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TO: Board of Education  
FROM: Dale Ellis  
DATE: July 11, 2012  
SUBJ: INFORMATION ITEM (Bible History Curriculum)

I continue to receive questions regarding the curriculum used for Bible History. This past year we used a curriculum called "The Bible in History and Literature." The issue with this curriculum is that it had been challenged several years ago in a federal case in Florida. The court ruled in that case that the Old Testament part of the course was Constitutional and the New Testament part was not. Therefore, this past year, we utilized only the Old Testament portion of the course.

For the coming year, we plan to use another curriculum called, "The Bible and Its Influence." As you can see from the information presented it is widely accepted and used all across the country. Ultimately, with the use of this curriculum, the only Constitutional question that can arise is with the actual instruction in my opinion. I am confident based upon the instruction that I have seen and in what the students say about the course that it is being taught competently and within the bounds of what is legally required. The use of this new curriculum will help ensure there are no Constitutional questions that arise regarding curricular content.

I am available to answer any questions you might have.

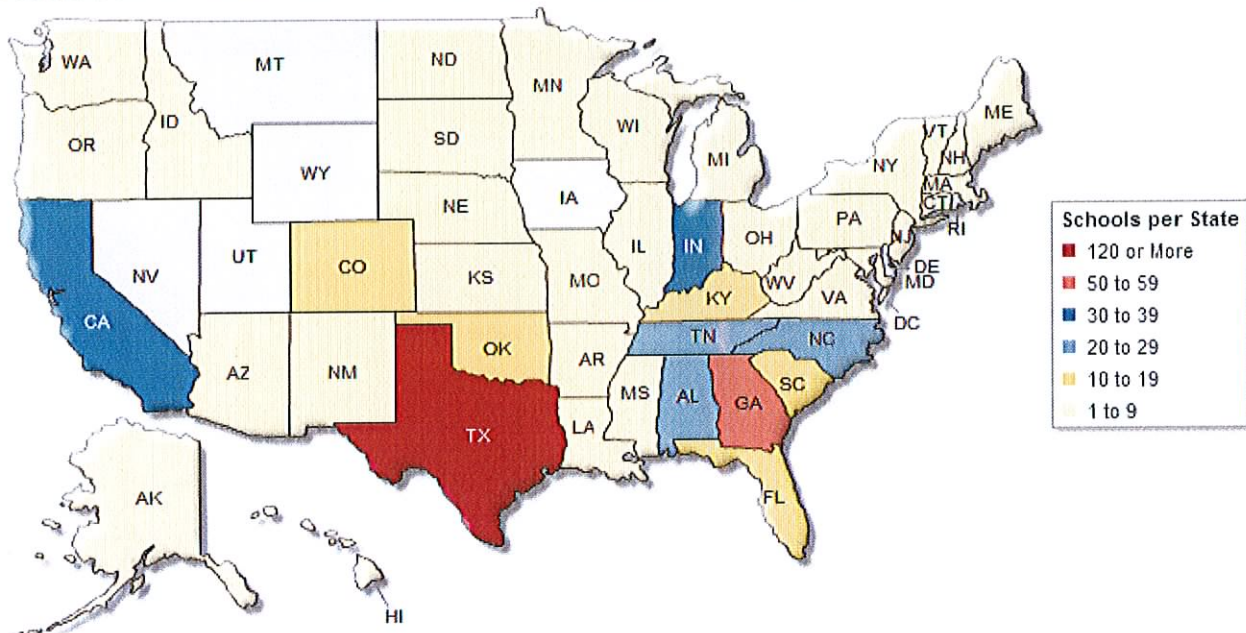
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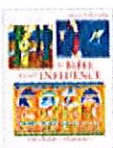
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# What Educators Are Saying About *The Bible and Its Influence*

"The feedback from students and parents has been positive. Students were surprised at what they learned about the Bible text as well as its influence in the world in literature, advertisements, music and art. Thank you for your preparation of the text; it is wonderful."

**Bonnie Nations, public school English teacher, Cape Girardeau, Missouri**

"I am very impressed with the level of information and the amount of project suggestions available. I like the well-rounded approach of providing the influence the Bible has had on literature, art, music, theater, law, etc."

**Crystal Flath, public school English teacher, Sullivan, Indiana**

"Institute the class and use the book. It is a wonderful supplement to the Bible: beautiful, well organized, and great for entry level students."

**Mark Whittaker, public school English teacher, Douglasville, Georgia**

"This textbook is extremely valuable when learning about the Bible's influence on our literature. I loved teaching it."

**Sherry Bailey, public school English teacher, Cullman, Alabama**

"It is an amazing course! The students are excited and inspired to study this piece of our culture."

**Barbara Jean Hoppe, public school English teacher, Murrieta, California**

"My experience with the text has been positive. It is filled with beautiful photos and works of art and the page layout keeps students engaged. In addition, the content illustrates the Bible's relevance in the student's everyday world."

**Wanda Dent, public school English teacher, Cleveland, Tennessee**

"Teaching *The Bible and Its Influence* this year has been a good experience for myself and the students as well. There are so many connections to our country's history and literature with the Bible. This curriculum has helped bridge that gap. *The Bible and Its Influence* has proven to be a good elective class for juniors and seniors. It is quite challenging."

**Alan Metzel, public school history teacher, Gilmer, Texas**

"Our students have received effective tools to enhance their literary studies in my class that alludes to biblical themes, figures, and patterns. Students have a greater chance of identifying and interpreting various points of view and perspectives as a result of using *The Bible and Its Influence*. I thoroughly enjoy teaching this class!"

