly when serving in the Vietnam War. The leading statement makes a mockery of their sacrifice.

The Charge of the Light Brigade page 657—asks young children to question military orders.

The Unforgettable Journey page 199—portrays the U.S. military abandoning allies in Laos.

Now consider we have only looked at the 7th grade text. What about the others. What kind of trauma will this cause our military families in the District?

II. Death and Spirituality

Spirituality, as repeatedly portrayed in the series EMC Paradigm and the 6th and 7th grade Social Studies Books, focuses on selective aspects of traditional religions to the point it distorts and completely misrepresents those religions. Sectarian, sacred texts are handled as “literature”—poems, or myths—when in fact, they are sacred—being used in disrespectful, non-sacred way.

For example, American Sign Language (ASL) is referred to as a spiritual language, “visible, invisible, out of body to conquer from the mind” (page 750 7th grade). I can’t tell you how offensive I find that. When I sign to my son, I am not practicing witchcraft or any other type of spiritual ritual. ASL is a language—pure and simple.

Mythology is presented over and over in every book of the EMC series. The strong beliefs in reincarnation are presented as socially accepted construct, and widely held belief. These are sectarian religious doctrines and dogmas—public education is mandated to be non-sectarian. Even though I am a Christian, I find it offensive to have an online activity to compare the *Epic of Gilgamesh* to King James Bible Genesis Chapter 6 and 7. The description of Christianity is grossly distorted in the 6th and 7th grade History textbook. In general, the EMC series is very dark, suicidal ideas overwhelm the 10th grade textbook. The EMC series strongly supports pantheism. The District is introducing New Age Ideas.

For the sake of this discussion I will concentrate mainly on the 7th grade Literature textbook and the 6th and 7th grade History textbooks. I will address by concerns relating to each Literature 8th through 12th grades in a separate report. Below are several examples of the content presented in the 7th grade Literature textbooks (some from the 10th grade), and the 6th and 7th grade History textbook:

The idea of death is presented throughout the series; stories of death dominate in the EMC Paradigm literature series. There are four suicidal stories in the 10th grade textbook: *The Drowned Maid*, *Popo and Ixta*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antigone*. Many of the death stories incorporate theosophical ideas that undermine traditional beliefs. The following stories from the 7th grade textbook, *Understanding Literature*, relate to death and spirituality:

- *Zebra*
- *Be-ers and Doers*

- *Jed's Grandfather*
- *The Green Mamba*
- *The Serial Garden*
- *An Unforgettable Journey*
- *The Inn of Lost Time*
- *Searching for January*
- *The 11:59*
- *Pets*
- *QWERTYUIOP*
- *The Foghorn*
- *The Tell-Tale Heart*
- *The Hummingbird*
- *Mute Dancers: How to Watch a Hummingbird*
- *The Challenger Disaster*
- *Persephone and Demeter*
- *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
- *The Instruction of Indra*
- *Luke Baldwin's Vow*
- *The Secret for Two*
- *The Snow Goose*
- *Caesar the Giant*
- *The price of Freedom*
- *Why the Sky is far away from the earth*
- *The Listeners*
- *Forgotten Language*

The stories and poems relating to death incorporate theosophical ideas such as reincarnation, ghostly presence of the dead, communing with the dead, immortality and suggest the ability to predict death. The stories and related questions are thought-provoking in areas that are too complex for young children (12yrs—7th grade) to relate with and understand. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is presented with the following questions:

Why do you think humans fear aging and death (page 481)?

Medical science has enabled humans to live longer and longer lives. What if humans were someday able to extend their own lives indefinitely due to the use of high technology? Do you think that would be a good thing toward which to strive? Why, or why not? What might society be like if we had eternal life on earth? What might be some of the advantages and disadvantages of eternal life (page 488)?

What events in nature does this story explain? What view of humans does this story express? What view of the gods does this story express (page 488)?