**James White, public school English teacher, Rocky Mount, North Carolina**

"*The Bible and Its Influence* was chosen because it is extremely informative and it focuses on how the Bible has impacted literature, the arts and history. We have not had one complaint about the course or the text."

**Grace Barber Jordan, School Board Member, Leander, Texas**

"*The Bible and Its Influence* is exactly what it needs to be--respectful of the sacred text, instructive, visually exciting and engaging. My students have absolutely loved this course. By the second semester, we had a waiting list for the course."

[Rationale for Teaching an Academic Course on the Bible](#)

[What Educators are Saying](#)

[What Scholars are Saying](#)

[State Standards for Bible Literacy Courses](#)

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**Click here to watch a video interview with four teachers who worked with the textbook in their classrooms.**

**Barbara Blinn, public school English teacher, Tilton, New Hampshire**

"*The Bible and Its Influence* is an outstanding resource for the academic study of the Bible in public schools. Bible literacy enhances student understanding of literature, history, music, art and culture. This textbook provides a constitutionally secure approach to teaching what students need to know about the Bible. The elective course in the Bible as Literature has been a successful addition to our program of studies."

**Judy Partlow, Administrator (Retired), Wilson County, Tennessee**

"This book is extremely 'student friendly.' It is interesting, informative, and challenging, and makes connections to contemporary, relevant events. It is objective and unbiased, and is sensitive and non-threatening to students' belief systems. Teachers and students both will enjoy working with this textbook."

**Stuart Rowe, public school English teacher, Vancouver, Washington**

"I applaud your efforts: good, exciting summary, excellent literature references; good cross-referencing. As I read through each chapter, I felt inspired to include that section in my units. I thought ... 'I can do this. This is manageable. My kids can deal with this.' The language of each chapter is easy to follow, enjoyable to read."

**Michael Groves, public school English teacher, Portland, Oregon**[Top of Page](#)

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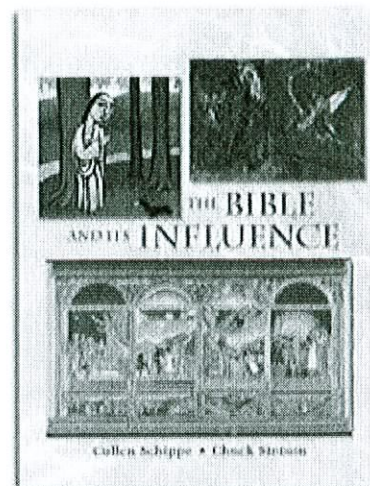


# The Bible and Its Influence

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*The Bible and Its Influence* is a textbook first published in 2005 to facilitate teaching about the Bible in American public high schools. Its publishers, the Bible Literacy Project, say the textbook allows schools to study the Bible academically while fully respecting the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. It is designed for teaching either a semester course or a full-year course on the literary and historical influence of the Bible.

The development took over five years, at a cost of \$2 million, with contributions from 40 evangelical, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish and secular experts.<sup>[*citation needed*]</sup>



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## Use in public schools

As of September 2010, the Bible Literacy Project reports that the textbook has been adopted by 470 schools in 43 states, with more than 100 schools in Texas teaching Bible literacy courses.<sup>[1]</sup> On October 11, 2007, *The Bible and Its Influence* was designated by the Alabama State Board of Education as an approved textbook statewide.<sup>[2]</sup> This designation allows schools throughout the state to purchase the curriculum with state funds.

## Media commentary

*The Bible and Its Influence* has received extensive press coverage. The cover story of *TIME* on April 2, 2007, described the rising trend in Bible courses in public schools nationwide. *TIME* senior religion editor David Van Biema stated, "[Public school Bible electives] should have a strong accompanying textbook on the model of *The Bible and Its Influence*, but one that is willing to deal a bit more bluntly with the historical wars."<sup>[3]</sup>

In May 2007, *The Bible and Its Influence* was also featured in *Education Week* and on NBC's *Today* show. The New York State School Boards Association's *On Board* magazine also had favorable coverage of *The Bible and Its Influence*, calling it "a remarkable textbook" in a July 31, 2006, review.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Notes

1. ^ Bible Literacy Project press release announcing 470 schools using the course (<http://www.bibleliteracy.org/site/News/PressRelease20100915/index.htm>)
2. ^ Bible Literacy Project press release announcing Alabama's adoption of the text ([http://bibleliteracy.org/Site/news/bibl\\_news071016AlabamaApproval.htm](http://bibleliteracy.org/Site/news/bibl_news071016AlabamaApproval.htm))
3. ^ "The case for teaching the Bible," (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1601845-1,00.html>) *TIME*, April 2, 2007.
4. ^ Full text of review as provided by Bible Literacy Project ([http://bibleliteracy.org/Site/news/bibl\\_newsNYSchoolBoard060731.htm](http://bibleliteracy.org/Site/news/bibl_newsNYSchoolBoard060731.htm))

## External links

- Bible Literacy Project page on their textbook (<http://www.bibleliteracy.org/Site/index2.htm>)
- Interfaith coalition unveils public school Bible course (<http://www.cnn.com/2005/EDUCATION/09/22/bible.textbook.ap/index.html>) , CNN
- "Bible textbook could circumvent culture war," (<http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascity/news/politics/12706340.htm>) *Kansas City Star*
- "Textbook on Bible aimed at public school classrooms," ([http://www.shns.com/shns/g\\_index2.cfm?action=detail&pk=BIBLE-09-21-05](http://www.shns.com/shns/g_index2.cfm?action=detail&pk=BIBLE-09-21-05)) Scripps Howard News Service, September 21, 2005.

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Categories: Bible | 2005 books

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