To help Gilgamesh, write a petition to the gods formally requesting eternal life on earth for all humans. Be sure to use formal, polite language, and give several reasons why you believe your request should be granted (page 489).

The questions presented are encouraging young children to express their beliefs with regard to religious matters; the questions associated with the story guide the children to discuss the idea of everlasting life, and then encourage young children to write a prayer to the gods; however presented as if it is a petition. The questions are inappropriate for young children (12 years—7th grade). Communication with God is of a religious matter and the District must remain silent in the area of religious instruction. I am offended that the District is presenting material that requests children to communicate with gods. Religious instruction is preserved for the family. Dylan is being spiritually nurtured in the Christian faith, and is establishing a personal relationship with God of the Holy Bible. The material presented in the Literature textbooks undermines our religious beliefs and encourages communion with other gods.

Persephone and Demeter

The story *Persephone and Demeter* is followed by a question that alludes to the fact that a myth “is a story that explains the beginnings of things in the natural world” (page 473); this is stated again on page 478 and 505. This statement is followed by questions that are inappropriate for our young boys and girls; the ideas presented in the story along with the questions promote a religious belief. The questions are as follows, and are designed to correlate with the story and its mythical explanation to each of the questions:

What happens to people after they die?
What makes plants such as flowers grow?
Why does summer give way to winter?
How did people learn to cultivate?

The first question is answered in the story as “Rhadamanthus, a judge of the dead, dealt out punishment to the souls of great sinners. They were sentenced to suffer forever under the whips of the avenging Erinyes. Heroes were led to the Elysian fields, where they lived happily forever in never-failing light” (page 475). This idea speaks of salvation and of heaven and hell. The second question suggests that nature’s growth is determined by the emotional well-being of Demeter, the goddess of corn and the harvest. The third question suggests that the annual reunion of Demeter and Persephone brings spring, and their departing when Persephone returns to Hades brings winter. The final question suggests that cultivation was due to the kindness of Demeter and her compassion for humans to not starve in the winter months. The story and related questions are religiously oriented and reinforce an idea associated to the heavenly realms and underworld (good and evil); these ideas are too advanced for 12 year old boys and girls. While the idea is presented as a myth the

textbook continually suggests that myths are stories explaining the beginnings of things in the natural world

Jed's Grandfather

The introduction to the story *Jed's Grandfather* provides information that leads a child to believe that “many people believe that dreams [are] visits from a supreme being, predictions of the future, or the activities of human souls freed from sleep” (page 95). The story then tells of Jed's dream, which relates to his grandfather dying. After reading this story a child is directed to respond to the following question:

Have you ever been so anxious about something that it made it hard for you to think or eat? Write about this experience (page 100).

In his own way, Jed's grandfather helps Jed to understand and deal with his oncoming death. Write some additional dialogue between Jed and his grandfather in which Grandfather talks to Jed directly about death (page 103).

The first question is too evasive and is intended to arouse personal feelings most likely related to an unhappy experience, and the second question is too advanced and inappropriate for young children. The ability to grasp the feelings related to the death of a close family member is difficult enough, having to create dialog explaining dying from an adult's perspective is too deep for 12 year old boys and girls.

The poem *The Listeners* is described as “the traveler in the poem confronts the mysteries of life and the connection between the living and the dead” (page 225).

The poem leads a child to believe that communing with the dead is possible; the public educational system needs to remain silent in the area of life after death, eternal salvation, and all other religious ideas that are preserved for the family.

The Instruction of Indra

The story *The Instruction of Indra* provides instruction in Hinduism, the teachings involve the following key elements of Hinduism:

The teachings say that all worldly possessions are illusions that will soon pass away (page 507).

The term *karma* means the way in which a person's actions determine that person's fate in the next stage of life (page 514).

Balancing the concepts of karma and detachment is the Hindu idea of dharma, or duty. Krishna, in the Hindu holy scripture *Bhagavad-Gita*, taught that a proper life does not involve withdrawal from action in the world. Instead, according to Krishna, one should practice one's dharma. One should

continue to act in the world, carrying out one's duties, but without expecting to be rewarded for actions on earth (507).

Some of the questions relating to the story *Instruction of Indra* are as follows:

What do you think about the ideas of detachment and Karma? Do you agree that people should work to become detached from worldly goods and power? Do you agree with the idea of karma, or do you believe people should work to improve their lives? Explain, referring to the Prereading if needed (page 513).

What does this myth teach us about how we should live our lives (page 513)?

In this story, Indra learns some important lessons. Imagine that you are taking notes for him so that he will not forget what he has learned. In your notebook, write some brief notes for him (page 514).

These types of questions (involving spirituality) are continually presented throughout the 7th grade textbook. The young students (12yrs—7th grade) immaturity and naivety do not allow for discussions relating to teachings that are too philosophical, and are intended for a more mature audience (college level students).

The story is followed by a one page insight into Hinduism and its three main gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Krishna is an avatar of Vishnu, and recognized as the most dynamic and beloved. An avatar is considered the embodiment of a god or spirit (embodiment of divinity and of divine love). In comparison to Christianity the avatar is that of Jesus Christ. The Buddha is also an avatar of Vishnu. Encouraging a discussion in relation to the teachings of Krishna is no different then presenting a discussion relating to the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity, and believing the acceptance of Christ as your personal savior and Lord will give eternal life with God.

The Hummingbird and Mute Dancers: How to Watch a Hummingbird and Forgotten Language

The stories *The Hummingbird* and *Mute Dancers: How to Watch a Hummingbird* introduce the idea of reincarnation. The poem *Forgotten Language* is a poem about communicating with nature (able to speak the language of flowers). The poem is preceded with an explanation that “many literary works study the theme of communicating with elements in nature, such as animals, plants, and the forces that create weather. Some indigenous groups believe that every animal, plant, and rock has a spirit and that these spirits can communicate with people” (page 638). The children are directed to answer the question, “If you could communicate with any element in nature, what would it be? Why” (page 638)?

This question along with the discussion associated with the poems are very suggestive and leads a student to believe that they may be able to commune with elements of

nature. I do not believe it is appropriate for the District to encourage my son, and other children, who are being spiritually guided in the Christian faith, or other faiths, to communicate with a spirit; this type of communication is taught in the Bible as being demonic, and is very much discouraged in the Bible. Deuteronomy 18:10-13, “Let no one be found among you who...practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord...” The District must remain silent in the area of religious practices and not suggest any form of spirituality.

On page 916 of the 10th grade Literature textbook it is written, “There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space, and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow—between science and superstition. And it lies between the pit of a man’s fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of the imagination.”

Dr. Shirley McCune, Learning and Teaching, Cabinet member of the Bergeson Administration, writes in her book *The Light Shall Set You Free* presents her idea of the fifth dimension that “the date of entry into the Fifth Dimension is scheduled for the year 2012.” She claims to have received this message through channeling sessions with Kuthumi, the Ascended Master. She further explains that “since we are entering the home (or perhaps dimension is a better word) of higher level beings, they are our teachers. Soon, they have said, we will have an entirely new curriculum that we must master.” McCune believes that “all humans who will journey on to this new world in the Fifth Dimension of time/space must have a vibrational frequency, earned through raised consciousness that will match the vibrational frequency of the New Age. This phenomenon is absolute and will be measured by individuals’ abilities to be open-minded, loving, centered, tranquil, peaceful, and devoted.”

Why is a discussion on the fifth dimension presented in the 10th grade Literature book? What purpose does it serve? Why is spirituality continually presented in the Literature series?

III. History textbooks—religious teachings

The History textbooks provide a foundation of the religious ideas associated with the five major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The ideas and beliefs presented in the textbook associated with the religions are distorted in order to present a common theme that salvation, eternal life or rebirths are determined by moral choices similar to that of karma.

Each of the five major religions’ Holy Scripture teaches the following about salvation—liberation—enlightenment, taken from *World Scripture: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Text* (page 360-365):

Hinduism—We who live in the world, still attached to karmas, can overcome the world by thy grace alone (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2).

Buddhism—When the poor son heard these words of his father, great was his joy...[he said] “without any mind for, or effort on my part, these treasures now come of themselves to me”...Therefore we say that though we had no mind to hope or expect it, yet now the Great Treasure of the King of the Law has of itself come to us, and such things that Buddha-sons should obtain, we have all obtained (Lotus Sutra 4: Parable of the Prodigal Son).

Islam—Abu Huraira reported God’s Messenger as saying, “There is none whose deeds alone would entitle him to get Paradise.” Someone said, “God’s Messenger, not even you?” He replied, “Not even I, but that my Lord wraps me in mercy” (Hadith of Muslim).

God charges no soul save to its capacity; standing to its account is what it has earned, and against its account what it has deserved. Our Lord! Take us not to task if we forget, or make mistake. Our Lord! Charge us not with a load as that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord! Burden us not beyond what we have the strength to bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us (Qur’an 2.286).

Judaism—All need grace, for even Abraham, for whose sake grace came plenteously into the world, himself needed grace (Midrash, Genesis Rabbah 60.2).

Christianity—Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith (Romans 3:23-25).

The religious studies offered in the 6th and 7th grade History textbooks do not teach the idea of grace; and that by grace alone the achievement of salvation, liberation and enlightenment are gained. The ideas associated to the achievement of salvation are misrepresented and limited in explanation. The District is using profound spiritual ideas of faith and salvation to stress a limited view of morality. The religious ideas presented are too complex for young children (11 and 12 yrs old—6th and 7th graders) to grasp. This can be demonstrated most clearly in the teachings associated to Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. Clearly the ideas associated to Karma and the Four Noble Truths have been misrepresented to influence our young innocent naïve 11 and 12 year old boys and girls. The history textbooks provide scriptures from the sacred texts of various religions, and present them in a manner that is misleading and distorts the sacredness of their divine teachings. The following is a demonstration of instruction offered by the District in the History textbooks followed by my comments:

Hinduism: World Adventure—6th grade

The Vedas state that people move in a constant circle of birth, death, and rebirth. This cycle is called reincarnation (page 144 World Adventure).

The Vedas explain how Hindus believe people were created and what is the proper way to live. The following hymn explains the Hindu belief that four different kinds, or classes, of people were created. These first humans were said to be born from the different parts of a god's body.

*The Priest was his mouth;
The Princes became his arms;
His [legs] produced the
Professionals and Merchants;
His feet gave birth to [Servant]* (page 144 World Adventure).

Dharma means laws and duties...when people broke the rules of dharma, the Vedas warned, disorder would be the result. One of the sacred writings said:

If a person is engaged in doing his proper work, he reaches the highest end (page 145 World Adventure).

In a very popular Hindu book—called the Bhagavad Gita—the god Vishnu says:

Howsoever people approach me, even so do I accept them; for on all sides, whatever path they may choose is mine (page 145 World Adventure).

Hinduism: World Culture—7th grade

Brahman. Hindus worship thousands of gods. Each god is part of a single supreme force called Brahman. Hindus believe that only a few people can truly understand Brahman, which is nameless, formless, and unlimited. The many gods of Hinduism give Brahman a concrete form that is more understandable to the average person (page 178 World Culture).

Hindus believe in the unity of all life. Every person has an essential self, or atman. The self is part of a universal soul, which is also called **atman**. The Upanishads explain:

The essential self or the vital essence in humans is the same as that in an ant, the same as that in a gnat, the same as that in an elephant...indeed the same as that in the whole universe (page 179 World Culture).

Reincarnation. According to Hinduism, people suffer from pain and sorrow because they pursue false goals such as material riches and personal pleasure. The true goal of life, Hindus believe, is *moksha*, freeing of the soul from the body so that the soul can unite with Brahman (page 179 World Culture).

Moksha cannot be achieved in one lifetime. Thus, Hindus believe that people undergo reincarnation, or rebirth of the soul in various forms. After the body dies, the soul may be reborn as anything from a god to a flower or a snake. Each form is only temporary (page 179 World Culture).

Karma. For Hindus, the cycle of death and rebirth continues until the individual soul achieves union with Brahman. Whether a soul gains this release is governed by the law of karma.

Karma comes from a Sanskrit word meaning “to do.” The law of karma holds that every deed—mental or physical—in this life affects a person’s fate in a future life. In a similar way, a person’s present situation is the result of his or her deeds in a past existence. Every good deed sooner or later results in happiness. Every evil deed sooner or later brings sorrow (page 179 World Culture).

Each caste system has its own dharma, or duties and obligations. Among these duties are obedience to caste rules as well as to moral laws. People can improve their position in the next life by carrying out their duties in this life (page 179 World Culture).

Dharma influence Indian life in many ways. It provides a guide to conduct. It also offers Hindus the hope of a better life in the future. Indeed, the knowledge that their future life depends on their past deeds encourages Hindus to behave morally (page 179 World Culture).

My Comment

The ideas presented in the History textbooks do not give a clear understanding of the sacred religious understandings associated with the ideas presented. For example, the *World Culture* textbook teaches “people suffer from pain and sorrow because they pursue false goals such as material riches and personal pleasure;” this is not an accurate explanation of the karmic ties associated to reincarnation. It is taught in the *Bhagavad Gita* the following:

Krishna teaches that one cannot simply avoid acting, but one can strive to avoid attachment to actions and their results. Through virtuous living and detachment from the consequences of one’s behaviour—that is by acting disinterestedly, free of egotistically concerns and desire—an individual can advance through a series of lives until he or she reaches spiritual perfection,

realizing the final goal of *moksha* [spiritual liberation] and achieving release from *samsara* [rebirth of the atman, the soul] (*Eastern Religion*, page 26).

The District's teaching of the Hindu's sacred texts is not clear or is it accurate. The instructional pieces offered in the textbook do not accurately reflect the true teachings of karma as understood by the Hindu; the District's effort to continue with the material dishonors the Hindu people, and their divine teachings. The idea, "people suffer from pain and sorrow because they pursue false goals such as material riches and personal pleasure" targets young children and their innocence of wanting material things and pleasurable experiences. The Hindu's sacred text teaches that one must act unselfishly to reach spiritual liberation—not that the denial of materialistic riches and personal pleasure alone will achieve spiritual liberation.

Buddhism: World Adventure—6th grade

Like Hindus, the Buddha believed that all people went through a cycle of birth, death and rebirth or reincarnation. Also like Hindus, he believed in karma. Karma is described by both Hindus and Buddhists as a force caused by a person's good and bad acts. Karma is said to affect future lives (page 152 World Adventure).

Buddha concluded that life is ruled by Four Noble truths:

1. Life is filled with suffering.
2. Suffering is caused by people's wants. People may want more pleasure, more power, or a longer life,
3. Suffering can be ended if people stop wanting things
4. To stop wanting things, people must follow eight basic laws (page 153 World Adventure).

He called the way to end suffering the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path is a set of instructions on the proper way to live. By following the Eightfold Path, the Buddha taught, people could end the suffering in their lives (page 153 World Adventure).

Buddhism: World Culture—7th grade

The Buddha's teachings. The Buddha spent the rest of his life teaching others what he had learned as he sat under the sacred tree. He called these ideas the Four Noble Truths.

The first truth is that suffering is universal. Everyone suffers from pain, sickness, and death.

The second truth is that the cause of suffering is desire. People desire things such as riches and long life...even pleasure causes suffering, because pleasure must end.

The third truth is that the only way to end suffering is to crush desire. If people give up desire, they can achieve nirvana, the condition of wanting nothing.

The fourth truth is that the way to end desire is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path. In the Noble Eightfold Path, the Buddha set out a practical guide to right conduct. It stressed understanding of the cause of suffering, compassion for all creatures, kindness, and truthfulness (page 180 World Culture).

My Comment

Once again the textbooks target the innocence of young children and their limited understanding of materialism. The sacred teachings of the Four Noble Truths have been distorted to imply that “suffering can be ended if people stop wanting things.” It is important that the District refrain from teaching sacred religious beliefs. The true meaning of the Four Nobles is by far more involved than the mere desire for things. The ability to comprehend and realize the Four Noble Truths is to be Buddha, which is equal to enlightenment and nirvana (Eastern Wisdom page 65). The Four Noble truths are as follows:

- Noble Truth of *Dukkha* (suffering)
- Noble Truth of the Origin of *Dukkha*
- Noble Truth of the Cessation of *Dukkha*
- Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of *Dukkha*

The Buddha taught that everything was suffering whether painful or pleasurable, and that “*Dukkha* is the condition of universal impermanence which affects everything (Eastern Wisdom page 74).

The second Noble Truth is the origin of suffering, which “arises from craving for sensual pleasure, for having more or having less, for existence and for self-annihilation...[this] is part of a cycle that is described as the twelve-linked chain of Dependent Origination: it arises from feeling, which in turn arises from sense-contact, which arises from the six senses...Dependent Origination underlies karma, causality, change and free will, and the way all conditioned phenomena exist” (Eastern Wisdom page 74).

The third Noble Truth “asserts that there is an end to *dukkha*: supreme and final liberation is the ‘blowing out’ of the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion...Buddha calls the third Noble Truth ‘the Cessation’. This is **not** identical to nirvana. Nirvana is not an effect produced by a cause” (Eastern Religion page 74).

The fourth Noble Truth of Eightfold Path “identifies the factors leading to the cessation of *dukkha*...these eight factors affirm the three essential elements of

Buddhist spiritual training—moral conduct, concentration and wisdom” (*Eastern Wisdom* page 75).

It is important to point out that the idea of causality is a common theme throughout the Literature series—meaning the textbooks direct students to prepare graphs depicting cause and effect in relation to their readings. Perhaps this could be seen as attempting to prepare children for the idea of Dependent Origination.

The history textbooks claim *dukkha* (suffering) can be ended by not wanting things and then to achieve right conduct. The District’s instruction on the Four Noble Truths limits the teachings of the Eightfold Path. The textbooks suggest that moral conduct is the achievement of the Eightfold Path. The textbook excludes the two other essential elements: concentration and wisdom. In doing so, the District dishonors the sacred teachings of Buddhism and targets the vulnerability of our young students and their limited understanding of the teachings associated to the Four Noble Truths. Using portions of sacred religious beliefs and practices to attack the innocent desires of our young students (11 and 12 yrs—6th and 7th graders) is wrong, harmful to the children’s emotional well-being and very disrespectful to the Buddhists and Hindus. The textbooks continually imply that moral conduct is the key element, and the only element needed to achieve salvation—liberation—enlightenment. This can also be demonstrated in the textbooks instruction on Christianity.

Christianity: World Adventure—6th grade

The New Testament states that a prophet called John the Baptist sent people to ask Jesus if he was the Messiah that Jews were waiting for. The Bible says Jesus answered:

Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk..., the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.

Jesus’ answer was made up of quotes from the Hebrew Bible (page 249 World Adventure).

...The Bible also tells us that Jesus rose from the dead three days after he was crucified. Then he rejoined his apostles and told them again about the coming kingdom of God. Afterwards, the Bible says, Jesus rose to heaven. Today most Christians try to follow Jesus’ teachings and to celebrate his renewed life and message of hope on Easter Sunday (page 249 World Adventure).

Christianity: World Cultures—7th grade

Appeal of Christianity. Why did Christianity appeal to people? For many people, both rich and poor, the new religion offered hope of salvation and

eternal life. The Christian belief that each person could achieve salvation through moral choices gave people a sense of control over their destiny. The poor found comfort in Jesus' teaching that all believers were equal in the eyes of God (page 566 World Cultures).

[Jesus] was sentenced to die by crucifixion, a Roman method of execution. Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross and left to die of exposure...[Jesus] taught that people who were humble, merciful, and unselfish would be rewarded with eternal life...Jesus used parables, or short stories with simple moral lessons, to teach people to be kind to one another. He warned that acquiring wealth on Earth did not guarantee salvation (page 565 World Cultures).

My Comment

The textbooks misrepresent the Christian faith by presenting the idea that moral choices determine a Christian's salvation. The Bible teaches in John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." The textbooks do not discuss the idea of the Holy Trinity or any of the ideas relating to coming to know Christ as your personal Savior. The misrepresentation of the Christian beliefs is blatant, so blatant a lengthy discussion proving so is not necessary.

The 6th grade History Textbook provides on page 123 a limited version of the Ten Commandments. The textbook excludes significant portions of various commandments. The 7th grade textbook limits the teachings of Judaism to that of an Ethical world view as its major feature—meaning that "people and their rulers should lead moral lives" (World Culture page 564-65). Once again the District instructs that morality is the basis of salvation.

IV. Stereotyping of the mentally challenged as criminals, horrifying and dangerous.

Depression, a common ailment in today's society, is described as having criminal tendencies, an example, in the 7th grade literature textbook, page 387, is embodied in the quote that precedes Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart*, "Mental illness is a common and serious health problem...includes schizophrenia, manic depression, (bipolar disorder) and severe depression. These mental illnesses...sometimes lead to violent behavior..."

The Tell-Tale Heart, a horror story by Poe (one of many in the series) portrays a psychotic break in response to witnessing a corpse.

Flowers for Algeron, 10th grade page 670, operates under the dubious premise that individuals of low intelligence “are hostile and uncooperative...usually dull, apathetic and hard to reach” (page 672).

The Miracle Worker, 7th grade page 654, portrays a deaf-blind child, Helen Keller, as monster like, raging, making animal noises. My own experience is very different. My son, who is deaf and legally blind, is very manageable with proper intervention and continued redirection, this is no different than teaching a young child how to behave properly. My son, Drew, has never exhibited the rage described in the stage direction noted in *The Miracle Worker*. I find the reference to “animal noises” offensive. My son has the most beautiful giggle, and his noises are very expressive of his mood and exploration of his environment. He has many noises that express his needs and feelings. His cries give direction of what he is feeling. He has cries that tell me when he is sad, physically hurting, hurt feelings, in search of comfort, or just angry. Other noises expressed are made as a result of his inability to see and hear like others, it is not done in the manner that suggests he is of another species, or that he is animalistic.

My 7th grader, come the school year 2004-2005, will be required to read *The Miracle Worker*, the derogatory statements made describing Helen Keller as a monster with animalistic characteristics is not appropriate for my 12 year old son, Dylan, nor is it appropriate for his peers to read. Many of Dylan’s friends have already met Drew, but others have not. This type of portrayal will set Dylan apart as well as cause unnecessary fear of Drew.

The textbook also states on page 751 that ASL “is not based on the English language.” It is important to realize that the alphabet is the same as the English language, and that each country has its own sign language. ASL is not a universal language. ASL is different than the sign language used in France, Germany, Italy, and other foreign speaking countries. To suggest that it is a foreign language in the manner that the English language has no relevance does not clearly express the importance of ASL, or its importance to American culture. The English language plays an important role for the communication of the deaf. The sentence structure in ASL is different, however, children who are deaf still need to be able to communicate with the hearing/speaking population, therefore an understanding of the English written language is needed and can be mastered with knowledge in ASL. ASL is a communication language, an unwritten language; however having a written language being that of English.